

Polling results report: 18 August 2020

This report

This report covers the period between the 4 August and 17 August 2020. Participants during this period were asked if they had opened a Social Work England online account and whether they had recorded any reflective practice and/or training as is now required in order to fulfill registration requirements. Participants were also asked the four wellbeing questions provided by the Office of National statistics as we continue to gather regular data to build a picture of the social work sector's wellbeing.

90 Social Workers responded to this poll, with 68 participants providing qualitative data on their views on registration criteria.

Registration with Social Work England

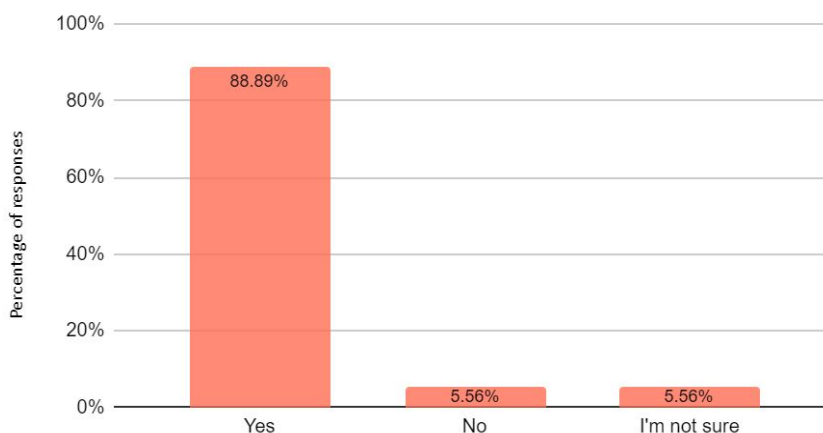
Participants were asked whether they had registered an account on Social Work England. Results show that the majority of social workers have registered an online account.

Please see results in Fig 1:

Fig 1

POLL RESULTS:

Have you registered an online account with Social Work England

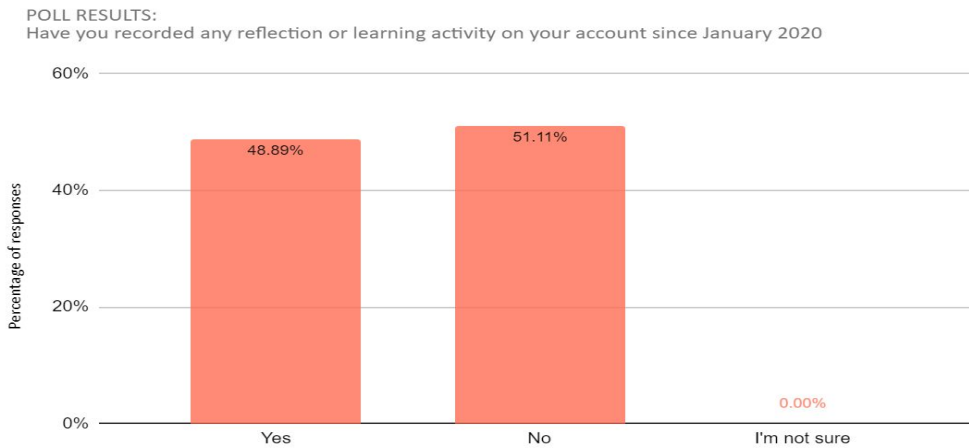


Participants were also asked whether they had recorded any learning on the site as per new guidelines for registration. Social workers are now required to provide written evidence of reflection or training before November 30th 2020 in order to renew their registration.



Please see fig 2 below;

Fig 2



As can be seen on the graphs above the results are more or less split down the middle, with slightly more participants who haven't recorded their continued professional development (CPD) than have. An open text box invited participants to give their feedback on the experience of using the site and their views on the new requirement so as to provide a greater understanding of barriers and ease of use.

Recording Continuing Professional Development (CPD)

Sixty eight participants gave text responses in this section, our highest ever number of written responses. There was a mixed response to this question. The following are some of the themes that came out of the analysis.

High workloads and a lack of time

"It's finding the time to do it! But it seems straightforward enough"

Many social workers reported that the combination of having high workloads and a lack of time are barriers to recording CPD online. Some social workers shared that

'I am so busy with my cases; I have not yet found time to start transferring all my CPD activity' and that this is *'more work on top of already high caseloads'*.

Ease of the process

Several participants found the process easy: *'very easy but time consuming'*, the *'process is easy enough to do'* and *'it was a bit tricky at first... but once you get around it, it's easy'*.

Further, *'activating account was easy'* and *'once on the site, the unstructured entry is easy to use'*



A bureaucratic experience

For some social workers, although the process was straightforward, they struggled to understand the value of the new requirement. For example, *'just seems like yet another unnecessary change...and does nothing other than put your name on a list'* and *'I'm not sure how many people learn by writing, which makes it essentially a bureaucratic experience'*. Furthermore, *'it's arduous as the points you need to answer don't always fit the circumstances in which you're working or the training and development event you want to write about'*.

Opportunity for reflection

Other practitioners viewed the recording of their CPD as an opportunity for reflection. For example, the process *'allows for personal reflection and views rather than being directive and strict to evidence specific learning activities'*. Further, *'the templates for recording learning are helpful and encourage meaningful reflection'* and that *'it makes sense to keep a record of learning and development'*.

Implications for wellbeing

Some social workers shared that they are struggling to find the time in working hours to record their CPD e.g. *'the reality of finding time during working hours to update CPD information alongside ensuring work is completed within timescales can be difficult'*. Others have mentioned needing to be *'in the right head space'* and taking the time *'to step back from your day to day activities'*. However, *'no one wants to have to use their own personal time'* [to record CPD] and that after work social workers *'want to be able to switch off from the role'*. For some people, this new requirement *'adds another layer of pressure and stress to an already overworked and stressful job'*.

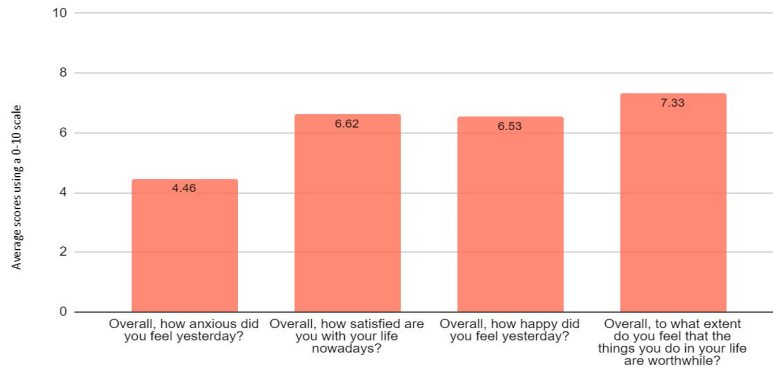
Wellbeing results

The table below shows the results for wellbeing over the past two weeks.



Fig 3

POLL RESULTS:
Average wellbeing scores

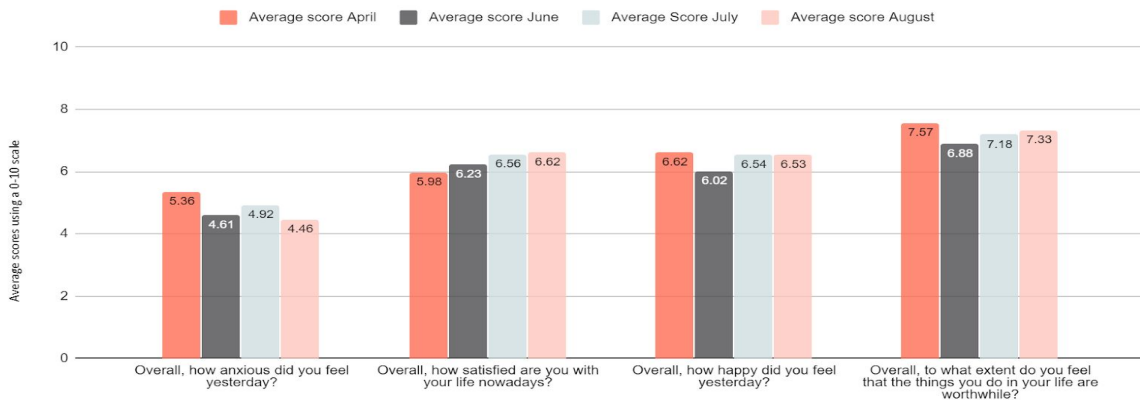


August saw the lowest average result for anxiety since data was first collected. This may reflect how the new way of living is becoming normalised.

Figure 4 shows the results over the last four months for all four questions on wellbeing.

Fig 4

POLL RESULTS:
Average wellbeing scores across April-August



Results over the last four months have tended to remain relatively stable. Data on wellbeing is an ongoing focus and will be measured monthly.

About WW-CSC Polling

What Works for Children's Social Care runs regular polls with social workers who have registered with us. Social workers are currently employed in a range of organisations and we canvas their opinions about our current and future research agenda as well as topics impacting on social work practice. There are 820 social workers currently registered to participate.