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Social Research Institute

June 2018

Troubled Families Programme National Evaluation

Staff survey among Troubled Families

keyworkers

Conducted by Ipsos MORI on behalf of MHCLG

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1. Introduction

Background

Methodology

1 Introduction

Background

This report presents findings from the third research study among Troubled Families Programme keyworkers or front-line practitioners, conducted on behalf of the Ministry for Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG). Keyworkers are those who lead work with individual families to overcome their problems as a whole.

The Troubled Families Programme (2015-2020) aims to support up to 400,000 complex families with multiple high-cost problems by 2020. It is designed to help families with severe and persistent problems make significant and sustained progress towards their goals. Key features include promoting a whole family approach across partner agencies including the police, housing, schools, voluntary sector and health.

This research is one element of the national evaluation, 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 whole family working approach on outcomes for families themselves, and the cost benefits that this has for the taxpayer.

Methodology

Data was gathered from Troubled Families Programme keyworkers through an online survey. MHCLG provided email addresses for Troubled Families Co-ordinators (TFCs) across all 152 local authorities, who were sent an email with a link for the keyworker survey and asked to forward it on to keyworkers in their local authority. In total, responses were received from 1,400 keyworkers with responses covering 123 of the 152 local authorities. The majority of these participating local authorities (90 of the 123) also had responses from keyworkers in 2016. Fieldwork was conducted between 23 October and 13 December 2017.

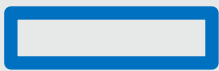
Separate reports present findings for similar surveys of Troubled Families Co-ordinators (TFCs) and Troubled Families Employment Advisors (TFEAs). These staff surveys are designed to run annually over the five years of the evaluation; this is the third in the series.

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. All keyworkers were asked to complete all questions in the survey.

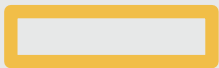
The following table outlines the fieldwork dates and sample sizes for each wave of research. As a guide, when looking at how a result varies, differences should be between ± 2 to 4 percentage points to be sure they represent statistically significant (or 'real') differences and are not due to chance (based on 95% confidence intervals).

Wave 1	26 th October-30 th November 2015	1,360 keyworkers
Wave 2	31 st October-9 th December 2016	1,274 keyworkers
Wave 3	23 rd October-13 th December 2017	1,400 keyworkers

Where a result is significantly greater than in previous years this is highlighted by the use of a blue box, where it is lower it is highlighted by the use of a yellow box.



Result has significantly increased since the previous wave.



Result has significantly decreased since the previous wave.

'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.

Percentages are rounded to the nearest whole number. Where percentages do not add up to 100, this may be due to computer rounding or multiple responses. To ensure the pie and bar charts are easy to read, where an answer is three per cent or lower the figure is not shown.

2. Overall views of the Troubled Families Programme

Overall effectiveness

Embedding the approach

2 Overall views of the Troubled Families Programme

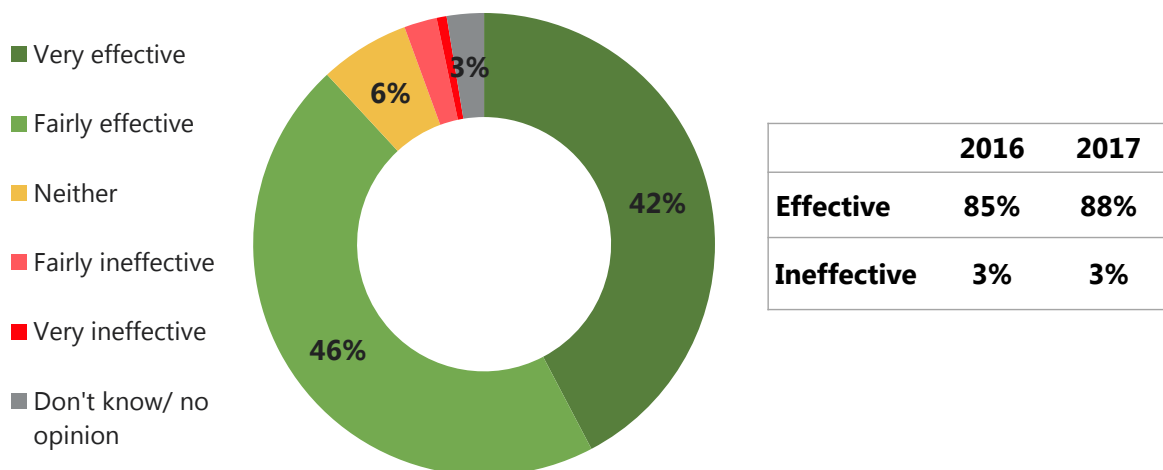
Keyworkers are very positive about the overall effectiveness of the delivery of the Troubled Families Programme at achieving whole family working.

Overall Effectiveness

Almost all keyworkers (88%) feel that the delivery of the Troubled Families Programme is **effective** at achieving whole family working, and almost half (42%) think it is *very* effective.

This is consistent with the findings from the 2016 survey of keyworkers, when 85% said it was effective at achieving whole family working.

How effective or ineffective would you say the delivery of the Troubled Families Programme is at achieving... Whole family working?

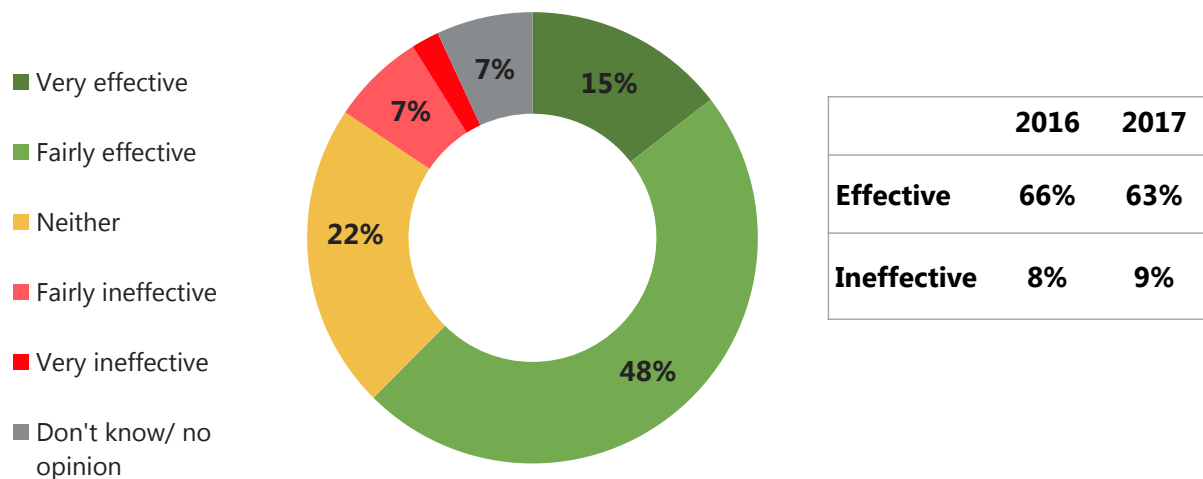


Base: All Keyworkers (1400): Fieldwork dates 23 October to 13 December 2017.
Percentages only shown if 3% or more. (KW22b)

Keyworkers are relatively positive about the effectiveness of the programme in achieving long term positive change in wider system reform.

Three in five keyworkers (63%) are positive about the effectiveness of the delivery of the Troubled Families Programme in achieving long-term positive change in wider system reform or service transformation. However, that view is not strongly held, with 15% saying it is *very* effective and one in five (22%) not feeling able to express an opinion either way. Again, opinions remain consistent with 2016 (66% effective).

How effective or ineffective would you say the delivery of the Troubled Families Programme is at achieving... Long term positive change in wider system reform/ service transformation in your local authority?



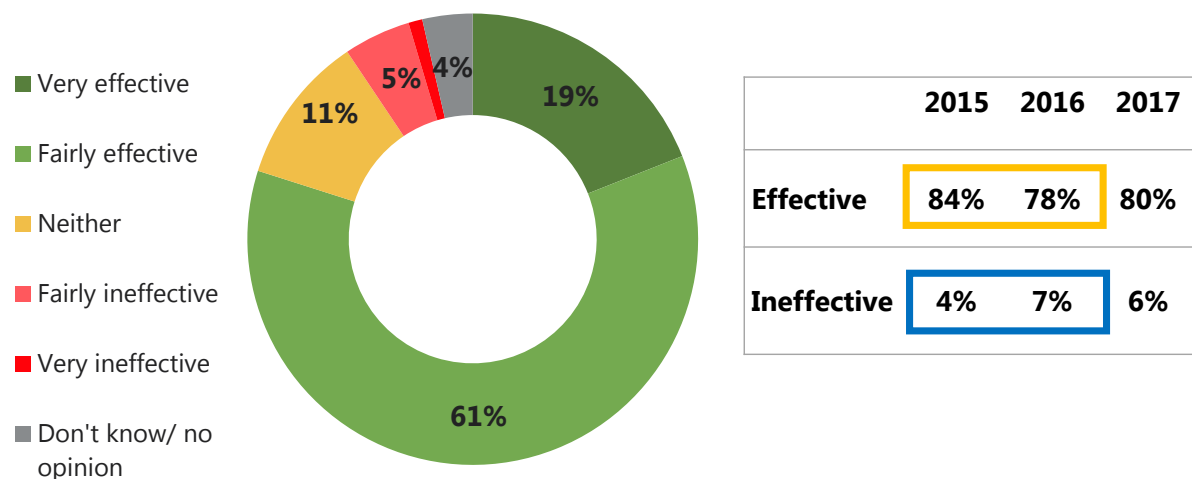
Base: All Keyworkers (1400): Fieldwork dates 23 October to 13 December 2017.
Percentages only shown if 3% or more. (QKW22c)

Keyworkers also agree the Troubled Families Programme is effective at helping families achieve long-term positive change in their circumstances.

Four in five keyworkers (80%) say that the delivery of the Troubled Families Programme is effective at achieving long term positive change in families' circumstances. Most keyworkers (61%) say it is *fairly* effective rather than *very* effective (19%), but very few (six per cent) say it is ineffective.

Once more, this finding is in line with previous years.

How effective or ineffective would you say the delivery of the Troubled Families Programme is at achieving... Long term positive change in families' circumstances?

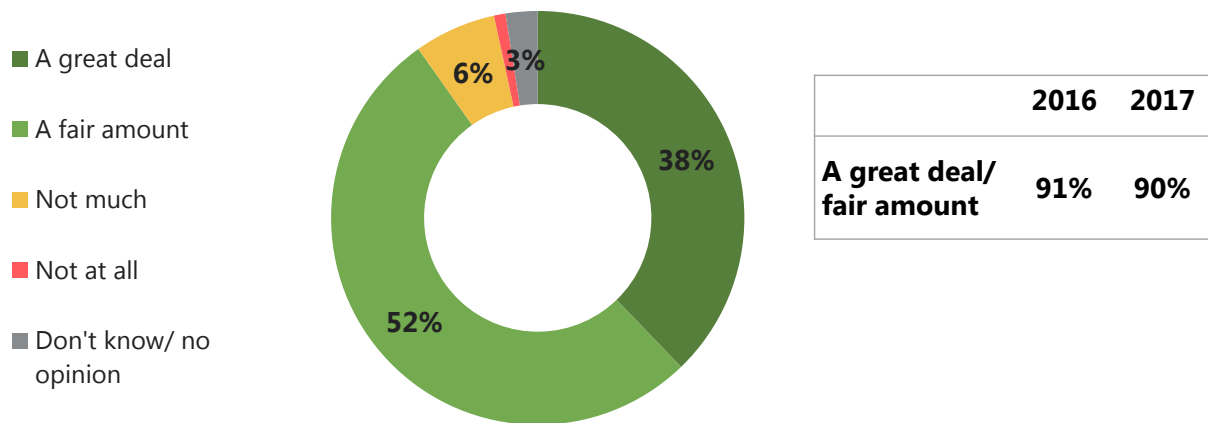


Base: All Keyworkers (1400); Fieldwork dates 23 October to 13 December 2017.
Percentages only shown if 3% or more. (QKW22a)

Almost all keyworkers think that the Troubled Families Programme helps families avoid statutory intervention.

The high level of support expressed by keyworkers in 2016 for the way in which the programme helps families to avoid statutory intervention continues: almost all keyworkers (90%) think that the Troubled Families Programme in their local authority is successful in helping families in this way, with around two in five (38%) who think it helps *a great deal*.

To what extent, if at all, would you say that the Troubled Families Programme in your local authority does each of the following? Successfully helps families to avoid statutory intervention.



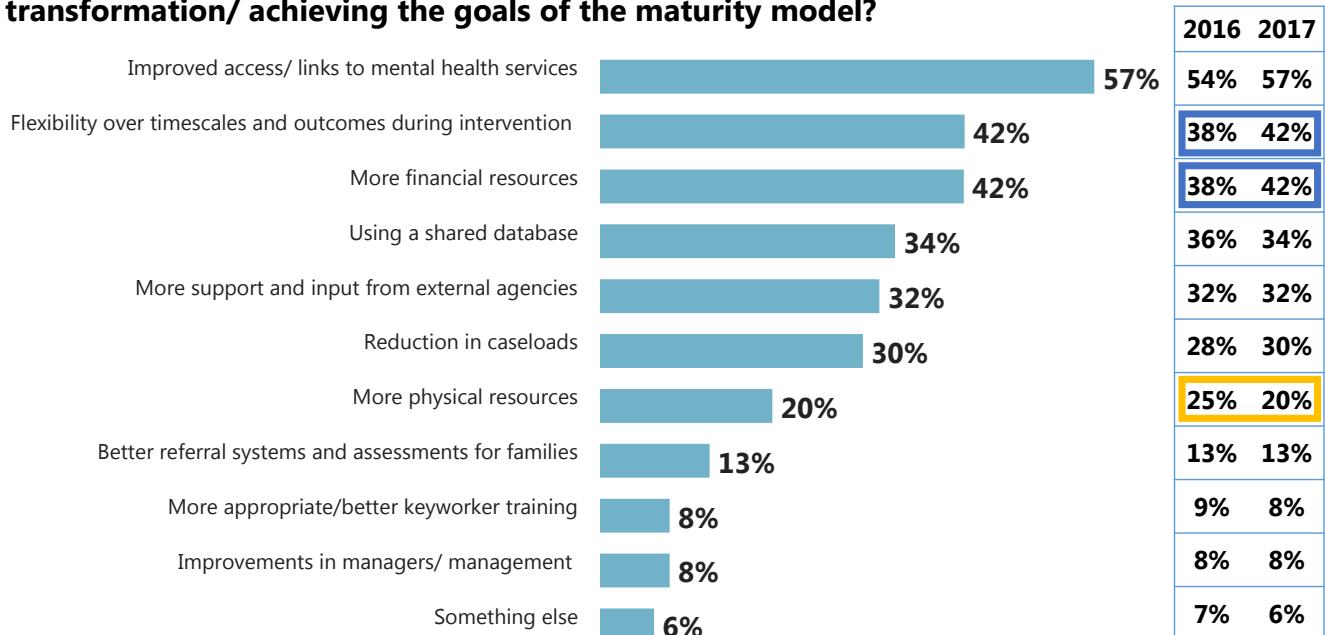
Base: All Keyworkers (1400); Fieldwork dates 23 October to 13 December 2017.
Percentages only shown if 3% or more. (QKW2C)

Keyworkers think that improved access or links to mental health services would make the programme more effective

Keyworkers were asked which three things they think would make the programme more effective for service transformation or achieving the goals of MHCLG's early help service transformation maturity model. Responses are varied, but **improved access to mental health services** is chosen most often (by 57% of keyworkers), followed by **flexibility over timescales and outcomes during intervention** (selected by 42%) and more **financial resources** (also selected by 42%). Additionally, a third of keyworkers think that using a **shared database** (selected by 34%) and more **support and input from external agencies** (selected by 32%) would make the programme more effective, as illustrated in the chart below.

This pattern is the same as that found in 2016, with keyworkers identifying the same improvements and in the same order. However, more point to the role of flexible timescales and financial resources as important to making the programme more effective in 2017, and fewer mention physical resources.

What three things do you think would make the programme more effective for service transformation/ achieving the goals of the maturity model?



Base: All Keyworkers (1400): Fieldwork dates 23 October to 13 December 2017. (QKW23)

Keyworkers continue to be positive about how the programme engages families.

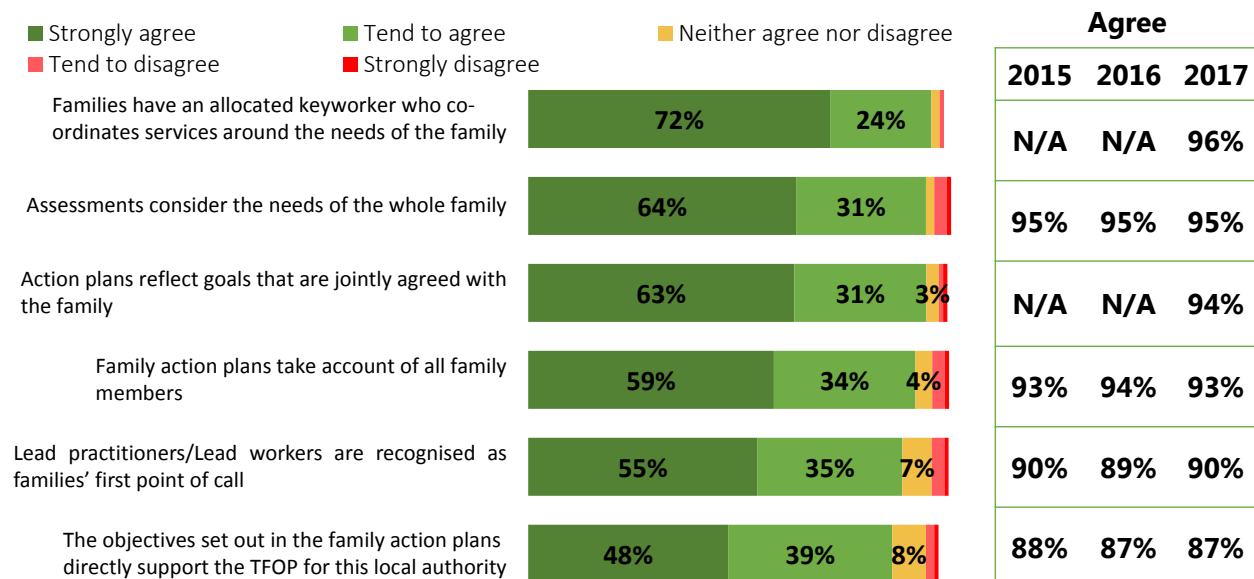
Embedding the approach

Keyworkers continue to be very positive about how the approach taken by the Troubled Families Programme in their local authority engages families. In response to a series of statements, almost all keyworkers agree that:

- families have an allocated keyworker who co-ordinates services around the needs of the family (96%), and 72% *strongly* agree
- assessments consider the needs of the whole family (95%), with three in five (64%) who *strongly* agree
- action plans reflect goals that are jointly agreed with the family (94%), and again three in five (63%) *strongly* agree
- family action plans take account of all family members (93%), including 59% who *strongly* agree
- lead practitioners or lead workers are recognised as families' first point of call (90%), and 55% *strongly* agree.
- the objectives set out in the family action plans directly support the Troubled Families Outcome Plan for their local authority (87%), including half (48%) who *strongly* agree.

Where these questions have been asked before, findings are very similar to both 2016 and 2015.

To what extent would you agree or disagree with the following statements about the approach taken by the Troubled Families programme in your local authority?

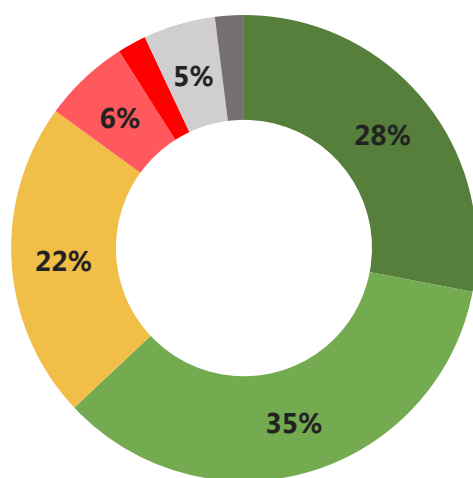


Base: All Keyworkers (1400): Fieldwork dates 23 October to 13 December 2017.
Percentages only shown if 3% or more. (QKW1)

Compared with other aspects of the approach, there is some reservation about how well the programme drives whole system reform.

Three in five (63%) agree that their local authority is driving whole system reform. While positive, this view on the programme’s ability to influence the wider system is less strongly held than attitudes towards how well other aspects of the Troubled Families approach, relating to family engagement, are embedded (as outlined in the chart above). However, this remains in line with findings from 2016.

**To what extent would you agree or disagree with the following statement:
The TF programme in your local authority is driving whole system reform across local partners?**



	2016	2017
Agree	66%	63%

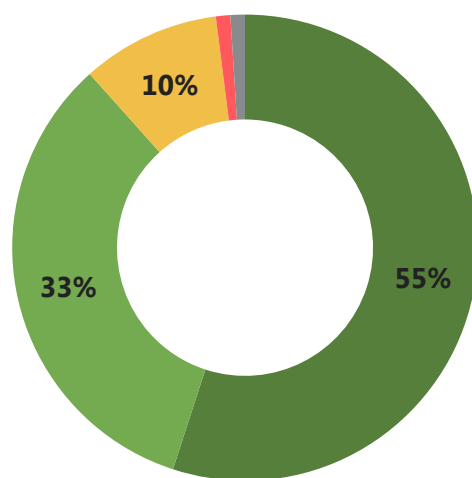
- Strongly agree
- Tend to agree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Tend to disagree
- Strongly disagree
- Don't know
- No opinion

Base: All Keyworkers (1400); Fieldwork dates 23 October to 13 December 2017.
Percentages only shown if 3% or more. (QKW1)

Keyworkers feel that their local Programme is focused on early intervention with families.

Consistent with previous years, nine in ten (88%) keyworkers say that the Troubled Families Programme in their local authority area is focused on early intervention with families, including more than half (55%) who think the programme is focused on this *a great deal*.

To what extent, if at all, would you say that the Troubled Families Programme in your local authority does each of the following?... Is focussed on early intervention with families



	2015	2016	2017
A great deal/ a fair amount	87%	89%	88%

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

Base: All Keyworkers (1400): Fieldwork dates 23 October to 13 December 2017.
Percentages only shown if 3% or more. (QKW2B)

Overall views of the Troubled Families Programme - Summary

The keyworkers responding to the survey remain supportive of the Troubled Families Programme approach: most say it is **effective at whole family working and achieving long-term change in families' circumstances**. These keyworkers also remain positive about how the programme is **focused on early intervention** and helps families to **avoid statutory intervention**.

Keyworkers feel they are **recognised as families' first port of call** and remain positive about how the programme engages with families in their area; **assessments are largely thought to take account of the whole family**, with most having an **allocated keyworker who coordinates services** around their needs. **Family action plans** are regarded as taking account of all family members, reflecting the goals that are agreed with the family, whilst supporting the Troubled Families Outcome Plan for their local authority.

The majority of keyworkers feel the programme is effective in achieving **long-term positive change in wider system reform or service transformation** in their local authority area and across local partners, but agreement has fallen since 2015. They are also less positive about how well their local programme is **driving whole system reform** across local partners; almost a quarter are uncertain whether it does this.

Mirroring the findings from 2016, key workers identify **improved access to mental health services** as a key step in making the programme more effective for service transformation or achieving the goals of MHCLG's early help service transformation maturity model.

3. The Keyworker role

Keyworker profile

Frequency of visits to families

Keyworker activities and types of supports

Actions used to help change behaviour

3 The keyworker role

Keyworkers are mostly female, well qualified and vary in age.

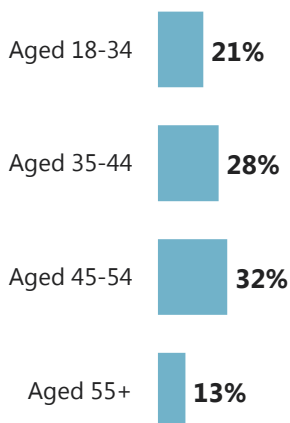
Keyworker profile

Most keyworkers who completed the survey are female (84%) and white (86%). However, the age profile is varied with 21% saying they are aged 18-34, 28% 35-44 and 32% 45-54.

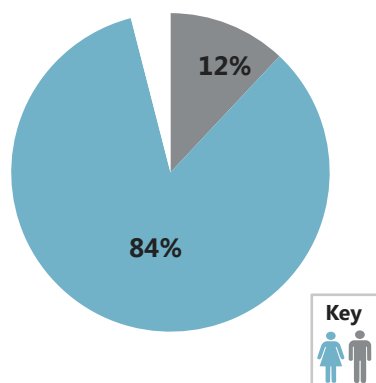
Over half (56%) of keyworkers report they have a Bachelor Degree or equivalent and 22% that they have A level or equivalent.

Keyworkers tend to...

...vary in age



...be more commonly female*



...be well qualified

NVQ+ /degree equivalent or higher: 64%



Base: All Keyworkers (1400): Fieldwork dates 23 October to 13 December 2017. (QD2, QD1, QD3)

* 4% selected prefer not to say

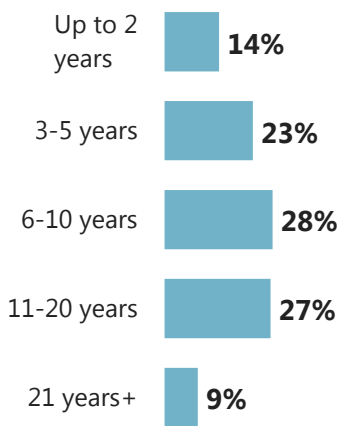
Keyworkers are most commonly employed by a local authority and work in children, young people and families' teams, with varying levels of experience.

Keyworkers report that they are mainly employed by the local authority (86%) with 60% surveyed representing a children, young people and families team and 29% a specific troubled families team within their local authority.

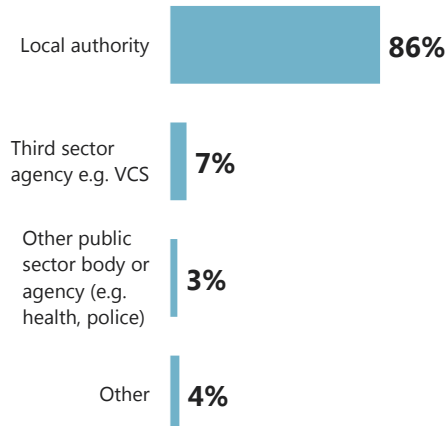
Many have worked with families with complex needs for a while; 64% have more than five years' experience, including 28% who have six to ten years and 27% 11-20 years.

Keyworkers tend to...

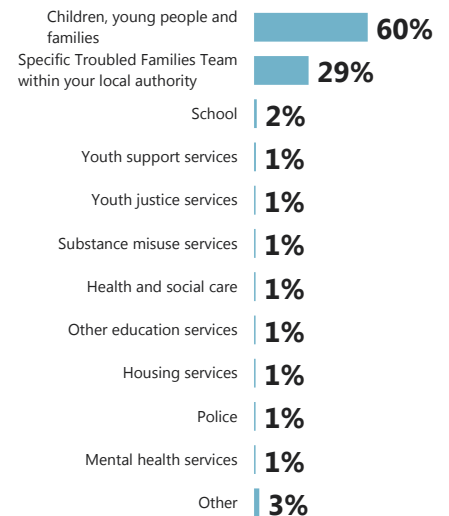
...have varying levels of experience working with families with complex needs



...be mostly employed by a local authority



...be working in a children, young people and families team



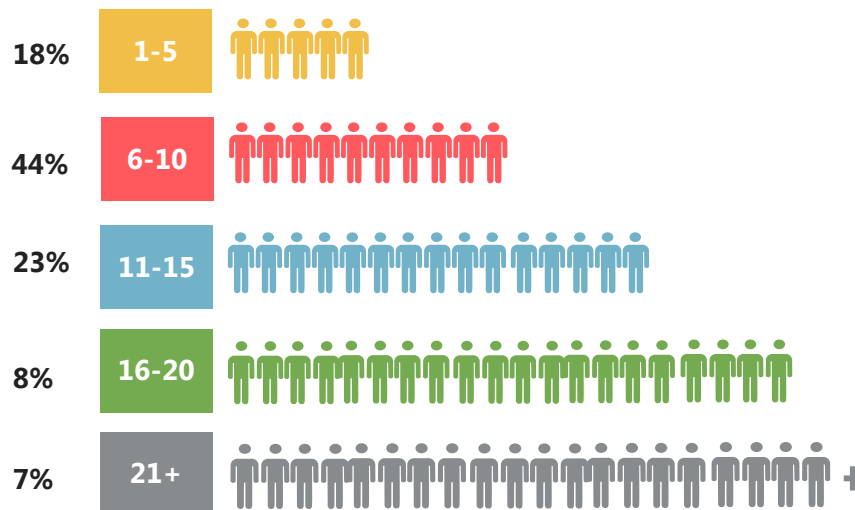
Base: All Keyworkers (1400): Fieldwork dates 23 October to 13 December 2017. (QA4, QA5, QA7)

The most common caseload is between six and ten families, but the range of caseloads across keyworkers varies significantly.

Keyworkers responding to the survey report a varied number of families on their caseload, ranging from one to more than 21 families. On average, keyworkers work with around 12 families, but the most common caseload ranges between six and ten families (selected by 44%). Fewer than one in ten keyworkers (seven per cent) are working with more than 21 families.

This is very similar to the caseload reported by keyworkers in 2016 (an average of 13 families).

What is your current caseload of families? If unsure, please give your best estimate.



Base: All Keyworkers (1400); Fieldwork dates 23 October to 13 December 2017. (W2Q1KW)

Overall keyworkers are making fewer visits to families than in previous years.

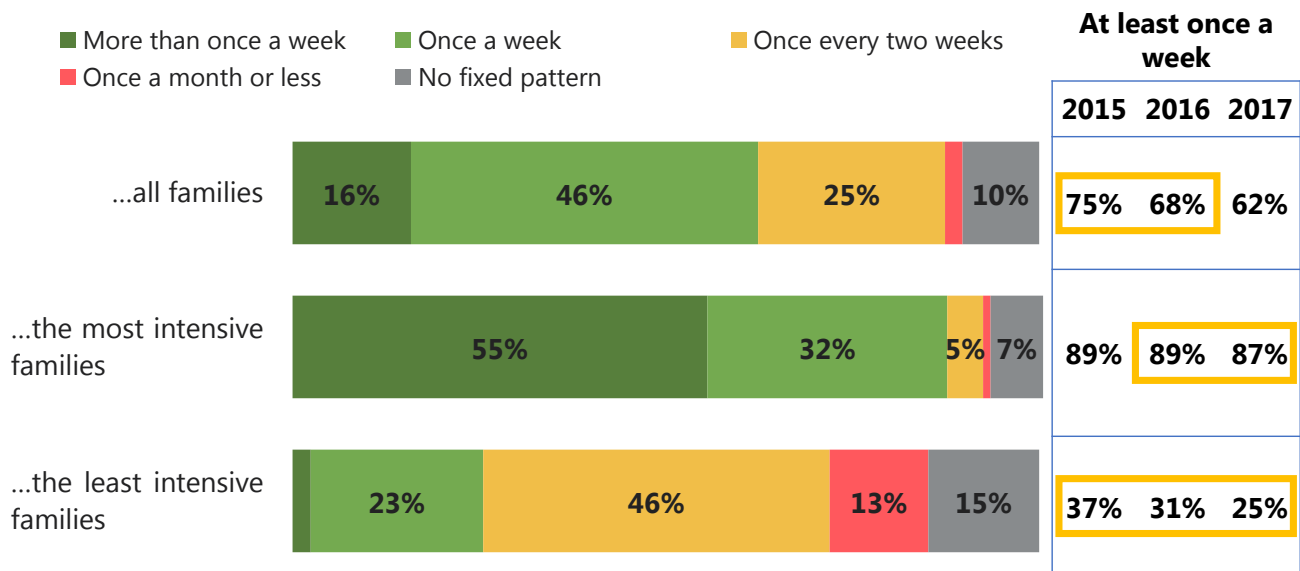
Frequency of visits to families

Three in five (62%) keyworkers visit each family they work with on average at least once a week, and a quarter (25%) visit families once every two weeks. As expected, the frequency of visits is related to the intensity of the engagement:

- Over four in five (87%) visit the families that they are working with most intensively at least once a week, and over half (55%) visit more often.
- For the families that keyworkers are working with least intensively, a quarter (25%) make visits at least once a week and almost half (46%) visit these families once every two weeks.

Of note, there appears to be a trend towards fewer visits to families, largely due to a fall in the number of visits to the least intensive families (25% visit at least once a week compared with 31% in 2016 and 37% in 2015). However, visits to the family’s keyworkers are working with most intensively have also decreased since 2016 (89% in 2016, compared with 87% in 2017).

Thinking about all the families that you work with at the moment who are involved in the programme, how often would you say you visit each on average?

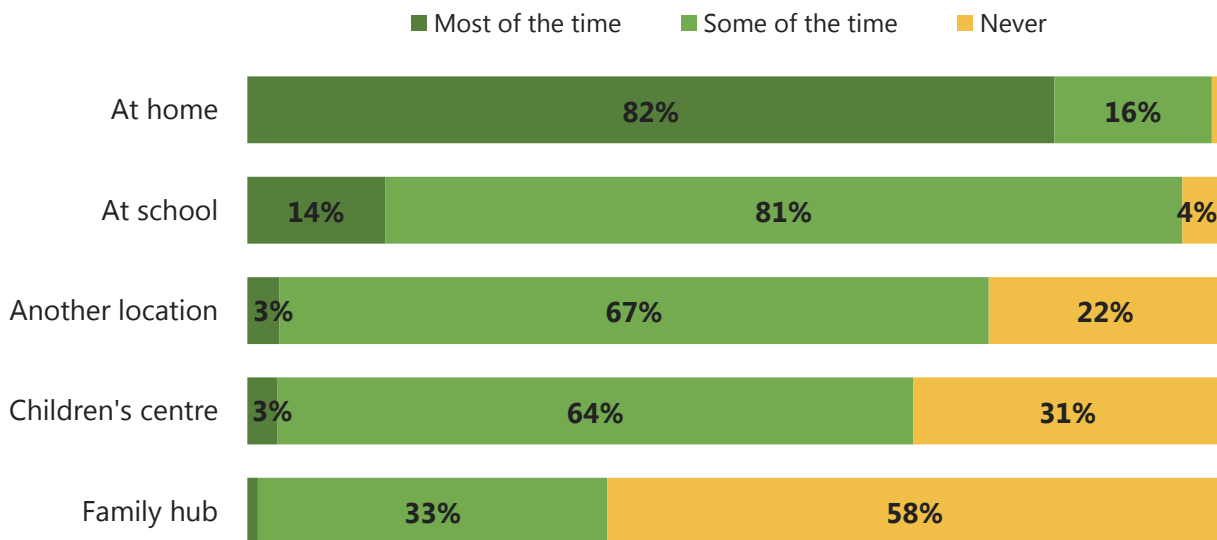


Base: All Keyworkers (1400): Fieldwork dates 23 October to 13 December 2017. Percentages only shown if 3% or more. (QKW5, QKW5, QKW6)

Most keyworkers work with families at home but do use a range of other locations.

Most commonly keyworkers work with families in their homes: four in five (82%) visit families here most of the time, and almost all keyworkers (98%) do so at least some of the time. A range of other locations are used at least some of the time, including schools (95%), children's centres (67%), and family hubs (33%), as well as 'other locations' (70%).

How frequently, if at all, do you see the families you work with at each of the following locations?



Base: All Keyworkers (1400): Fieldwork dates 23 October to 13 December 2017.
Percentages only shown if 3% or more. (W3QKW1)

Keyworker activities are varied but mostly focused on working directly with families.

Keyworker activities and types of support

Keyworkers consider a wide range of different activities to be part of their role in delivering the Troubled Families Programme in their local authority. Almost all identify their role as **building a trusting relationship with the family** and **making referrals to other local services or agencies** (both 96%). Most also say that their role involves **developing action plans with families** (94%) and **advocating for the family with other services** (93%).

As shown in the chart below, where the same options were presented in both the 2015 and 2016 surveys, there has been little if any change.

Which, if any, of the following are part of your role in delivering the Troubled Families Programme in your local authority?

		2015	2016	2017
Building a trusting relationship with the family	96%	N/A	N/A	96%
Making referrals to other local services/agencies	96%	92%	94%	96%
Developing action plans with families	94%	92%	93%	94%
Advocating for the family	93%	N/A	N/A	93%
Delivering interventions/support to families directly	91%	90%	90%	91%
Providing a lead practitioner role, co-ordinating and delivering family action plan	89%	88%	88%	89%
Undertaking whole family assessments	87%	86%	87%	87%
Creating closure reports/ assessments for the family	85%	N/A	N/A	85%

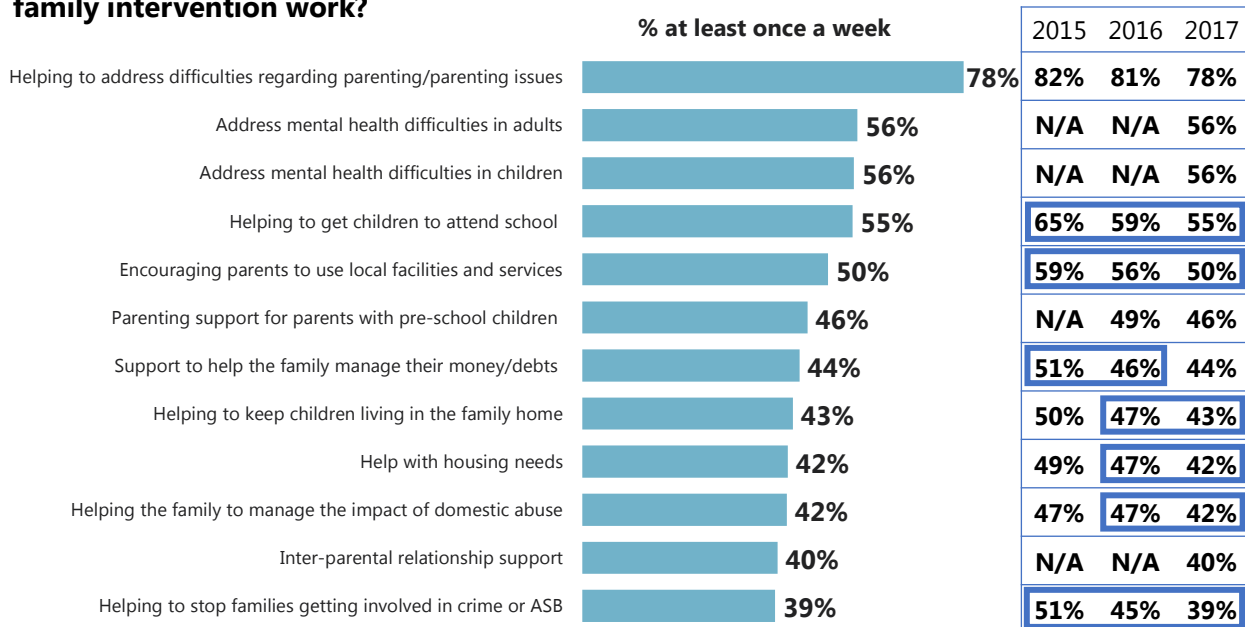
Base: All Keyworkers (1400): Fieldwork dates 23 October to 13 December 2017. (QKW3)

Keyworkers most commonly provide support in relation to parenting.

Keyworkers provide a wide range of support to families. Most commonly they help families to address difficulties regarding **parenting**: more than three quarters (78%) say they do this at least once a week. They are also regularly involved in **getting children to attend school** (55%) and **encouraging parents to use local facilities and services** (50%). Over half help families address **mental health difficulties**, working with both adults and children (56% each).

In comparison with previous years the pattern of support is broadly similar, although a few new categories were added in 2017; splitting out adult and child mental health and including inter-parental relationship support. While fewer select some of the types of support that had been included before (for example, helping to get children to attend school, encouraging parents to use local facilities and services and helping to keep children living in the family home), this may be a result of the fact keyworkers were presented with a longer list to choose from rather than them becoming less important.

How regularly, if at all, do you provide the following types of support in your current family intervention work?



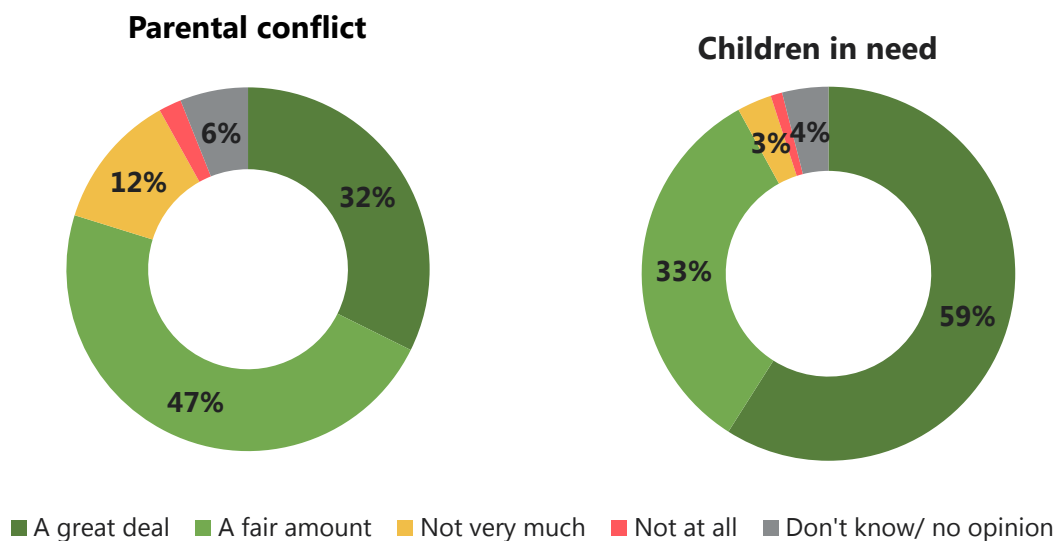
Base: All Keyworkers (1400); Fieldwork dates 23 October to 13 December 2017. Chart shows the top 12 answers. (QKW9)

Keyworkers feel the Programme is good at supporting families where there are children who are designated as in need and, to a slightly lesser extent, parental conflict.

Keyworkers generally feel that the Troubled Families Programme in their local authority area is good at addressing the specific problems of parental conflict and children in need.

- Four in five (79%) say that the programme addresses the problem of parental conflict a great deal or a fair amount.
- Nine in ten (92%) feel the same way about children in need.

To what extent, if at all, do you think the Troubled Families Programme is good at addressing the following in your local authority area?

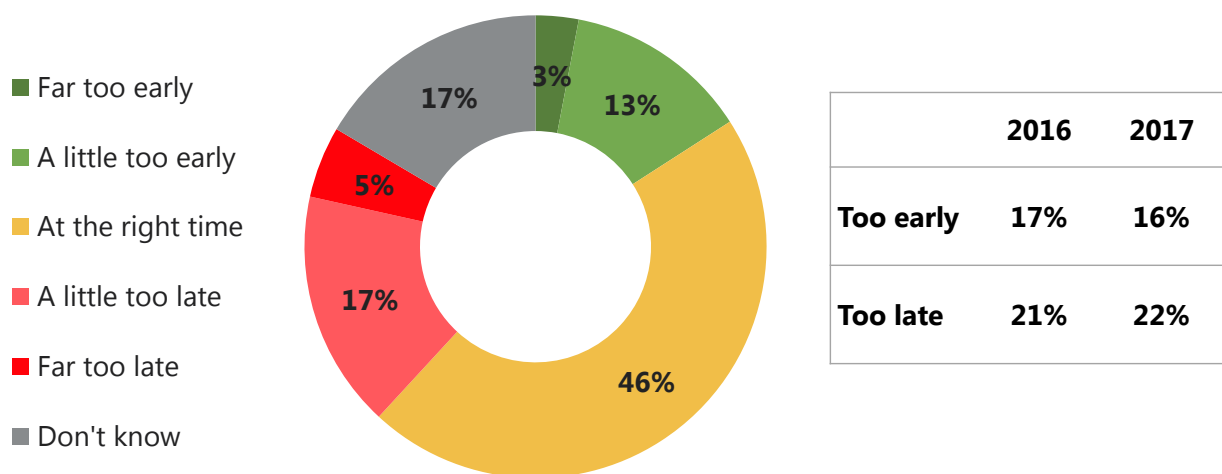


Base: All Keyworkers (1400): Fieldwork dates 23 October to 13 December 2017.
Percentages only shown if 3% or more. (W3QKW2)

Keyworkers are more likely to think that employment support is being offered at the right time, rather than too early or too late.

Nearly half of keyworkers (46%) say that employment support is being offered to families at about the right time. However, similar to previous years, 16% think employment support is offered too early, despite the focus of the programme on early intervention. One in five (22%) say it is offered too late.

In general, would you say that employment support is being offered to families too early, too late or at about the right time during their time on the programme?

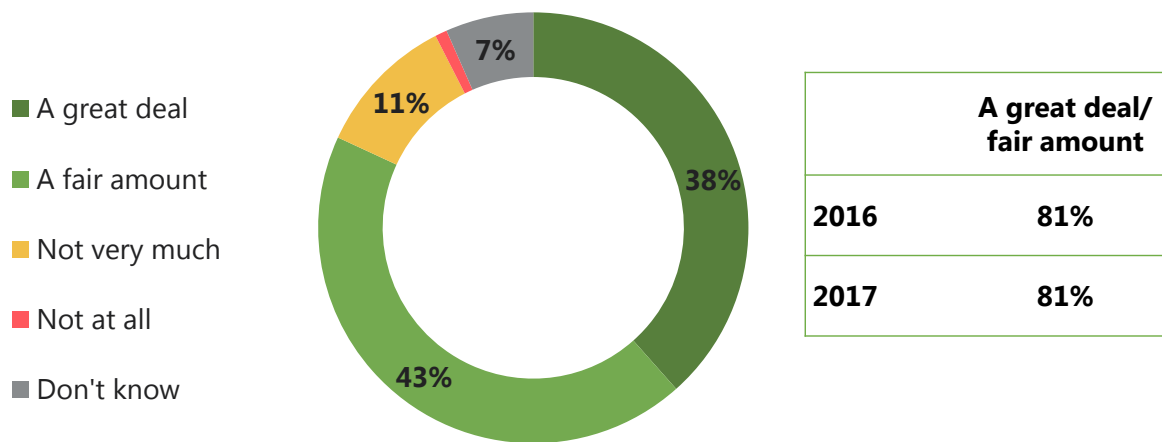


Base: All Keyworkers (1400): Fieldwork dates 23 October to 13 December 2017.
Percentages only shown if 3% or more. (W2Q3KW)

There is a continued belief that employment support is an integrated part of the Programme.

Keyworkers continue to think that employment support is an integrated part of the Troubled Families Programme in their local authority: 81% think it is integrated a great deal or fair amount.

And to what extent, if at all, do you think employment support is an integrated part of the Troubled Families Programme in your local authority?

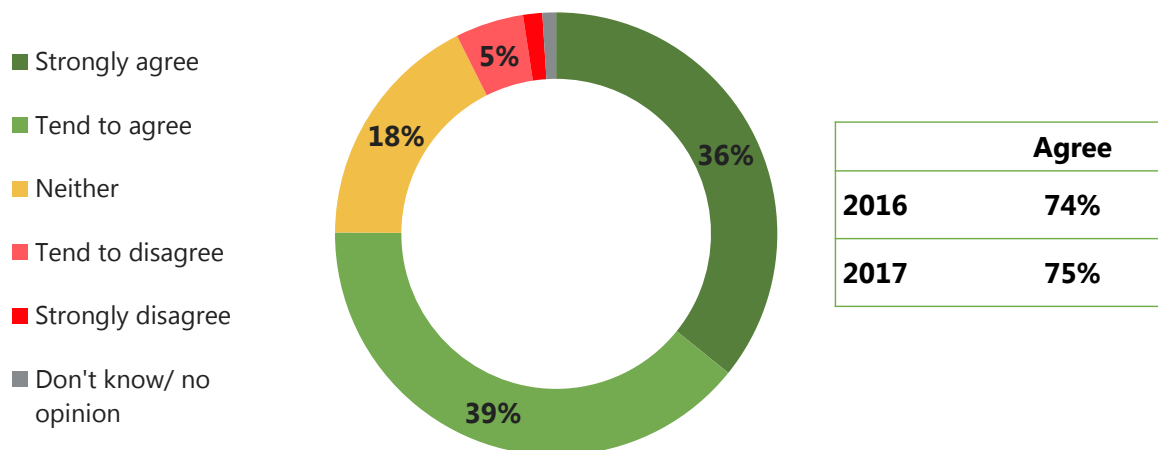


Base: All Keyworkers (1400); Fieldwork dates 23 October to 13 December 2017.
Percentages only shown if 3% or more. (W2Q4KW)

Keyworkers would like more information on employment support and how it can help the families they work with.

However, three quarters (75%) of keyworkers agree that it would be helpful to have more information about employment support and how it can help the families they work with, suggesting a potential gap. This finding is consistent with keyworkers views in 2016.

To what extent do you agree or disagree that it would be helpful to have more information about employment support and how it can help the families you work with?



Base: All Keyworkers (1400): Fieldwork dates 23 October to 13 December 2017.
Percentages only shown if 3% or more. (W2Q2KW)

Keyworkers' actions to encourage behaviour change in families focus on parenting, mental health and safeguarding children.

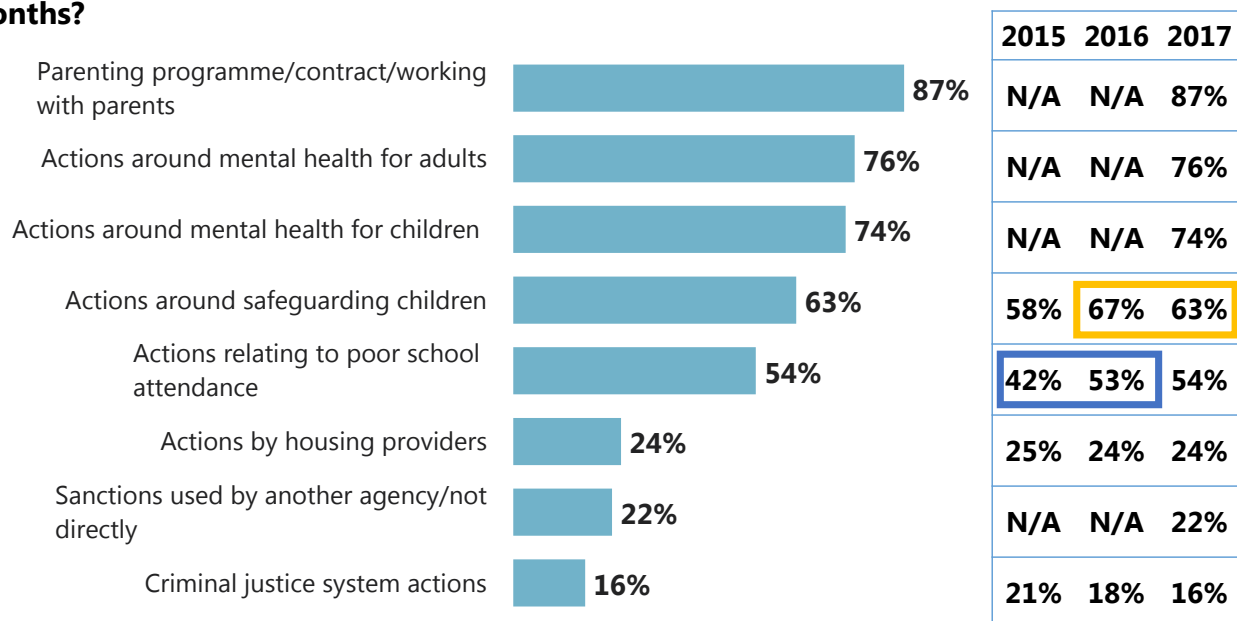
Actions used to help change behaviour

Patterns in keyworkers use of actions to encourage behaviour change continue to demonstrate that the focus of their role relates to children and parenting. In the last six months they have used a variety of actions, but most commonly **parenting programmes or contracts** (used by 87% of keyworkers).

In addition, two in five (63%) have taken action around **safeguarding children** (child protection interventions, backed by the ultimate threat of action to remove children if they are at significant risk of harm). Half (54%) have taken action to tackle **poor school attendance**.

Asked about for the first time in 2017, actions around **mental health** for adults and for children were also widely used (76% and 74% respectively).

Which of the following, if any, have you used to help change behaviour in the last 6 months?



Base: All Keyworkers (1400): Fieldwork dates 23 October to 13 December 2017. (QKW10)

The keyworker role - Summary

Most keyworkers responding to the survey (87%) visit families requiring most intensive support at least once a week, while only a quarter visit families needing least intensive support this frequently. While three-quarters of keyworkers (75%) visited all families at least once a week in 2015, this declined to 62% in 2017. Most visits are made to families in their homes, but other locations are also used some of the time, including schools, children's centres and family hubs.

In terms of their work with families, almost all keyworkers say that **building a trusting relationship with the family** (96%) and **making referrals to other local services or agencies** (96%) are a key part of their role. Helping to **address difficulties regarding parenting** remains the most common type of support that keyworkers provide. Asked specifically, 59% say the programme addresses **children defined as in need** a great deal and a third (32%) say the same about **parental conflict**.

Around half the keyworkers (46%) think that **employment support** is offered at the right time, with more thinking it is offered too late (22%) rather than too early (16%). The majority would like more information on employment support.

4. Multi-agency working

Overall success

Working with partner services

Barriers to effective partnership working

4 Multi-agency working

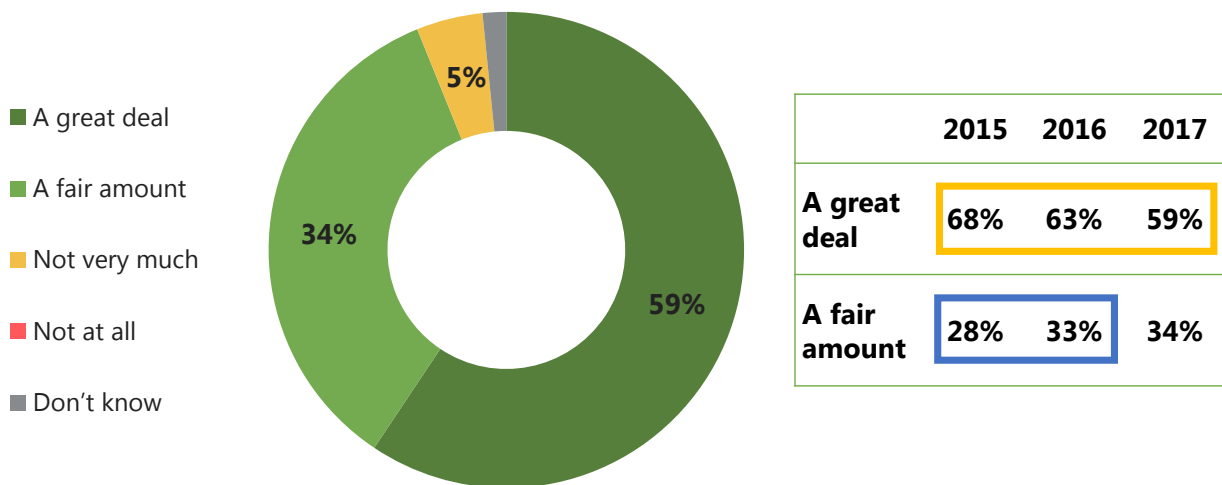
Keyworkers consider that multi-agency working contributes significantly to the success of the programme.

Overall success

Keyworkers continue to be positive about the contribution of multi-agency partnership working towards the success of the Troubled Families Programme in their local authority area. Almost all keyworkers (93%) think that **multi-agency partnership working** contributes significantly to the success of the programme, with more than half (59%) saying that it contributes *a great deal*.

While this is very positive overall, there has been a fall in the proportion of keyworkers who say multi-agency partnership working contributes *a great deal*, representing a trend of continued decline (from 68% in 2015 to 63% in 2016 and 59% in 2017).

And to what extent does multiagency partnership working contribute towards the success of the programme in your local authority?



Base: All Keyworkers (1400); Fieldwork dates 23 October to 13 December 2017.
Percentages only shown if 3% or more. (QKW12)

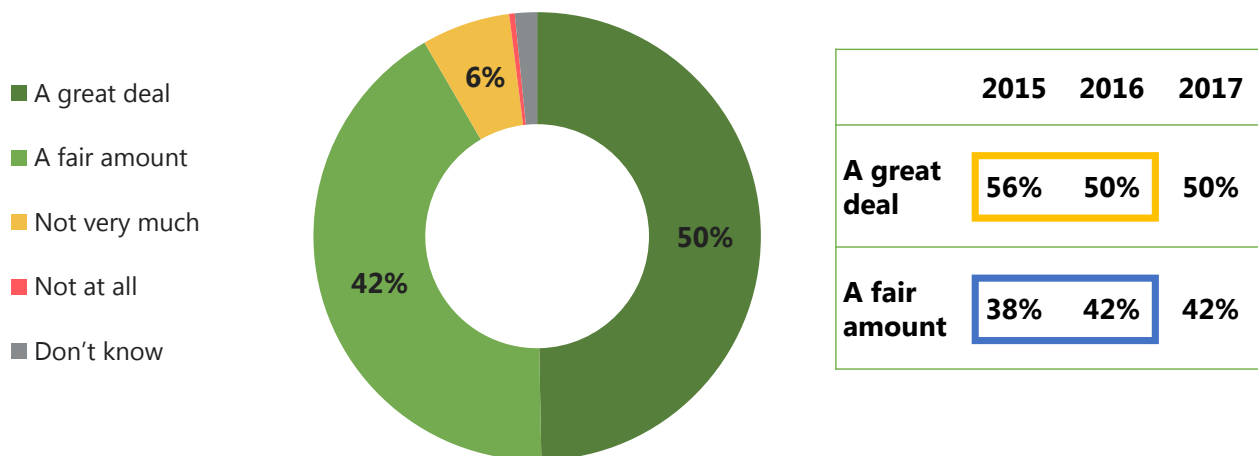
Local programmes are seen to encourage input from partner agencies.

Working with partner agencies

Consistent with 2016, almost all (92%) keyworkers think that the Troubled Families Programme encourages effective input from all agencies relevant to each case, including half (50%) who think the programme does this *a great deal*.

To what extent, if at all, would you say that the Troubled Families programme in your local authority does each of the following?

Encourages effective input from all agencies relevant to each case

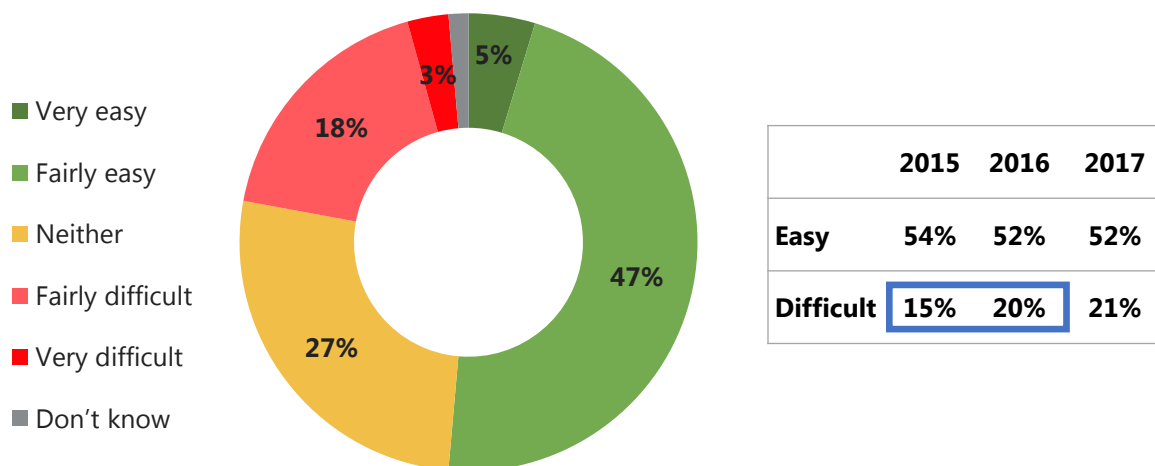


Base: All Keyworkers (1400); Fieldwork dates 23 October to 13 December 2017.
Percentages only shown if 3% or more. (QKW2A)

Half of keyworkers find it easy to work with partner organisations.

Although keyworkers appreciate the contribution of multi-agency partnership working to the success of the programme, they are less positive about their ability to get the support they need from partner organisations to deliver solutions for families: half (52%) say it is easy, with most (47%) saying *fairly* easy. One in five (21%) admit to finding it difficult and three in ten (27%) are unable to express a view either way.

In general, how easy would you say it is to get the support you need from partner organisations to deliver solutions for families?



Base: All Keyworkers (1400): Fieldwork dates 23 October to 13 December 2017.
Percentages only shown if 3% or more. (QKW11)

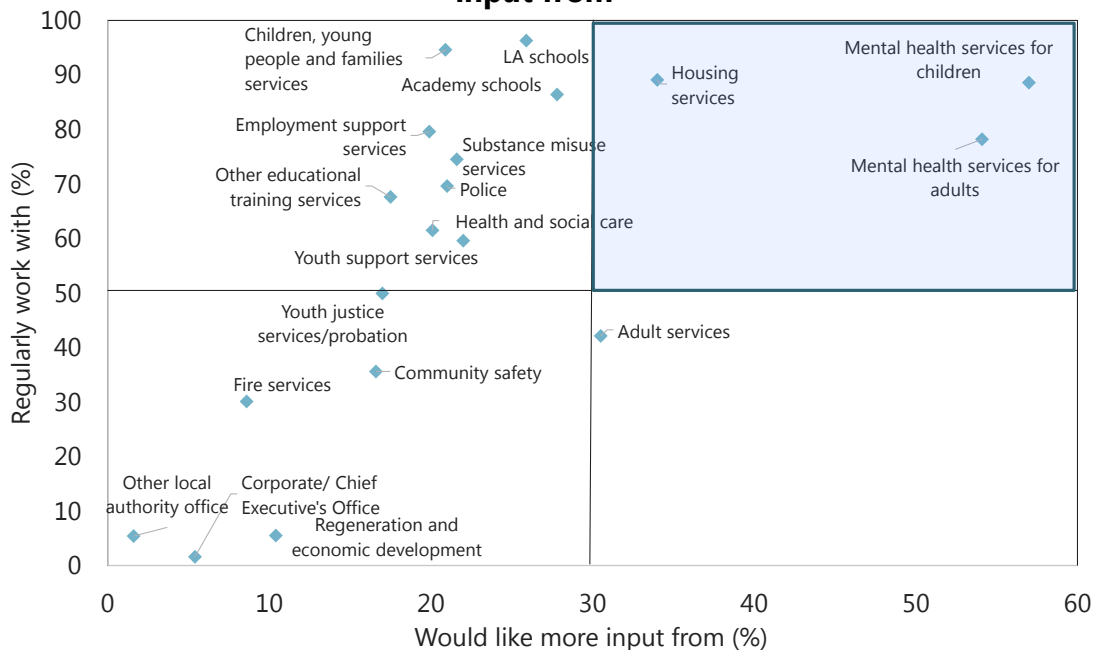
Keyworkers are happy with the input they receive from most services but would like more in relation to mental health and housing.

Keyworkers regularly work with a wide range of services in order to support families. Most commonly, they work with local authority schools (96%), children, young people and families' services (95%), housing services (89%), and mental health services for children (89%).

The chart below plots those services keyworkers work with most regularly against those they would like more input from, in relative terms; the bottom left hand quadrant includes the services they work with less frequently but feel they have sufficient input from; the top left includes those worked with more frequently but again, most feel that the level of input is good; the top right indicates those services that TFEAs would like more input from even though they are among those they already work with most regularly.

This analysis shows that keyworkers are mostly happy with the level of input received from most services but identifies mental health services for children, and to a lesser extent those for adults, along with housing services as those they would like greater engagement with; a finding that is consistent with the pattern found in both 2015 and 2016.

Services keyworkers regularly work with compared with those they would like more input from



Base: All Keyworkers (1400): Fieldwork dates 23 October to 13 December 2017. (QKW13, QKW14)

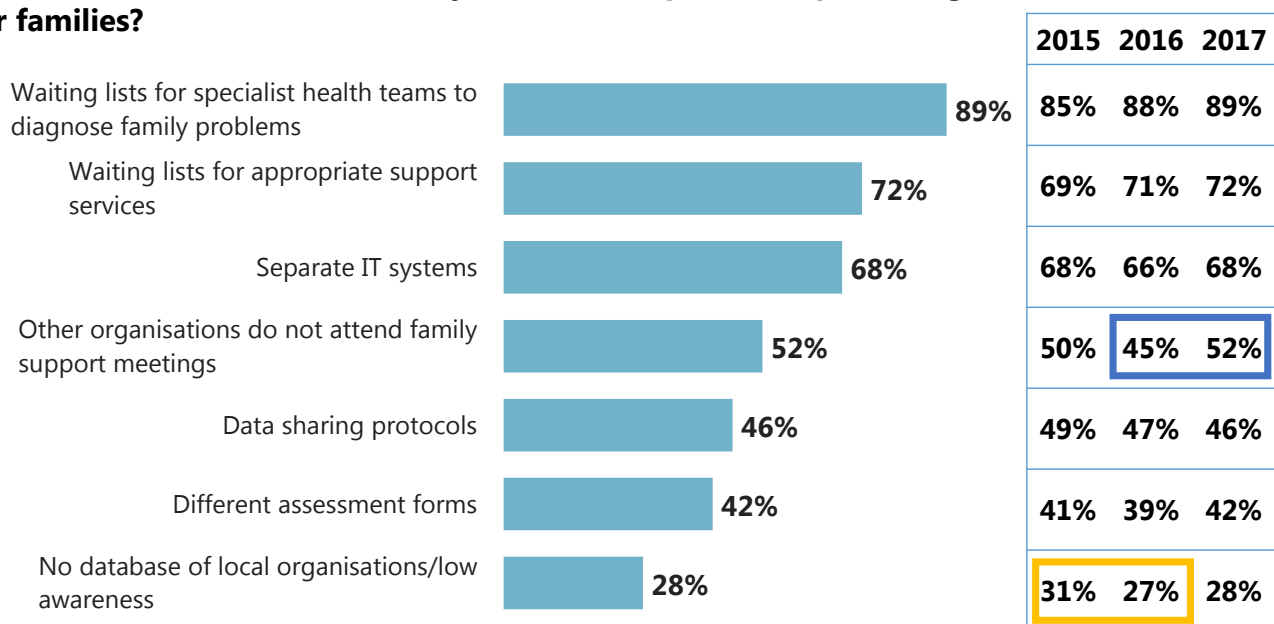
Keyworkers identify waiting lists as the main barrier to effective partnership working.

Barriers to effective partnership working

Waiting lists for specialist health teams to diagnose family problems (e.g. Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services) along with waiting lists for other appropriate support services are perceived as the main barriers to effective partnership working (89% and 72% respectively). Other key barriers identified by keyworkers include separate IT systems (68%) and other organisations not attending family support meetings (52%).

In comparison with 2016, the pattern of barriers is consistent but more single out other organisations not attending family support meetings as a barrier.

What are the main barriers, if any, to effective partnership working to deliver solutions for families?



Base: All Keyworkers (1400); Fieldwork dates 23 October to 13 December 2017. (QKW15)

Multi-agency working - Summary

Multi-agency working is a key component of the Service Transformation Model underpinning the Troubled Families Programme. Its importance is reflected in keyworkers' view of **multi-agency working**, with almost all (93%) agreeing that it contributes at least a fair amount to the success of the programme. Further, almost all (92%) keyworkers think that the programme significantly **encourages effective input from all agencies relevant to each case**. Nevertheless, only half (52%) find it easy to get the **support they need from partner organisations to deliver solutions for families**. As in 2016, **waiting lists** for specialist health teams to diagnose family problems (e.g. Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services) and waiting lists for other appropriate support services are perceived as the main barriers to effective partnership working (89% and 72% respectively). Reflecting this, while mostly happy with the support from local services, keyworkers continue to identify housing and mental health services for adults and children as areas they would like greater input from.

5. Workforce development

Development of keyworker skills

Training, support and supervision

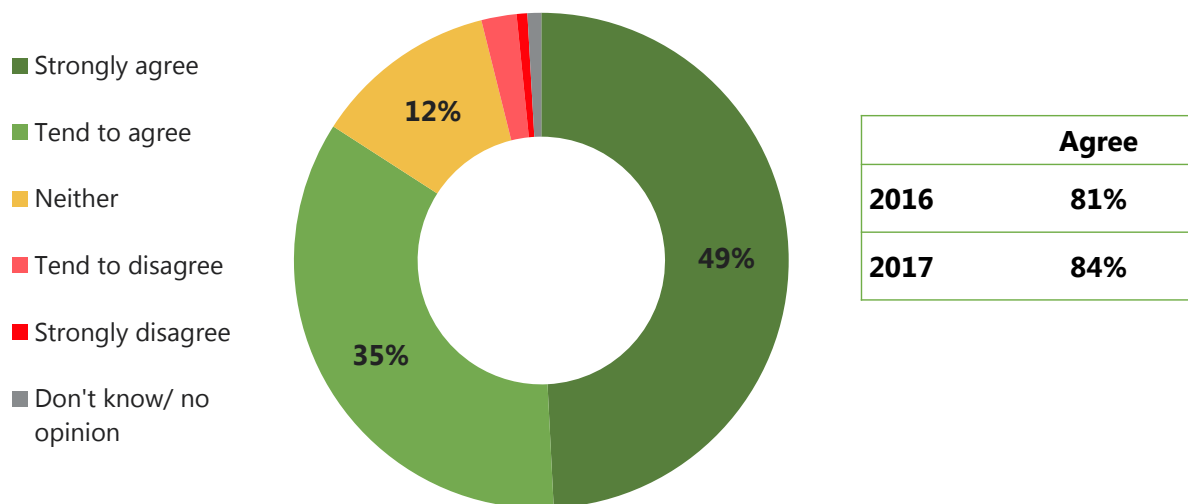
5 Workforce development

Keyworkers have a strong appetite for skills development.

Development of keyworker skills

More than four in five keyworkers (84%) agree that they would like to develop their skills further to help them deliver effective services for families. This is in line with previous findings.

Troubled Families involves different ways of working for staff across the public service. To what extent do you agree or disagree that you would like to develop your skills further to help you deliver effective services for families?



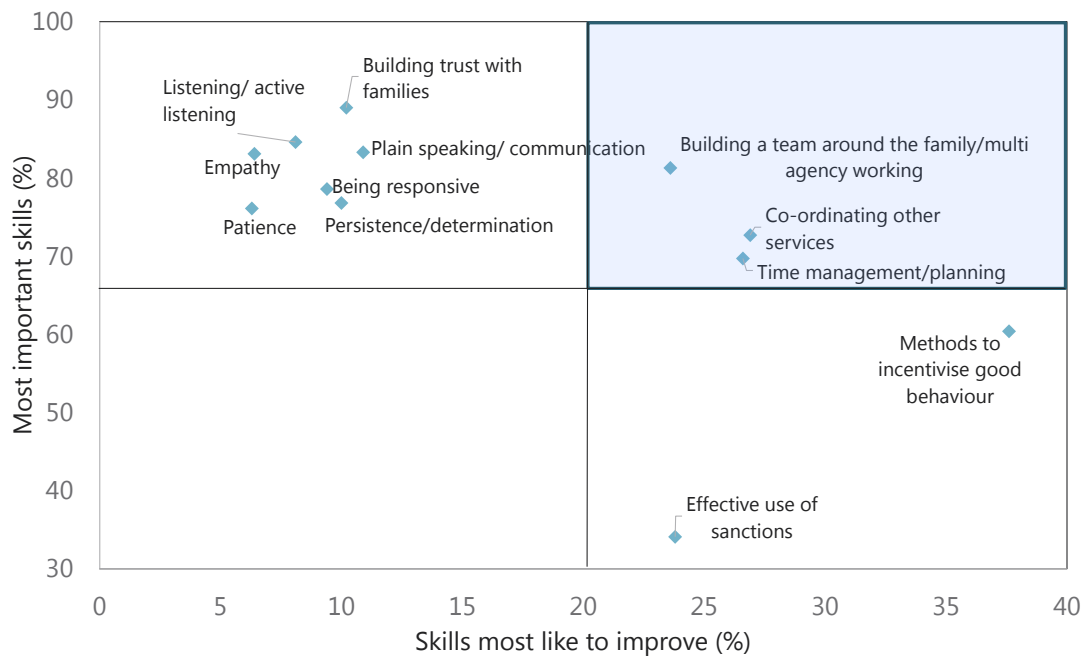
Base: All Keyworkers (1400); Fieldwork dates 23 October to 13 December 2017.
Percentages only shown if 3% or more. (W2Q5KW)

Keyworkers would like to improve methods to incentivise good behaviour, coordinate other services and time management.

Keyworkers identify ‘soft’ communication and relationship building skills as most important to delivering their role, including building trust with families (89%), listening (85%), plain speaking and empathy (both 83%). However, they are mostly confident in these skills, which are not a focus for improvement. Instead they would like to develop methods to incentivise good behaviour among families (38%), coordinating other services (27%) and time management and planning (27%) along with building a team around the family (24%).

This is a similar pattern to that found in both 2016 and 2015.

Skills keyworkers identify as important compared with those they would like to improve



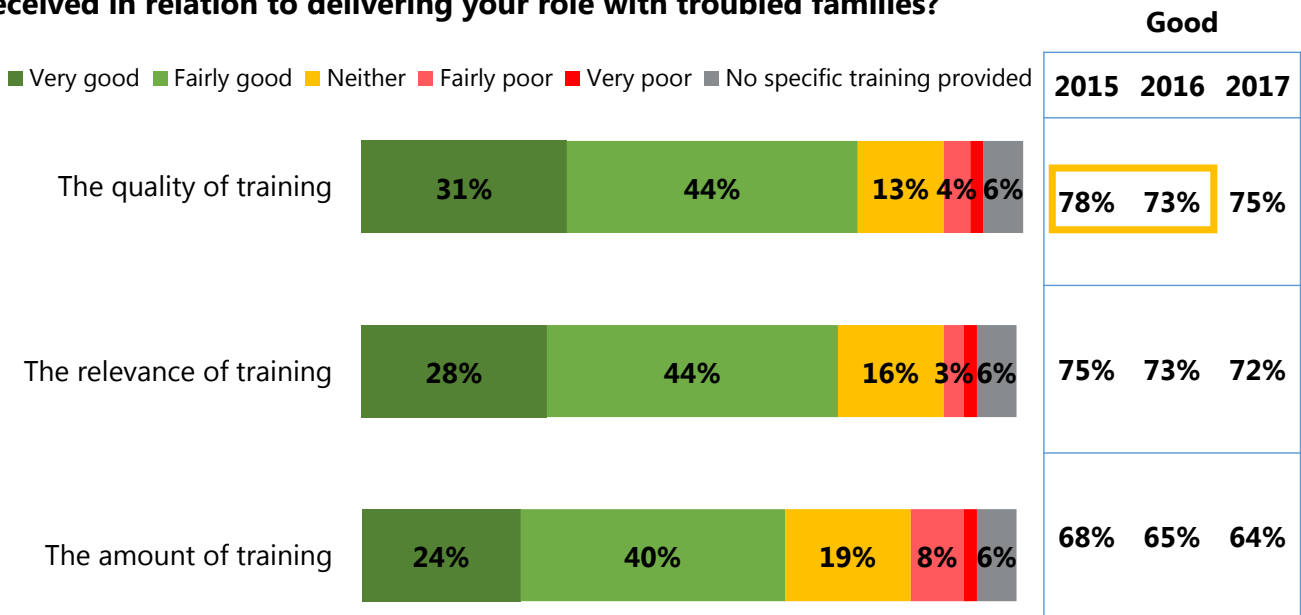
Base: All Keyworkers (1400): Fieldwork dates 23 October to 13 December 2017. (QKW17, QKW18)

Keyworkers are positive about the quality, relevance and amount of training they receive.

Training, support and supervision

Keyworkers are positive about the training they have received in relation to delivering their role with troubled families. Three quarters (75%) rate the **quality of training** as good, and a similar proportion (72%) rate the **relevance of training** as good. Slightly fewer (64%) say the **amount of training** they receive is good. Keyworkers' views on these aspects of their training are similar to previous years.

How would you rate the quality of the following aspects of the training you have received in relation to delivering your role with troubled families?

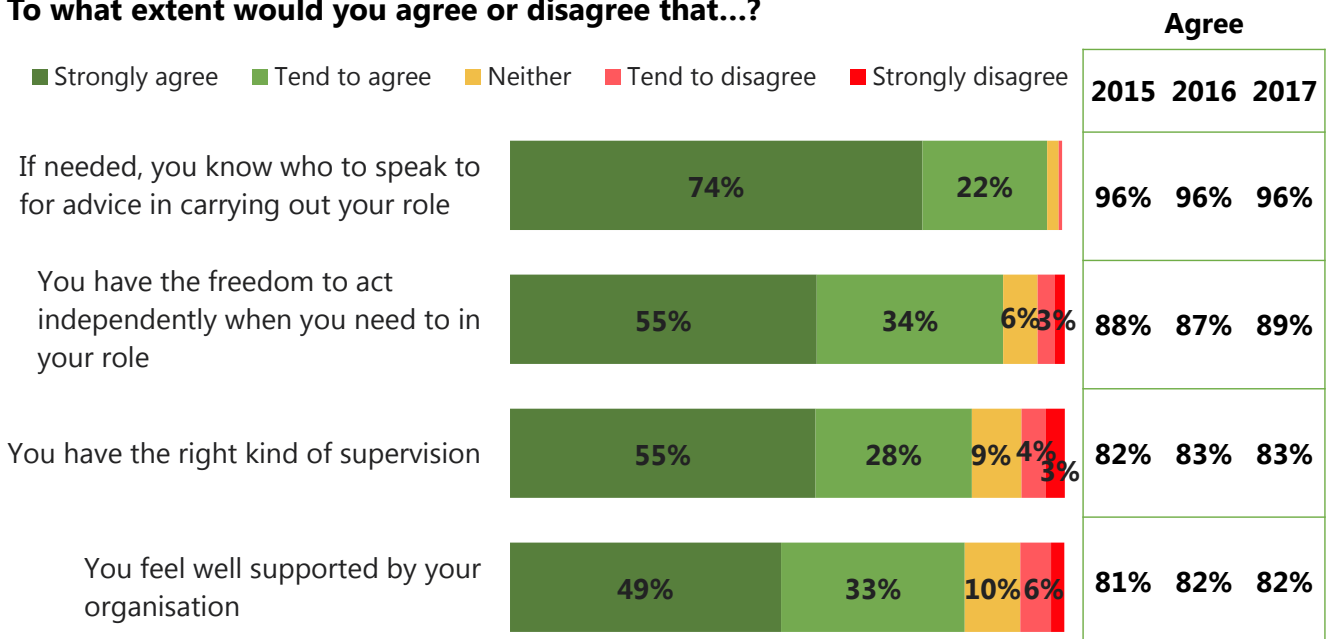


Base: All Keyworkers (1400): Fieldwork dates 23 October to 13 December 2017. Percentages only shown if 3% or more. (QKW19)

Keyworkers continue to be very satisfied with the support and supervision available in their role.

Almost all keyworkers (96%) agree that they know who to speak to for advice in carrying out their role if needed, and four in five agree that they have the right kind of supervision and feel well supported by their organisation (83% and 82% respectively). Additionally, nine in ten (89%) keyworkers agree that they have the freedom to act independently when they need to in their role. These findings are consistent over all three waves of research.

To what extent would you agree or disagree that...?



Base: All Keyworkers (1400); Fieldwork dates 23 October to 13 December 2017. Percentages only shown if 3% or more. (QKW20)

Workforce development - Summary

As in previous years, keyworkers **rate the quality, relevance and amount of training** they are able to access positively. They also **feel well supported**, with the **right level of supervision** while feeling they have the **freedom to act independently**.

Keyworkers appear eager to learn; they are keen to **develop their current skills further** to enable them to deliver effective services for families, and would particularly like to improve methods to incentivise good behaviour, time management/planning, building a team around the family/multi-agency working and co-ordinating other services.

6 Conclusions

6 Conclusions

This is the **third annual survey of keyworkers** involved in delivering the Troubled Families Programme. The research set out to explore their views on the overall programme, their everyday roles, multi-agency working and their own development as keyworkers.

The **results are mostly consistent** with those found previously – both in terms of the keyworker role and their views of the programme – it continues to be seen as effective at achieving long-term positive change in both families' circumstances and whole family working.

Delivering the Troubled Families Programme – the keyworker role.

Models of delivery are similar to previous waves of research, with the majority of keyworkers taking part in the survey **employed by a local authority** (86%), and three in five (60%) working within a children, young people and families team.

Keyworkers are **well qualified** (64% hold an NVQ4+) and are **mostly female** (84%), reflecting the profile in 2016.

The average caseload for a keyworker is around 12 families. Overall, the **frequency of visits to these families has fallen**, although this difference is largely accounted for by a trend of fewer regular visits (i.e. at least once a week) to those they are working with least intensively. However, in 2017 the frequency of visits to the most intensive families had also seen a decline.

Most of the time **keyworkers visit families at home**, but other locations such as schools or children's centres are also used some of the time.

Keyworkers remain involved in similar activities with families; with **direct engagement with the whole family dominating their role**. This includes developing and delivering action plans as well as delivering support directly and undertaking whole family assessments. They also focus on the need to build a trusting relationship with families, asked about for the first time in 2017. Highlighting the continued importance of multi-agency working, making referrals to other local services also remains a key part of their role.

Much of the keyworker **role is focused on parenting interventions**, though a range of other types of support are also provided, including mental health (for adults and children), money management,

housing and domestic abuse and anti-social behaviour. These activities are similar to those identified in previous years.

The focus on children and parenting also continues to be reflected in the actions keyworkers use to **encourage behaviour change**, with parenting programmes or contracts and actions around safeguarding children and poor school attendance topping the list. However, again, reflecting the focus on their work, mental health actions also feature very highly; asked about for the first time in 2017.

In line with previous waves, almost all keyworkers (84%) are **keen to develop their current skills** to enable them to deliver effective services to families. They continue to focus on wanting to develop methods to incentivise good behaviour, co-ordinating other services and time management and planning. However, they are also **positive about the training received and feel well supported**, with the **right level of supervision** while feeling they have the **freedom to act independently**.

Views of the programme – keyworkers continue to be positive about the Troubled Families approach.

Keyworkers are supportive of the Troubled Families Programme approach: 88% say it is effective at achieving **whole family working** and 80% say it is effective at achieving **long-term change in families' circumstances**; the latter is in line with 2016 but slightly below findings in 2015 (78% and 84% respectively).

Similarly, **early intervention** continues to be recognised as a key focus for the programme (88% say a great deal/fair amount) and that it helps families to **avoid statutory intervention** (90%).

Keyworkers also remain very **positive about how the programme engages with families** in their area suggesting it continues to embed well; assessments and family action plans are largely thought to take account of the whole family and are recognised as jointly agreed. Almost all say the model locally involves an allocated keyworker who co-ordinates services around the needs of the family (96%) and feel they are recognised as families' first port of call (90%).

There is continued belief that **employment support** is an integrated part of the programme (81% say at least a fair amount), but keyworkers would **like more information about how this type of support can help families** (75% agree).

Looking at some specific problems for the first time in 2017, keyworkers are positive about the ability of the programme to support families where there are **children who are designated as in need** in their local area (59% say it does this a great deal), but they are less positive about **resolving parental conflict** (32%).

While positive, keyworkers appear to have some reservations about the ability of the programme to drive long-term positive change in terms of **service transformation in their local authority or across local partners**; in both cases significant minorities feel unable to express an opinion either way.

That said, keyworkers continue to feel that **multi-agency working directly contributes to the success of the programme**; 93% say it contributes to the effectiveness of the local programme and 92% that it encourages effective input from all agencies related to each case.

However, there is some evidence that keyworkers find it **difficult to get the support they need from partners** when delivering solutions for families; 21% say it is difficult. Housing and particularly mental health (adults and children) stand out as the services they would like more input from, with waiting

lists for specialist health teams to diagnose family problems topping the list of barriers to effective partnership working.

Areas for development - keyworkers.

The Troubled Families Programme aims to bring about change in the delivery and management of local services for families. Keyworkers continue to be positive about these changes, but as with the findings from 2016 and 2015, the research does identify some persistent challenges.

Multi-agency working: keyworkers are positive about the multi-agency approach but there is continued evidence that working with partners is not always easy. One in five (21%) say it is *difficult* to get support from partners, in line with 2016 (20%) but a poorer picture than in 2015 (15%). Further, while there was some improvement between 2015 and 2016 in terms of partnership working these gains seem to have been short-lived, for example, with more in 2017 mentioning that other organisations do not attend family support meetings (52% compared with 45% in 2016).

Improving relationships with health services: this was identified as a key problem in the first wave of research and persists as a focus of concern. Keyworkers would like greater input from mental health services, both in terms of adults and children, and also continue to identify waiting lists for health teams as one of the main barriers to effective partnership working. There is also a suggestion that keyworkers would like greater input from **housing services** than they currently get, albeit to a lesser extent than in relation to health services.

Keyworker training and development: keyworkers continue to be keen to develop their skills to enable them to deliver effective services to families. They remain confident in the 'softer' skills required for their role and are looking to develop management techniques, such as time management/planning, the ability to co-ordinate other services and building a team around the family. They are also keen to develop their ability to use methods to incentivise good behaviour.

Employment support: keyworkers recognise that employment support is an integrated part of the programme but there appears to be a continued gap that has not been filled over the course of the last two years, with three quarters consistently keen to have more information on how it can help the families they work with.

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