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Social Research Institute

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Troubled Families Programme National Evaluation

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 fifth and final wave of research 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.

The Troubled Families Programme (2015-2021) aims to support up to 400,000 complex families with multiple high-cost problems. 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 early help approach across partner agencies including the police, housing, schools, the voluntary sector and health.

This research is one element of the national evaluation, alongside a longitudinal quantitative family survey, qualitative case studies and analysis of national and local datasets.

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 costs and benefits that this has for the taxpayer. In 2018 and 2019 new questions were asked to further explore whole family interventions and the efficacy of the programme in relation to children at risk of becoming looked after. No new questions were added in 2019.

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 150 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 2,008 keyworkers, covering 123 of the 150 local authorities. The majority of these participating local authorities (98 of the 123) also had responses from keyworkers in 2018. Fieldwork was conducted between 17 October and 8 December 2019.

Separate reports present findings for similar surveys of Troubled Families Co-ordinators (TFCs) and Troubled Families Employment Advisors (TFEAs).

The staff surveys among keyworkers, TFCs and TFEAs are designed to run annually over the five years of the evaluation; this is the fifth and final in the series.

The questionnaire for the keyworkers survey was updated between waves to reflect changes in the delivery of the programme. However, many questions are consistent allowing for comparison over time. 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).

	Fieldwork dates	Sample size
Wave 1	26 October - 30 November 2015	1,360 keyworkers
Wave 2	31 October - 9 December 2016	1,274 keyworkers
Wave 3	23 October - 13 December 2017	1,400 keyworkers
Wave 4	17 October - 16 December 2018	1,398 keyworkers
Wave 5	17 October - 8 December 2019	2,008 keyworkers

Where the 2019 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.

Notes for the reader

'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 bar charts are easy to read, where a response is three per cent or lower the figure is not shown.

Where data is available for more than two waves of the survey, this is shown in a line chart or included in tables in the report appendices.

2. Overall views of the Troubled Families Programme

Overall effectiveness

Embedding the approach

2 Overall views of the Troubled Families Programme

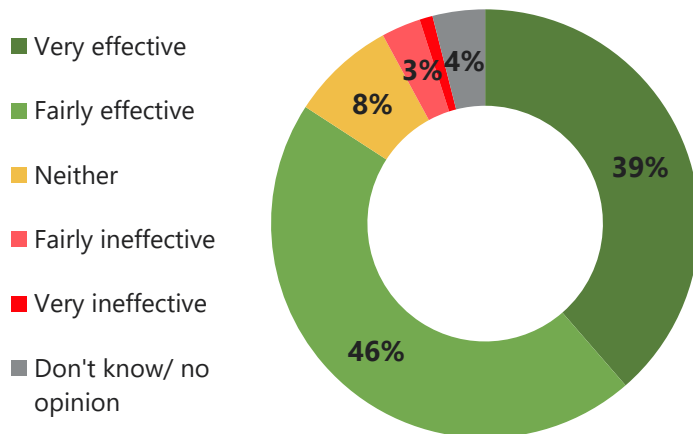
Most keyworkers think the programme effectively achieves whole family working.

Overall effectiveness

Most keyworkers (84%) agree that the delivery of the Troubled Families Programme is effective at achieving whole family working; and two in five (39%) say that it is very effective.

Keyworkers have consistently regarded the programme as effective at achieving whole family working across all of the waves of the research.

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



	2016	2017	2018	2019
Effective	85%	88%	86%	84%
Ineffective	3%	3%	3%	4%

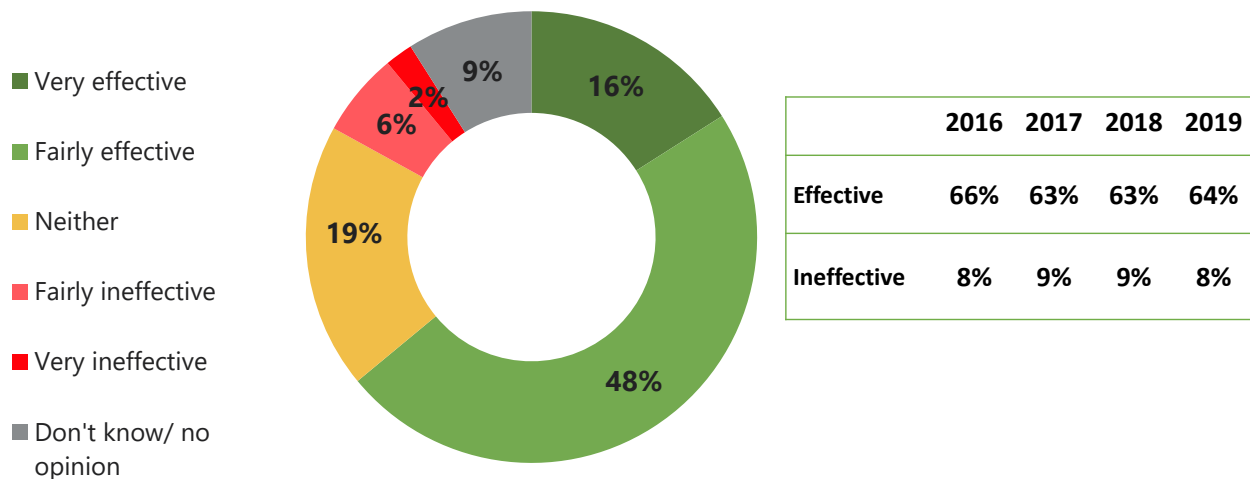
Base: All Keyworkers (2,008); Fieldwork dates 17 October to 8 December 2019. (KW22B)

The majority of keyworkers feel that the programme is effective at achieving long term positive change in wider system reform.

Consistent with the findings from previous waves, three in five keyworkers (64%) say the Troubled Families Programme is effective at achieving long-term positive change in wider system reform or service transformation.

However, this view is only strongly held by a minority of keyworkers; 16% say it is very effective, while 19% are not able to express an opinion either way and one in ten (9%) say they don't know.

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?



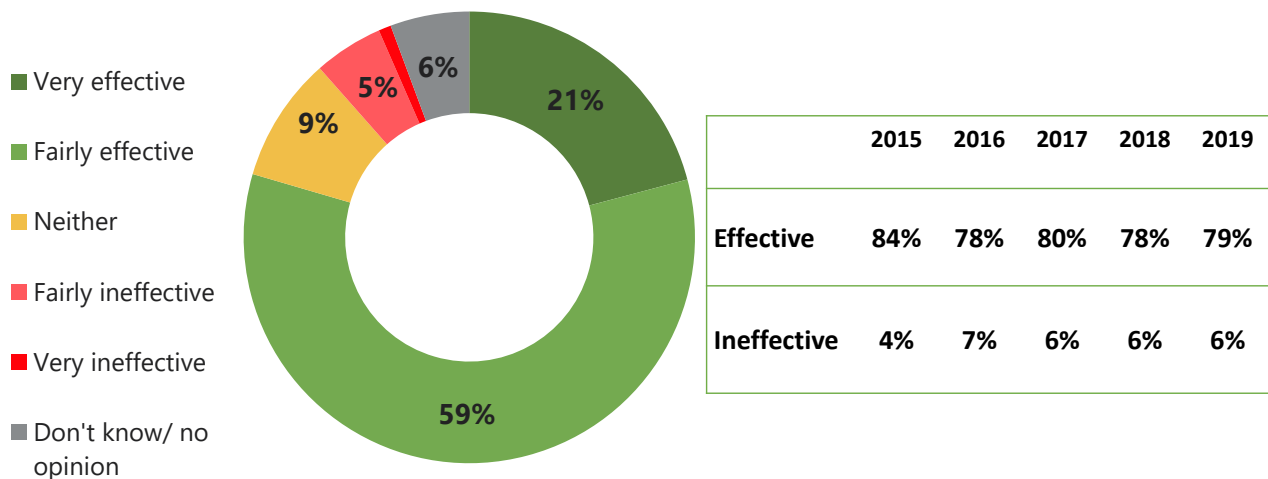
Base: All Keyworkers (2,008); Fieldwork dates 17 October to 8 December 2019. (QKW22C)

The Troubled Families Programme is consistently regarded by keyworkers as effective at achieving long-term positive change in families' circumstances.

Almost four in five keyworkers (79%) say that the delivery of the Troubled Families Programme is effective at achieving long term positive change in families' circumstances. However, keyworkers are more likely to say that it is *fairly* effective in this respect, rather than *very* effective (59%, compared with 21%).

In line with previous years, very few (six per cent) say that the programme is *ineffective* at achieving long term positive change in families' circumstances.

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



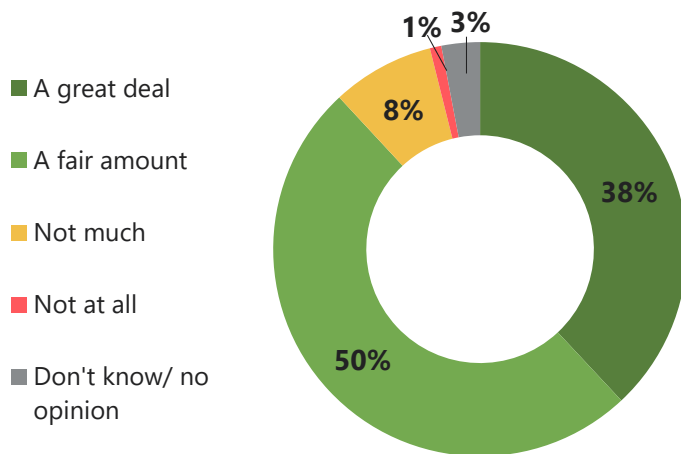
Base: All Keyworkers (2,008); Fieldwork dates 17 October to 8 December 2019. (QKW22A)

Helping families avoid statutory intervention is regarded as a major success of the Troubled Families Programme.

In line with previous years, almost nine in ten keyworkers (88%) think that the Troubled Families Programme in their local authority helps families avoid statutory intervention.

Nearly two in five keyworkers (38%) say that the programme helps a *great deal* in this respect and half (50%) say a *fair amount*.

To what extent, if at all, would you say that the Troubled Families Programme in your local authority successfully helps families to avoid statutory intervention?



	2016	2017	2018	2019
A great deal/ fair amount	91%	90%	90%	88%

Base: All Keyworkers (2,008); Fieldwork dates 17 October to 8 December 2019. (QKW2C)

Improving access to mental health services is identified as key to making the programme more effective for service transformation and achieving the goals of the maturity model.

Keyworkers were asked which three things would make the Troubled Families Programme more effective for service transformation and achieving the goals of MHCLG's early help service transformation maturity model. They tend to identify the same key priorities year-on-year and, consistent with previous waves of the survey, **improved access to mental health services** is most often selected by keyworkers (61%).

Two in five (41%) keyworkers say that having more **financial resources** would make the programme more effective, followed by greater **flexibility over timescales and outcomes during intervention** along with more support and input from external agencies (both 37%).

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 (2,008); Fieldwork dates 17 October to 8 December 2019. (QKW23)

Keyworkers remain overwhelmingly positive about how the programme in their local authority engages families.

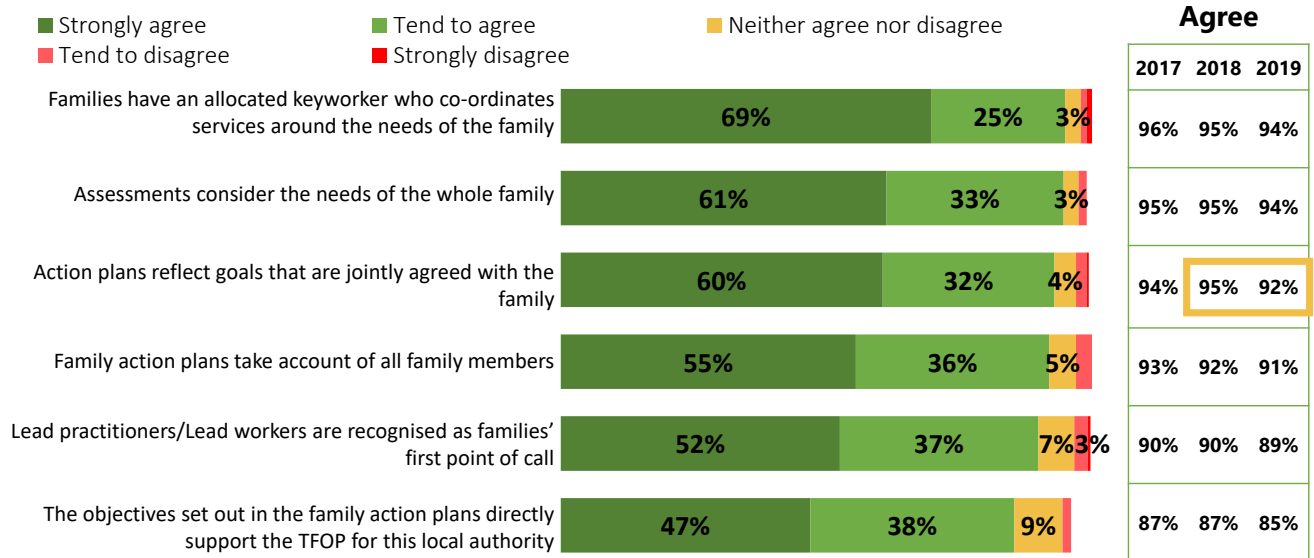
Embedding the approach

Keyworkers continue to express a high level of support for the way in which the Troubled Families Programme in their local authority engages families. In response to a range of statements, shown in the chart below, almost all keyworkers agree that¹:

- families have an allocated keyworker who co-ordinates services around the needs of the family (94%), and 69% *strongly* agree
- assessments consider the needs of the whole family (94%), with three in five (61%) who *strongly* agree
- action plans reflect goals that are jointly agreed with the family (92%), with again three in five (60%) who *strongly* agree
- family action plans take account of all family members (91%), including 55% who *strongly* agree
- lead practitioners or lead workers are recognised as families' first point of call (89%), and 52% *strongly* agree
- the objectives set out in the family action plans directly support the Troubled Families Outcome Plan for their local authority (85%), including 47% who *strongly* agree.

¹ A full table of results for all previous waves (2015 onwards) is included in the appendix.

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?



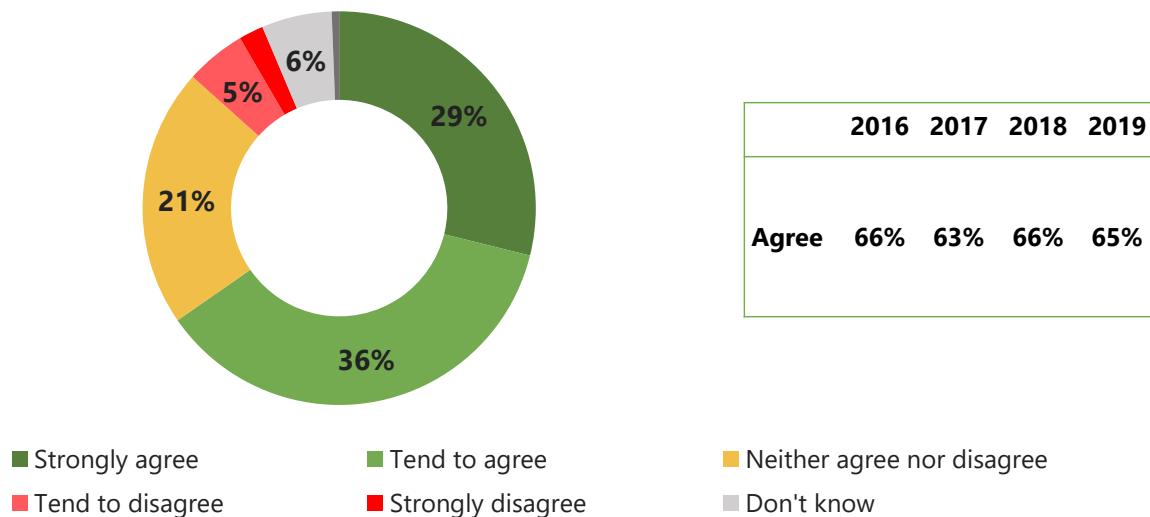
Base: All Keyworkers (2,008); Fieldwork dates 17 October to 8 December 2019. Percentages only shown if 3% or more. (QKW1)

Keyworkers are largely positive that the programme in their area is driving whole system reform across local partners.

In line with findings from previous years, two-thirds of keyworkers (65%) agree that the programme in their local authority is **driving whole system reform**; including three in ten (29%) who *strongly* agree.

However, fewer keyworkers agree that the Troubled Families Programme is successful in this respect, compared with aspects of family engagement (outlined in the chart on the previous page).

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



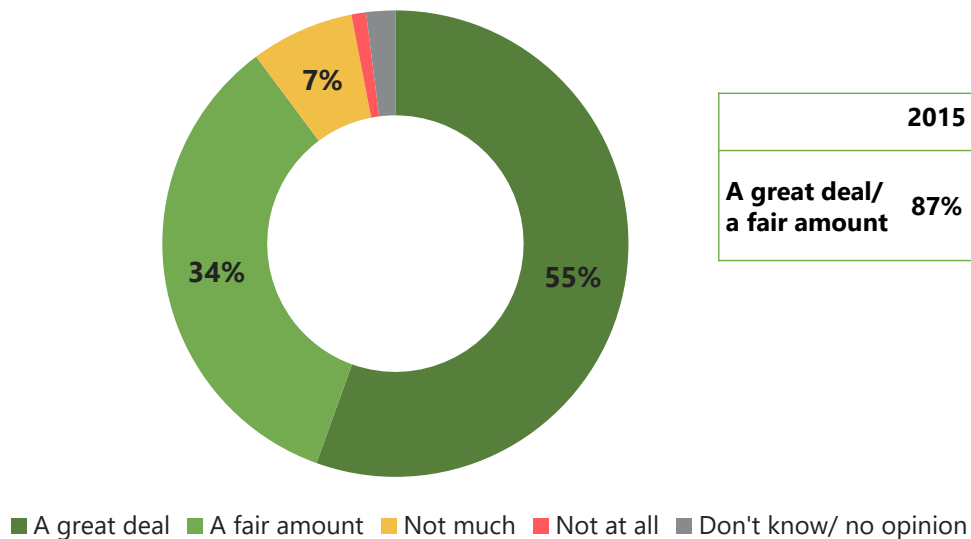
Base: All Keyworkers (2,008); Fieldwork dates 17 October to 8 December 2019. (QKW1f)

Keyworkers are consistently positive about the focus of their local programme on early intervention with families.

Most keyworkers (90%) 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*.

This finding is consistent with previous years.

To what extent, if at all, would you say that the Troubled Families Programme in your local authority . . . is focused on early intervention with families



Base: All Keyworkers (2,008); Fieldwork dates 17 October to 8 December 2019. (QKW2B)

Keyworkers consider the programme to be effective at preventing issues that lead to children becoming children in need or being stepped up to child protection plans. However, they are less confident that it prevents children being taken into care.

In 2018 and 2019 both keyworkers were asked about the Troubled Families Programme in their local area in relation to preventing certain issues for families who have been on the programme; findings are consistent in both years.

Most keyworkers (81%) feel that the programme effectively prevents children becoming children in need (as defined under Section 17 of the Children Act 1989). Three-quarters also consider the programme effective at preventing children being stepped up to a child protection plan (75% agree).

While still positive, most keyworkers are not as inclined to rate the Troubled Families Programme as effective at preventing children being taken into care (68% agree).

Among families that have been on the Troubled Families Programme, how effective, if at all, has the programme in your local authority area been in preventing issues that would lead to..



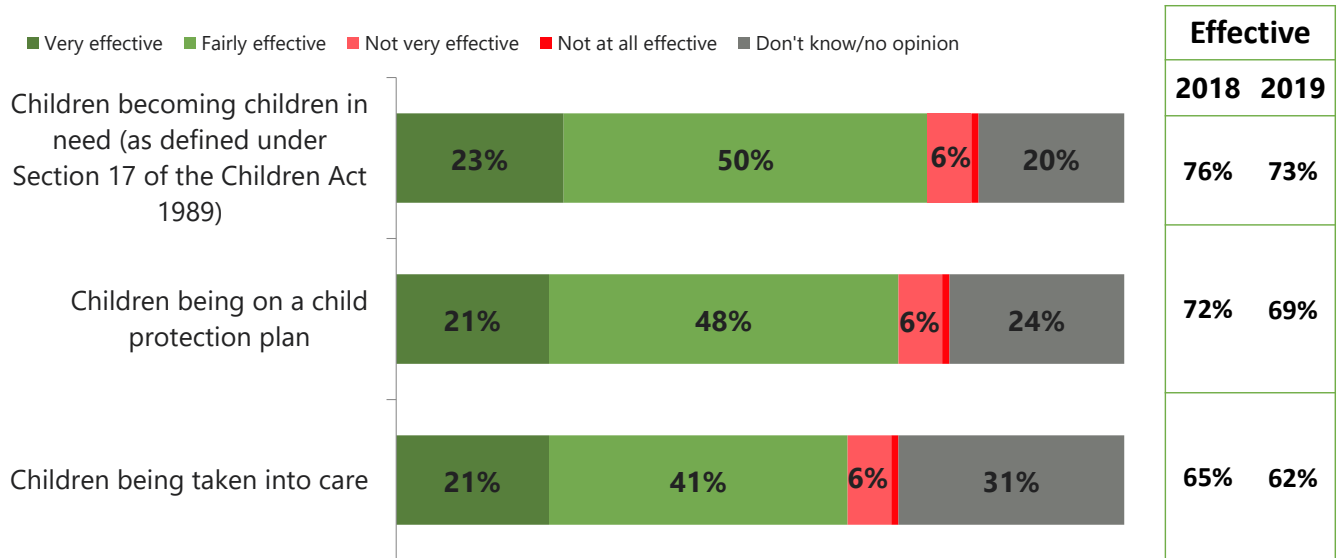
Base: All Keyworkers (2,008); Fieldwork dates 17 October to 8 December 2019. Percentages only shown if 3% or more. (W4Q6KW)

Keyworkers also highlight the programme’s effectiveness at resolving issues relating to children becoming children in need, being on a child protection plan, or being taken into care.

In 2018, keyworkers were also asked, for the first time, how effective the Troubled Families Programme in their local area has been at resolving the same issues relating to children in families who have been on the programme.

Findings reflect the same pattern found in terms of prevention: around three quarters of keyworkers (73%) feel that the programme is effective at resolving issues leading to children becoming children in need (as defined under Section 17 of the Children Act 1989). Seven in ten (69%) agree it helps resolve issues leading to children being stepped up to being on a child protection plan. However, slightly fewer (62%) feel that the programme in their local authority has resolved issues relating to children being taken into care.

Among families that have been on the Troubled Families Programme, how effective, if at all, has the programme in your local authority area been in resolving issues that would lead to..



Base: All Keyworkers (2,008); Fieldwork dates 17 October to 8 December 2019. Percentages only shown if 3% or more. (W4Q7KW)

Overall views of the Troubled Families Programme – Summary

Keyworkers consistently regard the Troubled Families Programme as **effective in terms of achieving whole family working** and **achieving long term change in families' circumstances**. Year-on-year the programme is also viewed by keyworkers as **successful in terms of helping families avoid statutory intervention** and is **focused on early intervention with families**.

While keyworkers are positive about the effectiveness of the programme in **achieving long term positive change in wider system reform or service transformation** and **driving whole system reform across local partners**, these views are less strongly held.

Overall, the approach to **engaging families is viewed positively** by keyworkers, including assessing the needs of the whole family, producing jointly agreed action plans that take into account all family members and their goals, and supporting the Troubled Families Outcome Plan (TFOP), alongside recognising lead practitioners as families' first point of call.

In line with findings from previous waves of the research, keyworkers think that improving access and links to **mental health services** would make the programme more effective. This is identified 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.

Keyworkers are positive about the Troubled Families Programme in their local area in relation to both **preventing** and **resolving** children becoming children in need (as defined under Section 17 of the Children Act 1989) and being stepped up to being on a child protection plan. However, slightly fewer are confident about the Troubled Families Programme in terms of preventing, and resolving, children being taken into care.

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

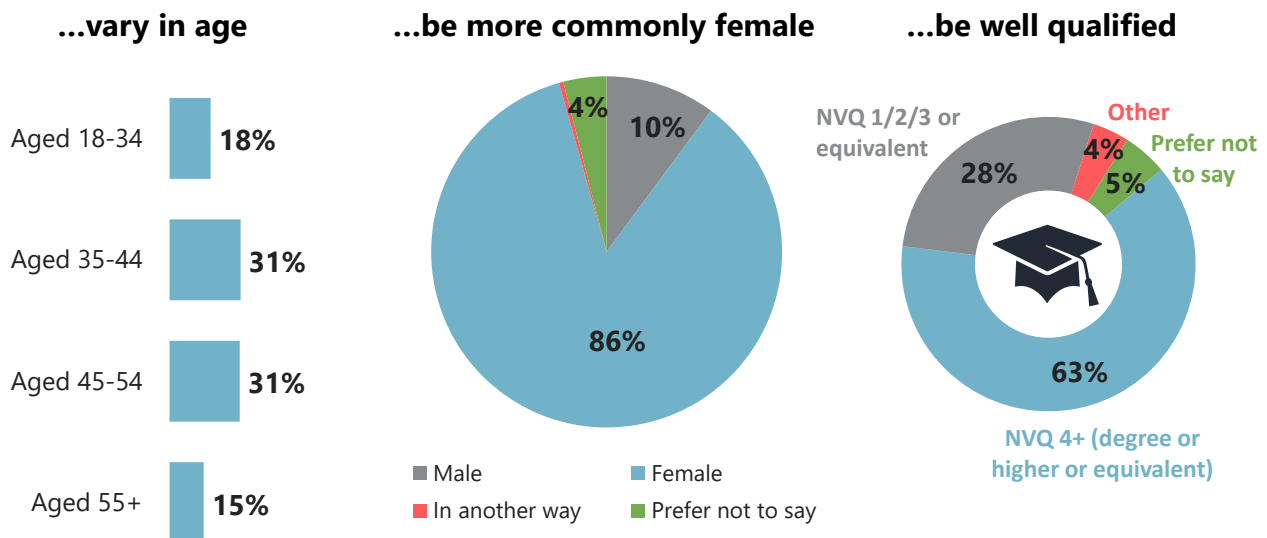
Keyworkers are mostly female, well qualified and vary in age.

Keyworker profile

Most keyworkers who completed the survey are female (86%). The age profile is varied, but with three in five (62%) saying they are aged 35-54.

Three in five (63%) report they have an NVQ 4+ or equivalent qualification, and three in ten (28%) have a NVQ 1-3, or equivalent.

Keyworkers tend to...

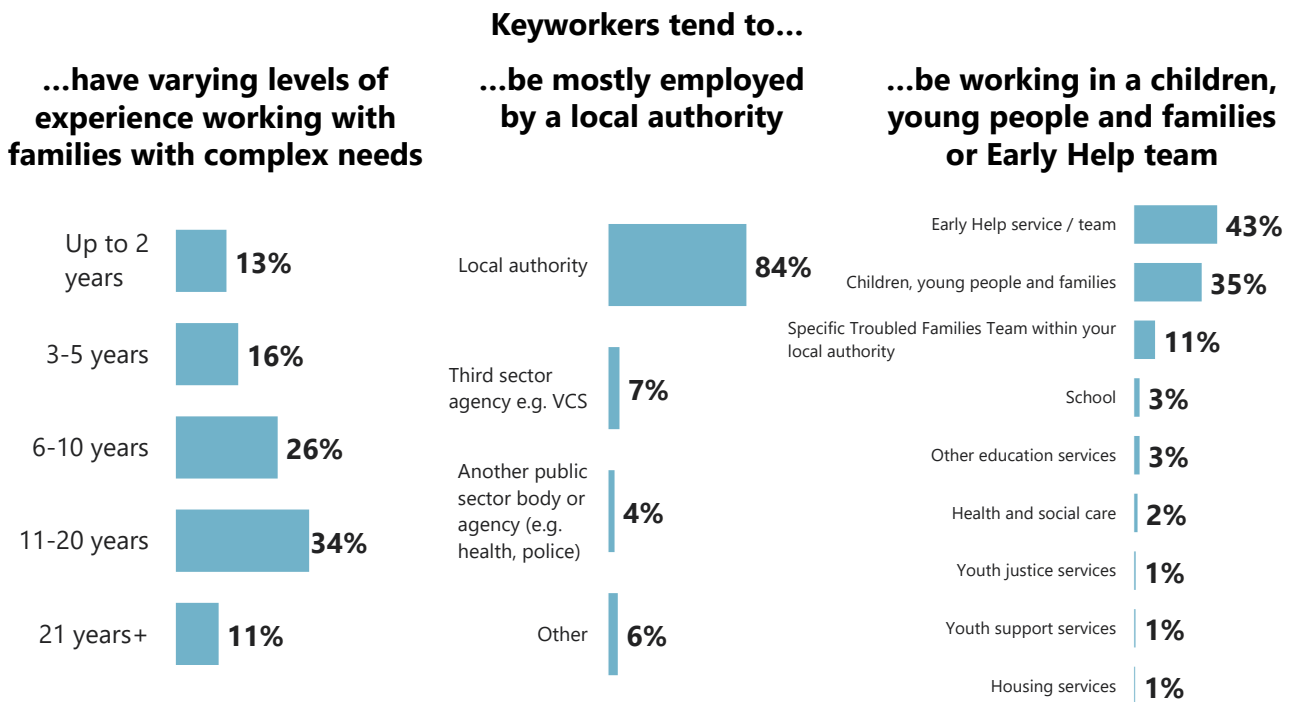


Base: All Keyworkers (2,008); Fieldwork dates 17 October to 8 December 2019. (QD2, QD1, QD3)

Keyworkers are mostly employed by a local authority and work in Early Help or children, young people and families teams.

Keyworkers report that they are mainly employed by the local authority (84%), with two in five (43%) representing an **Early Help² service or team** and slightly fewer a **children, young people and families team** (35%). One in ten keyworkers report working for a **specific Troubled Families Team** within their local authority; this has fallen from 29% in 2017.

Many of the keyworkers surveyed have extensive experience of working with families with complex needs: seven in ten (71%) have more than five years experience, including 26% who have six to ten years and 34% with 11-20 years.



Base: All Keyworkers (2,008): Fieldwork dates 17 October to 8 December 2019. (QA7, QA4, QA5)

² Early help is commonly defined as support for families before problems reach a stage where statutory services such as children's social care need to intervene.

Keyworkers' average caseload is 14 families, but a minority work with more than 21 families.

On average, keyworkers are working with around 13 families. This is very similar to the caseloads reported in 2018 and 2017 (an average of 14 and 12 families respectively).

The most common caseload is between six and ten families (42%). However, there is a wide range, and 14% have a caseload of between one and five families and nine per cent are working with more than 21 families.

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

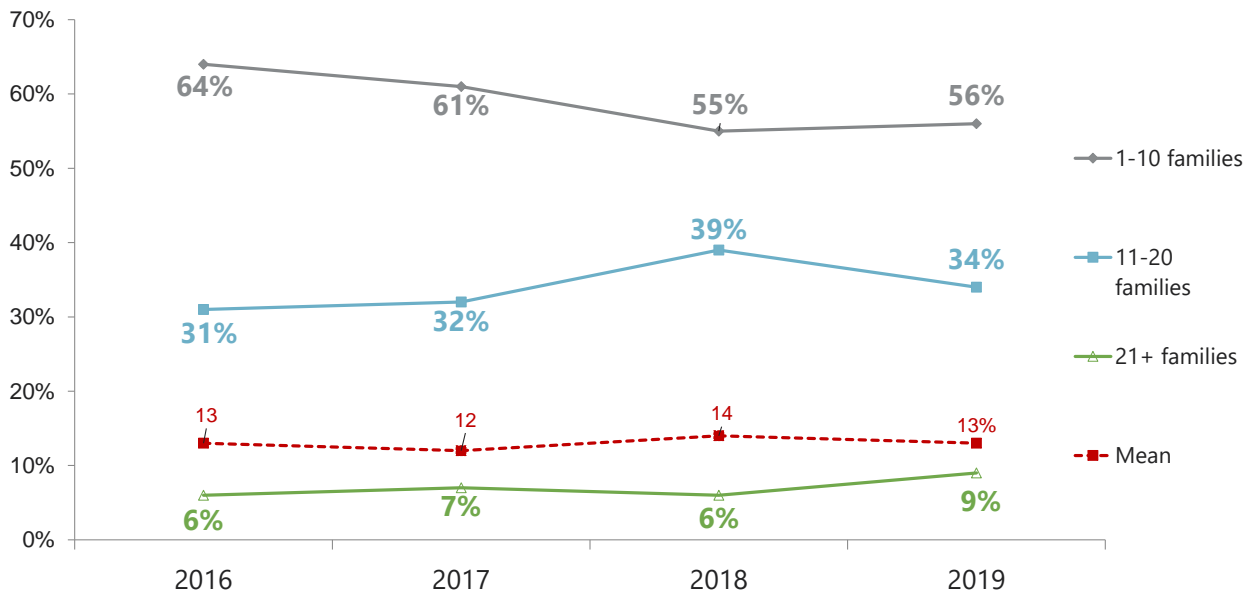


Base: All Keyworkers (2,008); Fieldwork dates 17 October to 8 December 2019. (W2Q1KW)

Keyworker caseloads: Trend data (2016-2019)

The proportion of keyworkers with an average caseload of between one and ten families has fallen since 2016, with an increase in the proportion who have a higher caseload. However, overall the mean number of families has remained consistent between 2016 and 2019.

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



Base: All Keyworkers (2,008); Fieldwork dates 17 October to 8 December 2019. (W2Q1KW)

The frequency of keyworker visits to families continues to be related to the intensity of engagement.

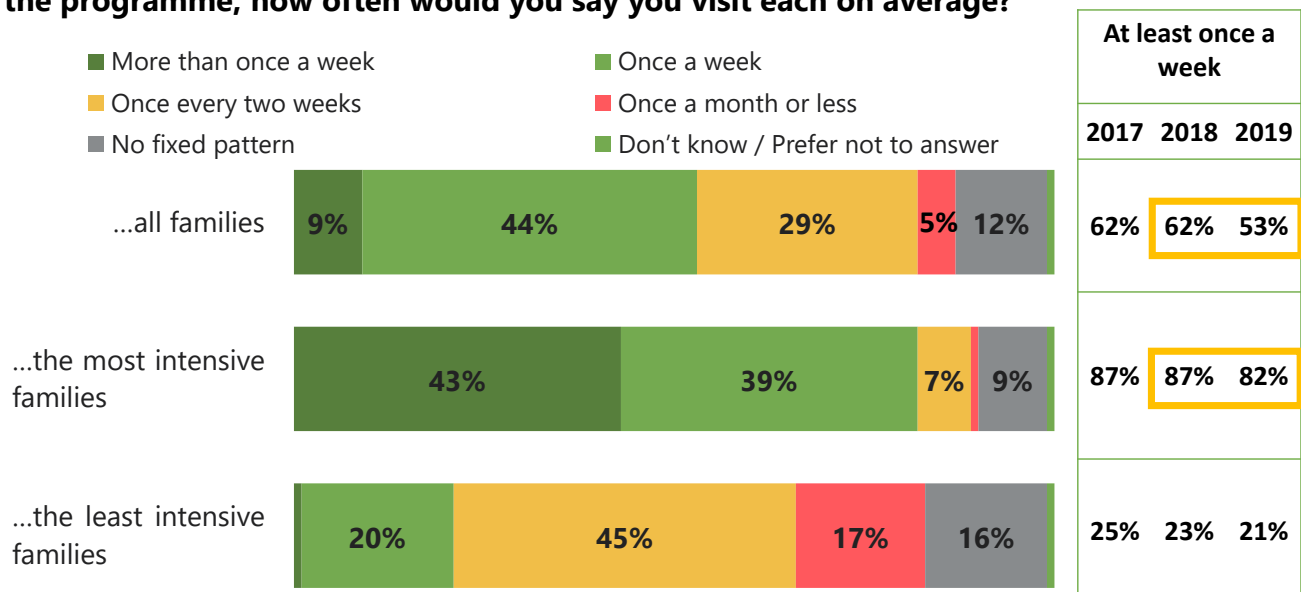
Frequency of visits to families

Half of keyworkers (53%) report visiting each family they work with at least once a week, including one in ten (nine per cent) who visit families more than once a week.

In line with findings from the 2018 survey, the frequency of visits is related to the intensity of engagement:

- Four in five (82%) visit the families that they are working with **most intensively** at least once a week, including two in five (43%) who visit more often.
- For the families that keyworkers are working with **least intensively** around one in five (21%) make visits at least once a week and another 45% visit these families once every two weeks.

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?



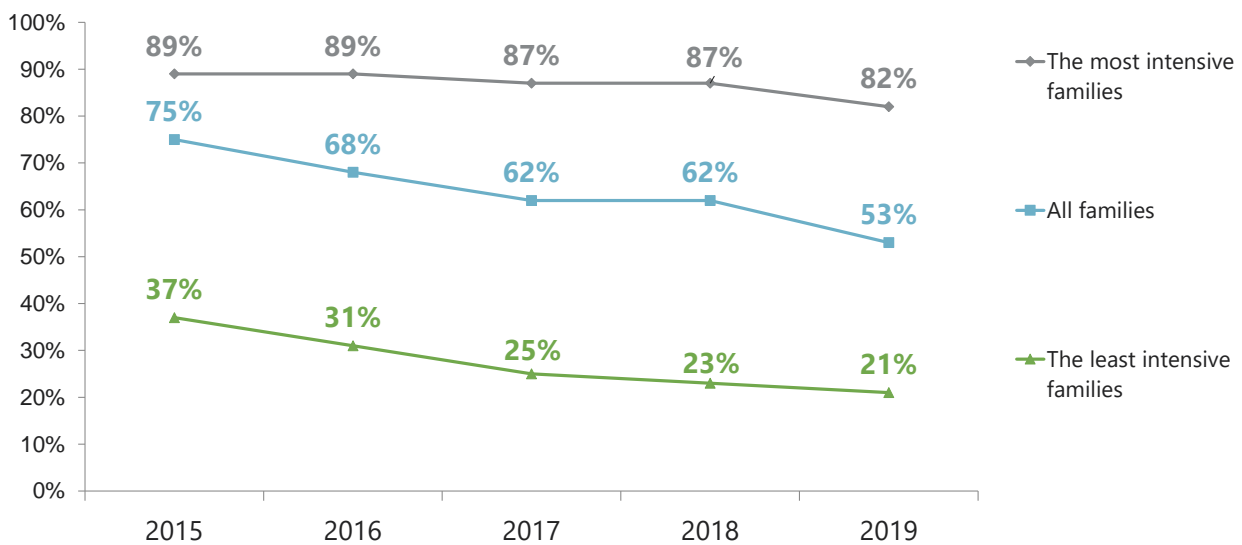
Base: All Keyworkers (2,008); Fieldwork dates 17 October to 8 December 2019. Percentages only shown if 3% or more. (QKW4, QKW5, QKW6)

Keyworker visits to families: Trend data (2015-2019)

There has been a slight fall in the frequency of visits over the last year, particularly with the most intensive families, continuing a longer-term trend.

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?

% at least once a week



Base: All Keyworkers (2,008): Fieldwork dates 17 October to 8 December 2019. (QKW4, QKW5, QKW6)

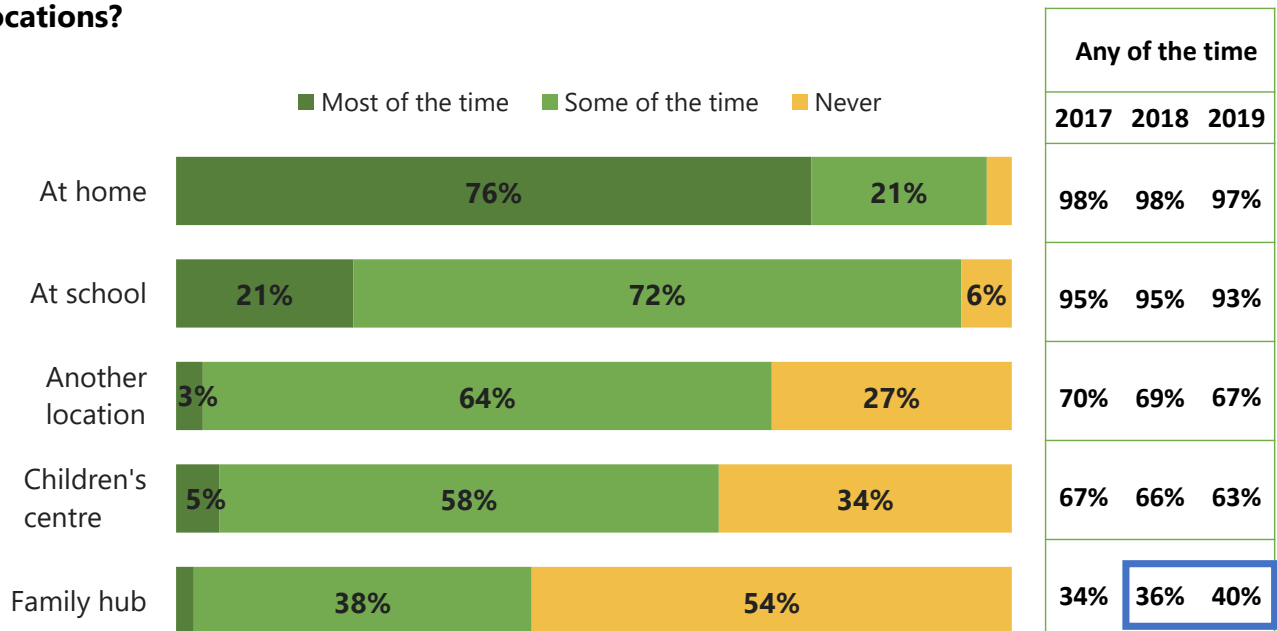
Most keyworkers work with families at home, but other locations are also commonly used, including a significant increase in family hubs.

Consistent with previous years, keyworkers typically work with families in their home: three quarters (76%) visit families here *most* of the time.

Other locations are used at least *some* of the time, including schools (93%), children’s centres (63%), and family hubs (40%), as well as ‘*other locations*’ (67%).

There has been an increase in the proportion using family hubs since 2018.

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



Base: All Keyworkers (2,008): Fieldwork dates 17 October to 8 December 2019. Percentages only shown if 3% or more. (W3QKW1)

Keyworker activities are varied but the majority focus on working with families to address parenting issues.

Keyworker types of support

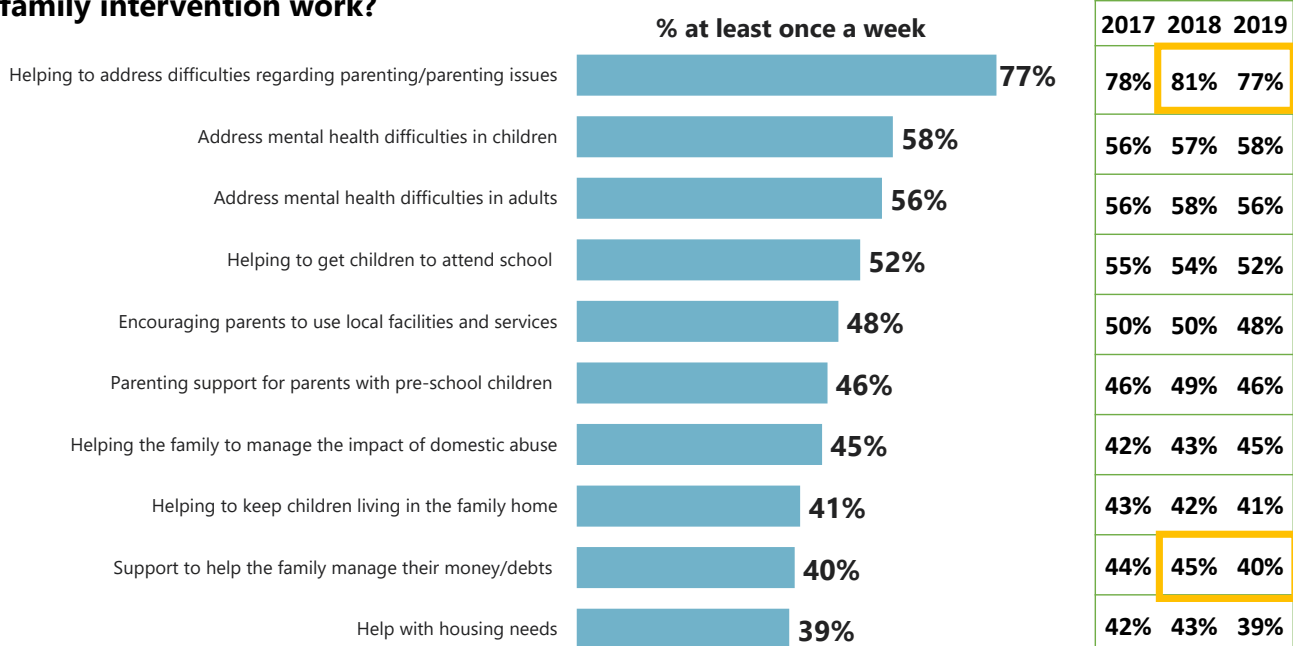
In line with previous years, keyworkers continue to provide a wide range of support to families. However, support for families to address difficulties regarding **parenting or parenting issues** continues to be most frequently offered; 77% say they do this at least once a week. After a small increase in 2018, this has returned to the level seen in 2017.

Addressing **mental health difficulties** in both adults and children continues to feature highly in terms of the support keyworkers are offering in their family intervention work: around three in five say they regularly provide support to address mental health difficulties in children (58%) and adults (56%).

Keyworkers continue to have a key role in supporting parents with **helping to get children to attend school** (52%), **encouraging parents to use local facilities and services** (48%), and providing **parenting support for parents with pre-school children** (46%).

Other key areas of support, provided regularly by keyworkers, are shown in the chart below and have remained consistent with findings since 2017, with the exception of money or debt management, which has fallen slightly. A full table of results for all previous waves (2015-2019) is included in the appendix.

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



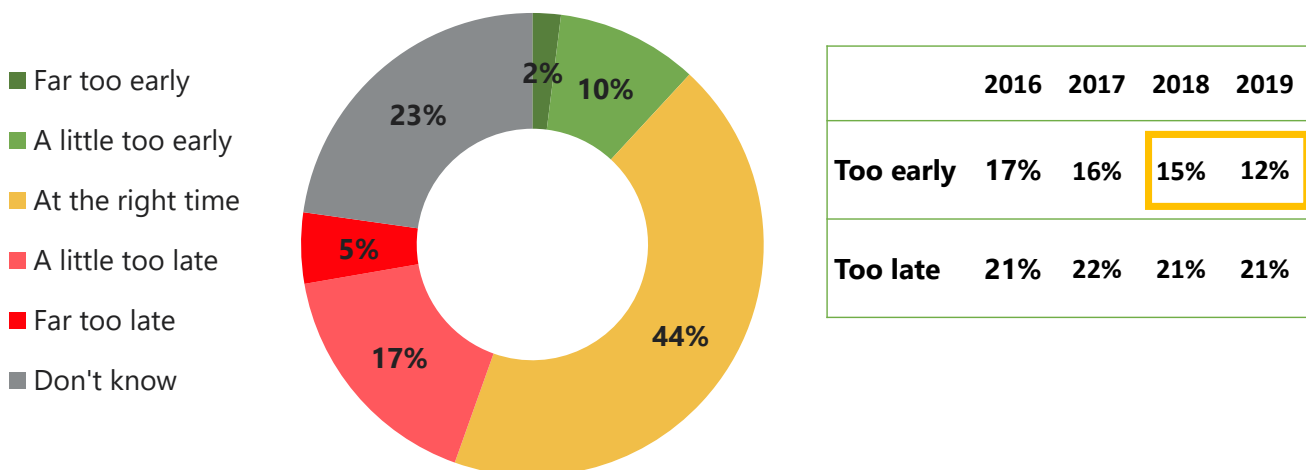
Base: All Keyworkers (2,008); Fieldwork dates 17 October to 8 December 2019. (QKW9). TOP 10 ANSWERS

Keyworkers tend to think that employment support is being offered at the right time, as opposed to too early or late.

More than two in five keyworkers (44%) think that employment support is being offered to families at about the right time.

There has been a steady fall since 2016 in the proportion of keyworkers who say employment support is being offered to families *too early* (17% in 2016 and 12% now). One in five (22%) continue to say that employment support is being 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?



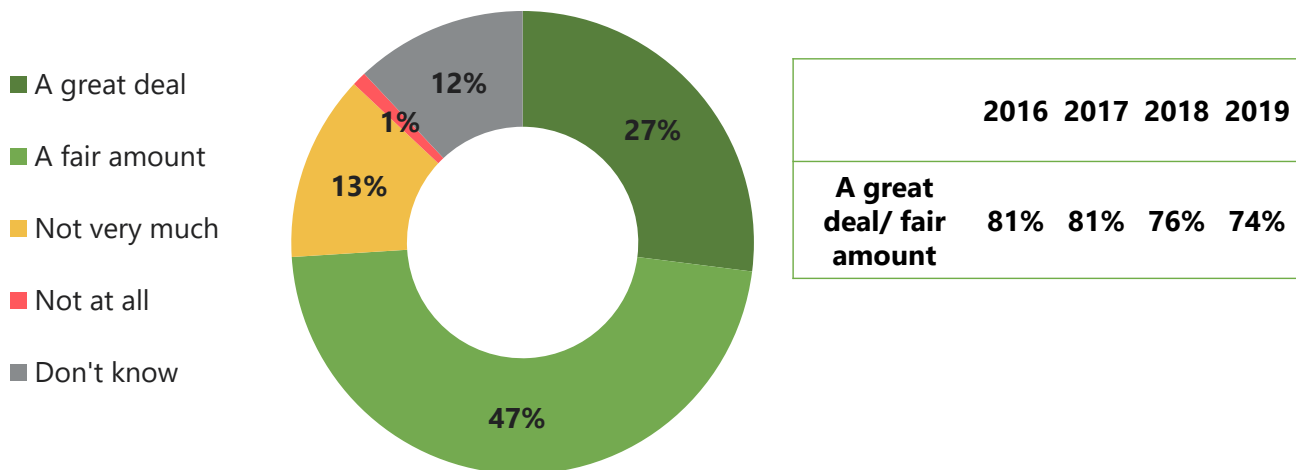
Base: All Keyworkers (2,008); Fieldwork dates 17 October to 8 December 2019. (W2Q3KW)

Most keyworkers continue to agree that employment support is an integrated part of the programme

The majority of keyworkers feel that employment support is an integrated part of the Troubled Families Programme in their local authority: 74% think it is integrated a *great deal* or *fair amount*.

Although this remains high, the proportion who agree that employment support is integrated has declined steadily since 2017 (81% in 2017, to 74% in 2019).

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 (2,008); Fieldwork dates 17 October to 8 December 2019. (W2Q4KW)

Actions used to help change behaviour in families continue to focus on parenting, mental health and safeguarding.

Actions used to help change behaviour

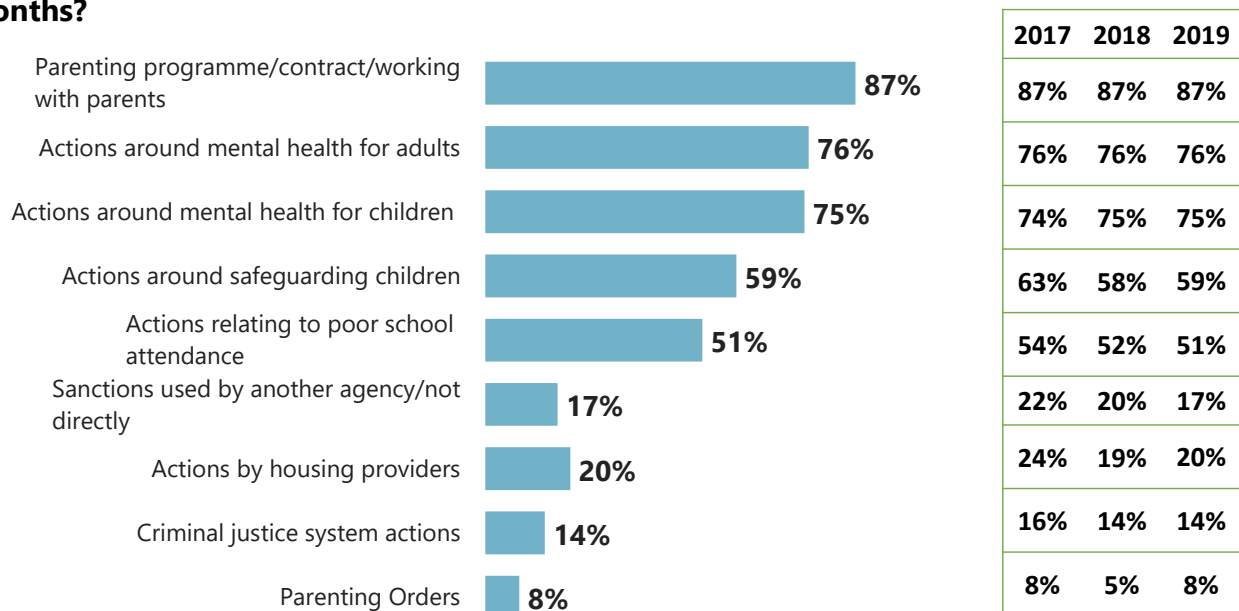
Keyworkers continue to use a variety of actions to encourage behaviour change in families. In general, there has been very little change over time, and consistent with previous years the key actions focus on parenting, mental health, and safeguarding children.

Parenting programmes or contracts (used by 87% of keyworkers) are most commonly used to help change behaviour. The majority of keyworkers also use actions around mental health for adults and for children (76% and 75% respectively).

Other common actions include the safeguarding of children (59%) and taking action to tackle poor school attendance (51%).

A full table of results for all of the previous waves is included in the appendix.

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



Base: All Keyworkers (2,008); Fieldwork dates 17 October to 8 December 2019. (QKW10)

The keyworker role – Summary

The role of keyworkers remains largely unchanged over the last year. **The frequency of visits to families continues to be related to the intensity of engagement:** the vast majority (82%) visit families requiring the most intensive support at least once a week. For families requiring the least intensive support only one in five (22%) visit at least once a week.

Most keyworkers continue to work with families at home, but other locations are also used including schools and children centres and, increasingly, family hubs.

Helping to address difficulties regarding parenting remains the most common type of support that keyworkers provide. Other types of support that keyworkers currently offer include addressing mental health difficulties in adults and children (56% and 58% respectively) and helping to get children to attend school (52%). This reflects the variety of actions used by keyworkers to encourage behaviour change in families, namely parenting programmes or contracts and actions around mental health for adults and for children.

While the majority of keyworkers feel that **employment support is an integrated part of the Troubled Families Programme** in their local authority, the proportion who agree has declined since 2016 (81% in 2016, to 74% in 2019). However, there has also been a slight fall in the proportion who say that **employment support is being offered too early** (12% compared with 17% in 2016).

Keyworkers continue to use a **variety of actions to help change families' behaviour,** with most focusing on parenting, mental health and safeguarding children.

4. Multi-agency working

Overall success

Working with partner services

Barriers to effective partnership working

4 Multi-agency working

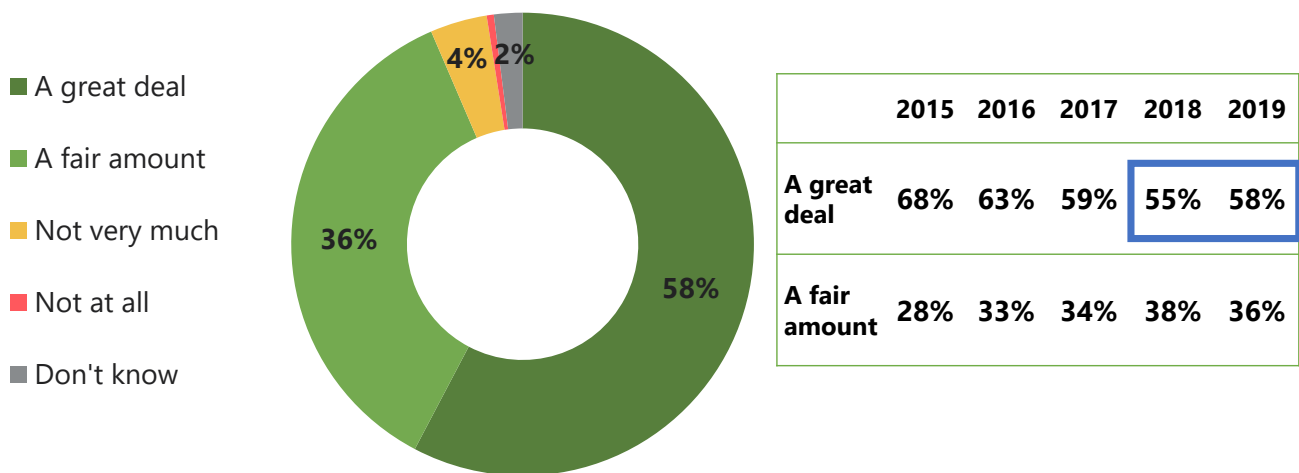
Keyworkers continue to believe that multi-agency working contributes significantly to the success of the programme.

Overall success

The vast majority of keyworkers are positive about the contribution multi-agency partnership working makes towards the success of the Troubled Families Programme: 94% feel that the **multi-agency partnership working** contributes significantly.

While there had been a slight decrease in the proportion who feel that multi-agency partnership working contributes a *great deal* to the success of the programme up until 2018, the last year has seen an increase, as shown in the chart below.

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



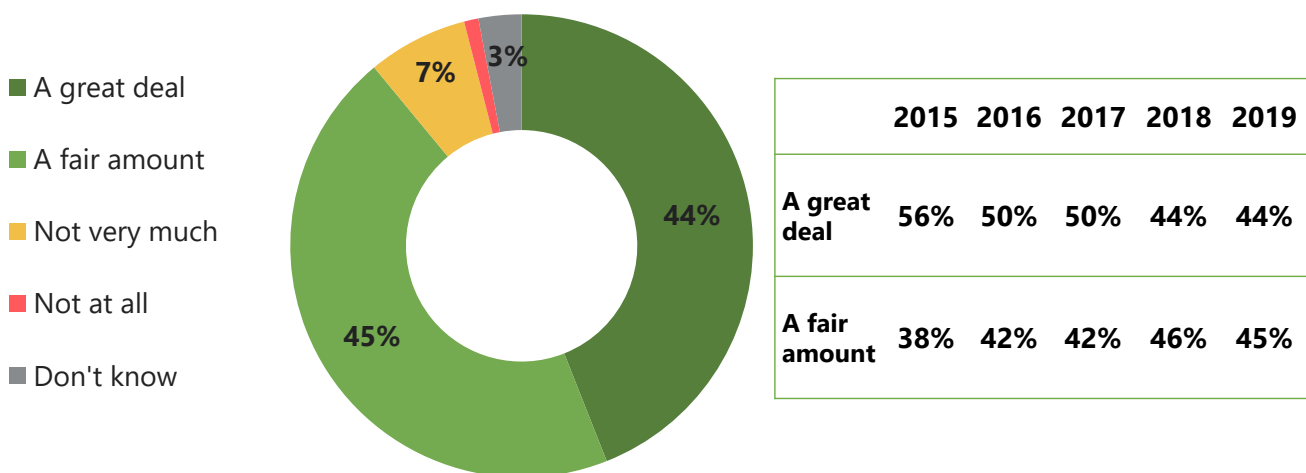
Base: All Keyworkers (2,008): Fieldwork dates 17 October to 8 December 2019.
Percentages only shown if 3% or more. (QKW12)

Keyworkers agree that local programmes encourage input from partner agencies.

Working with partner agencies

Consistent with previous years, nine in ten keyworkers (89%) think that the Troubled Families Programme encourages effective input from all agencies relevant to each case. While this is very positive overall, there has been a fall in the number of keyworkers who say the Programme encourages effective input from all agencies a *great deal* (44%), and a rise in the number who say it does so a *fair amount* (45%).

To what extent, if at all, would you say that the Troubled Families programme in your local authority . . . encourages effective input from all agencies relevant to each case



Base: All Keyworkers (2,008); Fieldwork dates 17 October to 8 December 2019.
Percentages only shown if 3% or more. (QKW2A)

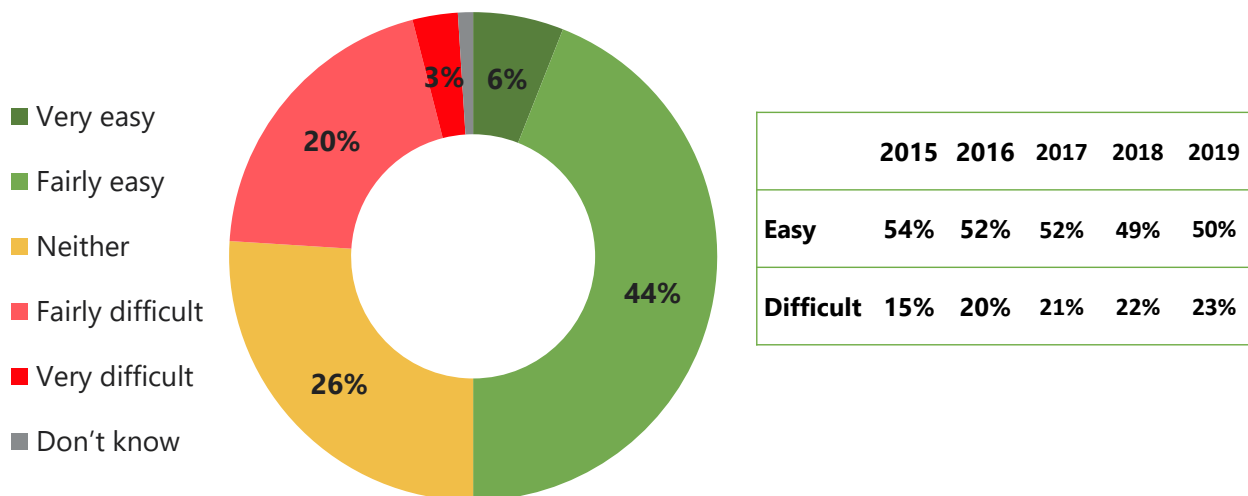
Half of all keyworkers find it easy to get support from partner organisations.

Despite keyworker's belief that multi-agency partnership working contributes 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 (50%) say it is easy to get support, with most (44%) saying it is *fairly* easy, rather than *very* easy (six per cent).

Almost a quarter (23%) admit to finding it difficult to get support from partner organisations, and almost three in ten (27%) are unable to express a view either way (neither or don't know).

While findings are consistent with 2018, looking across all five waves of the research, the proportion who find it difficult to get the support they need to deliver solutions for families from partner organisations has increased (from 15% in 2015, to 23% in 2019).

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 (2,008): Fieldwork dates 17 October to 8 December 2019.
Percentages only shown if 3% or more. (QKW11).

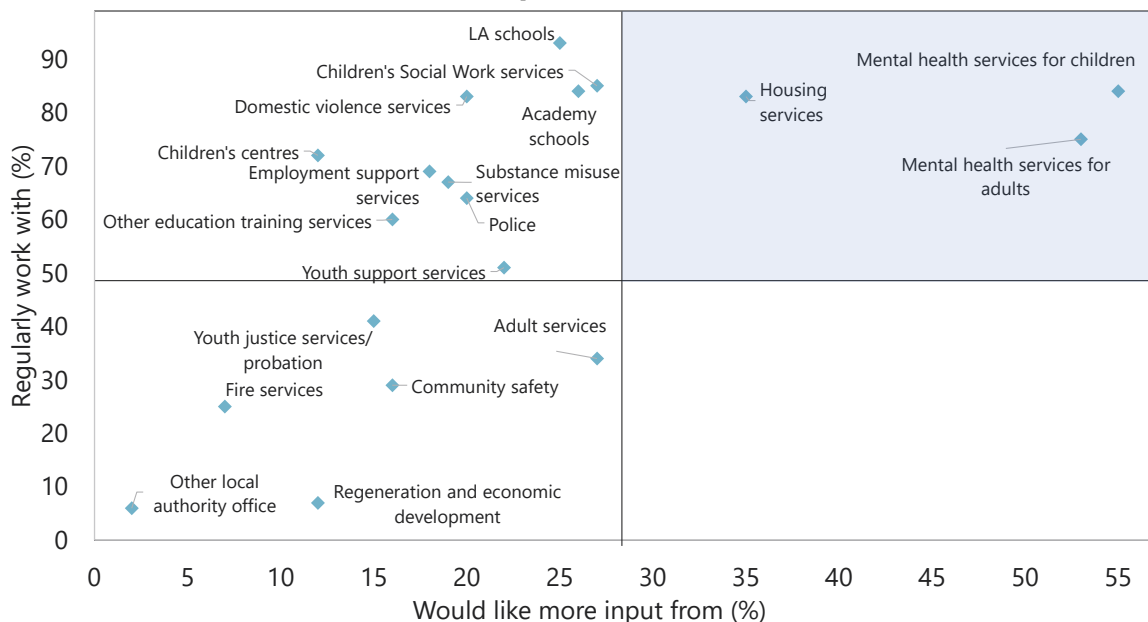
Keyworkers would like to receive more input from mental health and housing services.

Keyworkers regularly work with a wide variety of services in order to support families. The organisations they most commonly work with are schools; either local authority (93%) or academies (94%), Children’s Social Work services (85%), mental health services for children (84%) and housing and domestic violence services (both 83%).

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

Consistent with the findings from all four previous waves, the analysis shows that keyworkers require greater engagement with **mental health services** for both children and adults (55% and 53%), along with **housing services** (35%).

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



Base: All Keyworkers (2,008); Fieldwork dates 17 October to 8 December 2019. (QKW13, QKW14)

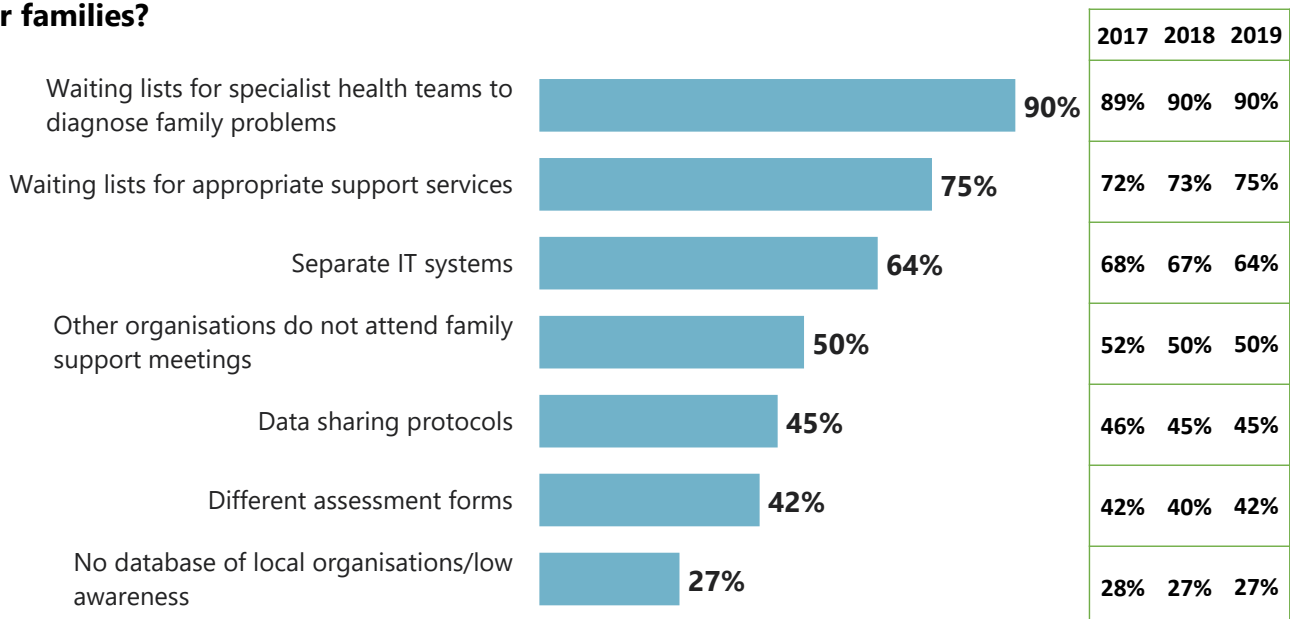
Keyworkers consistently identify waiting lists as the main barrier to effective partnership working.

Barriers to effective partnership working

Keyworkers identify the main barriers to effective partnership working as **waiting lists for specialist health teams to diagnose family problems** (e.g. Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services) (90%), along with **waiting lists for appropriate support services** (75%).

Other key barriers identified by keyworkers include **separate IT systems** (64%) and **other organisations not attending family support meetings** (50%). These are mostly consistent with the barriers in previous waves but, looking further back, waiting lists (for specialist health teams and appropriate support services) are considered more of an issue and concerns around data sharing protocols have declined.

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

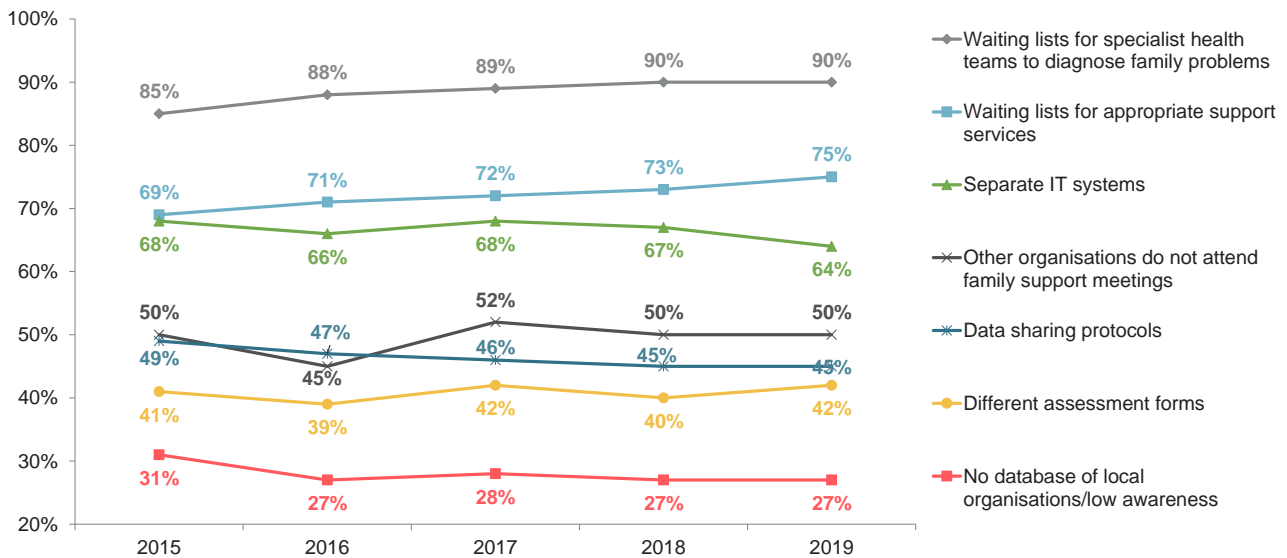


Base: All Keyworkers (2,008); Fieldwork dates 17 October to 8 December 2019. (QKW15)

Barriers to effective partnership working: Trend data (2015-2019)

There has been little change in the barriers identified by keyworkers over the five waves of research, as shown in the chart below.

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



Base: All Keyworkers (2,008); Fieldwork dates 17 October to 8 December 2019. (QKW15)

Multi-agency working - Summary

A key component of the Service Transformation model is multi-agency working, which underpins the Troubled Families Programme. This is reflected in keyworkers' views of **multi-agency working**, with 94% saying it contributes to the success of the programme. In addition, 89% of keyworkers think that the programme encourages **effective input from all agencies relevant to each case**. However, there continues to be evidence of keyworkers finding it **difficult to get support from partner organisations**. Only half say that it is *easy* (50%), with around a quarter (23%) finding it *difficult*.

As was the case in 2018, keyworkers continue to identify **waiting lists** both for specialist health teams to diagnose family problems and other appropriate support services as the main barriers to effective partnership working. Reflecting this, and following a similar pattern to 2018, keyworkers would like to receive greater input from **mental health services** for both adults and children in order to better support families.

5. Workforce development

Development of keyworker skills

Training, support and supervision

5 Workforce development

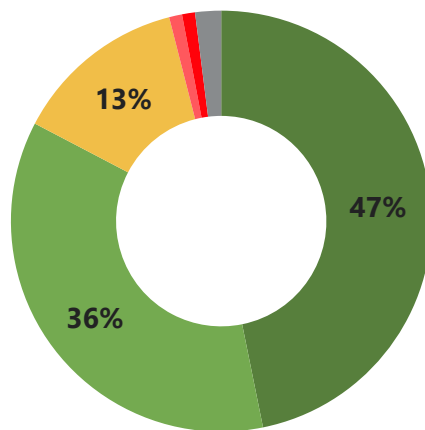
Keyworkers remain keen to develop their skills further in order to deliver more effective services.

Development of keyworker skills

Consistent with findings from previous waves, more than four in five keyworkers (83%) agree they would like to develop their skills further to help them deliver effective services for families; 47% *strongly* agree.

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?

- Strongly agree
- Tend to agree
- Neither
- Tend to disagree
- Strongly disagree
- Don't know/ no opinion



	2016	2017	2018	2019
Agree	82%	84%	83%	83%
Disagree	3%	3%	2%	2%

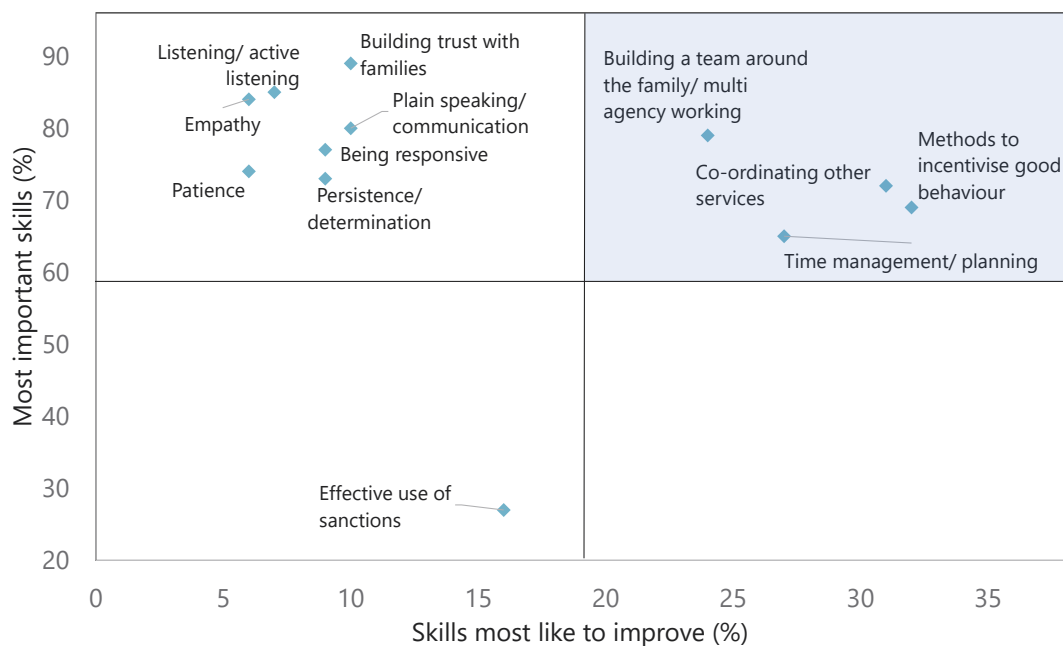
Base: All Keyworkers (2,008); Fieldwork dates 17 October to 8 December 2019. Percentages only shown if 3% or more. (W2Q5KW).

Keyworkers identify incentivising good behaviour, co-ordinating other services and time management as skills they would like to improve.

In line with findings from previous waves of the research, keyworkers identify communication and relationship skills as the most important in enabling them to deliver their role. Almost all keyworkers highlight the importance of **building trust with families** (89%), **active listening** (85%) and **empathy** (84%).

However, the skills in the top right hand quadrant are those that keyworkers identify as most important and would most like to improve. These skills include **methods to incentivise good behaviour among families**, the **co-ordination of other services**, **improving time management and planning** and, **help to improve multi-agency working/ building a team around the family**.

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



Base: All Keyworkers (2,008); Fieldwork dates 17 October to 8 December 2019. (QKW17, QKW18)

The majority of keyworkers are positive about the quality, relevance and amount of training they receive.

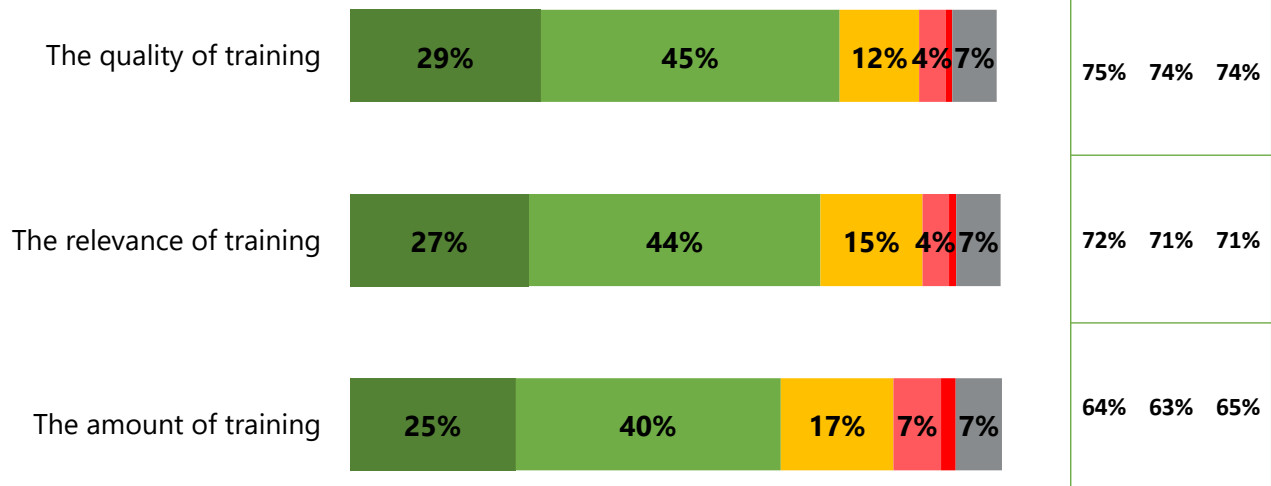
Training, support and supervision

Keyworkers are positive about the training they receive: three quarters (74%) rate the **quality of training** as good, and a similar proportion (71%) rate the **relevance of training** as good.

Although slightly lower, two thirds (65%) of keyworkers also rate the **amount of training** as good, as shown in the chart below.

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?

■ Very good
 ■ Fairly good
 ■ Neither
 ■ Fairly poor
 ■ Very poor
 ■ No specific training provided

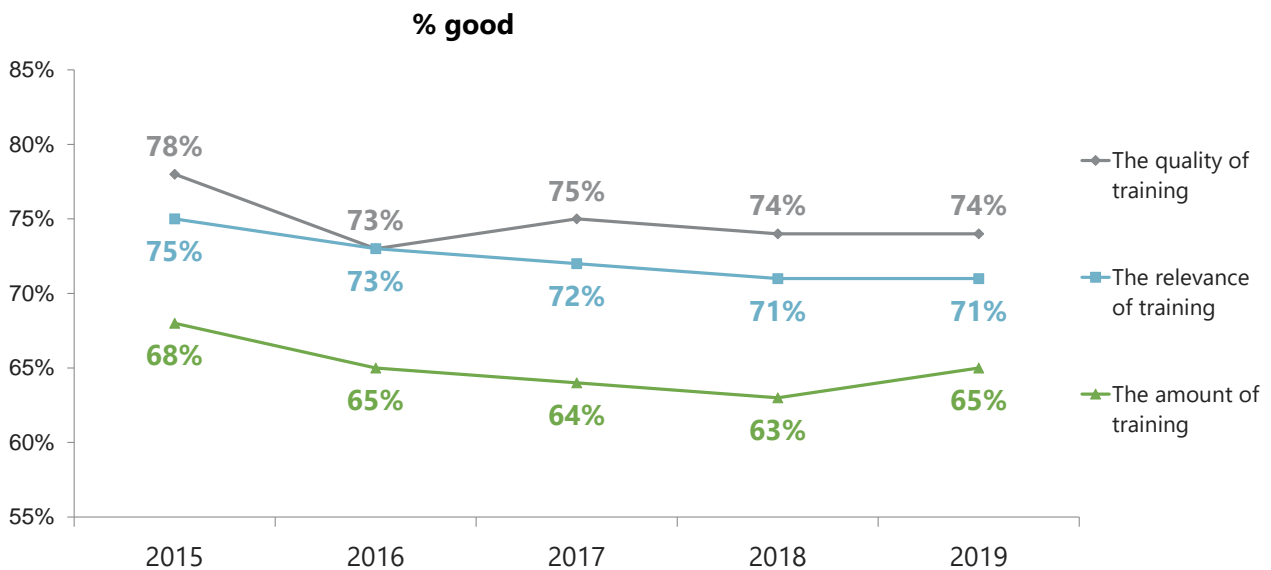


Base: All Keyworkers (2,008); Fieldwork dates 17 October to 8 December 2019. Percentages only shown if 3% or more. (QKW19)

Keyworkers attitudes to the quality, relevance and amount of training they receive: Trend data (2015-2019)

Apart from a small dip after the first wave of the survey, the proportion rating training as good across the board has remained mostly consistent over the last five 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 (2,008): Fieldwork dates 17 October to 8 December 2019. (QKW19)

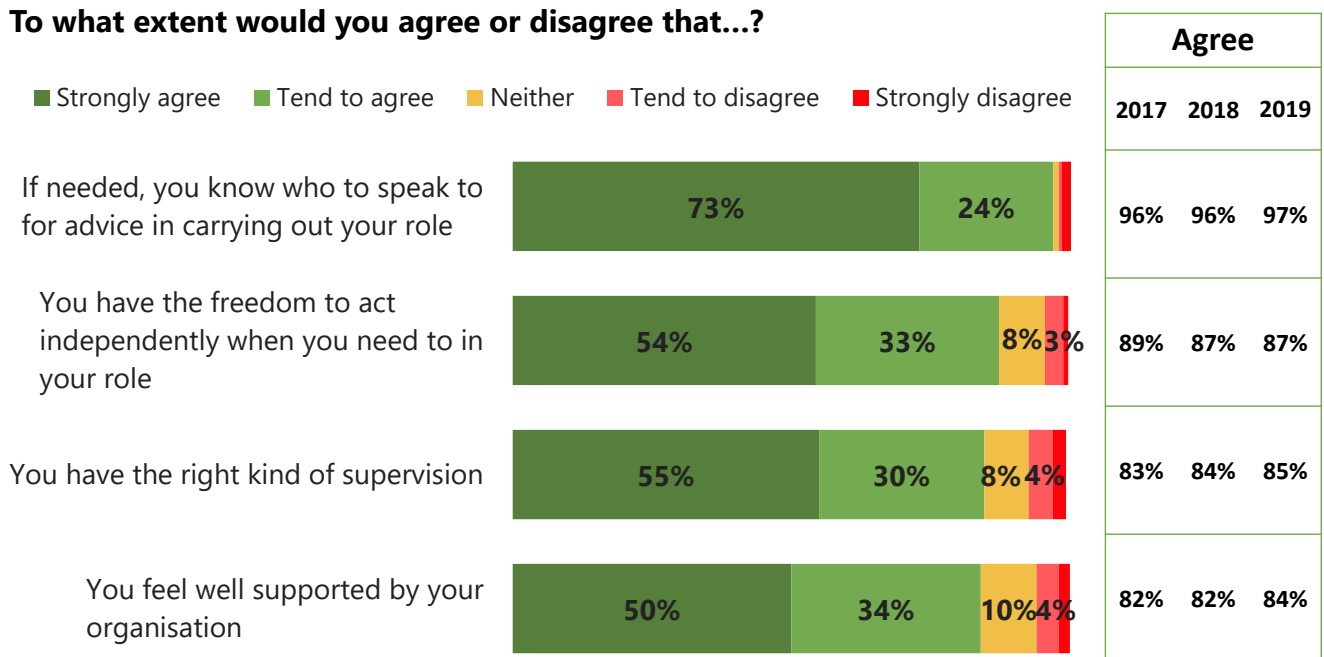
Keyworkers continue to feel well supported, with the right level of supervision in their role.

Consistent with previous years, keyworkers are overwhelmingly positive in terms of knowing **who to speak to for advice in carrying out their role** (97%). Nine in ten keyworkers also agree that they **have the freedom to act independently in their role** (87%).

Most keyworkers agree that they **have the right kind of supervision**, and **feel well supported by their organisation** (85% and 84%, respectively).

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

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

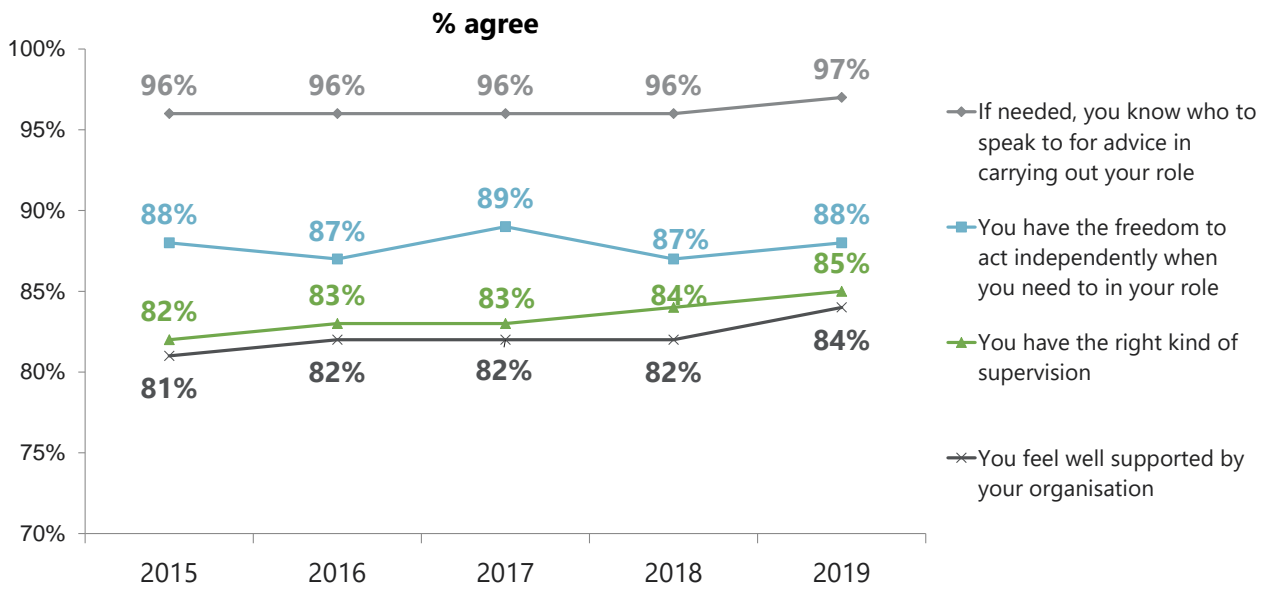


Base: All Keyworkers (2,008); Fieldwork dates 17 October to 8 December 2019. Percentages only shown if 3% or more. (QKW20)

Support and supervision: Trend data (2015-2019)

These positive attitudes towards support and supervision have remained consistent across all five waves of the research.

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



Base: All Keyworkers (2,008); Fieldwork dates 17 October to 8 December 2019. (QKW20)

Workforce development - Summary

In line with previous years, keyworkers are overwhelmingly positive about the **support** and **supervision** they receive within their role and continue to agree that they have **freedom to act independently** when they need to.

The majority remain positive about the **quality, relevance and amount of training** they receive in relation to delivering their role. Apart from a small dip after the first wave of the survey, the proportion rating training as good across the board has remained mostly consistent over the last five years.

Looking ahead, keyworkers are keen to **develop their current skills further**, so they can deliver services more effectively, specifically they would like to improve multi-agency working, co-ordinate other services and develop their time management/planning skills, alongside knowing more about how to incentivise good behaviour.

6 Conclusions

6 Conclusions

This is the **fifth 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.

Overall, keyworkers remain positive about the Troubled Families Programme in their area in terms of engaging with families and achieving long-term positive change in whole family working, through early intervention.

Delivering the Troubled Families Programme – the keyworker role

The profile of keyworkers has remained consistent year-on-year: they are **well qualified** (63% hold an NVQ4+), and they are more likely to be **women** (86%). The majority (71%) have **more than five years' experience** of working with families with complex needs, including 45% who have 11 or more years' experience.

Keyworkers are typically **employed by a local authority** (84%) and work within an **Early Help** (43%) or **children, young people and families team** (35%).

Their **average caseload is 13 families** and most of the time keyworkers **visit families at home** (76%). The survey findings do highlight a **fall in the frequency of regular (at least once a week) visits to families** over the five waves of the research. However, despite this, the majority of keyworkers (82%) continue to visit the families they work with *most* intensively at least once a week.

Keyworkers continue to offer a wide range of support to families: The focus is on providing help to address difficulties regarding parenting (77%) and helping to get children to attend school (52%). However, supporting children (58%) and adults (56%) with mental health difficulties is also a large part of their role.

The range of support offered to families is reflected in the actions keyworkers typically use to **encourage changes in behaviour**, notably parenting programmes or contracts (87%), and actions around mental health for adults (76%) and children (75%).

Keyworkers continue to feel well supported by their organisation; they know who to speak to for advice and have the freedom to act independently. However, there remains an **appetite among most keyworkers (83%) to develop their skills further**. The skills they would most like to improve are methods to incentivise good behaviour, co-ordination of other services, time management and planning and help to improve multi-agency working/building a team around the family.

Attitudes towards the Troubled Families Programme

Overall, keyworkers remain positive about the Troubled Families Programme. There is continued belief that it is effective in achieving whole family working (84%) and long-term positive change in families' circumstances (79%).

Most keyworkers (90%) continue to recognise that the programme in their area is focused on early intervention and say that this approach successfully helps families to avoid statutory intervention (88%).

Keyworkers are particularly positive about the approach taken by the Troubled Families Programme in their area to engaging families. Almost all say that allocated keyworkers co-ordinate services around the needs of the family, assessments consider the needs of the whole family and action plans reflect goals that are jointly agreed with the family. Family action plans are seen as taking account of all family members and the objectives set out in these action plans are regarded as directly supporting the Troubled Families Outcome Plan for their local authority. Lead practitioners or lead workers are recognised as families' first point of call.

Keyworkers are also positive about the Troubled Families Programme in their local authority in relation to both preventing and resolving children becoming children in need (as defined under Section 17 of the Children Act 1989) and being stepped up to being on a child protection plan. They are relatively less confident of success in terms of preventing, and resolving, children being taken into care.

Employment support continues to be regarded as an integrated part of the Troubled Families Programme (74% say 'a great deal/ a fair amount'), and there has been a fall in the proportion of keyworkers who say employment support is offered to families too early.

While overall views are positive, a minority of keyworkers continue to have reservations about the Troubled Families Programme's ability to achieve long-term positive change in wider system reform or service transformation, with almost three in ten (28%) who say it is neither effective nor ineffective or they don't know. However, other views are more positive and keyworkers continue to believe in multi-agency partnership working; 94% say that it contributes to the success of the programme in

their area, and 89% say it **encourages effective input from all agencies relevant to each case**. However, there continues to be evidence that keyworkers find it **difficult to get support from partner organisations**. Only half (50%) say that is *easy*, with one in five (23%) finding it *difficult*.

Over all five waves of the research, keyworkers identify **waiting lists**, both for specialist health teams to diagnose family problems and other appropriate support services, as the main barriers to effective partnership working. Reflecting this, and consistently over time, keyworkers would like to receive greater input from **mental health services** for both adults and children in order to support families.

Areas for development

The Troubled Families programme aims to bring about change in the delivery and management of local services for families, through whole family working, using a multi-agency approach. Keyworkers are consistently positive about both of these aspects of the programme, but persistent challenges remain:

The continued development of multi-agency working: the service transformation model is underpinned by multi-agency working. While almost all keyworkers agree that multi-agency working contributes to the success of the programme, a quarter (23%) say it is difficult to get support from partner organisations to deliver solutions for families and this has increased since 2015 (from 15%).

Achieving the goals of MHCLG's early help service transformation maturity model: keyworkers pinpoint improved access to mental health services, increased financial resources, flexibility over timescales and outcomes during intervention and more support and input from external agencies as the top things that would make the programme more effective for service transformation and to achieve the goals of the maturity model.

Improving relationships with health services: keyworkers consistently highlight the importance of improving links to mental health services in achieving the goals of the maturity model and making the programme more effective for service transformation. Year-on-year they highlight the need for more input from mental health services (for both adults and children) in order to support families, and they continue to identify waiting lists for specialist health teams to diagnose family problems as the main barrier to effective partnership working.

Improving skills to develop their role: keyworkers have a continued appetite to develop their skills; 83% agree this will help them deliver effective services for families. They consistently identify the same key areas for development, notably methods to incentivise good behaviour, the ability to co-ordinate other services, time management and planning and help understanding how to build a team around the family.

Appendices

Appendices

Trend data tables

Fig A.1: Making the Troubled Families programme more effective for service transformation (Trend data 2016-2019)

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

	2016	2017	2018	2019
Improved access/ links to mental health services	54%	57%	60%	61%
More financial services	38%	42%	40%	41%
Flexibility over timescales and outcomes during intervention	38%	42%	40%	37%
More support and input from external agencies	32%	32%	36%	37%
Using a shared database	36%	34%	34%	32%
Reduction in caseloads	28%	30%	27%	28%
More physical resources	25%	20%	19%	20%
Better referral systems and assessments for families	13%	13%	12%	13%
More appropriate/ better keyworker training	9%	8%	9%	7%
Improvements in managers/ management	8%	8%	7%	7%
Something else	7%	6%	6%	5%

Base: All Keyworkers (2,008); Fieldwork dates 17 October to 8 December 2019. (QKW23)

Fig A.2: The approach taken by the Troubled Families programme (Trend data 2015-2019)

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?

	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019
Families have an allocated keyworker who co-ordinates services around the needs of the family	N/A	N/A	96%	95%	94%
Assessments consider the needs of the whole family	95%	95%	95%	95%	94%
Action plans reflect goals that are jointly agreed with the family	N/A	N/A	94%	95%	93%
Family action plans take account of all family members	93%	94%	93%	92%	91%
Lead practitioners/Lead workers are recognised as families' first point of call	90%	89%	90%	90%	88%
The objectives set out in the family action plans directly support the TFOP for this local authority	88%	87%	87%	87%	86%

Base: All Keyworkers (2,008); Fieldwork dates 17 October to 8 December 2019. (QKW1)

Fig A.3: Keyworker types of support (Trend data 2015-2019)

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

	% at least once a week				
	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019
Helping to address difficulties regarding parenting/parenting issues	82%	81%	78%	81%	77%
Address mental health difficulties in adults	N/A	N/A	56%	58%	56%
Address mental health difficulties in children	N/A	N/A	56%	57%	58%
Helping to get children to attend school	65%	59%	55%	54%	52%
Encouraging parents to use local facilities and services	59%	56%	50%	50%	48%
Parenting support for parents with pre-school children	N/A	49%	46%	49%	46%
Support to help the family manage their money/debts	51%	46%	44%	45%	40%
Helping to keep children living in the family home	50%	47%	43%	42%	41%
Help with housing needs	49%	47%	42%	43%	39%
Helping the family to manage the impact of domestic abuse	47%	47%	42%	43%	45%
Inter-parental relationship support	N/A	N/A	40%	40%	41%
Helping to stop families getting involved in crime or ASB	51%	45%	39%	35%	36%
Help with securing the right benefits	41%	38%	36%	35%	32%
Helping adults in the family to get a job/training	43%	36%	33%	28%	25%
Support for parents to access early years' service, e.g. childcare offer	N/A	N/A	32%	34%	33%
Helping to reduce the use of alcohol	28%	27%	24%	21%	21%
Helping with practical issues	29%	25%	23%	24%	21%
Helping to reduce the use of non-prescription drugs	24%	20%	19%	16%	16%

Base: All Keyworkers (2,008): Fieldwork dates 17 October to 8 December 2019. (QKW9)

Fig A.4: Actions used to help change behaviour (Trend data 2015-2019)

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

	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019
Parenting programme/contract/working with parents	N/A	N/A	87%	87%	87%
Actions around mental health for adults	N/A	N/A	76%	76%	76%
Actions around mental health for children	N/A	N/A	74%	75%	75%
Actions around safeguarding children	58%	67%	63%	58%	59%
Actions relating to poor school attendance	42%	53%	54%	52%	51%
Actions by housing providers	25%	24%	24%	19%	20%
Sanctions used by another agency/not directly	N/A	N/A	22%	20%	17%
Criminal justice system actions	21%	18%	16%	14%	14%
Parenting Orders	9%	7%	8%	5%	8%

Pre-codes have changed over time, as such a degree of caution should be taken in comparing trend data. (QKW10)

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