

# CHILDREN'S WORKFORCE

## Guide to Qualifications and Training



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With enduring challenges posed by the Covid-19 pandemic, *Charlotte Goddard* identifies entry-level requirements and ongoing professional development for the children and young people's workforce

**T**he Covid-19 pandemic has had a massive impact on the children's workforce, disrupting service provision and training, and creating issues and challenges for children and young people that professionals will be tackling for years to come. The childcare sector has been particularly hard hit, with a 35 per cent increase in nursery closures in 2020/21.

However, the pandemic has also shone a spotlight on the vital work carried out by the children's sector, which is already having positive effects. The Fostering Network reports a rise in interest in fostering, as people have been re-evaluating their priorities under lockdown. The National Youth Agency (NYA) says the pandemic has driven interest in youth

work as a career, as youth workers were given key worker status in Covid legislation. There has been a surge of interest in entering health professions, with a significant rise in recruitment for entry-level paediatrics positions and a record rise in nursing applications.

New qualifications and training programmes have been introduced across the sector, including apprenticeships in youth justice and playwork. The government has made more than 400 free Level 3 courses available as part of its Plan for Jobs, including qualifications in childcare and early years, play and residential childcare.

In the youth sector, the government is funding 400 bursaries to support youth workers through training courses. The pandemic has also driven investment in the education sector, including a £253 million

expansion of teacher training – although the overall spend was only a tenth of that called for by the government's education recovery commissioner.

Equality and inclusion is a key theme. Sector bodies like Social Work England are collecting data on diversity to help tackle challenges facing professionals from minority ethnic backgrounds, while The Staff College and the NYA are expanding efforts to boost diversity and inclusivity in leadership roles.

Strong and inspirational leadership is vital during difficult times. Charity Frontline has launched the Headline programme, aimed at heads of service within local authority children's services. Meanwhile, the Department for Education-funded Upon programme aims to create a cohort of strong future children's services leaders.

## Social work

The number of children and family social workers in England is increasing, but there are also high rates of vacancies – 16.1 per cent in September 2020.

The pandemic has had a significant impact on social workers' workload. A British Association of Social Workers (BASW) survey found it had also taken a toll on practitioners' wellbeing with 68.3 per cent saying working from home made it more difficult to switch off.

Recruitment and training have been affected. "Neither are really back to normal," says BASW professional officer for children and families Rebekah Pierre. "When so much is uncertain, it's not surprising fewer social workers are seeking new roles and instead opting for stability and familiarity."

### Policy

The Independent Review of Children's Social Care, chaired by Frontline founder Josh MacAlister, published The Case for Change report in June 2021, setting out the need for a new approach to children's social care in England. It called for more to be done to recruit and retain social care staff and ensure social workers have the right skills, knowledge and support.

Social Work England (SWE) is the regulator for all child, family and adult social workers. It

set up a temporary register of around 13,400 former social workers who left the profession in the last two years to fast-track them into employment during the Covid crisis.

Temporary registrations will close 14 days after the government declares the coronavirus emergency has ended.

New SWE education and training standards launch in September 2021, applying to all qualifying routes. They include a requirement for at least 200 days on placements with a greater emphasis on student support.

### Routes into social work

The main route for entering child and family social work is a generic three-year social work degree or a two-year masters. University social work courses are based on students undertaking two placements. SWE currently approves 292 social work courses.

In 2021/22, bursaries of £3,362.50 (£3,762.50 in London) are available for 1,500 postgraduates in England. There are bursaries of £4,862.50 (£5,262.50 in London) for 2,500 undergraduates who are funded for the second and third years of their course. Postgraduates can also access £4,052 in tuition fee contributions.

Specialist fast-track routes such as Frontline and employer-based 14-month programme

Step Up to Social Work provide another route into social work. Students on the Step Up programme receive a bursary of £19,833 and can train in one of 23 regional partnerships involving more than 100 local authorities in England. Those who complete the scheme earn a postgraduate diploma in social work. Step Up to Social Work cohort 7 will start in January 2022. The government is considering whether future cohorts will take place. A third route is provided by degree apprenticeships.

A total of 23 Social Work Teaching Partnerships aim to tackle regional variations in supply of social workers and ensure availability of practice placements for students. An evaluation published in November 2020 found the programme had led to more collaboration between higher education institutions, local authorities and others, more and better placements and increased support for newly-qualified social workers.

### Newly-qualified social workers

The Assessed and Supported Year in Employment (ASYE) provides access to training and development during practitioners' first year of work, with regular reviews leading to a final assessment against national standards. Not all employers offer an ASYE course. "The availability of ASYE positions, compared to demand, continues to be problematic," says Pierre. "This puts some graduates at a disadvantage when it comes to learning and professional development."

### NAAS

The National Assessment and Accreditation System (NAAS), which aims to provide a clear career pathway for social workers, was extended to 13 more local authorities in 2020, bringing the total to 69. The assessment comprises an online multiple choice knowledge assessment and a simulated practice assessment. NAAS assessment centres were closed until June 2021 due to the pandemic but have started to open.

The accreditation system is not mandatory but the government hopes it will be widely adopted. An evaluation published in November 2020 found six in 10 respondents had received some training or support about NAAS, which the majority found helpful.

### CPD

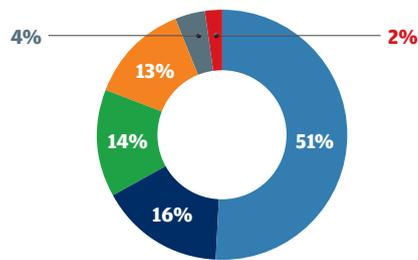
Social workers must record their continuing professional development (CPD) with SWE when they apply to renew their registration annually. SWE is currently consulting on

## CHILDREN AND FAMILY SOCIAL WORK WORKFORCE IN ENGLAND

### Number of full-time equivalent children and family social workers in post

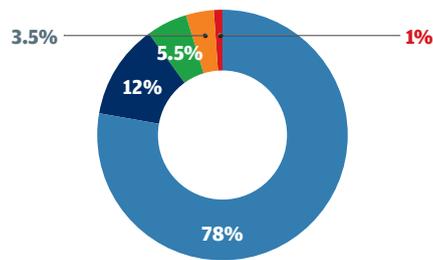
September 2017	28,496
September 2018	29,475
September 2019	30,720
September 2020	31,854

Percentage of children and family social workers by role



■ Case holder ■ Qualified without cases  
 ■ Senior practitioner ■ Middle manager  
 ■ First line manager ■ Senior manager

Percentage of children and family social workers by known ethnic origin



■ White ■ Mixed race ■ Black  
 ■ Asian ■ Others

Source: Reporting year 2020: Children's social work workforce, Department for Education

proposed changes to carrying out and recording CPD, which will come into force in December 2021. Under the proposals social workers would record at least two pieces of CPD each year in their online account, one of which would be on a theme determined by SWE.

BASW runs a CPD accreditation scheme and launched its own CPD programme in 2019. New developments include weekly workshops aimed at practicing social workers and students on placement and weekly one hour lunchtime workshops. Learning outcomes are aligned with SWE requirements. BASW's e-learning series Theory to Practice has covered issues including parental substance misuse, contextual safeguarding and remote working. BASW also runs a mentoring scheme, initially for newly qualified social workers, but expanded to cover social workers seeking advice on returning to social work and overseas social workers needing advice and guidance on working in the UK.

What Works for Children's Social Care (WWCSC) has launched a three-part free training programme to support practitioners with evidence-based practice.

### Practice supervisors

The Practice Supervisor Development Programme has delivered CPD for more than 1,100 social workers over the last three years, including face-to-face learning, group and one-to-one practice development sessions and self-directed study. During 2020 delivery moved to virtual platforms, and there are plans for 35 virtual cohorts in 2021. The programme has been extended with up to 700 additional places.

A course for managers of practice supervisors was launched in 2020. A further 12 cohorts are on offer during 2021.

### Systemic social work

Systemic practice is a way of working that focuses on relationships and working in collaboration with families and professional networks. The Centre for Systemic Social Work was launched by Westminster, Kensington and Chelsea, and Hammersmith & Fulham councils in 2017. The DfE-funded centre provides training programmes for practitioners, supervisors and leaders.

The centre offers three 15-day courses: the Certificate in Systemic Social Work Practice with Children and Families for practitioners, the Certificate in Systemic Social Work Supervision and Management for managers and supervisors, and the Intermediate

(Year Two) Course in Systemic Practice with Children and Families, as well as a six-day Systemic Leadership course. It also runs a national Practice Leadership Development Programme for aspiring practice leaders.

### Social workers in schools

A DfE-funded WWCS project placing more than 140 social workers in schools across 21 local authorities has been extended to March 2022. The project aims to find out if placing social workers in schools can build better relationships between social workers, schools, and families, and improve outcomes.

### Child protection

The Centre of Expertise on Child Sexual Abuse delivers training in preventing, identifying, and responding to child sexual abuse. Training has moved online during the pandemic, reaching more than 2,000 professionals. The centre launched new courses in 2020 and 2021, covering harmful sexual behaviour and sibling sexual abuse. Longer programmes include a Train the Trainer course and the Child Sexual Abuse Practice Leads Programme.

The NWG Exploitation Network offers a range of foundation- and advanced-level courses covering child sexual exploitation and wider exploitation suitable for organisations within the statutory and voluntary sector. The courses are accredited and count towards CPD.

The Frontline fast-track graduate programme aims to ensure trainees get the experience they need, while also bringing high-calibre graduates into child protection social work. The programme has received DfE funding to run a cohort in 2022. Participants undergo an intensive five-week residential training programme followed by two years working in a local authority child protection team while studying towards a masters qualification. In their first year, successful participants qualify as a social worker. In their second, they complete their ASYE. Lancaster University is Frontline's higher education partner.

Frontline also runs the Firstline 10-month leadership development programme for social work managers. A DfE evaluation published in May 2021 reported the programme improved attendees' levels of confidence and increased their expertise and ability to lead teams of frontline staff. The evaluation found 99 per cent of participants were satisfied or very satisfied with the training. There are 89 participants in the autumn 2020 cohort while 92 started in spring 2021. Another cohort will

## NEW FRONTLINE PROGRAMME FOR HEADS OF SERVICE

In May 2021 social work charity Frontline launched the Headline programme, aimed at heads of service within local authority children's services. Heads of service sit above team managers and below directors and assistant directors of children's services.

The 12-month programme aims to equip leaders with the skills and knowledge to deal with a range of challenges, identified through research and consultation with sector experts, local authorities and experts by experience. These include keeping children and families at the centre of social work practice, developing an inclusive workforce, and cultivating effective multi-agency relationships. It also aims to develop participants' strategic leadership skills and knowledge to maximise the impact they have on their service, teams and ultimately children and families.

After completing the programme, Headline leaders will join the Frontline Fellowship, a community of social workers who continue to develop their skills, share excellent practice and scope ideas and initiatives that will bring sustainable change for children and families.

begin training at the end of September 2021 and two cohorts will take place in 2022.

### Looked-after children

In July 2021, the government published the results of a consultation on the regulation of the children's home workforce. The majority of respondents felt professional registration would improve recruitment and retention. There was a consensus that professional standards should be established for people in care roles in children's homes. The government has said it will keep the recommendation for a professional register for residential child care "under review".

The National Centre for Excellence in Residential Child Care relaunched in January 2021 with the aim of developing and supporting access to theory, policy, practice and research. "We see less sharing of practice across providers than previously," says principal partner Jonathan Stanley.

Private companies run over 80 per cent of children's homes, with the remainder run by local authorities or the voluntary sector, meaning pay and conditions vary. "There is a need for one pay scale and one set of terms and conditions across the sector," says Stanley. The centre is working on the creation of an association for registered managers and workers in children's homes. »

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## Social work continued

The government has proposed the introduction of national standards and Ofsted regulation for unregulated children's homes such as requiring staff to have the skills to identify and act on signs a child is at risk of harm.

### Leadership

Recruitment and retention continue to be a challenge in the sector. "There is a national shortage of staff at most levels but in particular at registered manager or senior, qualified, levels," says Liz Cooper, deputy chief executive officer at the Independent Children's Homes Association (ICHA). The ICHA's 2020 State of the Sector report, published in November 2020, found more than 80 per cent of homes have managers in post, with 75 per cent being fully qualified. Over one third – 36 per cent – of providers report staff turnover levels above 20 per cent.

Ofsted's most recent annual report, published in December 2020, reported a significant rise in the number of requirements for children's homes to improve leadership and management. "We see homes without strong leadership that make poor decisions for children and staff, who are also unsupported," states the report.

In August 2021 Ofsted amended children's home guidance, saying it may consider registering a manager to manage two homes, a situation previously described as exceptional. "That is a retrograde step," says Stanley. "There are sound reasons why there should be one manager for one home, and we are

worried this opens up the possibility of one person managing even more than two homes. Senior staff in every home would then have to take on additional responsibility, effectively doing the manager's job."

### Qualifications

Since January 2015, staff working in children's homes in England have been required to obtain the Level 3 Diploma for Residential Child Care. Managers are required to hold the Level 5 diploma but have up to three years to gain it.

Two apprenticeships for those wanting to work with children and young people aim to give practitioners and managers a clearer career path and flexibility to move from one role to another. Children, Young People and Family Practitioner is a Level 4 qualification for those who want to work in residential care or do community-based work with vulnerable children and families. Participants will either be expected to gain a Level 3 Diploma in Residential Child Care or a Level 4 Certificate in Higher Education in Working with Children, Young People and Families. Children, Young People and Families Manager apprenticeship students gain either a Level 5 Diploma in Leadership and Management for Residential Child Care or a Level 5 Diploma in Leadership for Health and Social Care.

ICHA's partnership with training provider Dialogue allows members to identify specific training requirements and receive discounts on training courses. Dialogue offers regular training at ICHA's Registered Manager and Responsible Individual events.

### CAREERS IN CAFCASS

The Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service (Cafcass) is England's largest employer of social workers. Cafcass family court advisers (FCAs) work across private and public law, looking after the interests of children involved in court proceedings. They must be qualified social workers and experienced in working with highly vulnerable children and families.

FCAs can become practice supervisors, taking on additional responsibility for supervising the casework of others, while supporting the service manager and handling more complex cases. Service managers lead and manage a team of experienced practitioners and are expected to have supervisory or practice management experience gained in a children's service setting. Heads of practice provide leadership over particular geographical areas. Cafcass

currently contracts 120 associate FCAs, who are self-employed social workers.

In 2021, Cafcass launched a Social Work Academy, which oversees the organisation's new three-year newly qualified social worker programme. The course incorporates hands-on experience in social work through an ASYE, six months working within a local authority and further academic training.

Nagalro, the association for children's guardians, family court advisers and independent social workers, expressed concern about the programme, saying Cafcass roles were "unsuitable" for newly qualified and inexperienced staff. Cafcass, however, says programme participants will be "robustly supported" through its Social Work Academy, which has mentors and 78 practice educators providing review, supervision and guidance.

## Fostering

In the UK in 2020, 69,793 children were living with around 54,620 foster families. The Fostering Network says more than 8,600 new foster families are needed in 2021.

### Recruitment

The pandemic seems to have boosted interest in fostering. Ofsted figures show 137,200 people in England expressed an interest between April 2019 and March 2020, up seven per cent. However, applications are going down. The Independent Review of Children's Social Care raised concerns about England's approach to recruiting foster carers in its Case for Change report, saying it had less national focus than adopter recruitment.

### Training

Foster carers can foster for a local authority or via an independent fostering agency. Potential foster carers must do a pre-approval training course such as The Skills to Foster, developed by The Fostering Network. Once approved, foster carers in England must meet standards set by the government in their first 12 months – or 18 months for family and friends carers – supported by training covering topics such as safeguarding. Induction training is often combined with training for the Level 3 Diploma for the Children and Young People's Workforce (Social Care Pathway).

Regular reviews allow carers to access ongoing professional development. They may take specific courses to help them meet the needs of a particular child or broaden their skills. The Fostering Network runs courses covering issues such as fostering unaccompanied asylum seeking children and looking after parents and their children. The network also delivers courses for those who train and support foster carers.

### Specialisms

Recent years have seen increased professionalisation of the role alongside the creation of specialist fostering placements for particularly vulnerable children such as refugees, and specific roles such as therapeutic foster carer. The Case for Change report called for a further increase in specialist foster care for children with complex emotional or behavioural problems.

In May 2021 the DfE announced a £33 million investment in Staying Put, a scheme which allows care-experienced young people in England to remain living with former foster carers after they turn 18. This is a 40 per cent increase on funding in 2019/20.

## Youth work

A UK Youth survey published in February found 66 per cent of youth organisations reported a rise in demand for services but 83 per cent have seen their income fall. In its Ten Year Vision for Youth Work, published in December 2020, the National Youth Agency (NYA) called for a £1.2bn investment in the youth sector. It wants to see at least two qualified youth workers and four youth support workers in each secondary school catchment area; recruitment and training of 10,000 qualified youth workers and a bursary programme for entry-level training for 20,000 youth support workers. The National Youth Advisory Board, which represents all parts of the youth sector, is working on a strategy to achieve this vision, which it hopes to publish in 2021.

The Conservative Party promised a £500m Youth Investment Fund (YIF) in its 2019 general election manifesto to boost open access provision but most of the money has yet to be released. The Department for Digital, Culture, Media & Sport is leading a Youth Review which is considering the next steps for the fund and other issues such as the future of the National Citizen Service programme. It is not expected to report until after the autumn spending review.

“We’re told there is still a government commitment to the YIF but know it will be delayed,” says NYA director of youth work Abbee McLatchie. “That brings challenges because young people and the sector need that support now.”

### Workforce

In the past, youth work was mainly delivered by local authorities but today is delivered by a range of organisations such as housing programmes, voluntary organisations, within the NHS, and in social care or youth justice-focused programmes. The NYA is carrying out a census of the youth sector to get a clearer picture of current youth provision. In September 2020 the NYA published a Youth Work Curriculum to boost understanding of youth work practice and provide an educational framework.

### Salary

At a local authority level, youth workers can be youth support workers, with Level 2 and 3 qualifications or professional youth workers at Level 6 and above. The Joint Negotiating Committee (JNC) – which comprises a staff side and an employer side – sets the national framework used to grade and pay youth work jobs. Local authority youth workers are paid



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according to its salary scale. Youth and community support workers receive between £19,308 and £28,787 while a professional youth worker earns between £25,513 and £42,718. In June, the JNC staff side called for a 10 per cent salary increase across all grades.

### Qualifications

The JNC endorses youth work qualifications via the NYA. Only youth workers holding an NYA-recognised qualification were classed as keyworkers during the pandemic. Level 2 and 3 qualifications, such as a Level 3 Diploma in Youth Work Practice, are available from a range of awarding bodies. In 2020, a government-funded NYA Youth Bursary Fund provided 450 bursaries for Level 2 and 3 courses. An additional 400 are available this year.

A Level 3 Youth Support Worker apprenticeship was approved in December 2020. “There has been a lot of interest from local authorities and others,” says McLatchie. A Level 6 apprenticeship is being developed and should be approved by the end of the summer.

Youth work degree courses must be JNC-recognised to confer the status of qualified youth worker. Degrees are evolving to reflect roles outside traditional youth work settings with modules covering social care, health and business development.

In 2020, the NYA updated Level 2 and 3 qualifications in collaboration with awarding bodies and the sector, and is continuing to develop new optional units, including one on work with Gypsy and Roma young people. The NYA has also received government funding to design and deliver a media literacy training module to help youth workers discuss online safety with young people.

### Recruitment

In its 2018/19 Annual Monitoring Report, published in October 2020, the NYA found the number of higher education institutions offering youth work degrees, and the number of degrees, were at a record low. While four new courses started in 2020 most regions have

experienced a reduction in undergraduate courses with none on offer in the east of England. Student numbers continued to fall, with just under 300 recruited in 2018/19. Degree numbers for 2019/20 were down slightly overall but up for students starting in October 2020. “There are also substantial increases in those doing training at Level 2 and 3,” says McLatchie.

The pandemic has driven interest in youth work as a career. “The profile of youth work was raised as youth workers were given keyworker status and referenced in Covid legislation,” says McLatchie.

### CPD

The NYA’s Youth Work Academy is a digital platform bringing together low-cost and free training courses and webinars. During the pandemic, the NYA developed monthly online Youth Work Tea Breaks, enabling practitioners to come together and explore common themes. The NYA and UK Youth developed a website [www.youthworksupport.co.uk](http://www.youthworksupport.co.uk) featuring training and resources to help youth workers through Covid-19.

In 2020 the NYA received £300,000 National Lottery funding to deliver the Routes to Success project, which included free webinars for youth workers and intensive training and consultancy for 20 small-to-medium youth work organisations. It is developing a similar project – Equal Equity – for youth workers from minority ethnic backgrounds.

### Youth Work Register

Work on a voluntary register for youth workers has passed from the Institute of Youth Work to the NYA. The institute is concentrating on providing support and networking opportunities. Membership is free to practitioners working with young people in an informal space. “We’re working with national partners to develop the sector and be the voice of youth work practitioners,” says new chair Jaffer Ali Hussain.

# Youth justice

Youth justice roles are available in youth offending teams (YOTs), the police, courts, Crown Prosecution Service and secure estate. There are also roles in the Youth Justice Board (YJB), which oversees the system in England and Wales.

The Youth Justice Institute offers short online courses including two free courses and four Effective Practice Awards, accredited by Skills for Justice Awards. Key youth justice qualifications include the Youth Justice Effective Practice Certificate (YJEP), accredited by Skills for Justice Awards and endorsed by the YJB.

The Foundation Degree in Youth Justice is at the heart of the Youth Justice Professional Framework and based on the key competencies required for work in the youth justice system, identified in the Youth Justice Skills Matrix. It is delivered to both community and secure establishments and consists of four modules taken over two years and two months, or 18 months for those who have completed the YJEP.

A Level 5 Youth Justice Practitioner apprenticeship was approved in July 2021, but has yet to launch.

## Secure estate

The Youth Custody Service (YCS) is a specialist service within HM Prison and Probation Service. Youth justice workers work with 12- to 18-year-olds in specialist young offender institutions (YOIs) or in Medway Secure Training Centre (STC).

Youth justice workers start with 12 weeks' Prison Officer Entry Level Training, specialising in working with children and young people in custody. They receive a NVQ Level 3 qualification. All Band 3 youth justice workers are expected to complete the first two modules of the youth justice foundation degree. They are then expected to complete the

degree and progress to the role of Band 4 youth justice worker specialist. All YCS officers are expected to be specialists by 2023. Some 201 have already achieved the degree-level qualification and 314 others are in training.

The second and final cohort of a pilot fast-track 15-month training programme began in September 2020. The salaried programme includes 13 months of training and two months of accreditation.

Leadership development programme Unlocked Graduates is now in a number of YOIs including Feltham, Cookham Wood and Werrington. In 2021, the programme took on more than 120 graduates to be placed as prison officers across nearly 30 prisons. To be eligible for the fully-funded programme, which includes work towards a Masters degree, graduates must have a 2:1 or above. They receive a salary of up to £30,000 depending on location. Applications open for the next cohort in mid-September 2021.

Secure schools aim to provide educational rehabilitation for children aged 12 to 17 remanded or sentenced to youth detention. The first school, run by charity Oasis, will open in late 2022. Oasis plans to recruit about 150 staff.

## Community

YOTs comprise practitioners from a wide range of backgrounds with different training needs. The YJB's skills audit tool is designed to help practitioners identify potential gaps in their knowledge and gain access to targeted training.

Some YOTs take on unqualified workers who work their way up. A qualification in social work is desirable but not essential. Once employed by a YOT, they undertake youth justice specific in-service training and may get the opportunity to do YJEP or a youth justice degree.

The Association of YOT Managers (AYM) runs the Aspiring Future Leaders course, in partnership with Solace Enterprises. This is aimed at operational managers within YOTs, who want to develop their leadership skills and apply for heads of service roles. The course is set at Institute of Leadership and Management (ILM) Level 5 and can include work towards a Certificate in Leadership and Management offered separately by local government leadership body Solace.

The AYM also offers an accredited ILM Level 7 Certificate in Leadership and Management for YOT heads of service, also in conjunction with Solace. The next cohort will start in autumn/winter 2021.

The Youth Justice Sector Led Improvement Partnership (YJSIP) is funded by the YJB, administered by the AYM, and delivered by senior leaders in youth justice. The YJSIP offers training for managers interested in undertaking peer reviews of YOTs and peer review team leader training. It also offers operational manager training, coaching and mentoring for YOT managers and supervisors.

## Probation

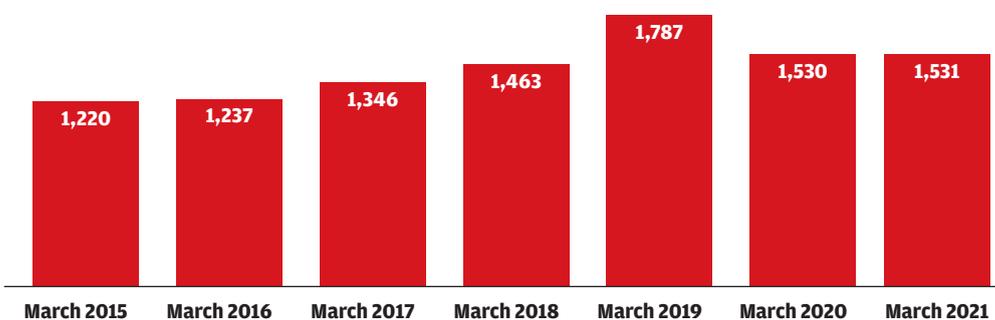
A revamped Probation Service was launched in June 2021. The service is looking to expand, with a record 1,007 recruits in 2020 and plans to recruit a further 1,500 by March 2022. Refreshed national standards ensure staff meet face-to-face with all the offenders they supervise at least once a month with an expectation staff will visit offenders' homes. There are also plans to increase diversity with targeted recruitment campaigns, new regional race ambassadors and inclusivity training.

The workforce consists of probation officers and probation service officers (PSOs). PSOs only supervise low-risk offenders. Probation officers can work in YOTs on secondment.

To train as a probation officer, applicants need a recognised Level 5 qualification or above in any subject. They also need relevant paid or voluntary experience of working with people in crisis and those who display challenging behaviour. Aspiring probation officers start as PSOs and work their way through the Professional Qualification in Probation (PQiP) programme, gaining a Level 5 vocational qualification diploma in probation practice and an honours degree.

The PQiP PSO Progression Programme, an accelerated pathway from PSO to probation officer, launched this year. PSOs taking this path do not need a Level 5 qualification and can study part-time or full-time.

## YOUTH CUSTODY STAFF IN ENGLAND AND WALES



Source: HM Prison and Probation Service workforce quarterly: March 2021

## Education

A £1.4bn government recovery package aims to support children whose education has been disrupted by the pandemic. This is only a tenth of the spend called for by the government's former education recovery commissioner Sir Kevan Collins, who resigned in protest.

A total of £1bn will support the National Tutoring Programme (NTP), which allows schools to get support from tutors and in-school academic mentors. The NTP will be delivered by tuition and mentoring company Randstad Education from September 2021, supported by Teach First. Academic mentors must have a degree at 2.2 or above or Qualified Teacher Status (QTS), as well as a Level 4 qualification at Grade C or above in GCSE maths and English or equivalent. Academic mentors undergo online training with Liverpool Hope University, which lasts a week for those with QTS and two weeks for those without. Tutors are recruited and trained by tutoring organisations signed up as Tuition Partners.

The government also announced a £253 million investment in expanding teacher training and development for all school teachers in England, including headteachers, but has not given any more details yet. Schools were able to apply this year to receive the Nuffield Early Language Intervention to support children's early language and literacy skills. This includes free training for teaching assistants and early years educators designed by the University of Oxford and beginning in September 2021.

An £8m government-funded Wellbeing for Education Return programme, starting in September 2021, will train local mental health experts to help school and college staff support student wellbeing.

### Teaching assistants

Government figures show the number of full-time equivalent teaching assistants (TAs) in England has increased by around 6,000 since 2019, standing at 271,370. TAs make up 28 per cent of the school workforce and are graded from 1 to 4. The role of higher level teaching assistant was introduced for those who wanted to progress in their career.

No specific qualifications are required to become a first level TA but higher level TAs should hold a nationally recognised qualification at Level 2 or above in English and maths and must meet a set of 33 standards. A Level 3 Teaching Assistant apprenticeship is available. Cache offers qualifications from Level 1 to Level 4 in supporting teaching and learning, while City & Guilds offers Level 2 and 3 qualifications. Students taking the new

Level 3 Education and Childcare T-Level can choose to specialise in Assisting Teaching.

Maximising the Impact of Teaching Assistants (MITA) is a programme of school workforce improvement and training delivered by the University College London (UCL) Centre of Inclusive Education. Research carried by MITA and UCL in 2020 found TAs' workload had increased over the pandemic with 51 per cent managing a whole class or bubble on their own.

### SEND

All mainstream schools are required to have a Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator (Senco), responsible for assessing, planning and monitoring the progress of children with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND). Sencos must be qualified teachers. Newly-appointed Sencos without more than a year's past experience of the role must achieve a postgraduate National Award in Special Educational Needs Co-ordination within three years of appointment.

A May 2021 Ofsted report found some Sencos felt they did not have enough time to carry out their duties and access CPD. A July 2021 report published by Nasen (National Association for Special Educational Needs) and Bath Spa University found 55 per cent of primary school Sencos and 70 per cent of secondary school Sencos said they were not given enough time to complete their role effectively. The research also showed a sharp increase in workload over the pandemic.

The government is carrying out a review of support for children with SEND but publication has been delayed due to Covid. In February 2021, the government announced a £42m extension of projects supporting children with SEND, including improved training for education staff in working with

children and young people with specific needs such as autism. From September 2022, 35 new special free schools will employ specially-trained teachers to provide tailored support to up to 3,000 children with SEND. Another two schools will open for children who have been or are at risk of being excluded from mainstream education.

Nasen provides training and support in SEND and inclusion. Membership became free to all UK individuals in January 2021. Nasen offers accredited courses such as a Level 3 and 4 SEND Casework Award and Youth Mental Health First Aid. The Whole School SEND Consortium brings together organisations and individuals who share a commitment to improving the educational experiences and outcomes for children and young people with SEND. Free CPD resources can be found online at The SEND Gateway at [www.sendgateway.org.uk](http://www.sendgateway.org.uk).

### PSHE

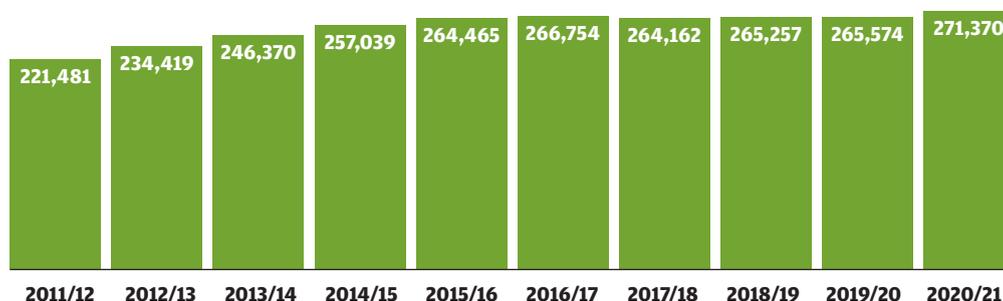
In September 2020, personal, social, health and economic (PSHE) education became compulsory in all state-maintained schools alongside relationships education in primary schools and relationships and sex education in secondary schools. The PSHE Association offers a range of CPD and one-to-one support opportunities.

### Other roles

Government funding is available to train to become an educational psychologist. There are 203 funded places available each year until 2022. Since September 2018, every school in England has been required to have a named "careers leader". The government's Skills for Jobs strategy, published in January, includes a commitment to invest in more training for careers leaders.

## TEACHING ASSISTANT WORKFORCE

### Number of full-time equivalent teaching assistants in England



Source: School Workforce in England: Reporting Year 2020, Department for Education



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# Early years

In January 2021, the Early Years Workforce Commission published a report on key challenges facing the sector, which concluded the workforce was underpaid and undervalued. Research by the Anna Freud Centre for Children and Families found half of early years practitioners said stress at work had made them feel unwell.

Covid has had a devastating effect on childcare. According to Ofsted, the number of registered providers fell by 3,300 between August 2020 and March 2021. The number of childminders fell by 1,800. The National Day Nurseries Association (NDNA) found 232 nurseries closed in 2020/21 – 35 per cent more than the year before.

Despite this, the early years sector continues to face major recruitment challenges. The number of nursery workers qualified to Level 3 has fallen from 83 per cent to 52 per cent, according to NDNA research. Nurseries say shortfalls in government funding for free childcare places make it hard to pay attractive salaries.

## Level 2

Early years settings must meet specific requirements for the ratio of qualified adults to children, including rules about the proportion of staff with Level 2 and Level 3 qualifications. Level 2 or 3 practitioners must hold a “full and relevant” qualification endorsed by the Department for Education. Staff with endorsed Level 2 qualifications are known as “early years practitioners”. A new standards-based Early Years Practitioner Level 2 Apprenticeship launched in March 2020.

## Level 3

Staff with DfE-endorsed Level 3 qualifications gain Early Years Educator (EYE) status.

A Level 3 EYE Apprenticeship was launched in April 2019. A new qualification, the Education and Childcare T-Level, launched in 2020 and is set to roll out to all post-16 providers by 2024. Students can choose from three specialisms, but only those taking the Early Years Education and Childcare specialism will gain a “full and relevant” qualification.

The government is consulting on replacing all Level 3 EYE courses with the T-Level and the apprenticeship. However, it has also made a range of Level 3 EYE courses available for free from April 2021 as part of its Lifetime Skills Guarantee.

## Early Years Teacher Status

Early Years Teacher Status (EYTS) was introduced in 2013 in an effort to create a graduate-led workforce. The number of students enrolling on Early Years Initial Teacher Training courses rose by 76 per cent in 2020/21 compared with 2019/20 with 628 new entrants. There are three routes into EYTS: undergraduate, graduate employment-based and graduate entry. EYTS is considered the equivalent of Qualified Teacher Status but does not bring equivalent pay and early years teachers cannot lead nursery or reception classes in maintained primary schools.

## Degree-level

There are around 320 early years degrees in England with wide variation in content. Not all qualify a graduate to be counted as a Level 3 practitioner. In 2019, the Early Childhood Studies Degrees Network introduced Early Childhood Graduate Practitioner competencies, which can be “bolted on” to a degree and ensure minimum standards such as 80 placement days.

Anglia Ruskin University launched an MA in

## PLAY

Ofsted-registered out-of-school clubs and holiday play schemes are not required to employ staff with childcare or playwork qualifications but a number of qualifications are available. NCFE Cache and City & Guilds offer a range of qualifications. The NCFE CACHE Level 3 Diploma in Playwork (NVQ) is free to adults with no other Level 3 qualifications as part of the government’s Lifetime Skills Guarantee. Level 2 and 3 qualifications developed by Play Wales should soon be available in England.

A group of play employers is developing an apprenticeship standard for playworkers, set to be approved in September 2021. The group has been working with Training Qualifications UK to develop a new qualification to sit alongside the apprenticeship, the TQUK Level 2 Diploma for the Playwork Practitioner.

“By the end of the year we will have created two new training opportunities that contain up to date information and training relating to all the changes in playwork, including the consequences of extended periods of lockdown for children and young people,” says group chair Gill James.

Leeds Beckett University offers a BA (Hons) in Childhood Development and Playwork. The University of Gloucestershire’s Playwork Partnerships courses can be delivered by the university or local providers registered as associate trainers.

Education with Montessori course in 2021. The university has also introduced a three-year Montessori degree course which enables graduates to work as Montessori teachers in early years settings.

## CPD

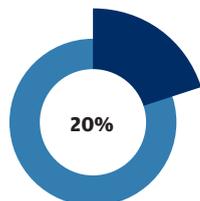
In June 2021 the government announced a £153 million investment in professional development for early years practitioners, including new programmes focusing on key areas such as speech and language. There are no further details yet.

From September 2021, early years settings must follow a revamped Early Years Foundation Stage curriculum. Resources available to members of the Professional Association for Childcare and Early Years (Pacey) include an EYFS masterclass and a range of bite-sized training courses.

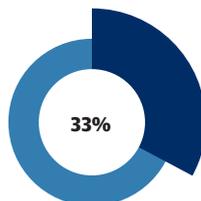
Nasen (National Association for Special Educational Needs) offers free resources and provides training and support in all aspects of special educational needs and disabilities.

## KEY ISSUES FOR EARLY YEARS WORKERS

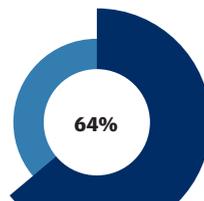
Results from a survey of 470 practitioners in September 2020



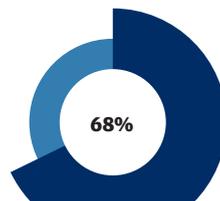
did not undertake CPD during Covid



unlikely to stay in the sector when they leave their current role



have not had a pay rise in the last one to two years or more



said a pay rise would help make their job more rewarding

Source: *A Workforce in Crisis: Saving Our Early Years*, January 2021, Early Years Workforce Commission



## Health

The pandemic has shone a spotlight on the health sector like never before, significantly affecting training, morale and working conditions. While the NHS remains the biggest employer of children's health professionals, many work in multi-agency teams. In the children's sector, roles cover a wide range of areas including nursing, midwifery, health visiting, paediatrics, mental health, substance misuse and sexual health.

Even before Covid, there were concerns about shortages of key healthcare staff, including those that work with the most vulnerable children and young people. A 2020 Royal College of Paediatrics and Child Health study found 10 per cent of neonatal units had gaps in medical staffing in 2019. However, there has been a recent surge of interest in entering health professions with a significant rise in recruitment for entry-level paediatrics positions. More than 97 per cent of posts were filled in England in 2020, up from just under 83 per cent in 2019.

### Nursing

The number of registered nurses, midwives and nursing associates in the UK is at a record high, according to the Nursing and Midwifery Council (NMC), with over 15,000 more registered nurses, midwives and nursing associates in 2021 compared with March 2020. Applications for nursing courses have risen by almost a third – 32 per cent – to reach 60,130, according to UCAS.

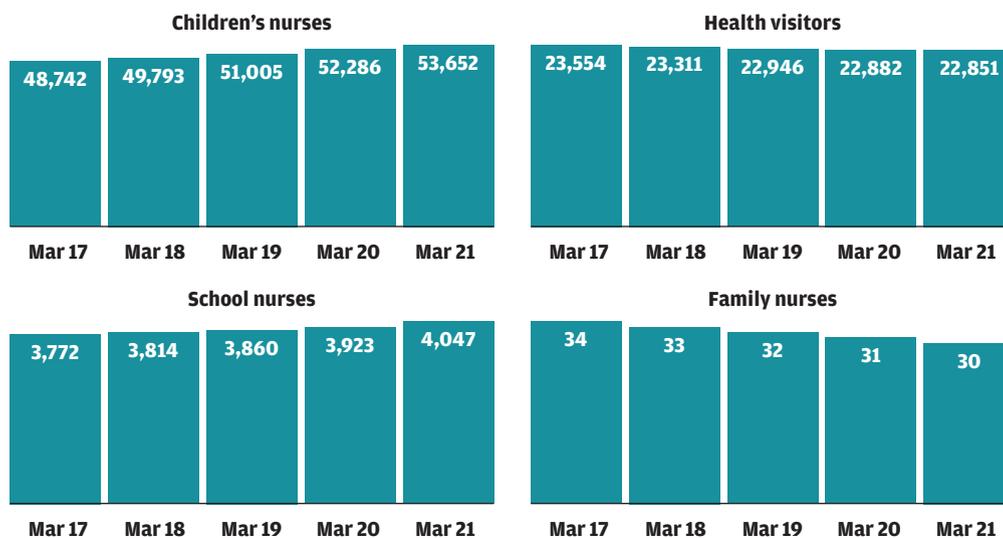
The number of children's nurses continued its steady annual rise to a new total of 53,652, and the number of registered school nurses has also risen from 3,923 in 2020 to 4,047 in 2021. However, the NMC has expressed concerns about the longer-term impact of Covid-19 on a workforce under pressure.

The NMC is currently consulting on new standards which will shape the education and ongoing development of a number of specialist nursing roles including health visitors, community children's nurses and school nurses. Health Education England (HEE) will launch a blended learning degree in midwifery in 2022, delivered by four universities. Each university will provide practical experience close to home, while all other aspects of training will be delivered using technologies including Virtual Reality, Augmented Reality and gaming. HEE launched a similar blended nursing degree in 2020.

The nursing associate role aims to bridge the roles of healthcare assistant and registered nurse. HEE launched an ambassador scheme in December 2020 to raise awareness.

## NURSES WORKING WITH CHILDREN AND FAMILIES

### Number of nurses on the Nursing and Midwifery Council register



Source: The NMC register 1 April 2020 – 31 March 2021, Nursing and Midwifery Council

### Health visitors

During the pandemic many health visitors were redeployed to help the NHS respond to the influx of coronavirus patients. Those who remained faced significantly increased caseloads. In England, the number of full-time equivalent health visitors continues to fall, standing at 6,595 in March 2021 – a 36 per cent drop since 2015, when numbers reached a record high. In its Start for Life review into early years health, published in March 2021, the government said it would work with partners including the NMC and HEE to promote health visiting as a career and ensure skilled health visitors were supported to stay in the profession.

### Mental health

The Royal College of Psychiatrists found that 80,226 more children and young people were referred to mental health services between April and December 2020, up by 28 per cent on 2019. The NHS has sped up the roll out of its mental health support team (MHST) programme and aims to have around 400 mental health support teams covering 3,000 schools in England by 2023. Currently 183 teams are operational and a further 103 are in development.

MHSTs usually include four Education Mental Health Practitioners (EMHPs), who assess and support children and young people with common mental health difficulties, such as mild to moderate anxiety, depression, and behaviour difficulties. The role can include advising on sleep, problem solving and panic attacks, promoting approaches to improve emotional health and advising education staff. EMHPs undertake a funded 12-month

university course combining academic and theory elements, self-study and work-based placements.

A voluntary register for EMHPs, Psychological Wellbeing Practitioners (PWP) and Children's Wellbeing Practitioners (CWPs) was approved in June 2021. A CWP is a specialist role in a child and adolescent mental health services team, delivering low-intensity psychological interventions for mild to moderate mood and anxiety disorders. A PWP is trained to assess and support people with common mental health problems to manage their own recovery and can specialise in perinatal work.

HEE is increasing training places for clinical psychology and child and adolescent psychotherapy by 25 per cent in 2021/22. Child and adolescent psychotherapists are employed by mental health trusts and undertake clinical placements. They must hold a degree, usually in psychology, then enter academic training that culminates with a doctoral level academic qualification alongside a clinical qualification.

Funding is available for around a third of schools and colleges to train a senior member of staff as a Senior Mental Health Lead between September 2021 and March 2022. Training will focus on the knowledge and skills to implement an effective whole school approach to mental health and wellbeing. The government has committed to offer senior mental health lead training to all state schools and colleges by 2025.

Charity YoungMinds offers a range of training courses covering issues such as adolescent mental health, trauma and adversity and mental health in younger years.

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Know some mean people

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Green-ups have all the power

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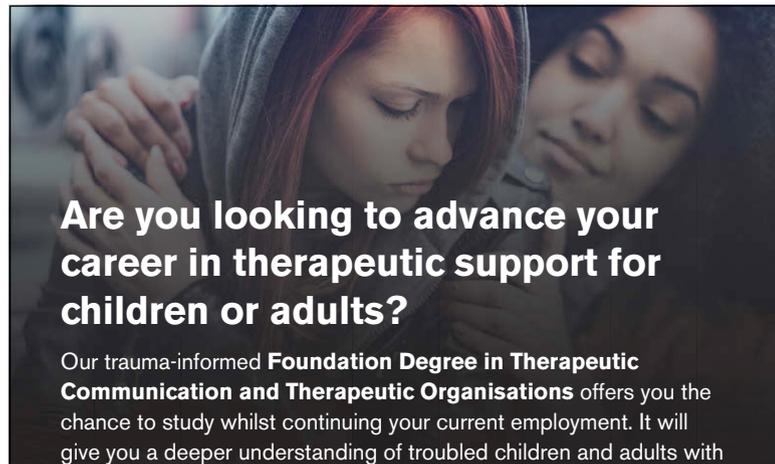


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## Early help

In March 2021, the government announced a revamp of its national Troubled Families programme, now known as Supporting Families. The programme aims to tackle the needs of a whole family, addressing problems such as domestic abuse, mental health problems and debt. The government said funding – £165m a year – and the delivery structure of the programme will remain the same in 2021/22, which will be used as a transition year to co-design and test future improvements to the programme with local partners.

### Workforce

Families are assigned a dedicated keyworker, who works with every member of the family and brings local services together to resolve issues at an early stage. Keyworkers most commonly help with parenting skills, mental health support and with getting children to school. Most keyworkers – 84 per cent – are employed by councils. According to a 2021 evaluation of the programme, 63 per cent of keyworkers have an NVQ 4+ or equivalent while 28 per cent have a NVQ 1-3 or equivalent. Seven in 10 – 71 per cent – have more than five years' experience of working with families with complex needs.

Supporting Families Co-ordinators coordinate the work of the programme in a local area. They are mostly educated to NVQ 4 or degree level, or higher. The majority of Supporting Families Co-ordinators – 97 per cent – are employed by councils.

Specialist Supporting Families Employment Advisers are employed by the Department for Work and Pensions/Jobcentre Plus and seconded into specialist roles, working closely

with others in the early help system to support families on the programme. Around three in 10 – 31 per cent – hold at least a degree or equivalent as their highest qualification while 43 per cent have an A level or equivalent. The most common route into the role is by working as a work coach or employment adviser, a lone parent adviser or an 18- to 24-year-old work coach.

Data analysts in councils provide data analysis to support and underpin the programme's delivery.

Some local authorities have invested in "link workers" to connect different services, such as Jobcentre Plus employment and welfare services and local authority family support. The government says it will continue to fund and champion innovation nationally, exploring the benefit of similar link worker roles. "We have now funded five local areas to test methods for increasing whole family working amongst housing partners," says a spokesperson from the Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government.

### Training

As the programme continues in 2021/22, the national team has seconded Supporting Families employees from local areas to improve joined-up working, help develop the early help system, and enhance data sharing and use of analytics. The national team runs regular webinars on key issues related to programme delivery, and wider family policy and practice matters. The team also delivers regular "surgeries", workshops and focus groups, including a national Digital Showcase for data leads this year.

## Directors

Turnover of directors of children's services (DCSs) in 2020/21 was half that of the previous year, with 12 new permanent appointments, according to the Association of Directors of Children's Services. Fewer local authorities are combining children's and adult services with just 26 "twin hat" directors, the lowest number since 2010.

### Aspiring directors

The Children's Services Leadership Consortium – made up of The Staff College, Institute of Public Care (IPC), Skills for Care and others – created the Upon programme to support talented leaders to become DCSs, funded by a three-year £3m Department for Education grant.

Starting in late September and running until March 2022, Upon will welcome around 50 aspirant directors and feature a mix of virtual and face-to-face learning. It is suited to those with senior leadership experience in the children's sector or related areas and the potential to become a director in three to five years. "There is a strong track record of participants becoming directors and support for those in their first two years of a director's role," says Jo Davidson, principal at The Staff College.

### Meeting challenges

The Staff College is expanding efforts to boost diversity and inclusivity in leadership roles with programmes and support for black and Asian leaders, and programmes to help all leaders develop inclusive leadership skills. It also runs a Women in Leadership programme.

Dealing with Covid-19 and the recovery continues to be a huge leadership challenge. "It's a living testament to the skills leaders need – humility, adaptability, innovation, working across systems, influencing others and championing the resources and ingenuity of communities," says Davidson.

### Leadership training

The IPC delivers leadership and management training specific to children's services and offers bespoke programmes for councils. IPC also delivers a Postgraduate Certificate in Strategic and Operational Leadership for Social Care Wales. The Local Government Association runs the residential Leadership Essentials Children's Services programme, providing an intensive introduction to the role of lead member for children's services. It offers mentoring and coaching plus bespoke support for individual councils and councillors. In May, the association published a guide for new lead members.

## PROGRAMME STAFF POSITIVE ABOUT IMPACT

### Findings from surveys of staff working on the Troubled Families programme

#### Proportion who agree the programme achieves whole family working

Troubled Families Co-ordinators	95%
Keyworkers	84%
Employment advisers	95%

#### Proportion who agree it achieves long-term change

Troubled Families Co-ordinators	89%
Keyworkers	79%
Employment advisers	97%

Source: *Improving Families' Lives: Annual Report of the Troubled Families Programme 2020-2021*, Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government