

Polling results report: 29 September 2020

This report

This report covers the period between the 15 September and 28 September 2020. Participants were asked to give feedback on their wellbeing using the Office of National Statistics (ONS) four wellbeing questions. This is a regular feature in our polling questions and is asked on a monthly basis. They were also asked about whether they had worked with mothers serving prison sentences.

Social Workers wellbeing



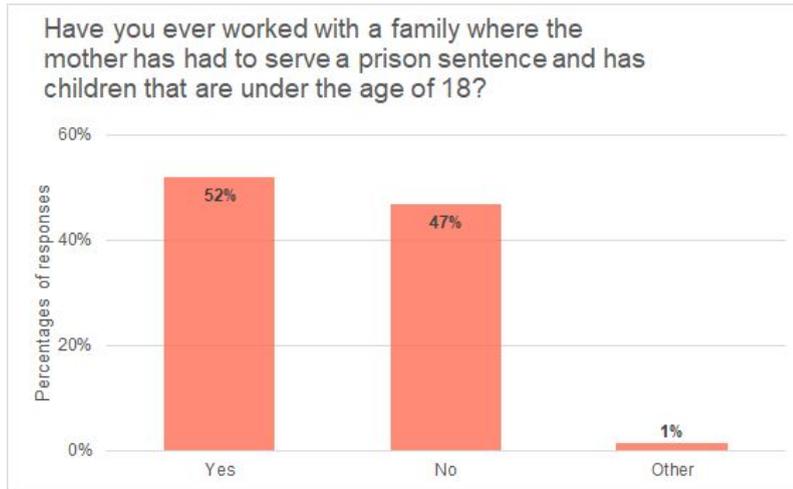
The above results chart the responses from participants from March when lockdown was first implemented due to Coronavirus. Anxiety level results show the most variation over time. Anxiety was at its highest at the beginning of lockdown at an average of 5 and now sits at an average of 4.8 having risen recently. Life satisfaction has steadily increased, starting at an average of 6 in March and currently sitting at an average of 6.7. Life worthwhile has dropped from its initial 7.5 and then has remained steady with very little difference in averages. Happiness has dropped recently from 6.6/10 to 6.2/10. The results show small incremental changes on a small number of participants and as such cannot be interpreted at this stage in any significant way. Wellbeing will continue to be measured at regular intervals and at times when societal changes may impact on social workers sense of wellbeing in particular with relation to any further measures to combat COVID - 19

Mothers in Prison

The Department for Education, The Ministry for Justice and What Works for Children's Social Care are jointly working on reviewing the decision process when women who have children are sentenced and would like to understand how common it is for a social worker to work on a case where a mother is sent to prison and when this occurs what happens to their children.



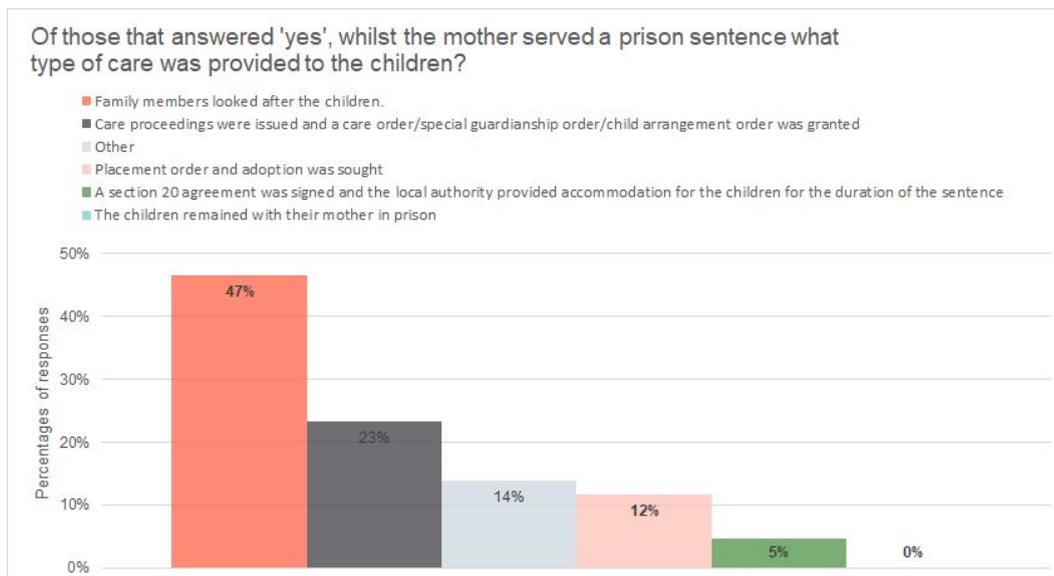
Participants were asked if they had ever worked with mothers who were serving a prison term and had children under the age of 18. The results can be seen below.



Just over half of social workers have worked with mothers who are serving a sentence and who have children. The results provided here give an indication of the potential numbers involved from the small survey sample that can then be applied to the wider community. Data for this area has been difficult to collect

What was the outcome for those children whose mothers were serving a prison sentence.

In the table below you will see the responses for the outcomes for the families known to social care.





For the majority of the children (47%), the outcome was, that they were placed with family members. 23% of participants reported issuing care proceedings with an outcome of either a care order, special guardianship order or a child arrangement order and five participants pursued placement order and adoption. Specific details of cases and outcomes were not sought and are not known at this time. WWCSC has invited those participants who did seek adoption or care orders to make contact to join further discussions. It is hoped this may provide a greater sense of understanding of the machinations that occur between the social care and justice system for these families at a particularly difficult time. It would be interesting to explore why there were no results for children remaining with their mothers in prison (children can only be placed with their mothers up until the age of two). Further exploration of women who are pregnant at the time of sentencing and the outcomes for these children born would benefit from further research.

In the text responses, social workers shared a range of care options available to children whose mothers are sentenced to a custodial prison sentence. For some children, they can already be looked after or have care proceedings underway prior to their mother being sentenced to prison. Other children can be in care whilst mother is serving a sentence and be reunited after. In some circumstances, a placement order and adoption can be sought. Also, some mothers are given suspended sentences which may enable them to continue caring for their children.

About WWCSC 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 833 social workers currently registered to participate. 79 Social Workers responded to this poll, with 11 participants providing qualitative data.