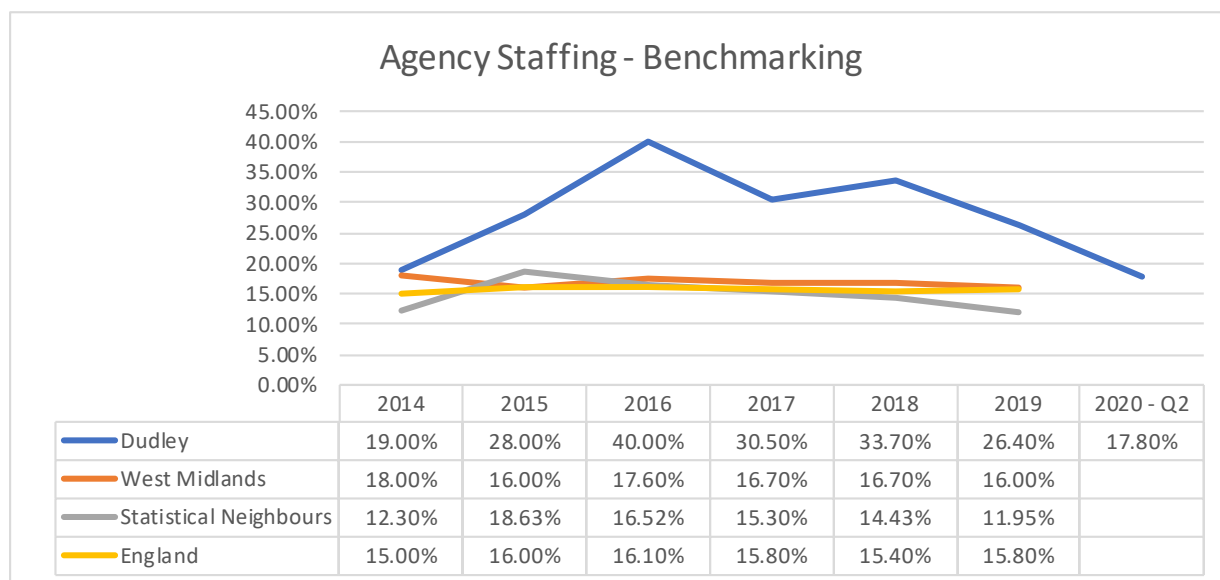


Benchmarking (with local authorities/nearest neighbours)



Statistical neighbours: Wigan, North Lincolnshire, Rotherham, Telford and Wrekin, Doncaster, Nottinghamshire, Lancashire, Bolton, Tameside and Medway

Overview of Service Delivery (include any issues / risks)

- **Workforce strategy**
- **Agency to perm conversion**
- **COVID – recruitment challenges**
- **Career pathway**

To increase the number of Permanent Staff and reduce the number of Agency Workers, the service has introduced the following initiatives:

- There is a career progression offer for social workers to complete Practice Educators awards and progression from Grade 8 to Grade 10 social worker. We are now proposing an additional grade in Care Management for Advanced Social Work practitioners.
- Target existing Agency Workers to encourage them to become Permanent Employees
- Utilise Social Media Platforms for Social Worker Advertisements
- Review the wording of Recruitment Advertisements to attract Applicants
- Procure the services of two Recruitment Agencies to provide permanent applicants for consideration
- Review and enhance the learning offer from the Centre for Professional Practice
- To consider and act on the contents of Exit Interviews to help the retention of staff
- Provide regular quality supervision with the emphasis on reflective practice

- Enhance the current career progression scheme to develop an Advanced Practitioner Career Development Scheme
- To Grow our Own Social Workers by:
 - Utilising the Social Worker Frontline Placement Scheme to provide a specialised route into social work for students who already have a degree.
 - Utilising the ASYE programme for newly Qualified Social Workers
 - Utilising the ASYE programme for newly Qualified Social Workers
 - Utilising the Apprenticeship Levy for existing Council Staff to become Qualified Social Workers

However, it is clear that the COVID pandemic is having a significant impact on recruitment and we have experienced a significant reduction in the number of applications and new starters. It is also important to note that this is both a regional and national issue. Social workers are being enticed into authorities outside of the region through the use of golden handshakes. Additionally, we have also experienced an increase in the number of staff that have left which has resulted in an increase in the number of agency staff. Table below provides comparative data for the period April – November across both 2019 and 2020::

	Starters	Leavers	Net Effect
2019	21	9	+12
2020	9	20	-11

We are utilising the apprenticeship levy for a range of qualifications for non social worker staff to achieve additional accreditation in their post. Early help are currently utilising this to support their staff to achieve Level 5 CMI management awards. There are also 2 early help practitioners who are due to start Apprenticeship levy funded Social Work courses in February 2021 and we have an additional 2 early help practitioners who are also doing their social work degree using the Apprenticeship route supported by the directorate.



Apprenticeships in
Childrens services v3.