



Troubled Families Programme National Evaluation

Research among Troubled Families Co-ordinators

Conducted by Ipsos MORI on behalf of DCLG



Department for
Communities and
Local Government

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Introduction

Background

Methodology

Background

This report presents findings from research among Troubled Families Co-ordinators (TFCs) conducted on behalf of the Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG).

The Troubled Families Programme was established in 2011 and expanded in 2014 to over half a million families. It is designed to help families with severe and persistent problems make significant and sustained progress towards their goals. Key features include promoting multi-agency working and a whole family approach.

This research is one element of the national evaluation of the new programme, alongside a longitudinal quantitative family survey, qualitative case studies and monitoring via data collected as part of the National Impact Study and Family Progress Data.

The evaluation aims to explore the level of service transformation driven by the programme as well as the impact of the family intervention approach on outcomes for families themselves.



Result significantly higher at wave 2, compared to wave 1



Result significantly lower at wave 2, compared to wave 1

Methodology

Data was gathered from Troubled Families Co-ordinators (TFCs) through an online survey. DCLG provided email addresses for TFCs across all 152 local authorities (LAs) who were sent an email with a direct link to the survey. In total, responses were received from 93 TFCs and the overall response rate to the survey was 61%. Fieldwork was conducted between 31 October and 9 December 2016.

Separate reports present findings for similar surveys of Troubled Families Employment Advisors (TFEAs) and Troubled Families keyworkers or practitioners. These staff surveys are designed to run annually over the five years of the evaluation; this is the second in the series. In total, 63% of TFCs who completed this survey report said that they also took part last year.

The questionnaire was updated between waves to reflect changes in the delivery of the programme. However, many questions are consistent allowing for comparison over time. As a guide, when looking at how a result varies, differences should be between ± 5 to 8 percentage points to be sure they represent statistically significant (or 'real') differences and are not due to chance (based on 95% confidence intervals). Where the 2016 result is significantly higher than in 2015 this is highlighted by the use of a blue box, where it is lower it is highlighted by the use of a yellow box (these differences are marked on the 2015 results for consistency). 'N/A' is used to signify that a year-on-year comparison is unavailable due to the survey question not being asked in a comparable format, or at all, in 2015.

Percentages are rounded to the nearest integer. Where percentages do not add up to 100, this may be due to computer rounding or multiple responses.

Management of the Troubled Families Programme

TFC profile

Programme management



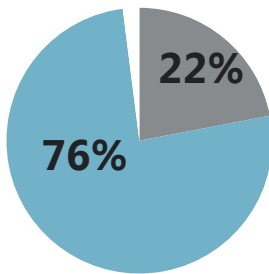
Troubled Families Co-ordinators tend to be . . .

...well qualified

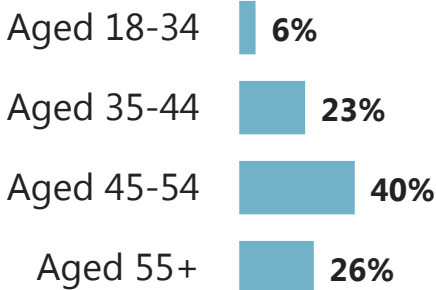


NVQ 4+: 86%

...more commonly female

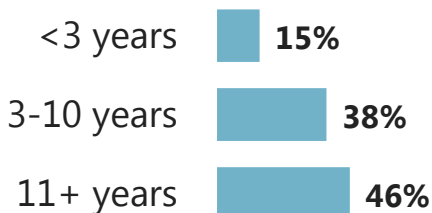


...aged 45+



...experienced

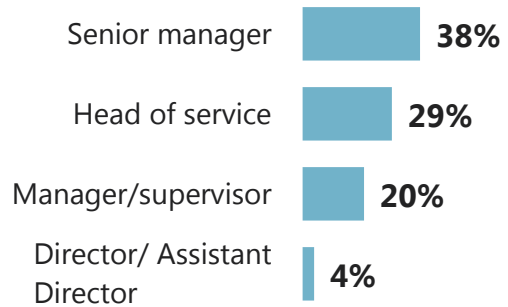
Time in organisation



...employed by a LA

98% are employed by a local authority

...in senior roles



... working in a children, young people & families team, but with responsibilities for other programmes

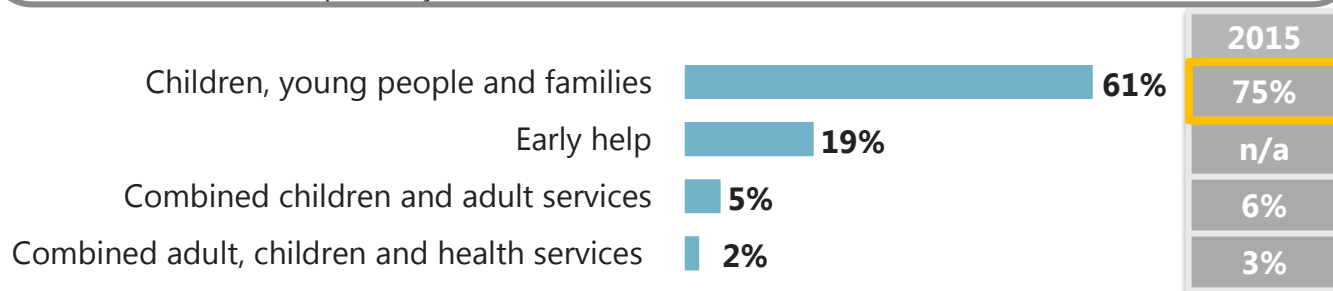
- **75%** represent a children, young people and families team
- **11%** represent a specific troubled families team within the LA
- **6%** are based in an early intervention/help team

73% are responsible for other programmes, projects or service areas in addition to the Troubled Families Programme

Troubled Families Programme typically led by children's services departments and delivered entirely within local authority

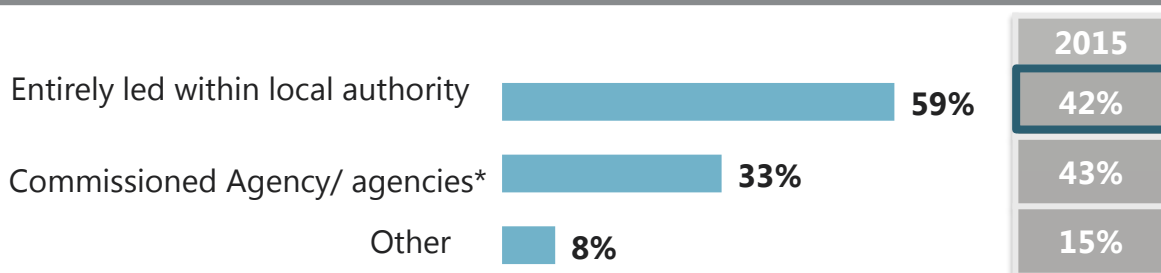
Local Authority Department

Almost all Troubled Families Programmes are led by children's services departments, with the majority based in a children, young people and families department (61%). One in five (19%) TFCs report that Early Help teams lead the delivery of their Troubled Families Programme, with small proportions citing combined children and adult services or combined adult, children and health services (5% and 2% respectively). QTFC1**



Commissioning

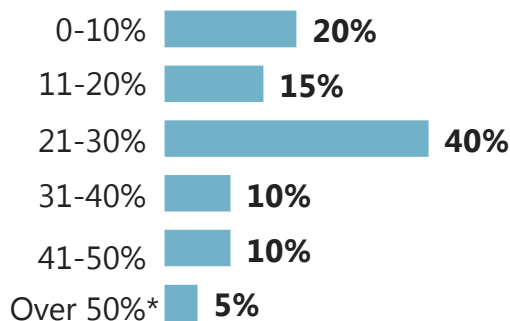
LAs are more likely to deliver the entire Troubled Families Programme themselves, rather than commissioning other agencies to manage elements (59% and 33% respectively). This suggests a slight shift in approach in the past year, with more LAs leading the entire programmes themselves (previously 42%). QTFC2**



* Either multiple agencies throughout the LA, central gov. and the voluntary sector or other partners excl. the voluntary sector.

Partners

Among LAs who commission partners to manage elements of their Troubled Families Programme, typically 30% or less of their local programme is delivered by other agencies. Only one LA commissions other partners to deliver the majority of their Troubled Families Programme. W2Q2**



* Note small base size (n=1)



Base: QTFC1, QTFC2 All TFCs (93)

Base: W2Q2 All TFCs who have commissioned other partners to manage some elements of their programme (20)

Fieldwork dates 31 October – 9 December 2016

Overall views of the Troubled Families Programme

**Effectiveness of the
programme**

Challenges to delivery

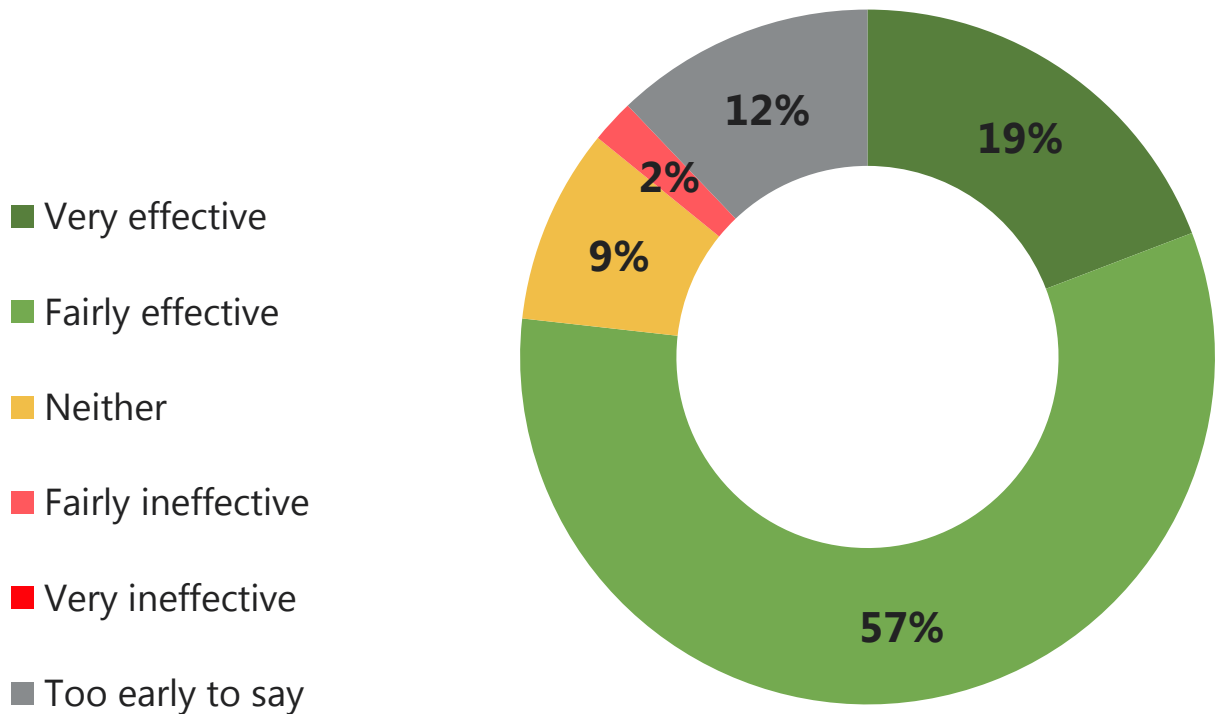


Most TFCs feel that the programme is effective at achieving long-term positive change in families' circumstances

The majority of TFCs (76%) feel that the programme is effective at achieving long-term positive change in families' circumstances. However, this view is not as strongly held, with 57% saying it is **fairly** effective. This is consistent with the previous wave of the survey.

QTFC22**

Achieving long-term positive change in families' circumstances . . .

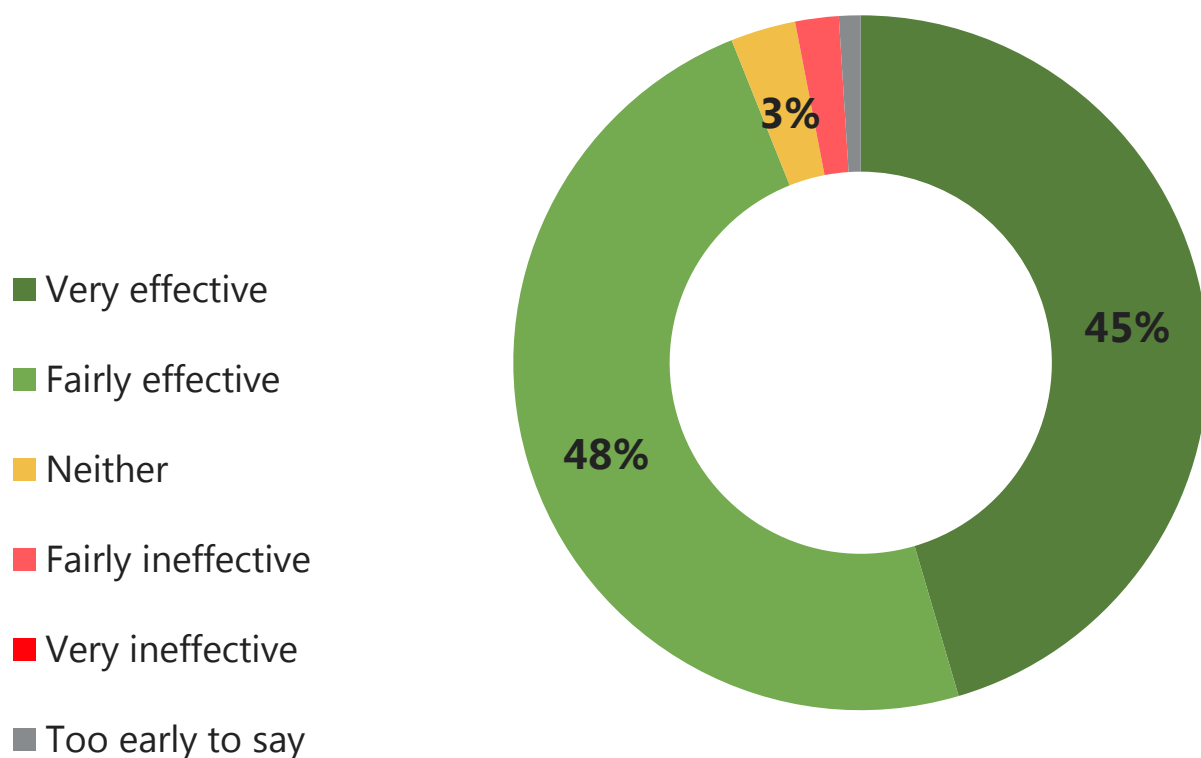


	2016	2015
Effective	76%	79%
Ineffective	2%	3%

TFCs praise the effectiveness of the programme in terms of whole family working

Almost all TFCs (93%) say the delivery of the Troubled Families Programme is effective at achieving whole family working, with 45% saying the programme is **very** effective. This question was asked for the first time in 2016. QTFC22**

Achieving whole family working . . .

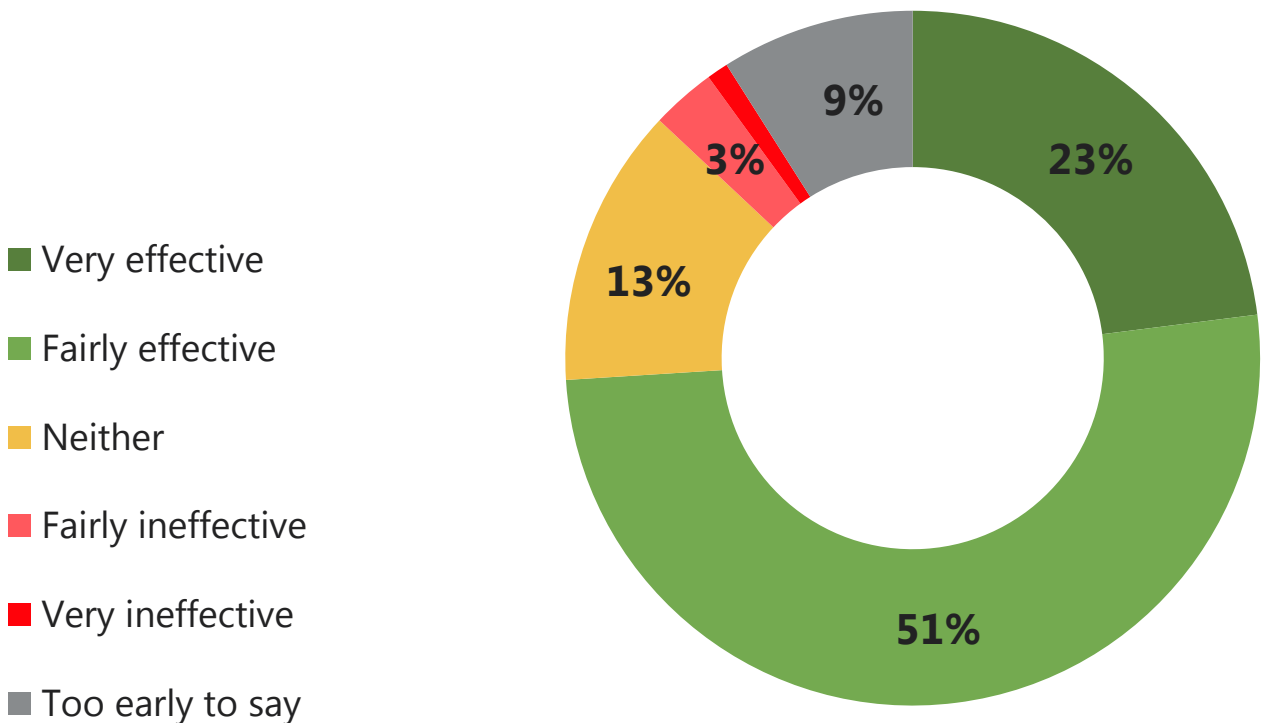


	2016
Effective	93%
Ineffective	2%

The programme is also regarded as effective in achieving long-term change in the wider system

TFCs were also asked to consider whether the Troubled Families Programme in their local authority is effective at achieving long-term positive change in wider system reform. Overall, most TFCs (74%) say that it is effective in this regard. However, this view is not strongly held; half of TFCs (51%) consider the programme to be **fairly** effective at achieving service transformation, with around a quarter (23%) saying it is **very** effective. Q_{TFC22}**

Achieving long-term positive change in wider system reform/ service transformation in your local authority



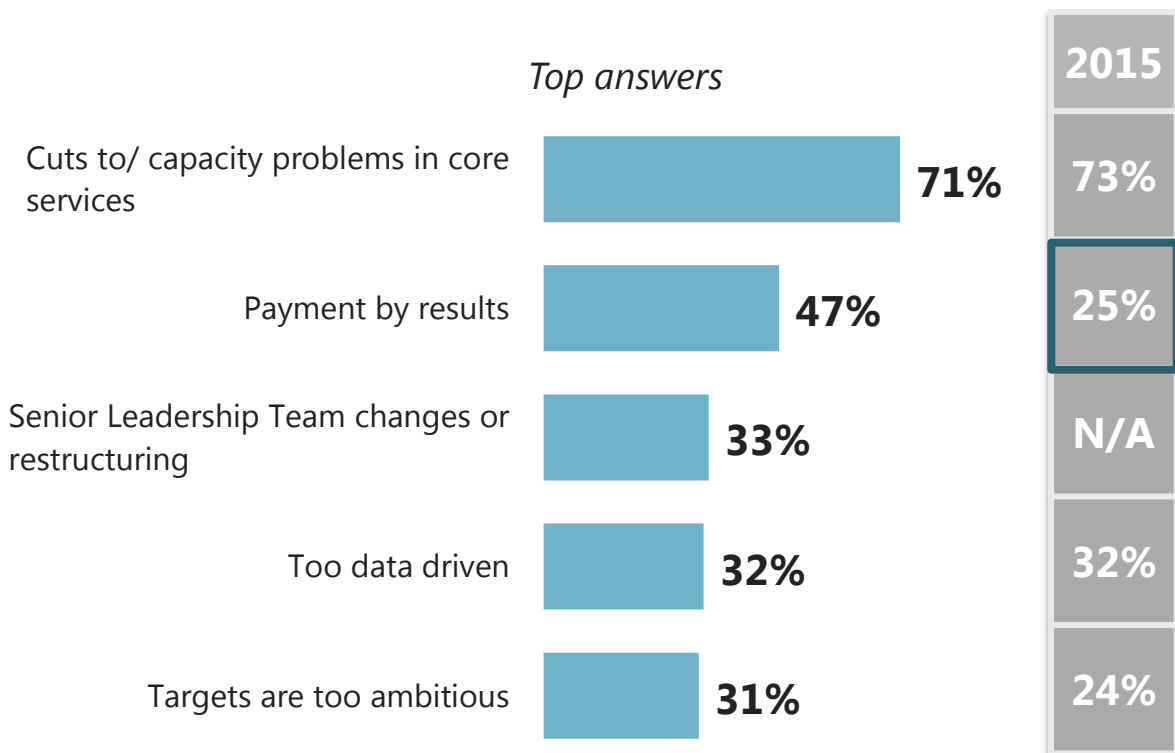
	2016
Effective	74%
Ineffective	4%

The main challenge to the delivery of the programme continues to be cuts to core services

Mirroring findings from the 2015 survey, the main challenges facing delivery of the Troubled Families Programme are cuts and capacity problems in core services (mentioned by 71% of TFCs).

The policy of payment by results has moved up the agenda; mentioned by almost half of all TFCs (47%) as challenging, compared with just 25% in 2015. A third (33%) suggest that the main barrier to the successful delivery of the Troubled Families Programme in their LA is changes or restructuring of their senior management team, as well as the focus on data (32%) and overly ambitious targets (31%). QTFC23**

Challenges to delivery . . .



Workforce and workforce development

Troubled families staff

Current skill levels

Workforce development

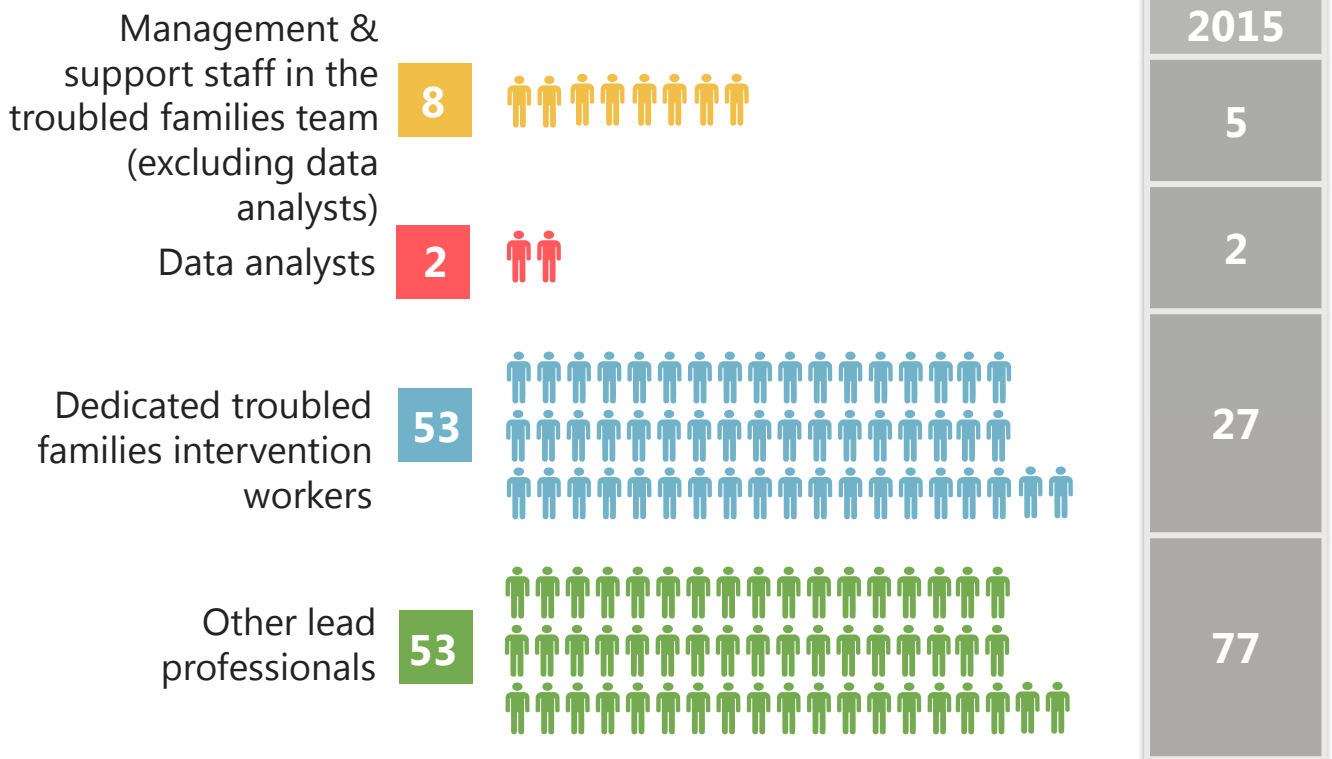


Increase in workforce reported in 2016, especially number of dedicated troubled families intervention workers

TFCs were asked to provide the number of staff involved in the delivery of the Troubled Families Programme in their LA across various roles. All figures are expressed as full-time equivalents.

In line with the shift away from commissioning partner agencies to manage elements of the programme, local authorities point to an increase over the past year in the number of dedicated troubled families intervention workers (but a relative reduction in the number of other lead professionals). QTF4**

Mean number (FTE) of Troubled Families Programme staff per LA



Department for Communities and Local Government

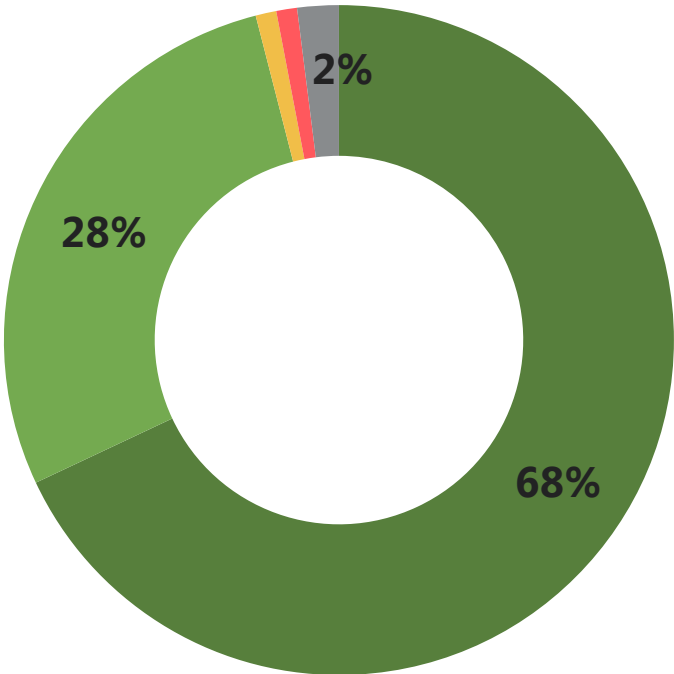
Base: All TFCs (93); Fieldwork dates 31 October – 9 December 2016

TFCs are increasingly positive about the skills of dedicated family intervention workers

Almost all TFCs (96%) agree that dedicated family intervention workers have the skills which allow them to deliver effective services to families. This is a significant increase from 2015, when 11% of TFCs answered 'don't know', compared with 2% this year. QTFC5**

Dedicated family intervention workers have the skills to deliver effective services . . .

- Strongly agree
- Tend to agree
- Neither
- Tend to disagree
- Strongly disagree
- Don't know



	2016	2015
Agree	96%	83%
Disagree	1%	2%



Department for Communities and Local Government

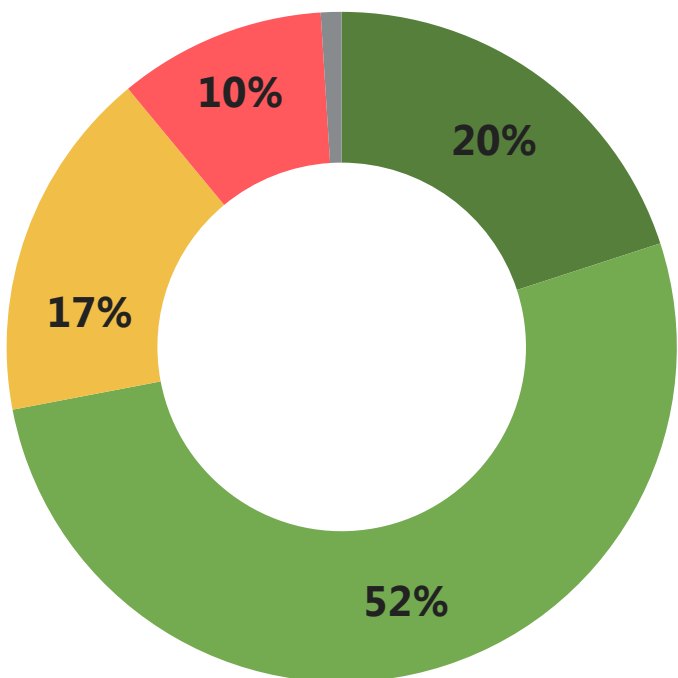
Base: All TFCs (93): Fieldwork dates 31 October – 9 December 2016

TFCs also agree that other professionals delivering family interventions have the skills to deliver effective services

TFCs were also asked about the skills of other professionals delivering family interventions. They are mostly positive that other professionals have the skills to deliver effective services (72% agree) and this view is unchanged from 2015. However, TFCs are less likely to agree that other professionals have the skills to deliver effective services when compared with dedicated family intervention workers (20% **strongly agree** versus 68% for dedicated staff). Q_{TFC5}**

Other professionals delivering family interventions have the skills to deliver effective services . . .

- Strongly agree
- Tend to agree
- Neither
- Tend to disagree
- Strongly disagree
- Don't know



	2016	2015
Agree	72%	70%
Disagree	10%	8%



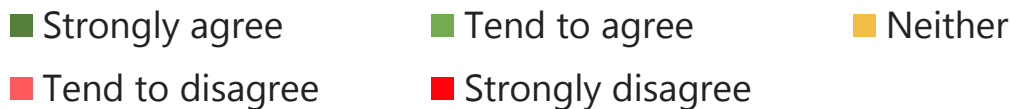
Department for Communities and Local Government

Base: All TFCs (93); Fieldwork dates 31 October – 9 December 2016

TFCs are mostly positive about workforce development

TFCs are largely positive about workforce development – specifically in relation to all frontline staff having clear access to shared performance incentives, objectives and training opportunities (83% agree). Four in five TFCs (81%) also agree that all frontline staff have a clear understanding of the impact of their work.

However, while positive, fewer agree that all local agencies have a shared understanding of whole family working or that the systems allow for shared opportunities and development of the workforce across the statutory community and voluntary sectors. W2Q3TFC*



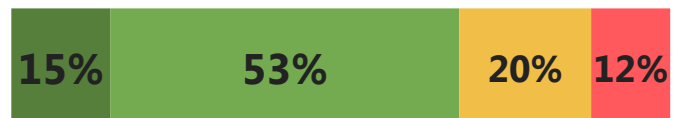
83% agree that all frontline staff have clear access to shared performance incentives, objectives and training opportunities



81% agree that all frontline staff have a clear understanding of the impact of their work



68% agree that all local agencies have a shared understanding of whole family working



61% agree that systems allow for shared opportunities and development of the workforce across the statutory community and voluntary sectors



Department for Communities and Local Government

Base: All TFCs (93); Fieldwork dates 31 October – 9 December 2016

Needs-based commissioning

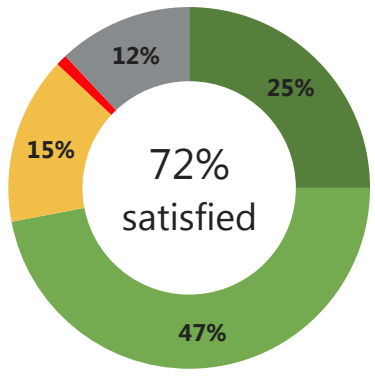
**Attitudes towards
commissioning**

Wider influence of TFP



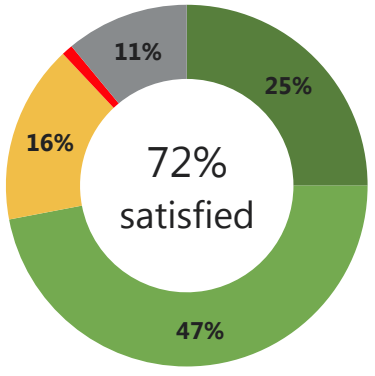
TFCs satisfied that the commissioning process is based on an effective assessment of local needs and best practice

TFCs were asked how satisfied or dissatisfied they are with a range of aspects of the commissioning process funded by the Troubled Families Programme within their local authority. TFC11**



2015
74%

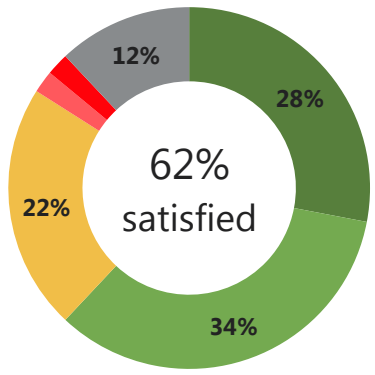
Is based on an effective assessment of local needs



2015
N/A

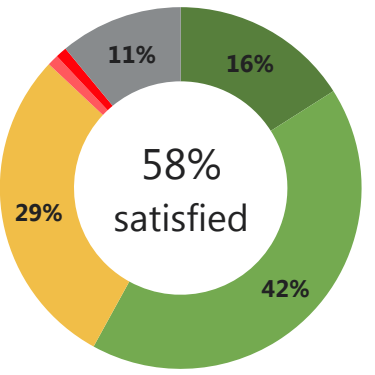
Is based on evidence of what works in practice

The majority of TFCs are satisfied that the commissioning process is based on an effective assessment of local needs and on evidence of what works in practice (both 72%).



2015
69%

Is based on comprehensive and reliable data



2015
64%

Has appropriate input from a range of agencies

While still mostly positive, TFCs are less convinced that the commissioning process is based on comprehensive and reliable data or that it has appropriate input from a range of agencies. Further, there has been a slight decline since 2015.



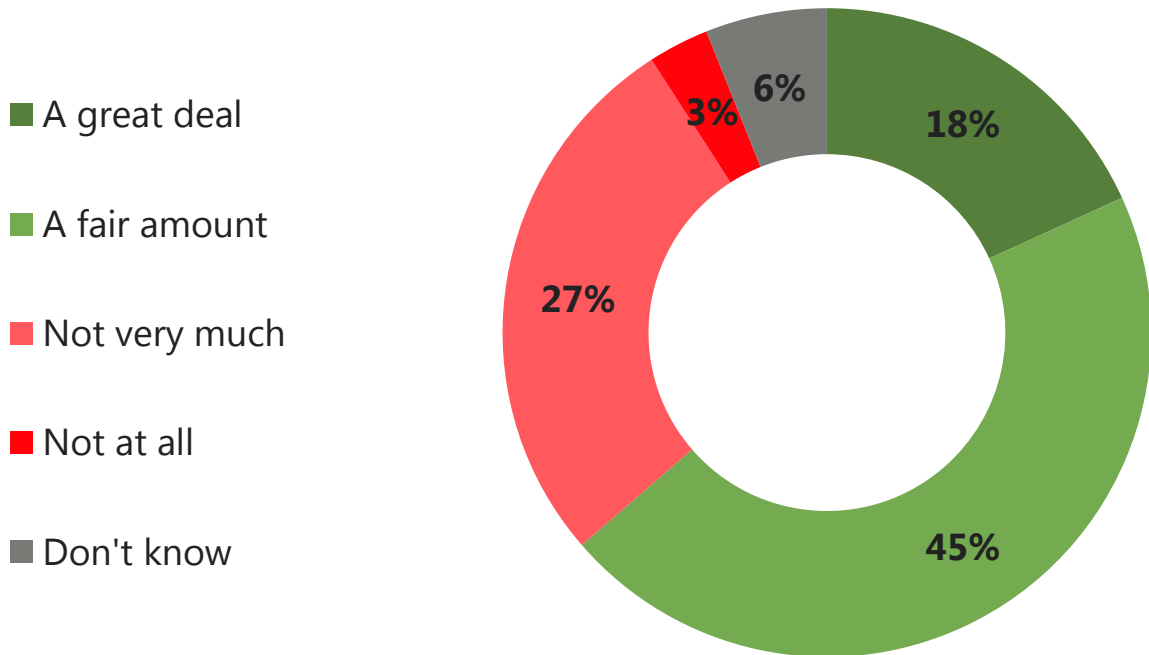
- Very satisfied
- Fairly satisfied
- Neither
- Fairly dissatisfied
- Very dissatisfied
- Don't know/ no opinion

Base: All TFCs (93): Fieldwork dates 31 October – 9 December 2016

Evidence that the Troubled Families Programme influences the commissioning of services beyond Troubled Families

The Troubled Families Programme has influenced LAs wider approach to commissioning services, according to the majority (63%) of TFCs. Three in ten (30%) say that it has not had very much influence or none at all. This is similar to findings in 2015. QTFC13**

The Troubled Families Programme has influenced your LAs approach to the commissioning of services beyond Troubled Families



	2016	2015
A great deal/ fair amount	63%	58%
Not very much/ at all	30%	32%



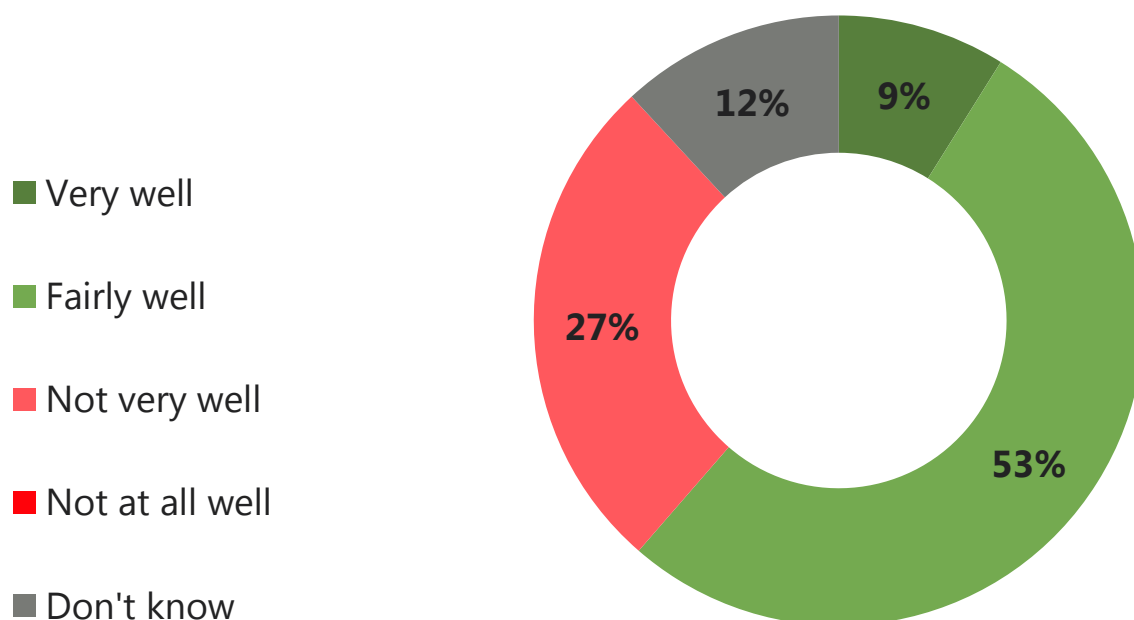
Department for
Communities and
Local Government

Base: All TFCs (93): Fieldwork dates 31 October – 9 December 2016

TFCs are positive about how wider commissioning supports the integrated working approach

Overall, 62% of TFCs consider that wider commissioning is being used either very or fairly well to support the Troubled Families/ integrated working approach. However, a quarter (27%) of TFCs feel that it is not being used very well. W2Q7TFC**

Wider commissioning being used to support the Troubled Families/ integrated working approach



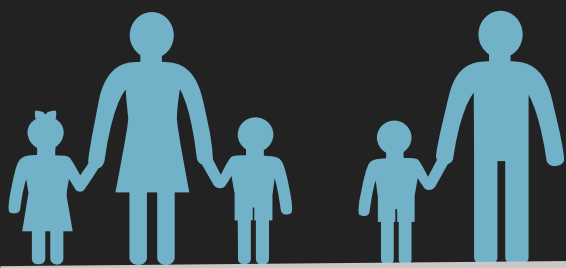
	2016
Very/ fairly well	62%
Not very well	27%

Identifying and supporting families on the programme

Identifying & prioritising

Efficacy of local systems

Employment support

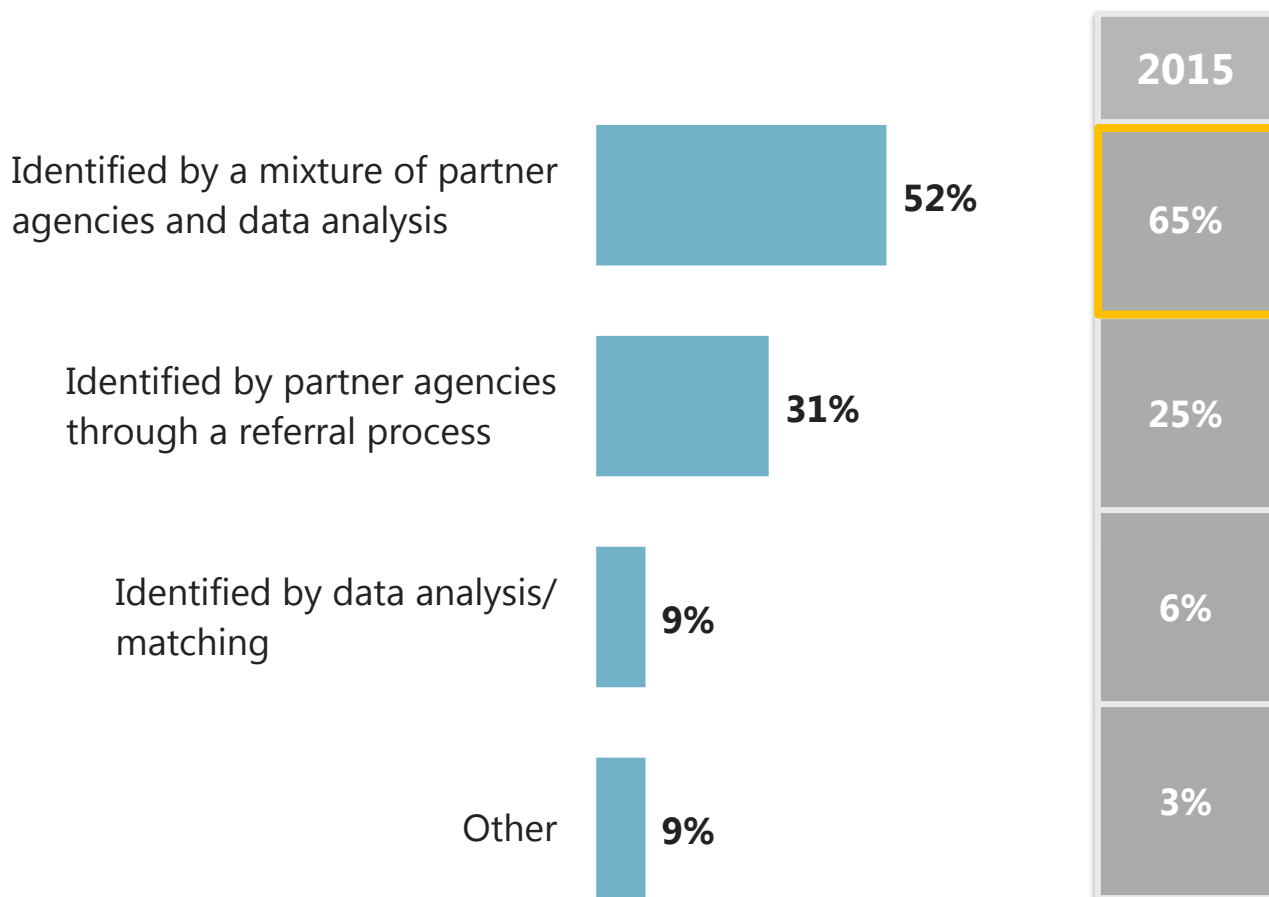


A mixed approach of partner agencies and data analysis continues to be the approach used to *identify* eligible families

Half (52%) of TFCs say their LA identifies eligible families to bring onto the programme by using a mix of partner agencies and data analysis. Three in ten TFCs (31%) say that families are identified by partner agencies through a referral process and nine per cent identify families through data analysis only. This pattern is broadly similar to 2015, but fewer say they use a mix of partners and data analysis.

QTFC14**

Approaches to identifying eligible families . . .



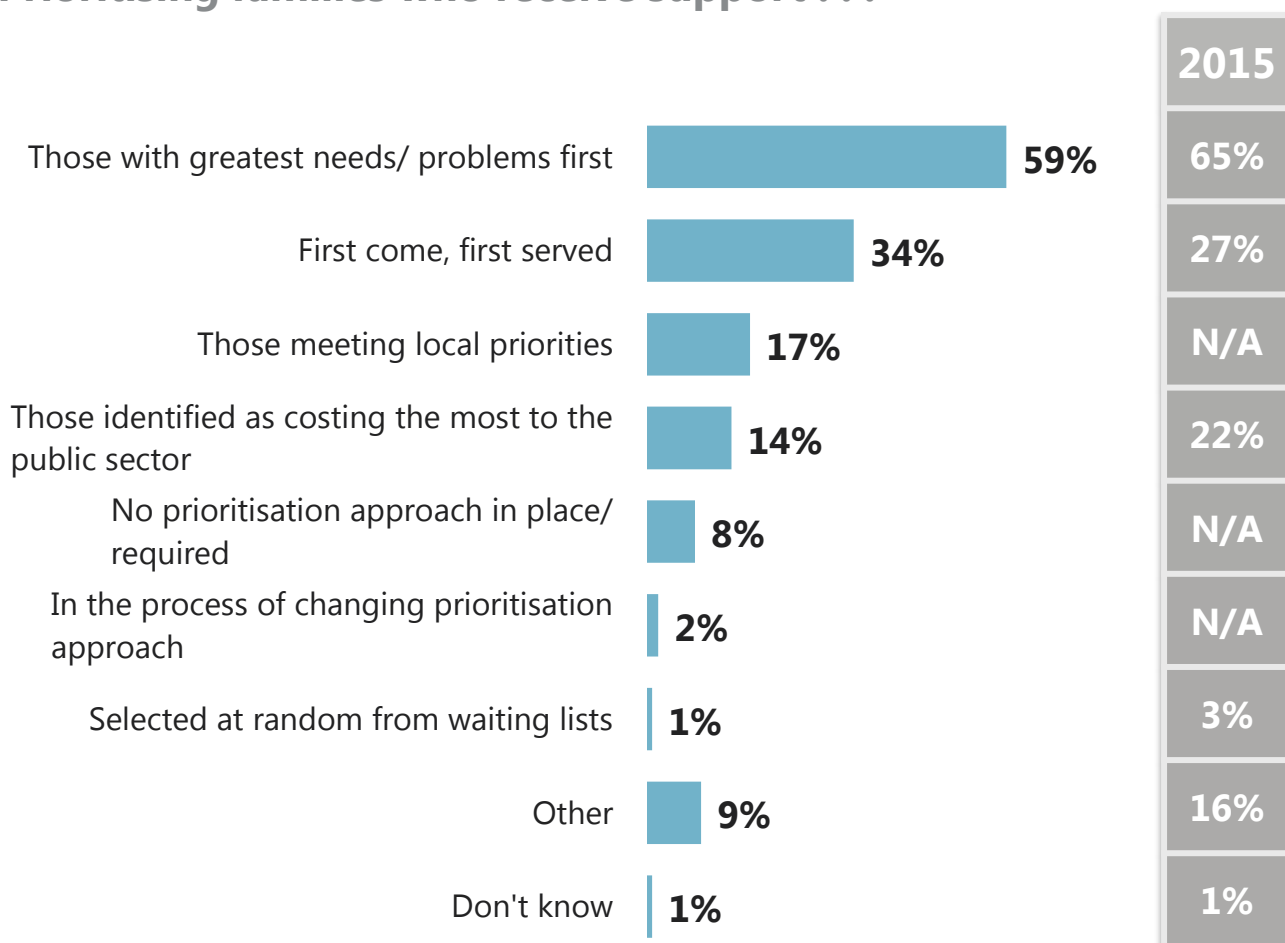
Families with the greatest needs are prioritised to receive support through the programme

The approach most commonly used to prioritise families for support, once they have been identified as eligible for the programme, is on the basis of greatest need or extent of problems (mentioned by 59% of TFCs).

A third (34%) say their LA takes a first come, first served approach, 17% look to those who meet local priorities and 14% identify families who are of greatest cost to the public sector.

This is a broadly similar pattern to that identified in 2015. Q_{TFC15} **

Prioritising families who receive support . . .



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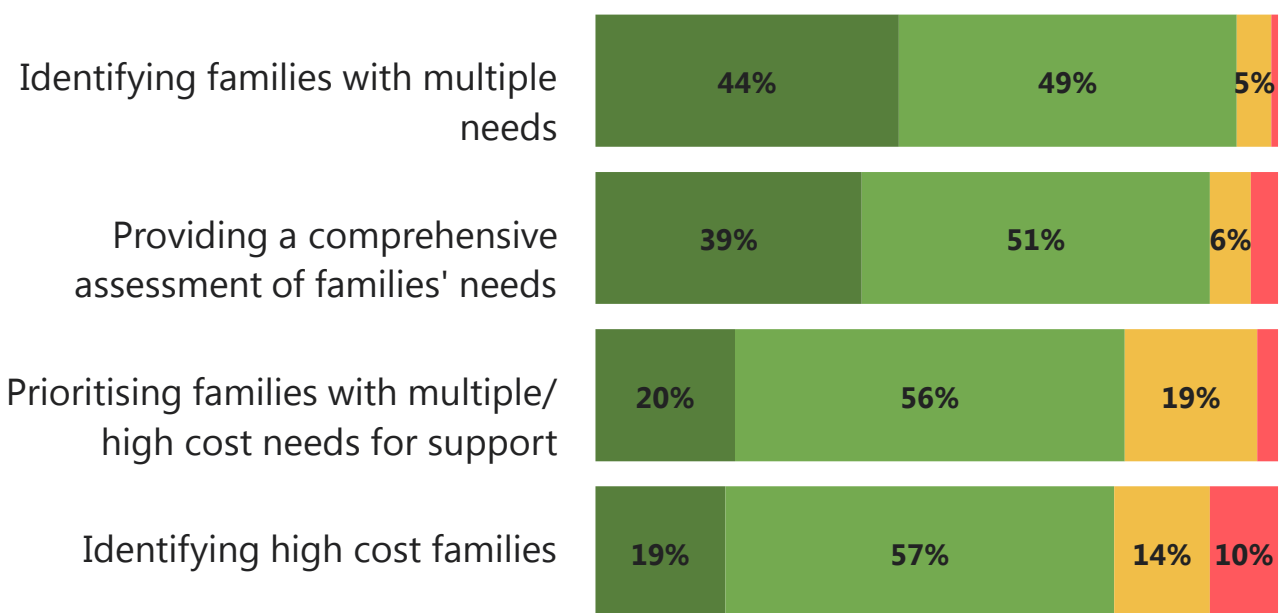
Base: All TFCs (93); Fieldwork dates 31 October – 9 December 2016

Continued praise for local systems with respect to identifying and prioritising families

Almost all TFCs consider the local systems in place for identifying and prioritising families, and providing a comprehensive assessment of their needs, are effective. However, these views are not strongly held with more saying they are **fairly** rather than **very** effective in each case. These views are unchanged from the 2015 survey. QTFC16**

Local systems are effective at. . .

■ Very effective
 ■ Fairly effective
 ■ Neither
 ■ Fairly ineffective
 ■ Very ineffective



Local systems are effective at....	2016	2015
Identifying families with multiple needs	93%	94%
Providing a comprehensive assessment of families' needs	90%	88%
Prioritising families with multiple/ high cost needs for support	76%	75%
Identifying high cost families	76%	70%



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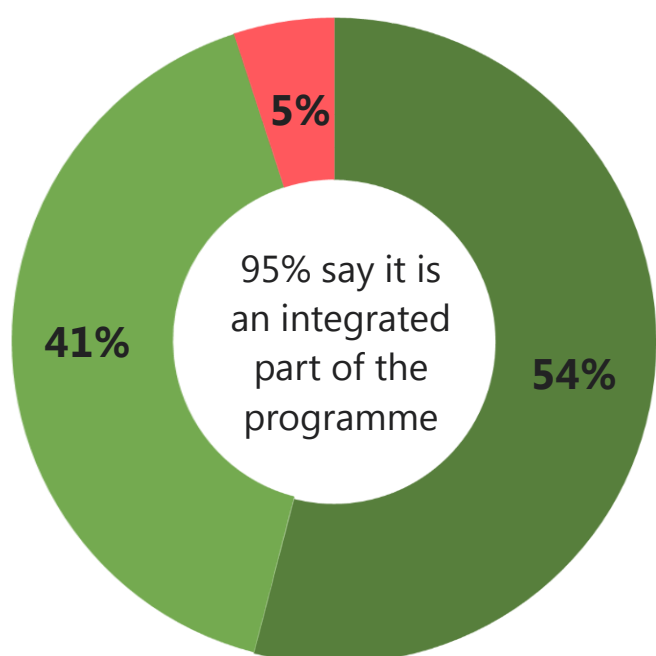
Base: All TFCs (93); Fieldwork dates 31 October – 9 December 2016

Most TFCs say the timing of employment support is 'about right' and feel that it is an integrated part of the programme

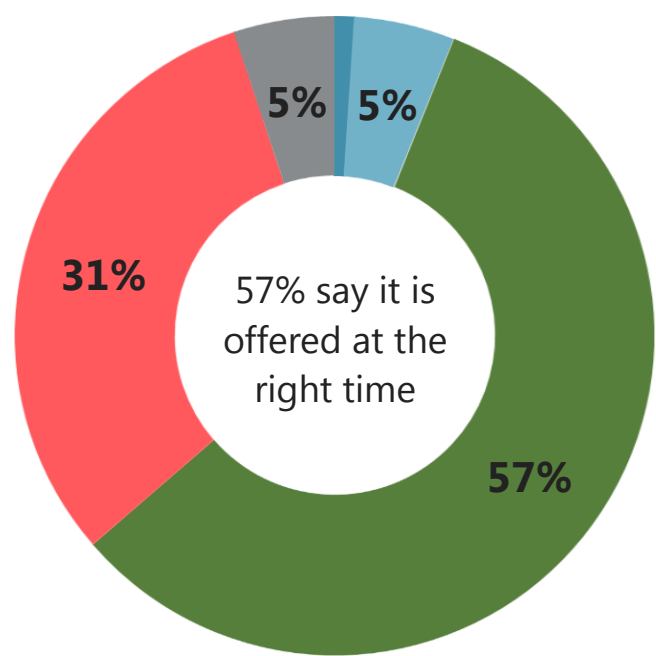
Almost all TFCs (95%) consider employment support to be an integrated part of the Troubled Families Programme, but, as with a number of other measures, this view is not strongly held; 54% say it is integrated **a great deal**, while 41% say **a fair amount**. W2q9tfc**

Further, while the majority of TFCs (57%) say employment support is being offered to families at the right time, a notable minority (31%) say it is offered a little too late. W2Q8TFC**

Employment support is an integrated part of the programme



Timing of employment support



- A great deal
- A fair amount
- Not very much
- Not at all
- Don't know

- Far too early
- A little too early
- At the right time
- A little too late
- Far too late
- Don't know



Base: All TFCs (93); Fieldwork dates 31 October – 9 December 2016

The service transformation maturity model

Leadership and governance

Partnership working

Local services



TFCs highlight the strength of senior leaders and strong governance in their local authorities

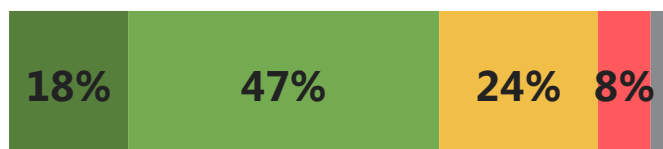
TFCs are mostly positive about senior leaders' ability to ensure there is a focus on services that best meet local families' needs (90% agree, split between those who strongly and tend to agree). The majority (65%) also agree that strong governance arrangements are in place to manage demand and deliver value for money and cost savings, but 24% are unsure. Slightly fewer (58%) feel that strong evidence and analysis of demand are informing the commissioning of family services; again, a significant minority (30%) are unsure. TFCs are most uncertain about whether all agencies in their area are working towards the common purpose of commissioning services designed to deliver whole family outcomes; while on balance more agree than disagree, a third (34%) are unsure. W2Q3TFCa**

- Strongly agree
- Tend to agree
- Neither
- Tend to disagree
- Strongly disagree
- Don't know

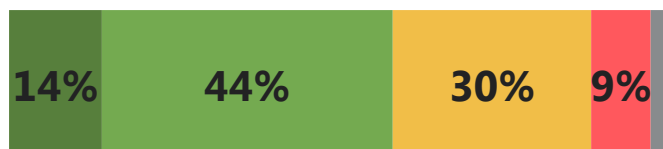
Senior leaders ensure a focus on services that best meet local families' needs



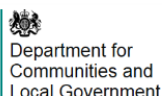
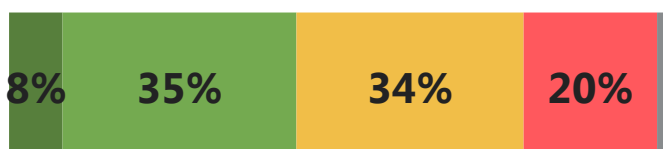
Strong governance arrangements are in place to manage demand and deliver value for money and cost savings



Strong evidence and analysis of demand informs commissioning of services for families



All agencies in the local area have a common purpose, commissioning services designed to deliver whole family outcomes



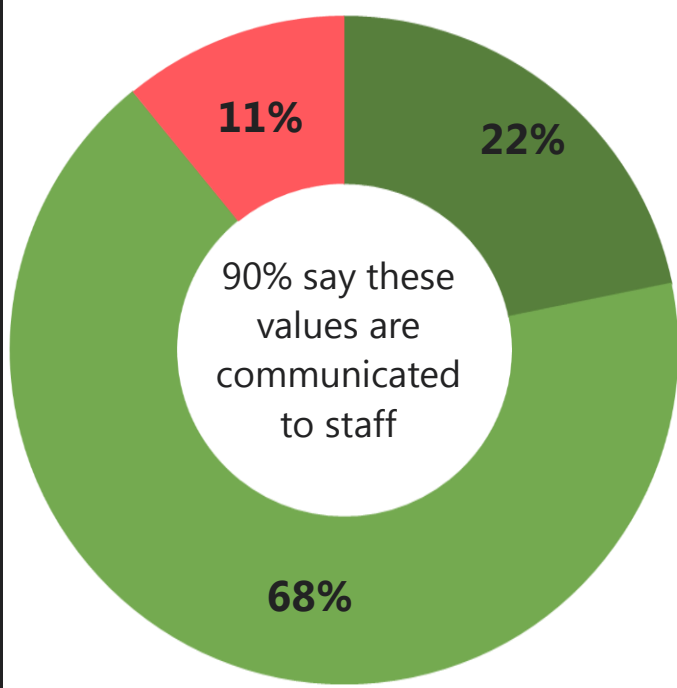
Base: All TFCs (93); Fieldwork dates 31 October – 9 December 2016

TFCs are positive about the way in which their programme involves local agencies

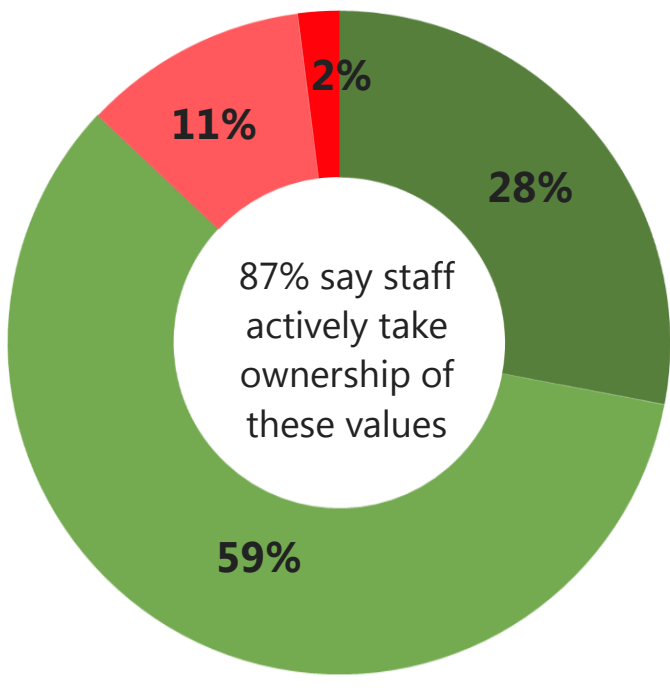
The Troubled Families Programme involves local agencies in a shared commitment to transform the way services work with families with complex needs and whole family working. TFCs were asked to consider how these values are communicated to staff and whether staff take ownership of them.

In both respects TFCs are overwhelmingly positive – 90% say that the values are communicated **very** or **fairly** well to staff and 87% that staff actively take ownership of these values to work across boundaries and deliver support. W2Q4TFC**

The way in which these values are communicated to staff



The extent to which staff actively take ownership of these values



Very well Fairly well Not very well Not at all well Don't know



Base: All TFCs (93); Fieldwork dates 31 October – 9 December 2016

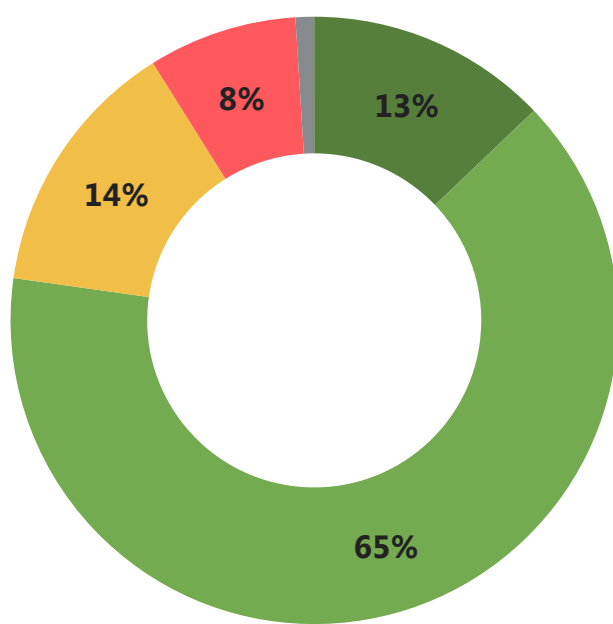
TFCs are positive about how wider commissioning supports integrated whole family working

This year TFCs were asked whether local services are committed to integrated whole family working (i.e. is there a focus on family outcomes in strategic plans for all partners?).

Three quarters of TFCs (78%) agree that local services are committed but, as with other questions, this view is not strongly held; only 13% *strongly* agree. W2Q5TFC**

Local services are committed to integrated whole family working

- Strongly agree
- Tend to agree
- Neither
- Tend to disagree
- Strongly disagree
- Don't know



	2016
Agree	78%
Disagree	8%



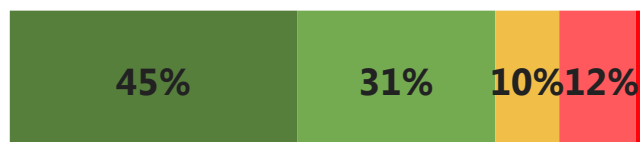
Base: All TFCs (93): Fieldwork dates 31 October – 9 December 2016

TFCs have mixed views on whether the programme allows staff to work together effectively

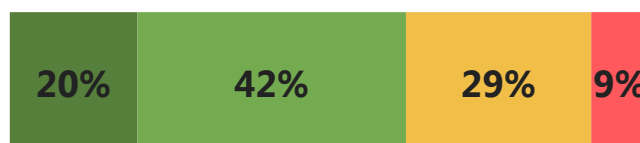
In most LAs (76%) there is a single agreed form and understanding of whole family assessments, which allows staff to work together effectively. However, TFCs are less certain that evidence analysis and data systems are in place allowing staff to work effectively together. While three in five (62%) agree that outcomes evidence is effectively used to drive delivery and improve performance, half (55%) say that shared analysis of evidence is used to inform future service demand, and slightly fewer (46%) think that systems are in place to allow access to data on demand which would encourage joint working practices. W2Q6TFC**

- Strongly agree
- Tend to agree
- Neither
- Tend to disagree
- Strongly disagree
- Don't know

76% say there is a single agreed form and understanding of whole family assessments



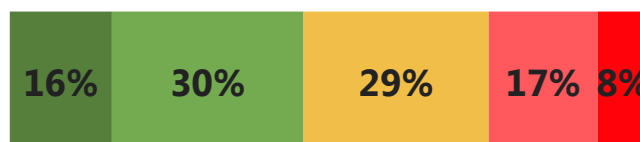
62% say outcomes evidence is effectively used to drive delivery and improve performance



55% say shared analysis of evidence informs future service demand



46% say data systems and sharing allow access to data on demand



Base: All TFCs (93); Fieldwork dates 31 October – 9 December 2016

The national programme

**Attitudes towards the
national troubled families
team**

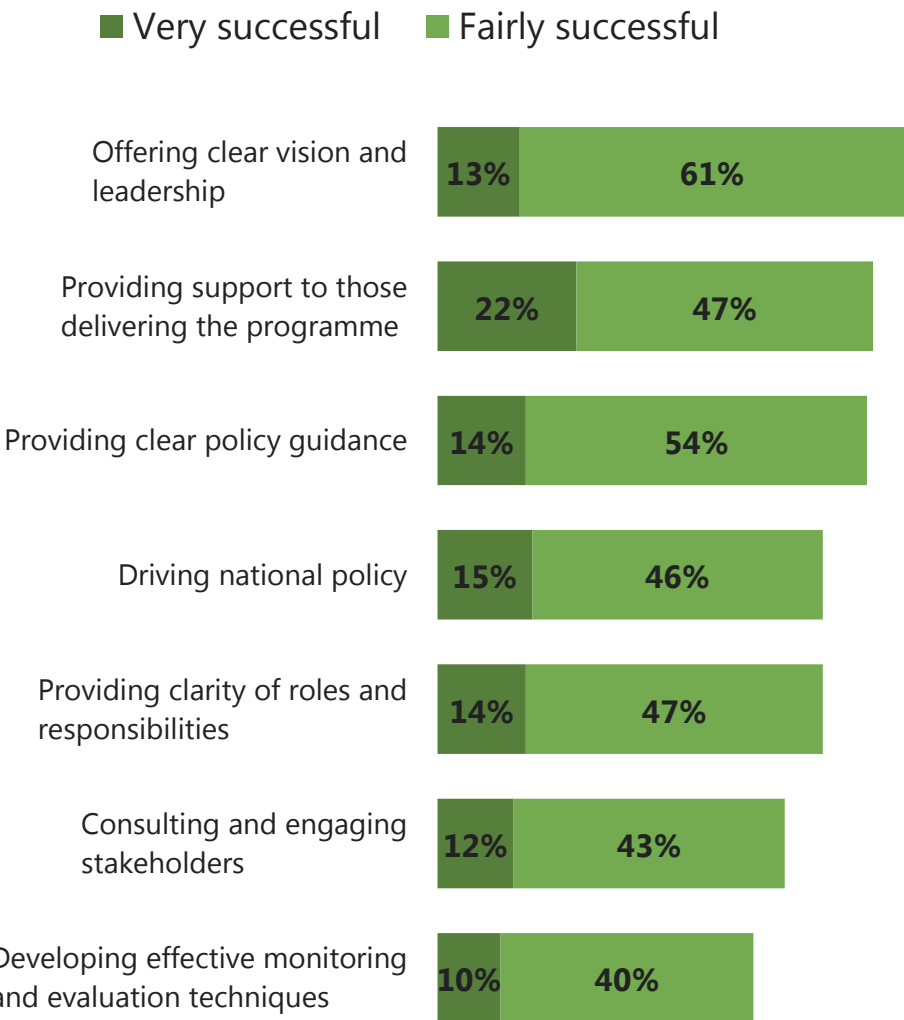
Ability to achieve progress



The national troubled families team is highly regarded in terms of offering clear vision, leadership, support and policy guidance

Overall, the national troubled families team is highly regarded in terms of offering clear vision, leadership, support and policy guidance. However, the proportion of TFCs who feel that it is successful in terms of offering clear vision/ leadership and clarity of roles and responsibilities has decreased since 2015.

As highlighted in the previous study, the national team is regarded as relatively less successful in terms of consulting and engaging stakeholders and developing effective monitoring and evaluation techniques. QTFC19**



Successful	
2016	2015
74%	86%
69%	72%
68%	65%
61%	N/A
61%	74%
55%	62%
50%	48%



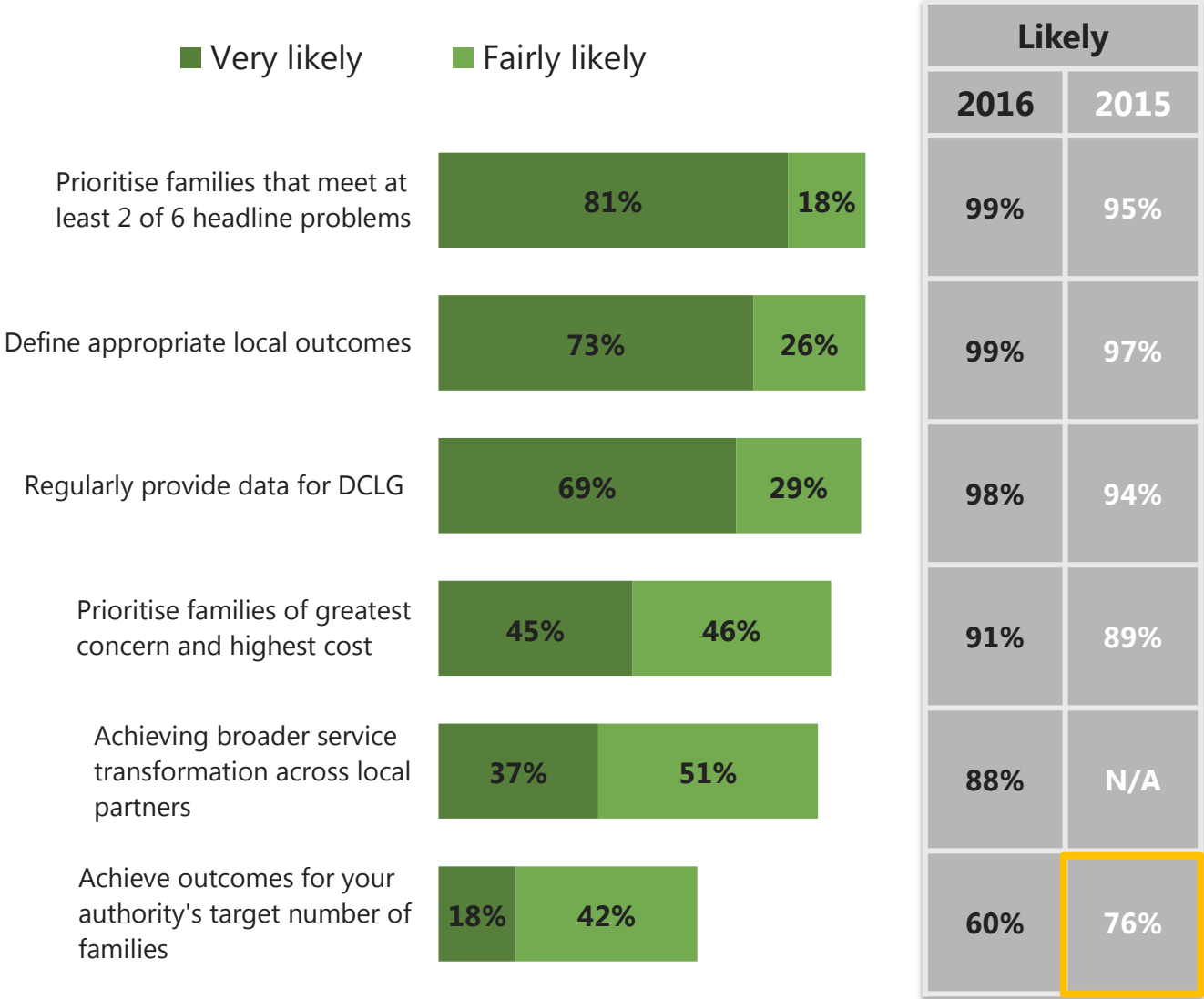
Department for Communities and Local Government

Base: All TFCs (93); Fieldwork dates 31 October – 9 December 2016

Confidence is high around local authorities' ability to achieve progress areas for the programme

Confidence is high around local authorities ability to achieve progress areas for the programme. Almost all TFCs say this is achievable in terms of prioritising families (those meeting 2 of the 6 headline problems as well as those of greatest concern/cost), defining appropriate local outcomes and providing data for DCLG.

The vast majority of TFCs also think that it is likely that their authority will achieve broader service transformation with local partners, but fewer say they will be able to achieve outcomes for the target number of families; which has fallen significantly since 2015. QTFC20**



Department for Communities and Local Government

Base: All TFCs (93); Fieldwork dates 31 October – 9 December 2016

Conclusions

Management of the Troubled Families Programme

This is the **second annual survey of Troubled Families Coordinators (TFCs)** involved in delivering the Troubled Families Programme. The **results are mostly consistent** with those found previously – both in terms of the TFC role and their views of the programme.

Most TFCs represent a Children, young people and families team (75%) and 11% a specific Troubled Families team within their local authority. This is a change from those interviewed in 2015, where the split was more even in terms of both.

The majority of Troubled Families Co-ordinators occupy senior positions in their authority, with three quarters (73%) having responsibility for other programmes, projects or services in addition to the Troubled Families Programme. This may help to facilitate engagement with partner agencies and multi-agency working across local teams.

More of the responding LAs are delivering the programme themselves, rather than commissioning other agencies to manage elements (59% compared with 33% respectively); in 2015 this split was more even, and this may represent a change in the way the programme is being delivered.

Families continue to be **mostly identified via a mixture of partner agencies and data analysis**, but this is slightly less likely to be the case than in 2015 (52% compared with 65%). Those with the **greatest need and problems are most likely to be prioritised** for support (59%).

Implementation of the Troubled Families Programme

Troubled Families Co-ordinators continue to be supportive of the Troubled Families Programme and its key elements: 93% say it is effective at achieving whole family working, 76% in achieving long-term positive change in families' circumstances, and 74% believe it is implementing wider system reform/service transformation.

TFCs are generally **satisfied with the commissioning process** in their LA. Most are satisfied that it is based on an assessment of local needs and what works in practice (both 72%). However, they are slightly less satisfied that it is based on comprehensive and reliable data and that there is appropriate input from a range of agencies (62% and 58% satisfied).

Local authorities appear to be making progress with transforming the way services work with families with complex needs, but results suggest that this model needs further development. For example, while 44% *strongly* agree that senior leaders are ensuring a focus on services that best meet families' needs, fewer *strongly* agree that; strong governance arrangements are in place to manage demand and deliver value for money (18%); evidence and analysis of demand informs commissioning of services (14%); or that local agencies have a common purpose (8%).

Having said that most TFCs do feel that **service transformation values are communicated well and that staff are taking ownership.** In addition, there is evidence that the **programme is effecting wider system change,** for example 63% say it has influenced their LA's approach to commissioning services more widely.

TFCs are confident in achieving most of the programme's goals, although they are less positive about achieving progress with their target number of families; a significant decline from 2015 (60% likely compared with 76% previously).



Areas for development

The Troubled Families Programme aims to bring about change in the delivery and management of local services for families. TFCs continue to be positive about these changes, but as with the findings from 2015, the research does identify some persistent challenges.

Embedding service transformation: there is evidence of progress in terms of local agencies shared commitment to transforming the way services work with families with complex needs and whole family working. However, in many cases these views are not strongly held and while senior leaders' commitment is praised, there appears more to do to encourage partner agencies to share these values as well as a greater need for better data systems to support this.

Evidence of positive impact on commissioning of services: TFCs are positive about local commissioning practices, feeling they are based on local need and what works in practice. However, there has been a decline in those who feel this process is based on reliable data or has input from a range of agencies, suggesting a need for more work in this area.

Addressing skills gaps: this year there appear to be relatively fewer non specialists involved in delivering the programme but perception of a skills gap persists. There has been a significant improvement in the proportion agreeing that dedicated workers have the right skills to work with families but the skills of other professionals continue to need improvement.

Improving methods for identifying high cost families: TFCs continue to praise systems for identifying families but they also remain relatively less likely to say that local systems are effective in identifying high cost problems than achieving other aims. In addition, only 14% say that cost is the basis for prioritisation of families in their local authority.

Cuts to core services: the main challenge to delivery of the programme is identified as cuts to/capacity problems in core services; this is consistent with findings from 2015.

For more information

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