

Children's Social Work Registered Workforce Data Report

November 2024



Summary

- There is a consistent flow of leavers across registered social work post holders each month which often results in agency placements whilst recruitment takes place.
- The number of agency social workers is 86 (49% of the workforce).
- Recruitment remains a focus of activity, and the following work is ongoing:
 - Tameside jobs platform with specific Children's Services jobs pages
 - All vacancies promoted via social media with specific children's service branding 'Be the Difference'
 - Attendance at jobs fairs
 - Permanent DCS recruitment underway – interviews 22 November 2024
 - Permanent Children's Head of Service jobs interviews completed with 4 posts appointed to. Two Head of Service posts were not appointed to and will be readvertised.
 - Centralised recruitment processes in progress to promote timely recruitment and selection
 - Ongoing work with agency supplier to improve availability and quality of agency workers
 - Agency conversion programme – The DfE have now published the Agency Rules / Statutory Guidance on the use of agency child and family social workers, which come into effect on 31 October 2024.
 - Working with other authorities to understand their approach to attraction and recruitment and developing further considerations to our current offer, including recognition of agency service to reduce the probation period
 - Detailed 'establishment' and structure workshops underway to ensure that we have in place a clear view on the structure required to support the current numbers of children's and to enable clear targets to be in place regarding workforce numbers.
- Exit interview data continues to be collected and monitored. Intelligence indicates the reasons for leaving are workload capacity and job dissatisfaction.
- Turnover rate for registered social workers is currently 30%. This figure may potentially increase over the year which will result in a higher turnover rate than 2023/24. This will continue to be monitored, and work is ongoing to increase retention rates across all services.
- The Social Work Academy has now been established. At present 28 ASYEs are supported in the Academy.
- The absence rate for registered social workers for Q2 2024/25 (11.26 average days lost) is above that of the organisation for the same period (8.37 average days lost). Work is underway with services with high absence rates to provide support and intervention where needed.

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1.0 Workforce Profile – Children’s Registered Social Worker

The table below details the number of employees (FTE), vacancies and agency workers in posts in Children’s Services that require a registered social worker from November 2023

	Dec. 23	Jan. 24	Feb. 24	Mar. 24	Apr. 24	May. 24	Jun. 24	Jul. 24	Aug. 24	Sept. 24	Oct. 24	Nov. 24
Children’s Social Worker FTE (ex. agency)	98	96	101	99	95	95	93	90	88	85	89	88
Agency Social Workers FTE*	44	41	40	45	48	52	56	59	69	75	78	86
Agency Social Workers as % of all SW’s	31%	30%	29%	31%	34%	35%	38%	40%	44%	47%	47%	49%
Social Worker Vacancies	8	10	10	11	12	16	14	18	9	21	12	11
SW posts covered by agency	33	36	36	32	43	51	61	49	66	58	89	88
Senior Prac./TM vacancies	2	5	3	5	5	5	9	11	6	8	6	5
Senior Prac/TM posts covered by agency	18	16	18	17	15	16	27	22	35	42	45	54
ASYE (% of SWs)	25%	24%	23%	23%	22%	24%	23%	19%	17%	16%	16%	16%
Leavers SW’s	5	3	2	4	3	3	3	2	2	3	1	TBC** *

Figures at 4th November 24

***Leaver data for October will be provided in November’s report to ensure the full month capture of leavers.

There are 88 Social Workers (including ASYEs) in permanent roles across Children’s Services.

The number of roles covered by agency workers is 86, an increase of 8 compared to the previous month which represents 49% of the Social Worker workforce. This figure remains high and needs to be reduced significantly to establish a permanent workforce. The impact of shifting from agency to a stable permanent workforce will be significant; ensuring that children and families receive consistent and quality service provision.

There are 54 agency Senior Practitioner and Team Managers which has increased by a further 9 since last month. Additional capacity has been added into services where needed and agency workers have been engaged where permanent employees have left during recruitment, which is creating a rise in the number of agency workers in these roles.

A rolling advert is currently live on greater.jobs for Social Workers, Senior Practitioners and Team Managers in Duty and Assessment and Cared for Children’s Services. Social media campaigns promote these available jobs.

Focussed activity of permanent recruitment, including agency conversions, to create a stable workforce is a priority. Currently the DCS post and 6 x Head of Service posts are being advertised to recruit permanent post holders. The adverts will close at the end of October 2024 with interviews scheduled for November 2024.

The service will attend a COMPASS jobs fair this month to attract further candidates. Beyond the initial COMPASS job fairs, a programme of events will be scheduled to ensure regular presence in the market to encourage candidates to apply for jobs at Tameside.

2.0 Workforce length of service (as of 4th November 2024) for registered social worker post holders (agency and employees) (excluding Education)

The table below provides a breakdown of the length of service across for registered social worker post holders.

It is expected that the majority of agency workers will have low service - 93% of agency workers have less than 12 months service. Work is ongoing to reduce agency engagement and recruit permanent post holders, including encouraging agency workers to convert to permanent roles.

16% of employees in Children's Services have more than 5 years' service. If we add in employees who have been at Tameside Council for more than 2 years this rises to 47%.

There are 21.5 (FTE) employees with less than 12 months' service. The focus for this group is effective and thorough induction, training and probation to ensure retention beyond 12 months. The refreshed Children's Services Induction and learning and development framework supports this aim.

Months/Years	Agency (FTE)	Employees (FTE)	Grand Total (FTE)
Under 2 months	22.00	4.00	26.00
2 months to < 6 months	43.00	9.50	52.50
6 months to < 12 months	15.00	8.00	23.00
12 months to < 18 months	3.00	20.00	23.00
18 months to < 2 years	2.00	5.50	7.50
2 years < 5 years	1.00	26.10	27.10
5 years < 10 years	0.00	6.89	6.89
10 + years	0.00	8.25	8.25
Grand Total	86.00	88.24	174.24

Figures at 4th November 24

3.0 Registered Social Worker experience (number of years post qualification experience)

The table below shows post qualified experience amongst social workers at all levels within Children's Services (employed and agency workers).

The GM Pledge means that future agency engagements will not be possible where a Social Worker has less than 3 years' post qualifying experience.

71% of the social work qualified workforce have 5 years or more post qualification experience.

Qualified Social Workers with less than 1 year's post qualifying experience are from the ASYE cohort.

Post registration experience	Agency	Employees	Workforce Total
less than 1 year	0	20	20
1 year	1	24	25
2 years	1	10	11
3 – 4 years	14	11	25
5 - 6 years	15	11	26
7 - 9 years	27	18	45
10+ years	70	60	130
Total	127	154	282

Figures at 4th November 24 (Includes Regional Adoption Agency)

N.B. this analysis is based on the SWE Reg. date which does not take into account previous HCPC registration date however, does illustrate the levels of capability and experience in the overall social care service.

4.0 Vacancies and Agency (breakdown by service area) for social worker registered posts

Service Area	Social Worker vacancies (covered by agency)	Senior Practitioner/TM Vacancies (covered by agency)
Early Help	0 (0)	0 (0)
Early Years	0 (0)	0 (0)
Targeted Early Help/ Family Time	0 (0)	0 (0)
MASH and EDT	8 (8)	4 (4)
Children in Need & Child Protection - Duty & Assessment	27 (26)	8 (8)
Children in Need & Child Protection – Safeguarding	20 (18)	24 (23)
Children in Need & Child Protection – Frontline	0 (0)	0 (0)
CP Family Intervention and Edge of Care	0 (0)	1 (1)
PLO Team	0 (0)	3 (3)
Children with Disabilities	3 (2)	1 (0)
Complex Safeguarding and Missing from Home	2 (2)	0 (0)
Adoption Team	2 (1)	0 (0)
Cared for Children, SGO and DCO team	22 (20)	9 (9)
Fostering Team	8 (4)	2 (2)
Residential Care	0 (0)	5 (2)
Leaving Care and Transitions	0 (0)	0 (0)
Youth Justice	0 (0)	1 (1)
Youth Service / You think / SHiFT	0 (0)	0 (0)
IRO & CP	1 (1)	0 (0)
QA, Inspection Readiness and Improvement	0 (0)	0 (0)
Academy	6 (6)	1 (1)
Placements	0 (0)	0 (0)
Commissioning	0 (0)	0 (0)
Total	99 (88)	59 (54)

Figures at 25th October 24

The table above shows a service level breakdown of social worker registered vacancies in Children's Social Care Services (inc. covered by agency).

There are a high number of Social Worker vacancies across all teams within Children's Social Care service (Social Worker, Senior Practitioner and Team Manager roles). Focused recruitment activity is underway to increase the number of permanent post holders.

5.0 Agency worker conversions

There were no conversions for November.

Work is ongoing to promote the conversion of agency workers to permanent roles. After a period of 3 months, it is possible to convert agency workers to permanent roles without incurring agency introduction fee charges (under the Reed agency contract). All managers are expected to encourage good agency workers to apply for opportunities, at all levels. HR are proactively supporting this work.

The introduction of the GM Pledge supports the strategic aim to reduce agency workers and increase permanent appointments. The pledge includes restrictions on engagement of agency workers to reduce the number of individuals choosing agency work over a permanent post.

The DfE have now published the Agency Rules / Statutory Guidance on the use of agency child and family social workers, which come into effect on 31 October 2024. This guidance supports the strategic aim to reduce agency workers by setting parameters on the engagement of agency workers. The GM pledge will be updated to reflect the statutory changes.

Permanent recruitment to the Head of Service posts has successfully appointed 4 permanent employees, inclusive of 1 agency conversion.

6.0 Starters and leavers

6.1 Number of new starters with a Social Work England Registration

We have made 15 appointments since 1 April. The number of qualified social care appointments remain low despite rolling adverts, social media promotion and recruitment events. Further promotion of Children's Services opportunities will take place through the online recruitment platforms and through media campaigns, along with support for managers to expediate the recruitment process where possible to secure candidates.

Options to continue to promote Tameside as an employer of choice are being further developed as part of the recruitment plan. Primary channels include social media platforms to showcase Tameside's Children's Services. This promotion will include videos and testimonials from the Assistant Director and social care professionals. Further work on recruitment and retention initiatives is underway to increase the attraction of the workforce offer for employees in children's social care.

Service	21/22	22/23	23/24	24/25
Children's Social Care	30	47	41	15

Figures at 4th November 24

6.2 Number of leavers with a Social Work England Registration

The number of leavers since 1 April 2024 is 44. This is high based on this point in the year and would result in a high turnover rate at the end of the year, if the trend continues.

Additional retention options are in the early stages of being developed to target this specific workforce i.e. payment of professional registration fees. This work needs to be moved forward at pace to significantly reduce the number of leavers. A task and finish group comprising of HR, finance and Children's service improvement lead(s) has been established to progress this work.

Feedback from leavers also indicates cultural and working practice changes need to be considered to support retention. The development and implementation of the new children's service structure and permanent recruitment to children's senior management posts (including Head of Service posts) will be pivotal in these changes. Support from workforce development colleagues is in place to enable culture change.

The workforce survey will provide an opportunity to understand in detail the workforce feedback following the most recent monitoring visit. As part of the workforce survey outcome, the workforce development team will support the service in the creation of their action plan to directly respond to feedback.

Service	24/25
Children's Social Care	44

Figures at 4th November 2024

6.3 Social Work Registered turnover rate:

The turnover rate for registered social workers is currently 30%. The figure will increase to year end in line with the number of leavers. If the rate of leavers continues turnover for 24/25 will be higher than 23/24 rates. The national turnover rate for Social Workers is 15.9% ([Children's Social Work Workforce data](#)).

Social Worker Registered Turnover (%) at 4 th November 2024	24/25
	30%

6.4 ASYEs (Assessed and Supported Year in Employment)

There are 28 Social Workers in the current ASYE cohort. There have been no leavers from the ASYE programme in the last 3 months.

The below table shows the number of ASYE in programme per month:

	Apr.24	May.24	Jun.24	Jul.24	Aug.24	Sept.24	Oct.24
Number of ASYE Starters	2	1	0	4	1	2	3
Number of ASYE in programme	35	35	28	27	26	26	28
Number of ASYE Leavers	0	1	3	0	0	0	0
Number who have passed	0	0	4	5	1	2	1
ASYE Leaver Reasons	0	Caseload and capacity	Caseload and capacity	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A

Figures at 4th November 24

Embedding the Social Work (SW) Academy will ensure effective support for Social Workers in their first year and beyond.

6.5 Leaver reasons captured from exit interviews:

Leavers sighted the following reasons for leaving:

- Higher salary
- Job dissatisfaction
- Caseload

7.0 Apprenticeships

Ongoing Apprenticeships	Ongoing at 3 rd October 2024
L6 Social Worker Degree	10

Completed Apprenticeships	Jul 23	Sept 23	Mar 24	Apr 24	May 24	Jun 24	Jul 24	Aug 24	Sept 24	Oct 24	Nov 24
L6 Social Worker Degree	0	2	5	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0

There have been no withdrawals from apprenticeships this year to date.

There are currently 10 ongoing SW apprenticeships; these are predicted to be completed in 2025/2026.

8.0 Caseload Data

Indicator (reported from the Children's scorecard August 2024)	Nov-23	Dec-23	Jan-24	Feb-24	Mar-24	Apr-24	Mar-24	Jun-24	Jul-24	Aug-24	Sept-24	Oct-24
Children with 3 or more Social Worker in the last 12 months (%)	33%	33.9%	33%	30%	29.2%	34%	36%	41%	43%	46%	48%	45%

Caseload figures as of 4th November 2024.

Measure (Data from caseloads and open cases report refreshed 01/08/2024)	Average	Min	Max	Target (amalgamated target 18)
Average, max and min caseloads Assessment (excluding ASYE and managers)	17	1	32	18
Average, max, min caseloads Social Work Teams (excl AYSE and managers)	17	1	32	18
Average max and min caseloads Cared for Children (excl ASYE and managers)	15	7	20	20
ASYE caseload	13	6	21	15

9.0 Absence

The table below shows the number of days lost per service for Q2 2024/25 for those in social worker registered posts.

The average days lost across the organisation (including schools) is 7.17 for Q2 2024/25. The figure excluding schools is 8.37 days. Children’s services absences is higher than the organisational average at 11.26 days. Work will be undertaken with services where absence is increasing and is above the organisational average.

The top 3 reasons for absence for Q2 2024/25 across workers in Children Services are:

- Stress / Depression / Anxiety / Other Psychological Illness
- Coughs / Colds / Influenza
- Operative / Post Operative Recovery

The GM Resilience Hub has also been promoted at Children’s management team and a team from Youth Services have accessed this support. Steps in place for Cared for Children’s teams to access this over the next few months.

A range of management training courses were rolled out across Children’s Services in May 2024. This includes a course aimed at supporting managers with effective management of absence. Both long term and short term absence needs to be managed effectively to improve attendance. Further training for managers on attendance is currently being delivered throughout November, December and January.

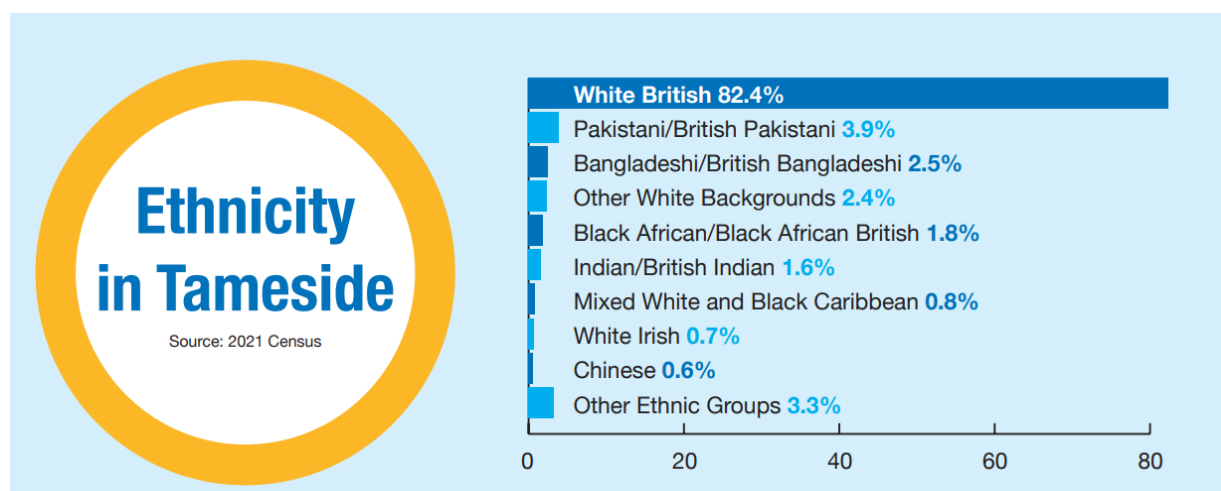
Long term absence accounts for 70% of all absence and short-term absence 30%. Absence related to mental health conditions accounts for circa 60% of all long-term absence.

Absence for SWE registered employees	Average days lost (Q2 2024/25)
Adolescent Services	1.26
Cared for Children Services	6.56
Duty, Assessment & Safeguarding	11.16
Fostering, Residential & Leaving Care	21.20
IRO and Child Protection	9.47
Safeguarding & Quality Assurance	0.00
Social Work Academy	0.00
Total	11.26

10.0 Ethnicity

Service Unit	Asian or Asian British	Black or Black British	Mixed	Other Ethnic Groups	White
Adolescent Services	0%	20%	0%	0%	80%
Cared for Children Services	18%	12%	12%	0%	59%
Duty, Assessment & Safeguarding	7%	8%	3%	3%	80%
Early Help & Family Help	0%	0%	0%	0%	100%
Fostering, Residential & Leaving Care	0%	10%	0%	0%	90%
IRO and Child Protection	5%	10%	0%	0%	85%
Safeguarding & Quality Assurance	0%	0%	0%	0%	100%
Social Work Academy	50%	0%	0%	0%	50%
Adoption	7%	0%	0%	0%	93%

[Tameside Monitoring data 2022/2023](#) to compare against other Directorates.



2021 Census [J005010-Protected-Characteristics-2023.pdf \(tameside.gov.uk\)](#)

11.0 Disability

Service Unit	No	Not Stated	Yes
Adolescent Services	100%	0%	0%
Cared for Children Services	94%	0%	6%
Duty, Assessment & Safeguarding	85%	4%	11%
Early Help & Family Help	100%	0%	0%
Fostering, Residential & Leaving Care	90%	0%	10%
IRO and Child Protection	95%	0%	5%
Safeguarding & Quality Assurance	100%	0%	0%
Social Work Academy	100%	0%	0%
Adoption	93%	7%	0%

12.0 Age profile

Service Unit	18 - 29	30 - 39	40 - 49	50 - 59	60 - 69
Adolescent Services	20%	40%	0%	20%	20%
Cared for Children Services	29%	24%	18%	24%	6%
Duty, Assessment & Safeguarding	32%	31%	23%	14%	0%
Early Help & Family Help	0%	100%	0%	0%	0%
Fostering, Residential & Leaving Care	5%	10%	35%	35%	15%
IRO and Child Protection	0%	10%	45%	30%	15%
Safeguarding & Quality Assurance	0%	100%	0%	0%	0%
Social Work Academy	0%	50%	0%	50%	0%
Adoption	0%	43%	29%	21%	7%

The social care workforce is diverse, and this is a strength in supporting our diverse communities. Engagement sessions continue to take place with our EDI Network groups.