

## Children's Services

### Guidance on ASYE caseload and case complexity

#### 1. Purpose

Guidance on the types of casework that Social Workers in their Assisted and Supported Year in Employment (ASYE) may undertake is set out in our Guidance on Social Worker and Team Manager Responsibilities. This document gives more detail about the support and development of ASYE Social Workers.

#### 2. Context

The *National evaluation criteria and NEC+ to support the continuous development and the quality of an ASYE programme* produced by Skills for Care<sup>1</sup> states:

B5. NQSWs receive workload relief appropriate to their stage in the programme (the NQSW's workload is the equivalent of up to 90% of what is expected of a confident social worker in the same role in their second/third year, **weighted over the course of the year by such things as case complexity, risk and growing proficiency**).

B11. **There is an emphasis on progressive development** and assessment evidence is provided by different people, in different situations and over the duration of the ASYE programme.

#### 3. Our requirements

Dorset Children's Services ASYE handbook requires that:

- 3.1 [The manager ensures] that the NQSW has a **protected and reduced workload throughout their ASYE. As the NQSW develops their Social Work practice and competency is agreed and evidenced** through the review process **more complex cases can be allocated including Child Protection work** (please refer to management guidance regarding the allocation of CP work to newly qualified Social Workers).
- 3.2 ASYE's will have a reduction in caseload representative of 10% of that of a level 2 social worker and this should equate to them holding between 11 – 14 children maximum.
- 3.3 **In the first 6 months of practice the ASYE will not hold any children in child protection.** They can complete Child and Family Assessments, hold Children in Need and Children in Care.

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<sup>1</sup> [National evaluation criteria \(skillsforcare.org.uk\)](https://www.skillsforcare.org.uk), viewed May 2023

- 3.4 From 6-9 months the ASYE can co-work child protection cases with a level 3 social worker or an Advanced Practitioner. **This means that child protection visits will be undertaken jointly**, and any reports will be signed by the co-worker. The ASYE can also complete Section 7 reports if this work is overseen by their Manager.
- 3.5 From 9 -12 months the ASYE can hold child protection work **as the lead worker** and can be allocated court **as the lead worker**, overseen by a manager. If this is their first court case, they will always have a co-worker or Manager support them writing the Social Work Evidence template and at attending Court Hearings.
- 3.6 Social workers completing their ASYE in practice **may be allocated children who are subject to Supervision Orders under the same requirements as those governing their work with children on a Child Protection plan** (see 3.3 – 3.5 above).
4. **Best practice**
- 4.1 A good Induction and learning experience is essential for the ASYE Social Worker. This can only be achieved if they have space to reflect and embed learning into practice. This in turn requires a gradual increase in their case load in the first 6 months that is informed by their progress in acquiring the desired competencies, and by consultation with the ASYE Social Worker.
- 4.2 Managers and Advanced Practitioners should ensure that Social Workers they supervise have a **protected and reduced workload throughout their ASYE. As the ASYE Social Worker develops their Social Work practice and their competency is agreed and evidenced** through the review process, **more complex cases may be allocated to them.**
- 4.3 ASYE Social Workers will not usually hold a 90% case load until after a successful 6 months review. Any exception to this should be agreed with the ASYE and Team Manager, and form part of the supervision record.
- 4.4 It is appreciated that ASYE social workers will developed at different rates; in particular, those that have had student placements in Dorset may achieve the competencies more quickly. Allocation decisions should be made with the ASYE, mentor and manager having reviewed and agreed their progress to support the maximum learning experience.