

Troubled Families Programme

National Evaluation

Research among Troubled Families Employment Advisers



**Conducted by Ipsos MORI on behalf of DCLG and DWP
May 2017**



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Introduction

Background

Methodology

Background

This report presents findings from research among Troubled Families Employment Advisers (TFEAs) conducted on behalf of the Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG) and Department for Work and Pensions (DWP).

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 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.

Methodology



Result significantly higher at wave 2, compared to wave 1



Result significantly lower at wave 2, compared to wave 1

Data was gathered from Troubled Families Employment Advisers (TFEAs) through an online survey. DWP provided email addresses for all 328 TFEAs, who were sent an email with a direct link to the survey. In total, responses were received from 202 TFEAs and the overall response rate to the survey was 62%. Fieldwork was conducted between 31 October and 9 December 2016.

Separate reports present findings for similar surveys of Troubled Families Co-ordinators (TFCs) 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. Two in five (42%) TFEAs who completed the 2016 survey report that they also completed it in 2015.

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.

Troubled Families Employment Advisers' role

TFEA profile

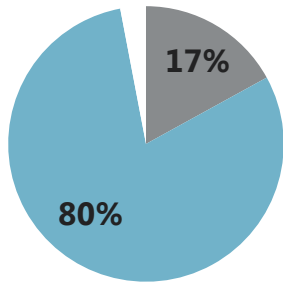
TFEA role

**Working with families
on the programme**

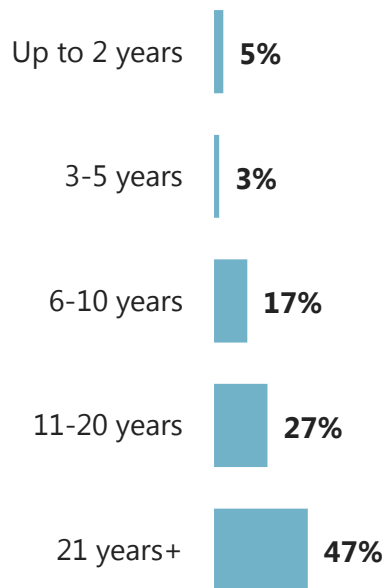


Troubled Families Employment Advisers tend to be...

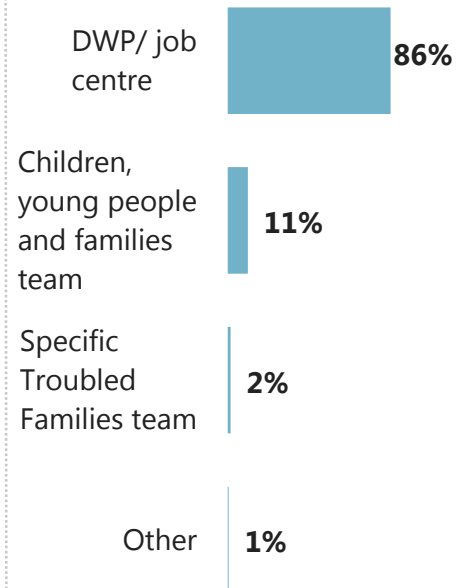
...more commonly female



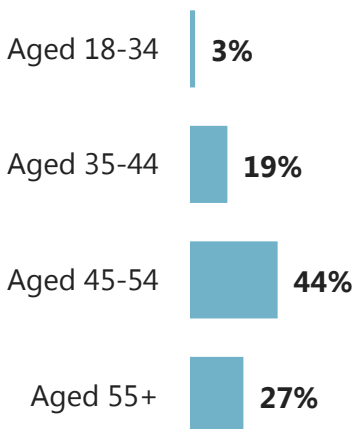
...experienced employee within DWP/ Jobcentre



...currently working in DWP/ Jobcentre



...aged 45+



...well qualified

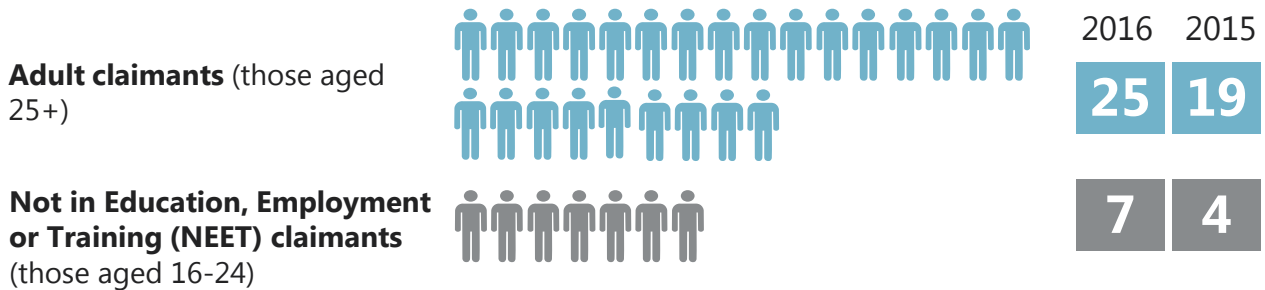


NVQ1-3: 64%
NVQ4+: 29%
Other: 3%
Prefer not to say: 4%

94% were employed in a specialist position prior to current TFEA role, most commonly as a work coach/ employment advisor (76%), or disability employment advisor (19%).

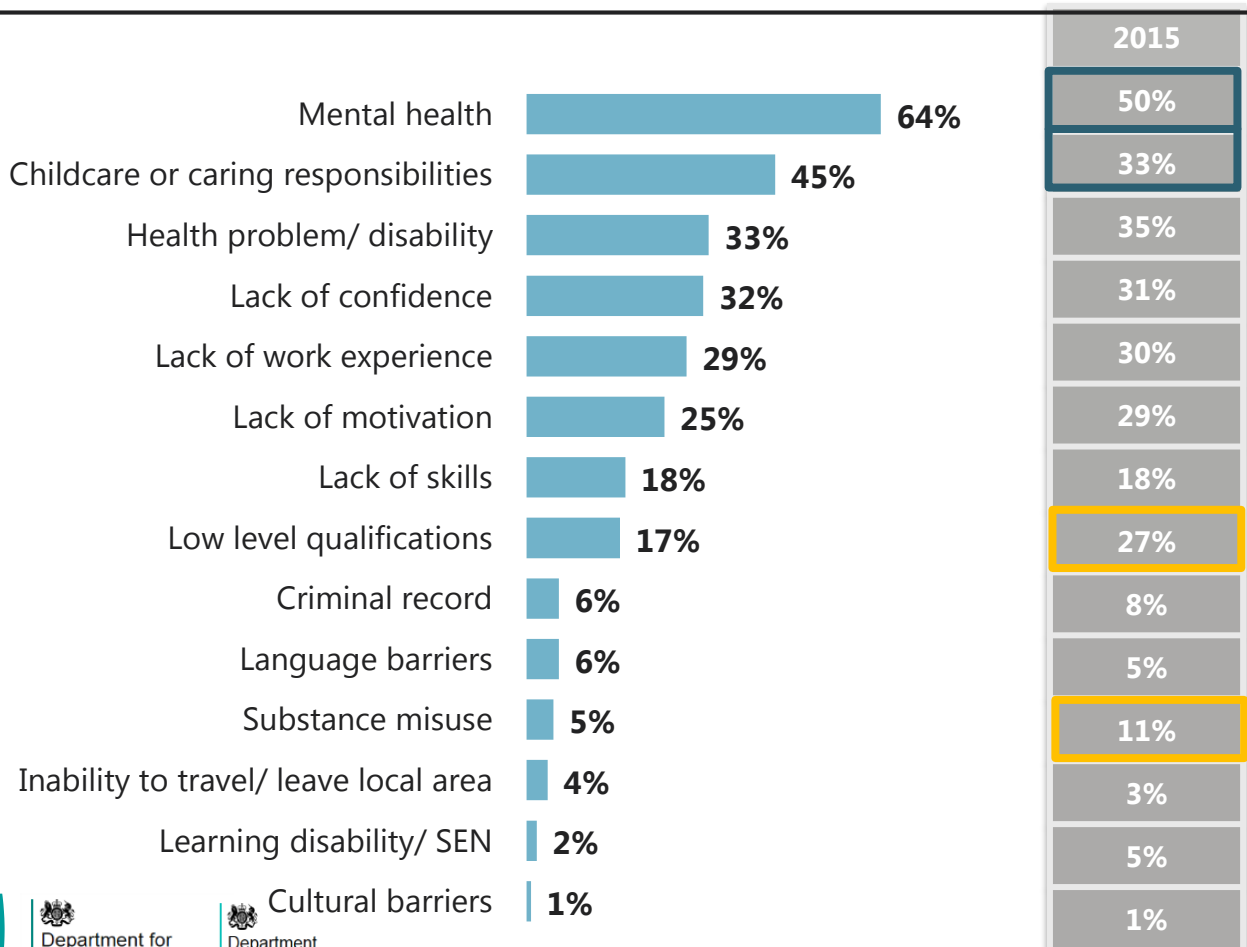
Mental health is the most common barrier to work or training faced by claimants

On average TFEAs are actively working with around 25 adult claimants and 7 NEET claimants; considerably more than in 2015.



Barriers to work or training most commonly faced by Troubled Families Programme claimants

TFEAs have reported a number of barriers most commonly experienced by claimants. Mental health issues as well as other health problems or disabilities are the most common barriers experienced by Troubled Families Programme claimants (64% and 33% respectively). Childcare and other caring responsibilities are also an issue (45%). While these barriers are broadly similar to those identified in 2015, more TFEAs single out mental health and caring responsibilities in 2016. Fewer mention qualification levels and substance misuse. QTFEA5**

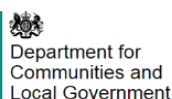
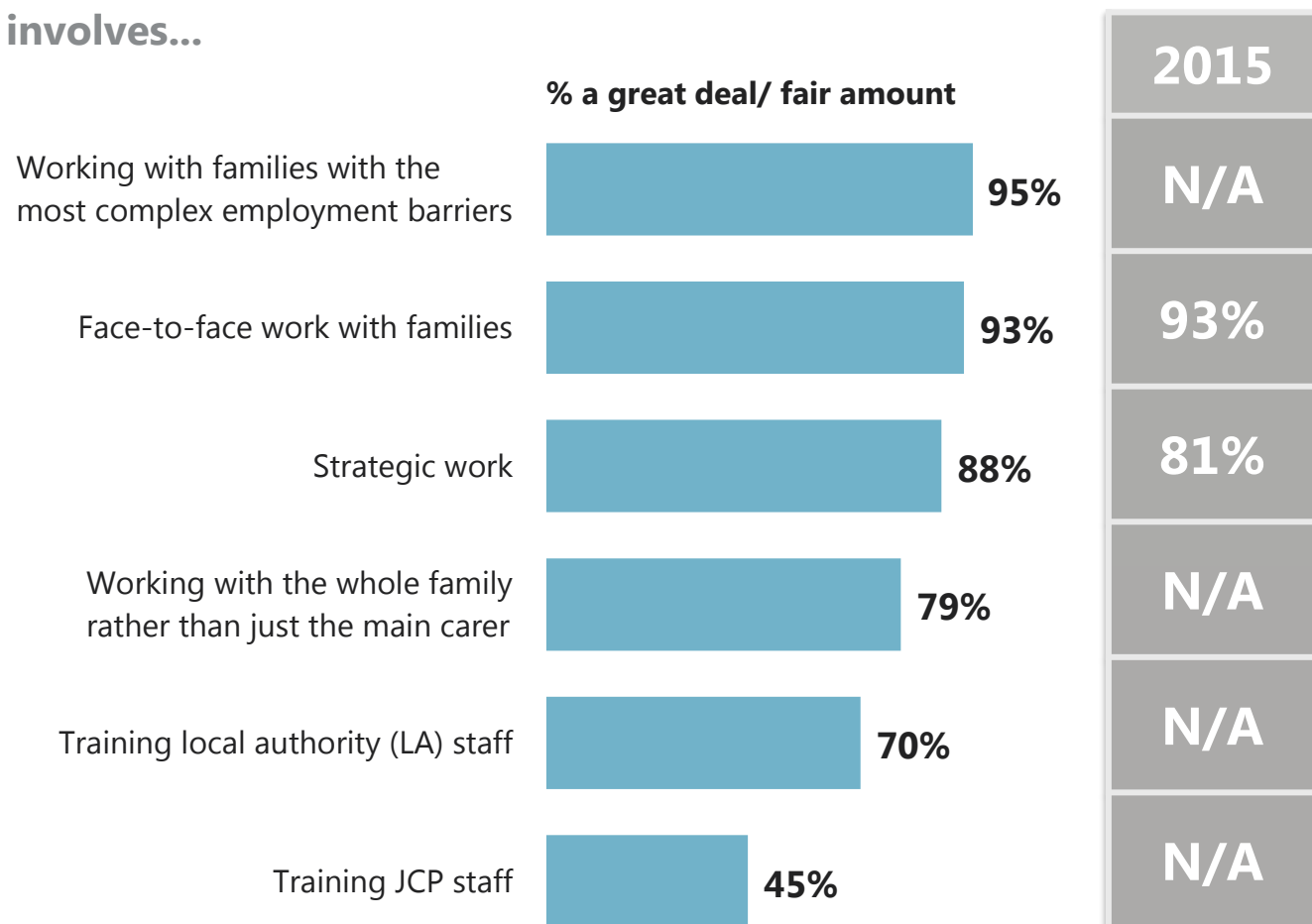


Base: All TFEAs (202); Fieldwork dates 31 October – 09 December 2016

TFEAs' role is varied, involving direct support, strategic work and training others

The TFEA role is varied, involving direct work with families, a strategic role, and training others. Nearly all (95%) TFEAs say their work involves families with the most complex employment barriers and the majority (93%) spend at least a fair amount of their time on face-to-face work; this is consistent with 2015. Almost nine in ten (88%) say their work involves at least a fair amount of strategic work, which includes making links to other employment programmes (such as Work Programme/ Work Choice, City Deals, LEP activities, ESF programmes, etc.) and helping claimants to move into or closer to employment. Four in five (79%) spend at least a fair amount of their time working with the whole family rather than just the main carer. In addition to their work with families, seven in ten TFEAs (70%) spend at least a fair amount of time training local authority (LA) staff, with fewer training Jobcentre Plus staff (45%). QTFEA3**

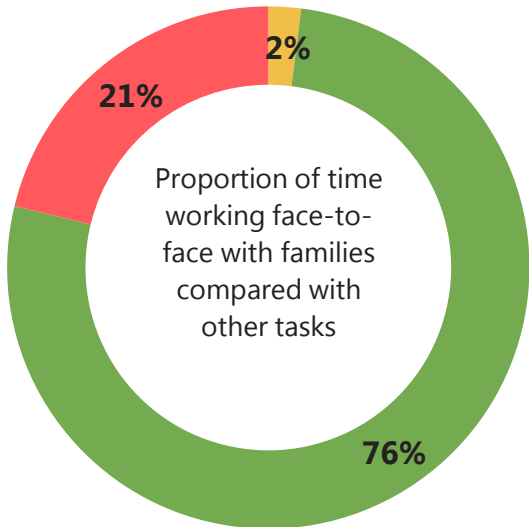
Extent that work involves...



Base: All TFEAs (202); Fieldwork dates 31 October – 09 December 2016

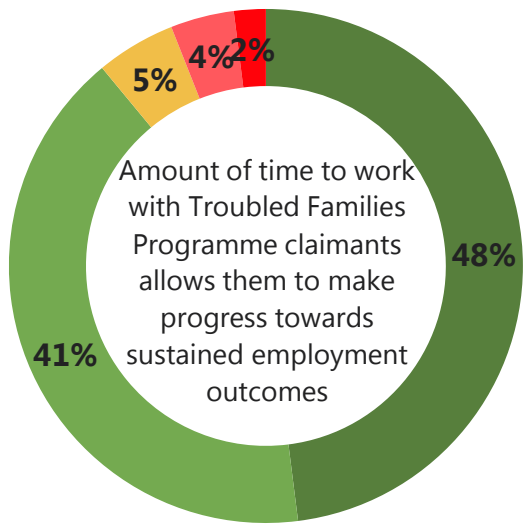
TFEAs feel they have sufficient time to work with families

Three-quarters (76%) of TFEAs say they have the right amount of time working face-to-face with families when compared with other tasks, but one in five (21%) feel they do not have enough time. W2Q1TFEA**



- Too much time
- The right amount of time
- Not enough time
- Don't know

The majority of TFEAs (89%) agree that the amount of time they have to work with Troubled Families Programme claimants allows them to make progress towards sustained employment outcomes, with 48% saying they *strongly* agree. Fewer than one in ten TFEAs (6%) disagree with this statement. Overall, this is similar to 2015 (93% agree) but fewer strongly agree in 2016 (48% compared with 59% previously). QTFEA4**



- Strongly agree
- Tend to agree
- Neither
- Tend to disagree

	Agree
2016	89%
2015	93%



Base: All TFEAs (202); Fieldwork dates 31 October – 09 December 2016

Overall views of the Troubled Families Programme

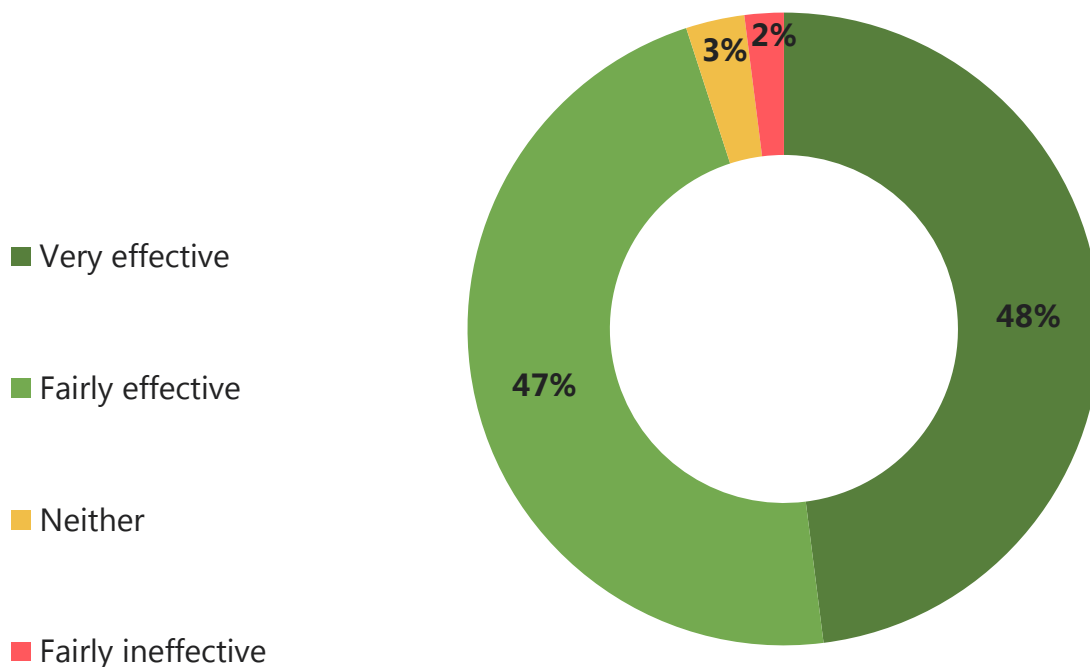
**Effectiveness of the
programme**

Impact of support



TFEAs are positive about programme effectiveness

Nearly all TFEAs (95%) feel that the Troubled Families Programme is effective at achieving long-term positive change in families' circumstances; this is evenly split between those who say very and fairly effective (48% and 47% respectively). Again, this is in line with attitudes in 2015. QTFEA24**



- Very effective
- Fairly effective
- Neither
- Fairly ineffective
- Very ineffective
- Don't know/ no opinion

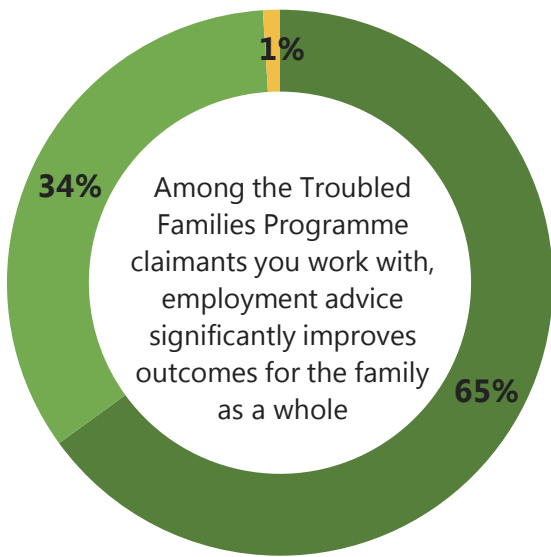
	2016	2015
Effective	95%	92%
Ineffective	2%	3%



Base: All TFEAs (202): Fieldwork dates 31 October – 09 December 2016

TFEAs feel able to improve family outcomes

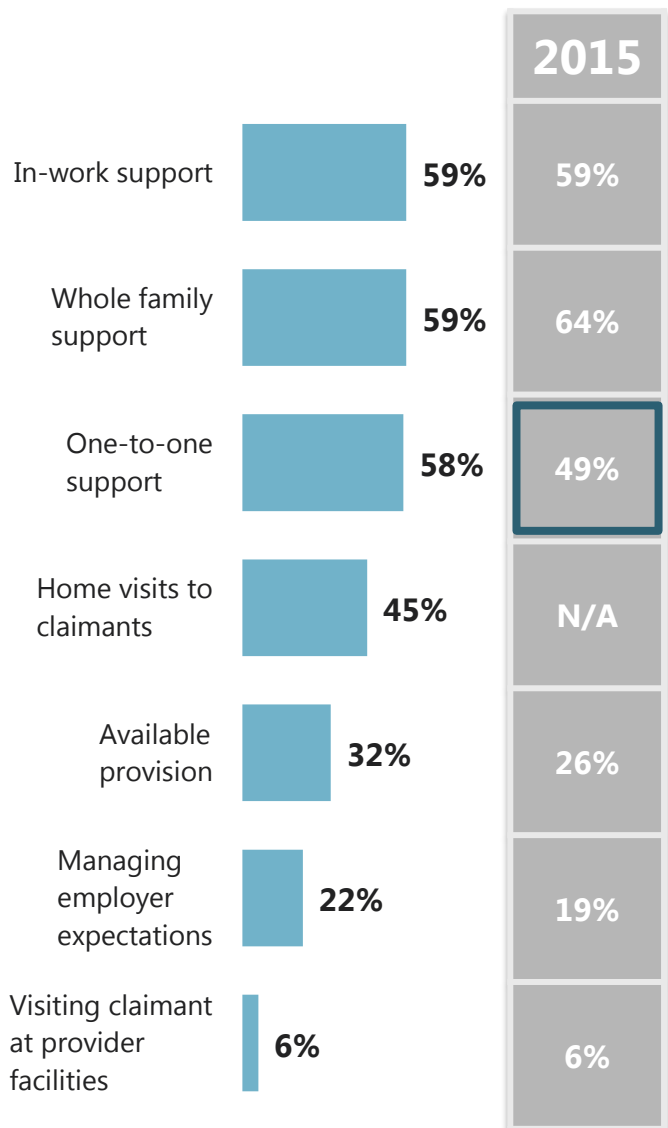
TFEAs almost unanimously (99%) agree that, among the Troubled Families Programme claimants they work with, employment advice significantly improves outcomes for the family as a whole. In fact, two thirds (65%) *strongly* agree with this statement. Again, this reinforces findings from 2015, though as with a number of other measures this view is less strongly held (65% strongly agree compared with 73% previously). QTFEA13**



	Agree
2016	99%
2015	96%

- Strongly agree
- Tend to agree
- Neither
- Tend to disagree
- Strongly disagree

A range of support is considered important to ensure that positive outcomes for Troubled Families Programme claimants are sustainable, most notably in-work support and whole family support (both 59%) along with one-to-one support (58%). These types of support were also identified as most important in 2015, but notably more mention one-to-one support in 2016. QTFEA14**



Provision for Troubled Families Programme claimants

Support for claimants

Training opportunities

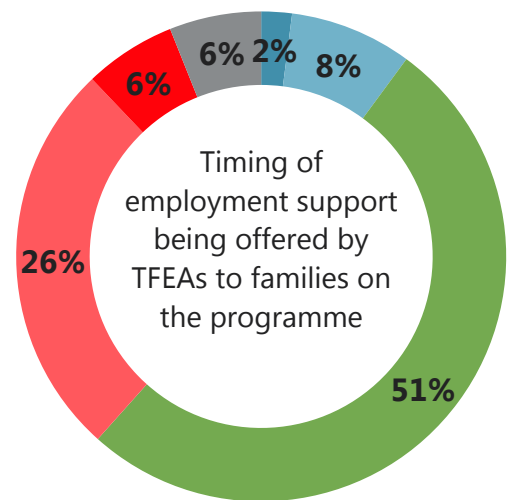
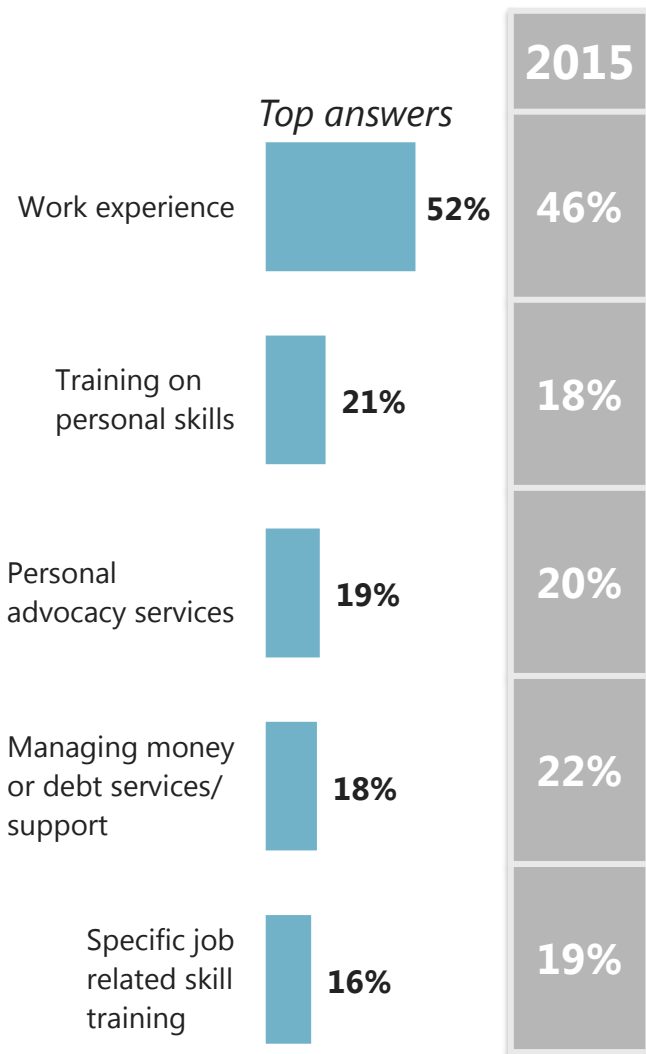
**Additional resources
required**



Work experience is viewed as the most effective support for families on the programme

TFEAs say work experience is the most effective type of support for families on the programme, mentioned by half (52%). There has been no change in the top five types of support identified since in 2016. QTFEA7**

Half of TFEAs (51%) feel that the employment support offered to families on the programme is given at the right time. However, a third (32%) think it is offered too late and one in ten (10%) feel it is offered too early. W2Q2TFEA**



	2016
Too early	10%
Too late	32%

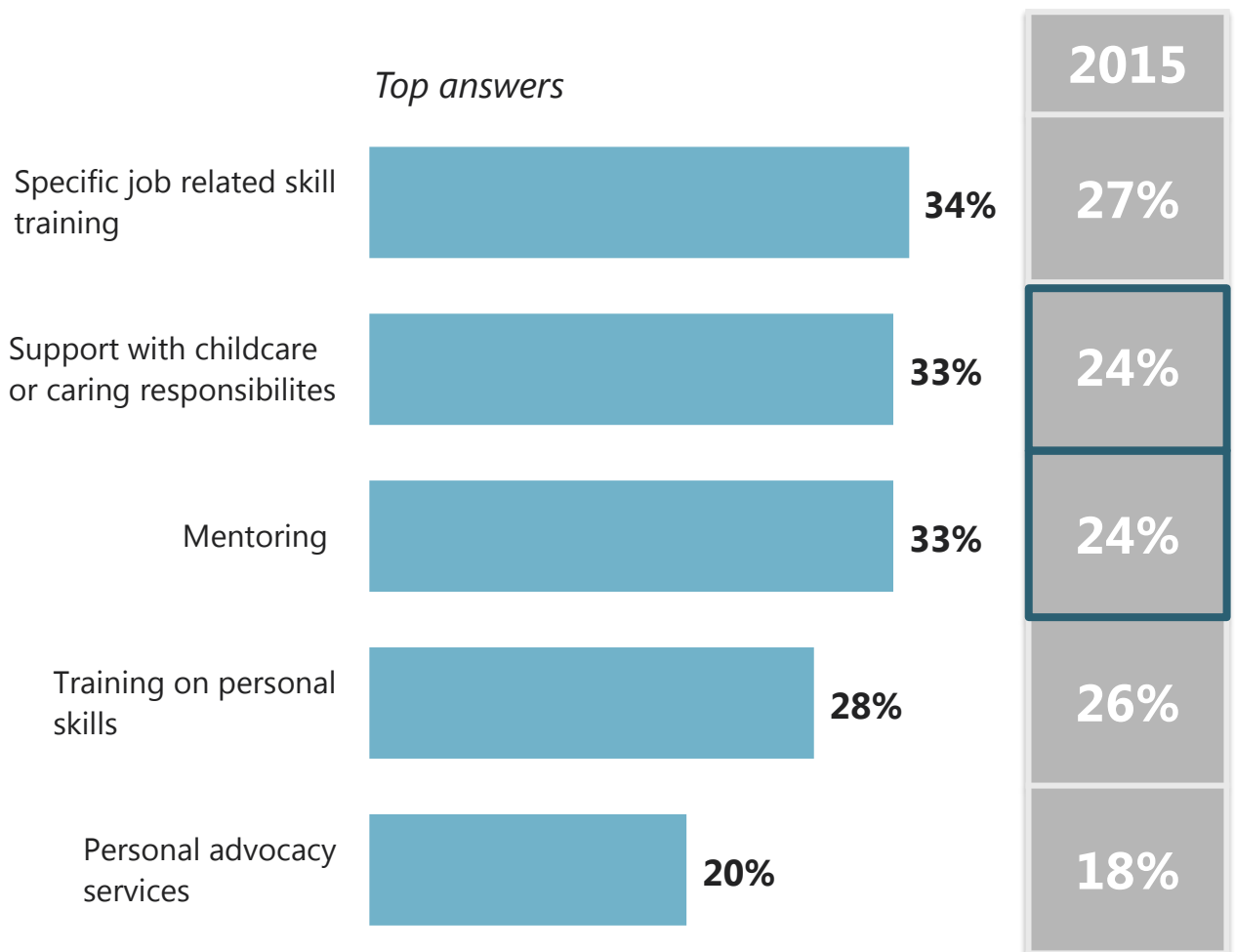
- Far too early
- A little too early
- At the right time
- A little too late
- Far too late
- Don't know



Base: All TFEAs (202); Fieldwork dates 31 October – 09 December 2016

Specific job-related skill training is most commonly perceived as gap in provision

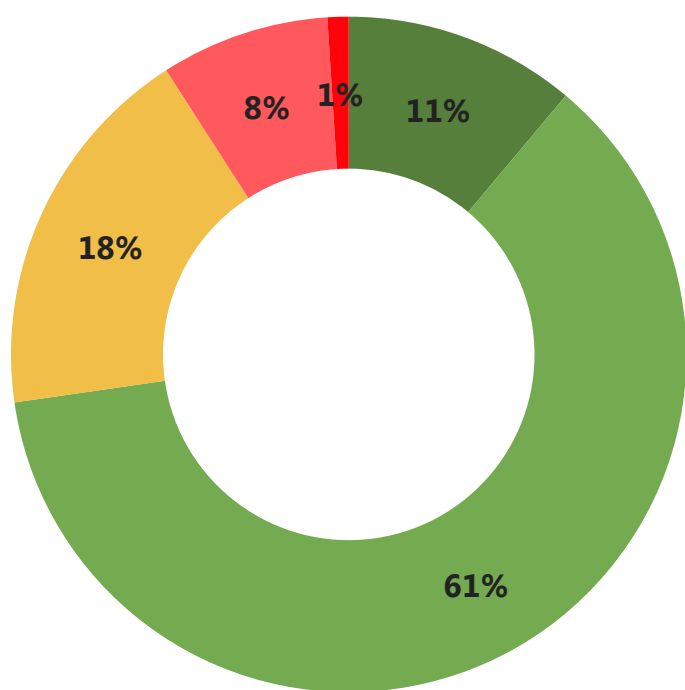
TFEAs identify a number of gaps in current provision for families on the programme. They most commonly highlight gaps with specific job-related skill training (34%), closely followed by support for childcare or caring responsibilities and mentoring (both 33%). They would also like more provision for personal skills training and advocacy services (28% and 20% respectively). In 2016 more TFEAs point to gaps in provision around caring and mentoring. QTFEA8**



Base: All TFEAs (202): Fieldwork dates 31 October – 09 December 2016

TFEAs are positive about training opportunities for Troubled Families Programme claimants

TFEAs are mostly positive about the education and training opportunities available for Troubled Families Programme claimants in their Jobcentre Plus area: 72% rate them as good and just 9% say they are poor. Notably, one in five TFEAs (18%) appear unsure, saying the opportunities are neither good nor poor. This is consistent with findings from the 2015 survey. QTFEA10**



	2016	2015
Good	72%	69%
Poor	9%	11%

■ Very good
 ■ Fairly good
 ■ Neither
 ■ Fairly poor
 ■ Very poor
 ■ Don't know/ no opinion



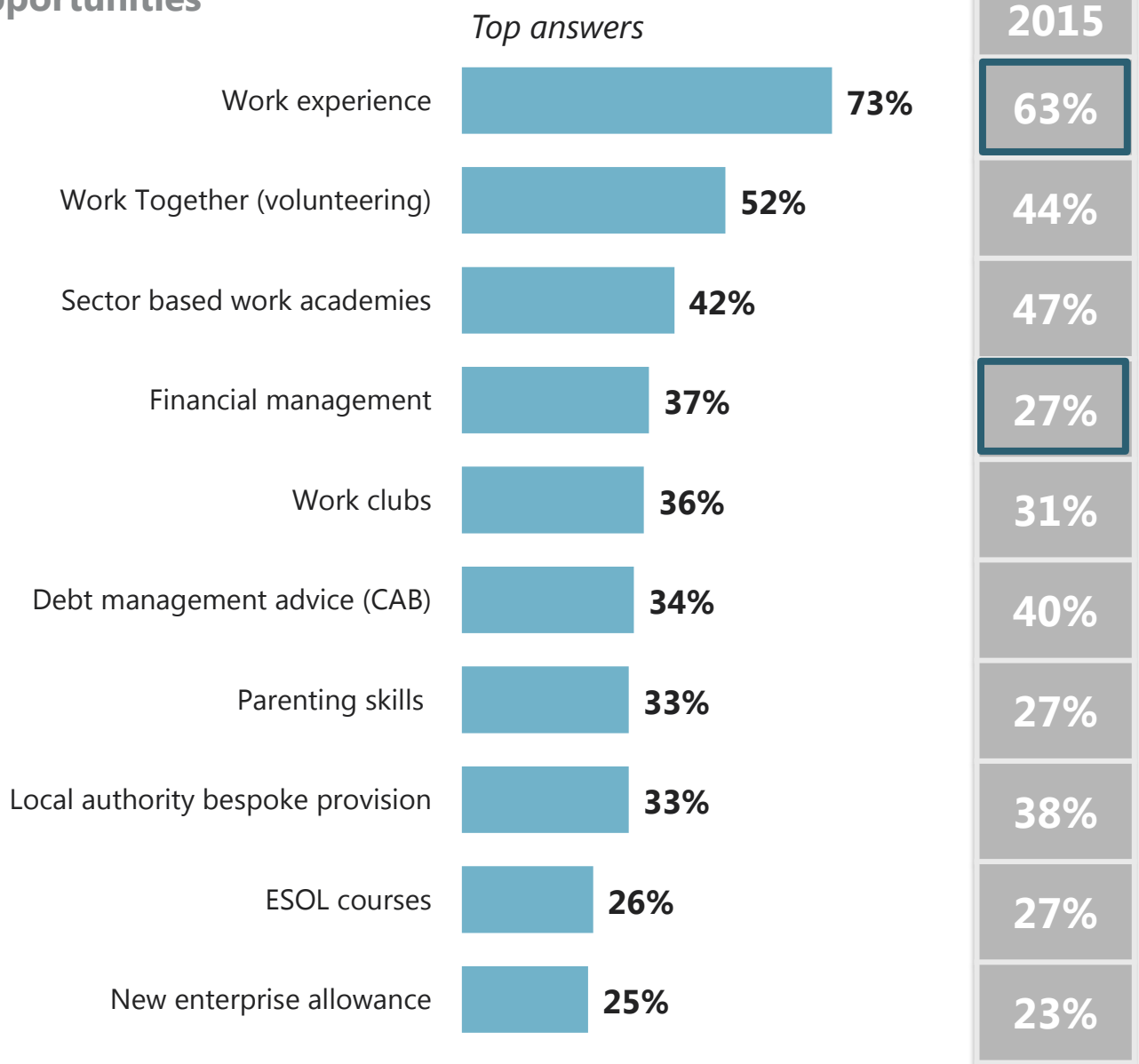
Base: All TFEAs (202): Fieldwork dates 31 October – 09 December 2016

Work experience is viewed as most successful training opportunity for Troubled Families Programme claimants

Programme claimants

TFEAs were asked to identify which types of education and training opportunities are most successful among Troubled Families Programme claimants. Reflecting the fact that work experience is seen as the most important type of support that TFEAs can offer, they also identify this as the most successful education or training opportunity (73%). This has significantly increased from 2015 (63%). Related to this, volunteering opportunities are also viewed as important (52%). TFEAs are more likely to identify financial management as a successful education or training opportunity (now 37% compared with 27% in 2015). QTFEA11**

Most successful types of education or training opportunities



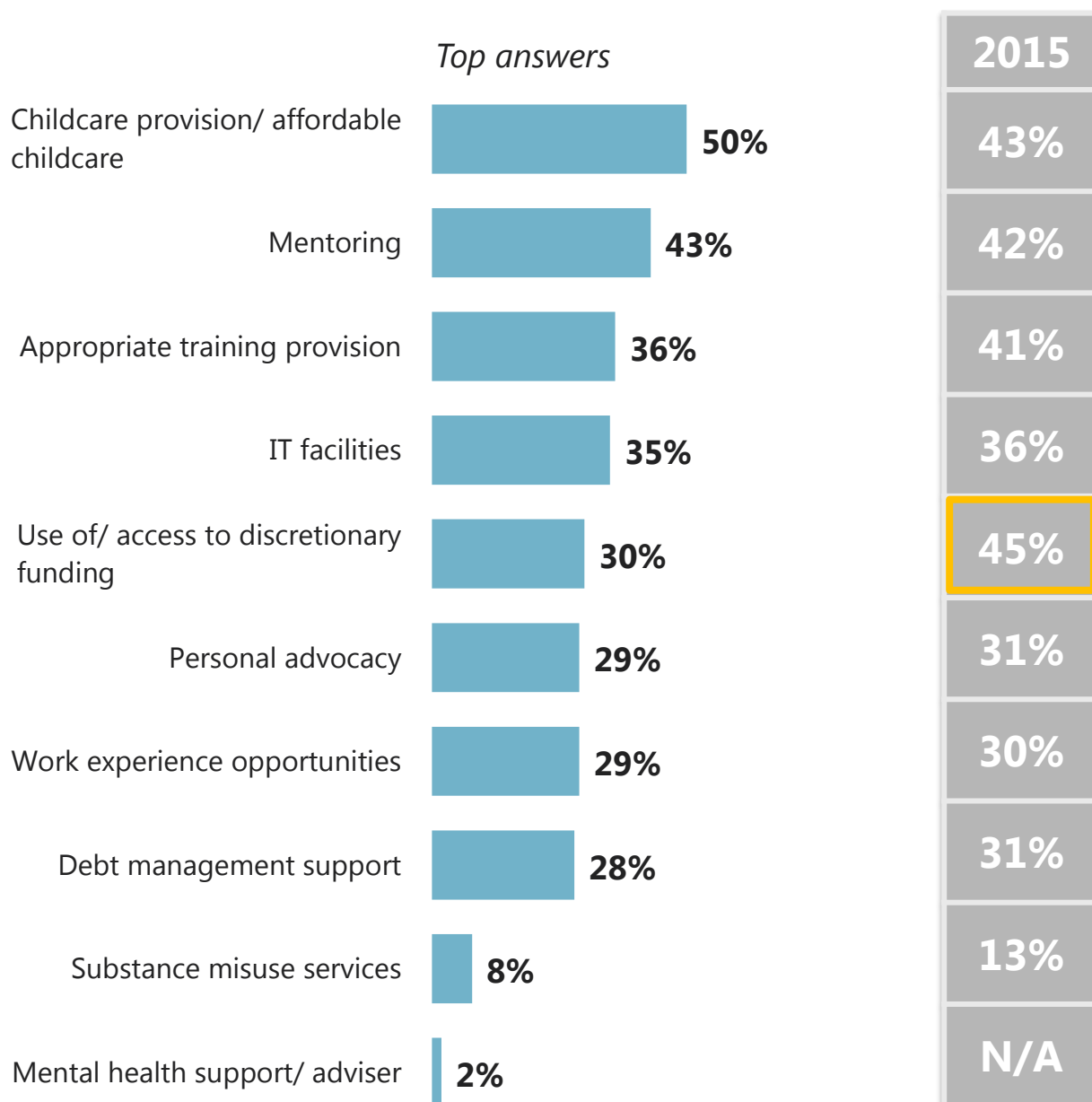
Base: All TFEAs (202): Fieldwork dates 31 October – 09 December 2016

A variety of additional resources are required to address the most common problems

TFEAs identify a range of additional resources or provision to address the most common problems faced by families on the programme in their Jobcentre Plus area. Half (50%) would like more childcare, 43% mentoring opportunities, and around a third point to appropriate training and IT facilities (36% and 35% respectively).

This pattern is mostly similar to 2015, but in 2016 fewer identify an additional need in terms of use of or access to discretionary funding (30% versus 45%). QTFEA12**

Additional provision needed in Jobcentre Plus area



Workforce development

Developing TFEA skills

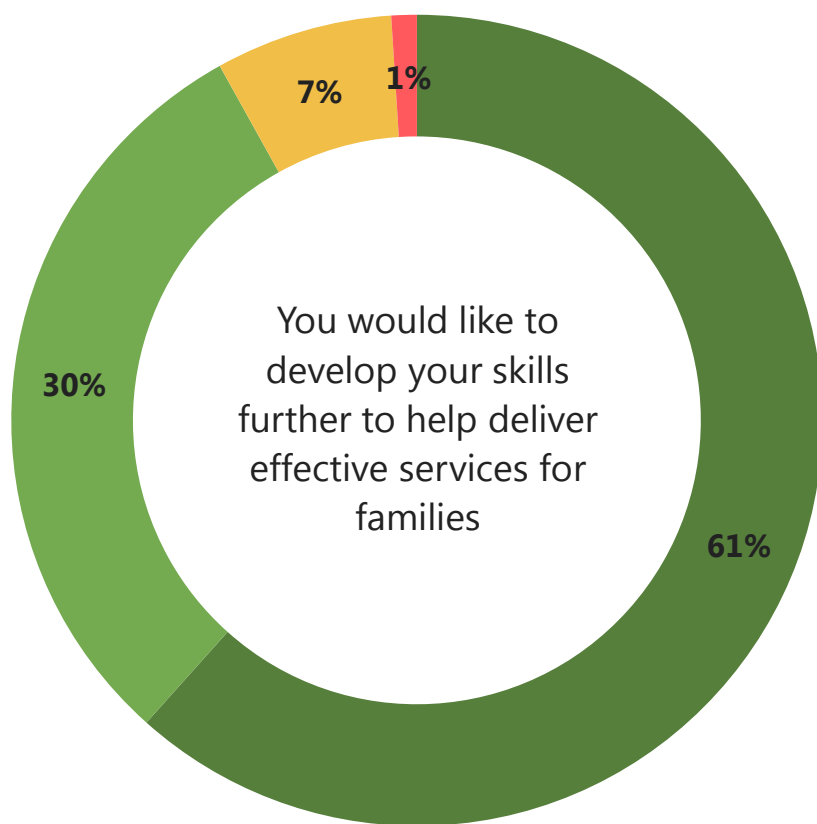
Training

**Support and
supervision**



TFEAs are keen to develop skills to deliver effective services for families

Almost all TFEAs (91%) agree that they would like to develop their skills further to help them deliver effective services for families, with six in ten (61%) saying they *strongly* agree. W2Q3TFEA**



	Agree
2016	91%

■ Strongly agree

■ Tend to agree

■ Neither

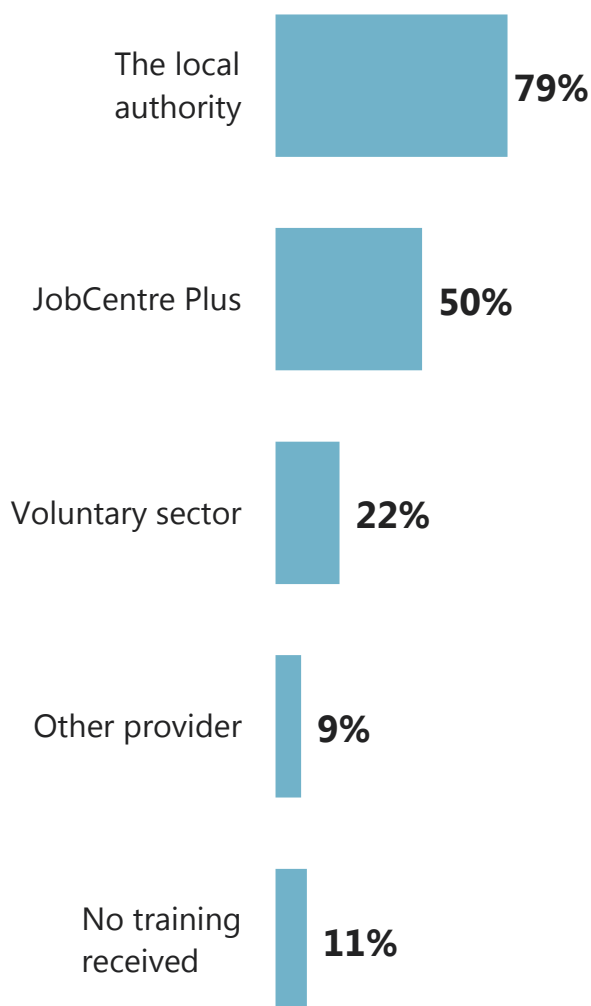
■ Tend to disagree

■ Strongly disagree

■ Don't know/ no opinion

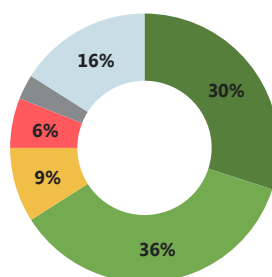
Training in relation to TFEA role is rated fairly positively

The majority of TFEAs (79%) have received training from their local authority, half (50%) from the Jobcentre Plus, and one-fifth (22%) from the voluntary sector. However, notably, one in ten TFEAs (11%) report that they have not received any training. W2Q4TFEA**

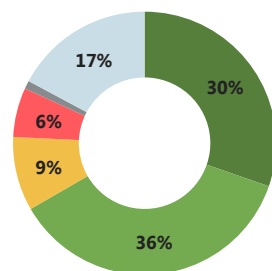


TFEAs are positive about the training received, two thirds (66%) say both the relevance and quality was good, and over half (56%) rate the amount as good. This is in line with TFEAs (11%) reporting that they have not received any training.

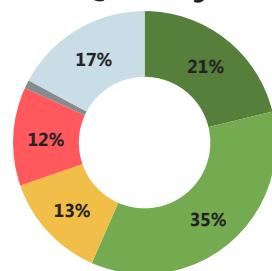
Rating of training...



Relevance



Quality



Amount



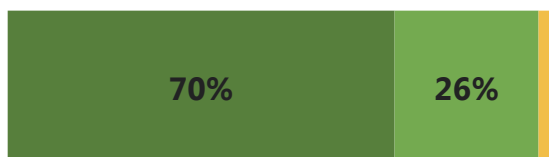
Good	
2016	2015
66%	66%
66%	65%
56%	59%

TFEAs are also positive about support and supervision

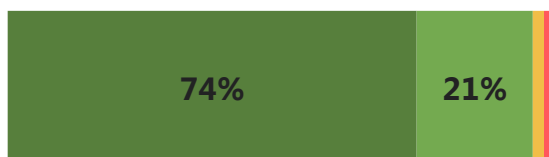
TFEAs are very positive about the support and supervision available for them in their role. Nearly all report that, if needed, they would know who to speak to for advice in carrying out their role (96%) and feel they have the freedom to act independently when they need to (95%). In addition, over four in five TFEAs feel that they have the right kind of supervision (84%) and are well supported by their organisation (81%). These findings are consistent with ratings of support in 2015. QTFEA17**

■ Strongly agree
 ■ Tend to agree
 ■ Neither
 ■ Tend to disagree
 ■ Strongly disagree

If needed, you know who to speak to for advice in carrying out your role



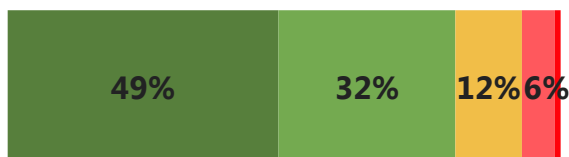
You have the freedom to act independently when you need to in your role



You have the right kind of supervision



You feel well supported by your organisation



Agree	
2016	2015
96%	95%
95%	93%
84%	84%
81%	80%

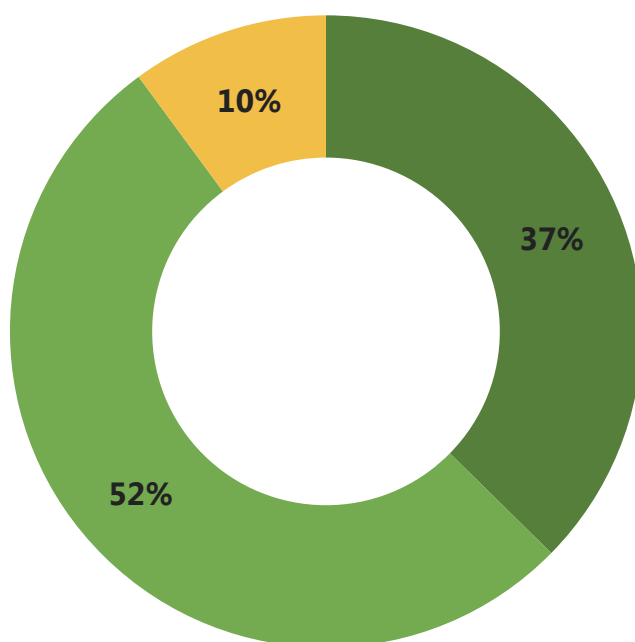


Base: All TFEAs (202); Fieldwork dates 31 October – 09 December 2016

There is ample opportunity to share good practice locally

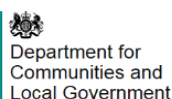
Nine in ten TFEAs (89%) feel that they have at least a fair amount of opportunity to share and learn from good practice locally within their Jobcentre Plus or local authority area. Specifically, 37% of TFEAs say they have a great deal and 52% say they have a fair amount of opportunity. Just one in ten (10%) feel they do not have much opportunity. This is very similar to findings in 2015. QTFEA19**

Opportunity to share and learn from good practice locally



	2016	2015
A great deal/ a fair amount	89%	86%

■ A great deal
 ■ A fair amount
 ■ Not much
 ■ Not at all
 ■ Don't know/ no opinion

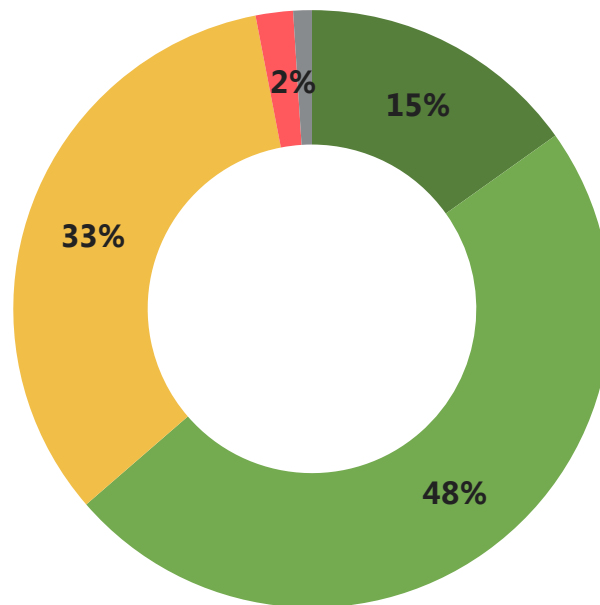


Base: All TFEAs (202); Fieldwork dates 31 October – 09 December 2016

Most TFEAs think that working with claimants has changed the ways that Work Coaches work

In 2016 TFEAs were asked a new question to establish the extent to which they feel working with Troubled Families Programme claimants has prompted changes in the way Work Coaches deal with claimants more generally. Three in five TFEAs (63%) feel that the programme has led to more general changes, though just 15% say a great deal. A third of TFEAs (33%) say there has not been much change as a result, but only two per cent feel there has been no change at all. W2Q5TFEA**

Working with claimants has prompted changes in the ways Work Coaches work



	2016
A great deal/ a fair amount	63%

■ A great deal ■ A fair amount ■ Not much ■ Not at all ■ Don't know/ no opinion



Base: All TFEAs (202): Fieldwork dates 31 October – 09 December 2016

Multi-agency working

Working with partner services

Support from partners

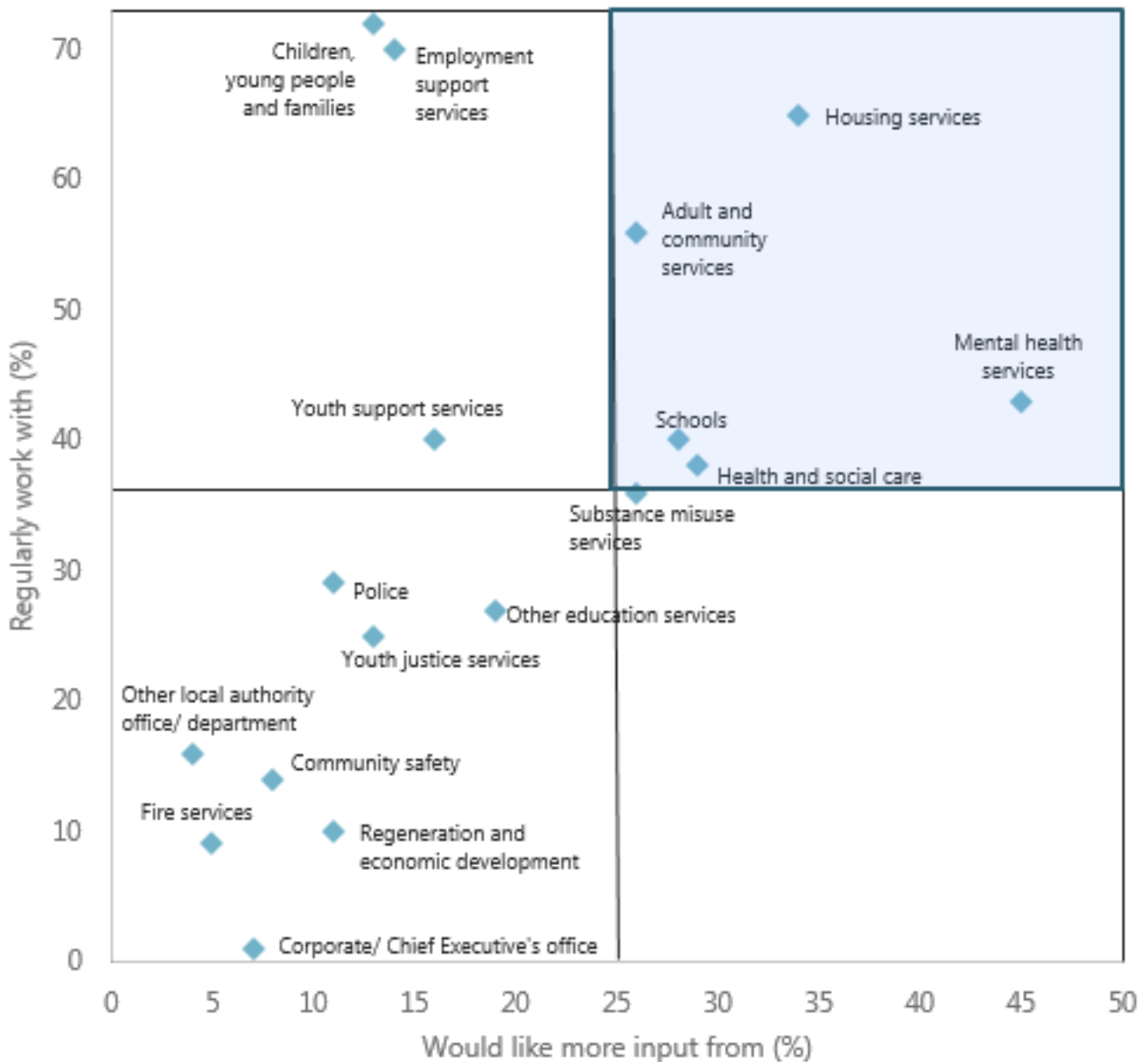
Barriers to effective partnership working



In 2015, TFEAs would have liked greater input from mental health and housing services

In 2015 TFEAs regularly worked with a wide range of local services, but most commonly employment support services and those offering services to children, young people and families. This chart highlights that in 2015 TFEAs would have liked greater input from a number of partner services they regularly worked with, especially mental health as well as housing, schools, health and social care, adult and community and substance misuse services. QTFEA20, QTFEA21**

*The quadrant in blue highlights the local services TFEAs work with most regularly **and** would like more input from.*

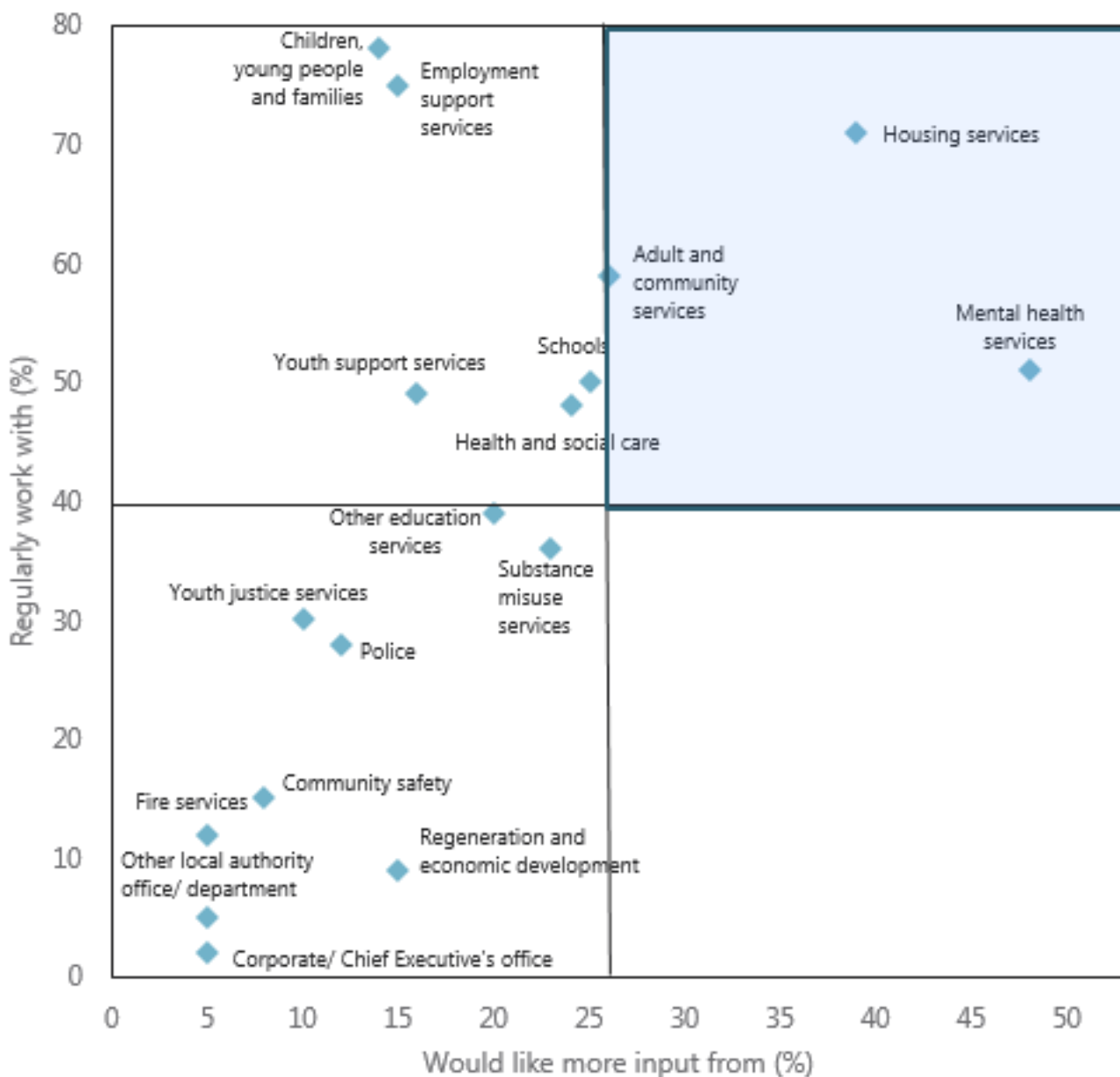


Base: All TFEAs (194); Fieldwork dates 26 October – 30 November 2015

TFEAs still want greater input from mental health and housing services

In 2016, the pattern in terms of the services that keyworkers regularly work with and would like more input from is mostly consistent with that found in 2015, as shown on the previous chart. They continue to be mostly happy with these relationships but again would like more input from housing and mental health services, in particular. QTFEA20, QTFEA21**

*The quadrant in blue highlights the local services TFEAs work with most regularly **and** would like more input from.*



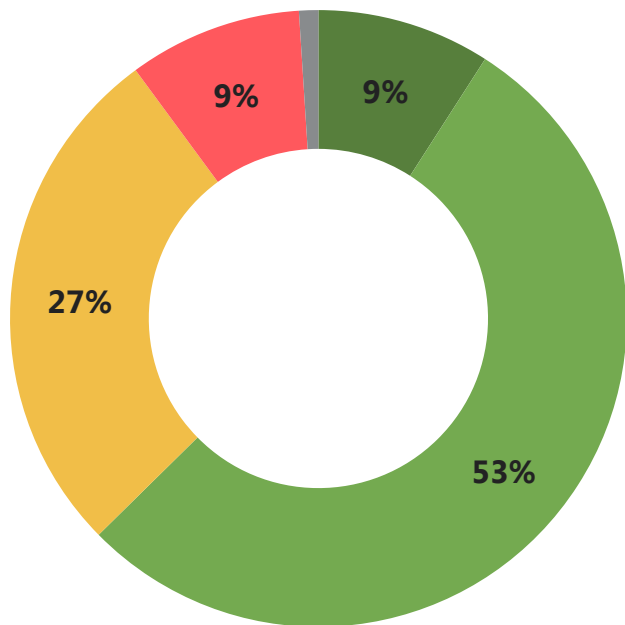
Department for Communities and Local Government

Department for Work & Pensions

Base: All TFEAs (202); Fieldwork dates 31 October – 09 December 2016

Evidence indicates room for improvement in partner organisations' support

Three in five TFEAs (62%) say it is easy to get the support they need from partner organisations to deliver solutions for families, but there is evidence of room for improvement. For example, many more say it is fairly than very easy (53% and 9% respectively) and, notably, a quarter of TFEAs (27%) feel unable to express a view either way. This is in line with findings in 2015. QTFEA22**



	2016	2015
Easy	62%	61%
Difficult	10%	11%

■ Very easy
 ■ Fairly easy
 ■ Neither
 ■ Fairly difficult
 ■ Very difficult
 ■ Don't know/ no opinion



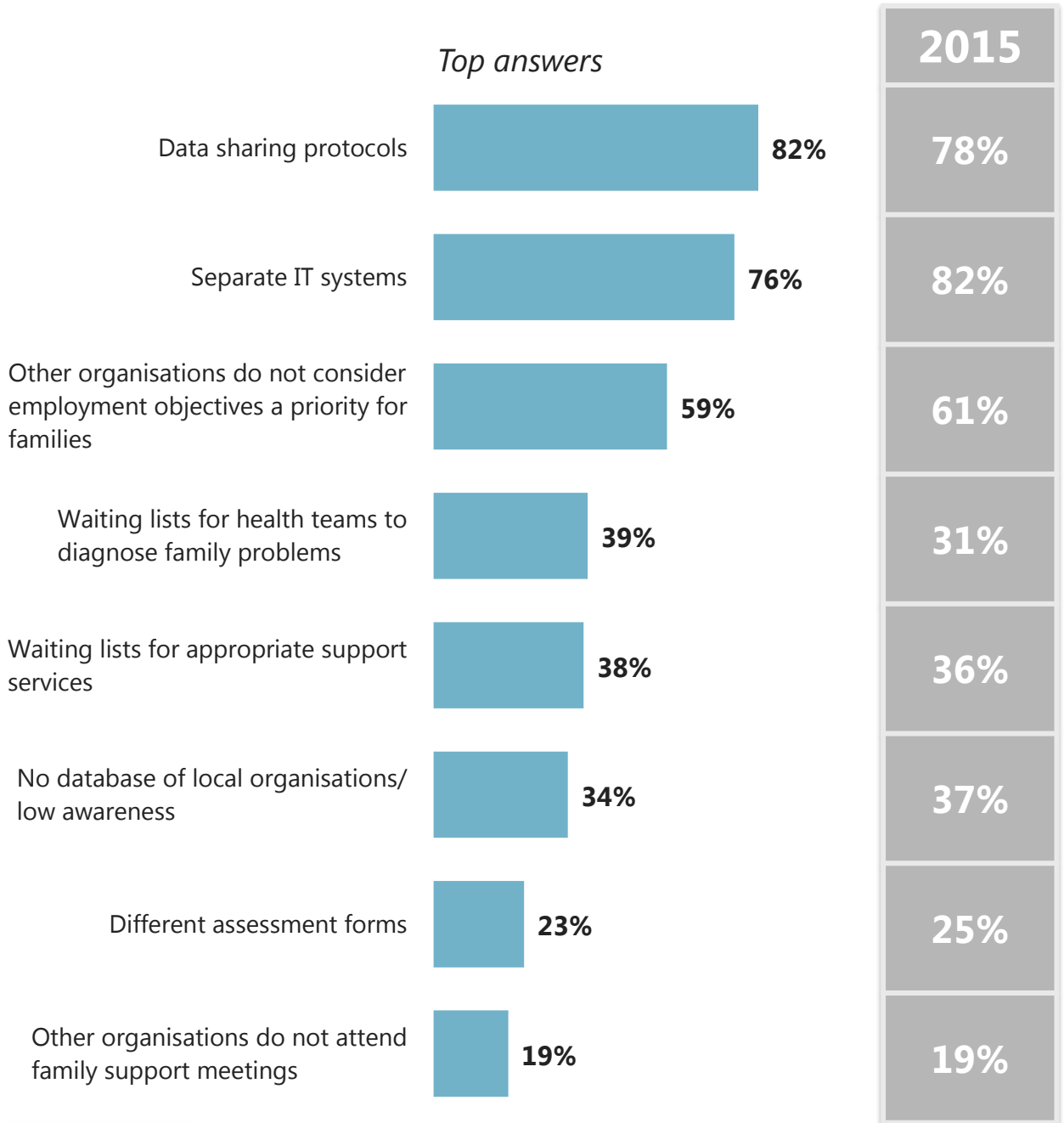
Base: All TFEAs (202): Fieldwork dates 31 October – 09 December 2016

Data sharing protocols perceived as main barrier to effective partnership working

TFEAs identify data sharing protocols and separate IT systems as the main barriers to effective partnership working enabling them to deliver solutions for families (82% and 76% respectively).

Three in five (59%) also suggest that other organisations do not consider employment objectives a priority for families.

These barriers are consistent with those identified in 2015. TFEA23**



Base: All TFEAs (202); Fieldwork dates 31 October – 09 December 2016

Conclusions

**Delivering the
programme**

**The Troubled Families
approach**

Areas for development

Delivering the Troubled Families Programme – the TFEA role

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

The TFEA role

The majority (86%) of TFEAs are working for **DWP/a Jobcentre**. **TFEAs are experienced**; half (47%) have worked with DWP/Jobcentre Plus for more than 20 years and almost all (94%) **previously worked in a specialist position**, for example, as a social justice work coach/employment advisor (76%) or disability employment advisor (19%).

TFEAs feel supported in their role, and are **content with the level of support and supervision** provided while also feeling that they have the **freedom to act independently**. However, almost all (91%) **would like to develop their skills further**.

Almost all (95%) TFEAs spend at least a fair amount of their time on **face-to-face work with families with the most complex employment barriers**, with an average case load of 32 claimants, including 25 adults (aged 25+) and 7 NEETs (16-24 years); an increase since 2015 (previously 23 claimants on average).

These claimants most commonly face **employment barriers relating to health**, specifically mental health (64%) or another health problem or disability (33%). Barriers relating to **childcare and other caring responsibilities** are also significant issues (45%). These mental health and caring barriers appear more pressing and are mentioned by more TFEAs in 2016.

TFEAs are positive about the Troubled Families Programme approach

TFEAs views of the programme

TFEAs continue to be very supportive of the Troubled Families Programme approach and its key elements: 95% say it is **effective at achieving long-term positive change in families' circumstances**, and 99% agree that among the families they work with **employment advice significantly improves outcomes for the family as a whole**. These findings are consistent with 2015.

Three in five (59%) feel **whole family support is important to ensure positive outcomes for Troubled Families Programme claimants are sustainable**, but similar value is placed on **in-work and one-to-one support** (59% and 58% respectively). Again, these views reflect those seen in the previous survey, though with a greater emphasis placed on one-to-one support in 2016.

TFEAs are **positive about the education and training opportunities** available for Troubled Families Programme claimants (72% good), and single out **work experience** as the most successful opportunity helping people into work (73%); an increase from 2015 (previously 63%).

Three quarters (76%) of TFEAs say they **have the right amount of time working face-to-face with families compared with other tasks**, and almost all (89%) agree that generally **the amount of time they have to work with Troubled Families Programme claimants allows claimants to make progress towards sustained employment outcomes**.

However, there is **evidence of time pressure**, with 21% of TFEAs saying they do not have enough time working with families.

Perhaps related to this, while half of TFEAs (51%) feel families get employment support at the right time, 32% say it is given too late.

Areas for development

The Troubled Families Programme aims to instigate significant changes in the design, management and delivery of local services. TFEAs are mostly positive about these changes and the benefits to claimants but, as with the findings from 2015, there are inevitably a number of challenges:

Evidence of system change: TFEAs feel that the Troubled Families Programme approach has encouraged a broader change in the way Work Coaches deal with claimants generally and that they have good opportunities to share and learn from good practice locally. However, TFEAs are more likely to say the approach has had a fair amount rather than a great deal of impact, suggesting more could be done to promote good practice more widely.

Promoting genuine partnership working: while most say it is easy to get support from partners to deliver solutions, there is evidence of room for improvement, with TFEAs particularly singling out the need for greater input from mental health and housing services.

Improving systems to facilitate effective partnership working: as with the findings in 2015, while the tools and systems underpinning multi-agency working are developing in most areas, there is more work to do. Data sharing protocols and separate IT systems continue to be identified as the main barriers to more effective partnership working by TFEAs.

Most effective interventions for Troubled Families Programme claimants: work experience continues to be viewed as the most effective type of support that TFEAs can offer, suggesting that more opportunities in this area would be most helpful in terms of improving claimant outcomes. However, as before, this needs to be balanced with other requirements; when asked specifically about gaps in provision support with childcare and mentoring feature highly. Notably fewer mention access to discretionary funding in 2016.

Timing of support: it is important that TFEAs have sufficient time to work directly with families, but also that employment support is embedded further in the programme, to ensure that it is offered at the right time and not too late.

Further developing TFEA skills: while the majority have had some training related to their TFEA role and are mostly positive about the relevance, quality and amount provided, almost all would like to further develop their skills to enable them to deliver effective services for families.

For more information

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