

Polling results report: 7th July 2020

This report

This report covers the period between the 22nd June and 6th July 2020. Participants during this period were asked their views on what training they would like to see offered and their continued professional development. They were also asked the office of national statistics (ONS) four wellbeing questions.

87 Social Workers replied to this poll, with 23 giving text responses.

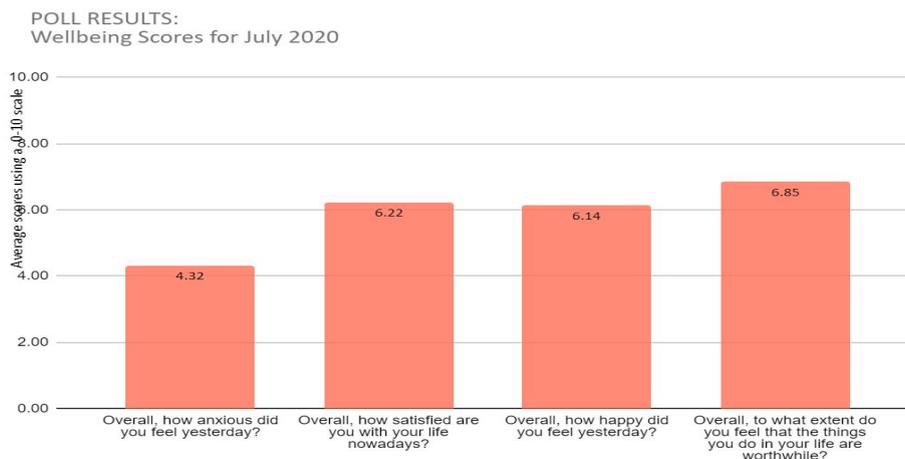
Wellbeing

Participants were asked to complete the four questions regarding their wellbeing based on the four questions from the ONS. These questions are being asked regularly in order to chart participants wellbeing as the situation changes regarding during and after the pandemic. In the first table you will see results for the end of June/July period.

Overall results indicate a similar to pattern to the previous responses. Anxiety appears to have reduced slightly whilst happiness has increased. As lockdown is easing this may reflect more opportunities to experience elements of normal life; for example going shopping, seeing family members etc.

Please see Fig 1.

Fig 1

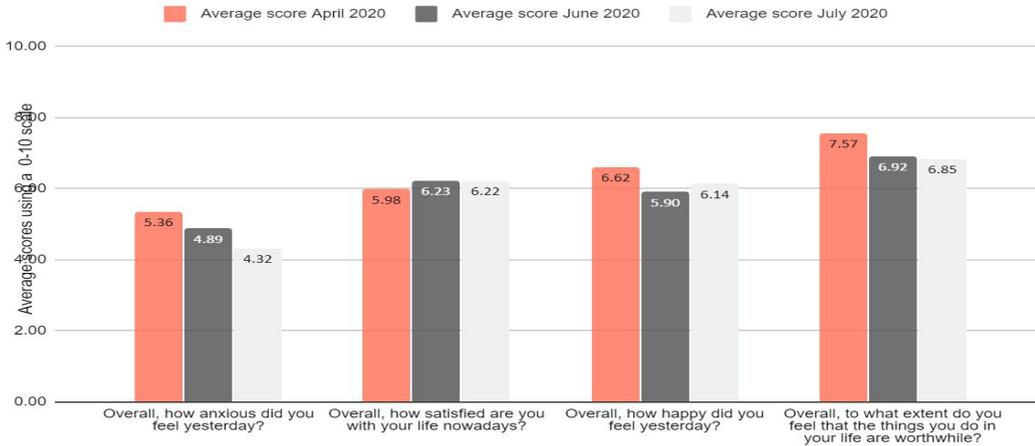


In Figure 2 below, all of the wellbeing responses are provided so you can see the overall results and any differences.

Fig.2



POLL RESULTS:
Average wellbeing scores across April, June and July



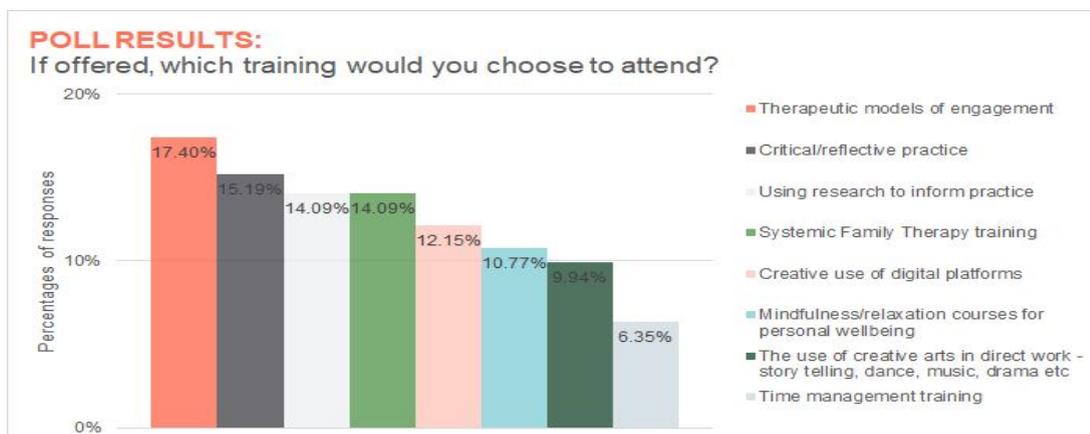
There appears to be a slow decrease in the levels of anxiety that social workers are reporting from when the questions were originally asked at the beginning of April. Satisfaction and happiness indicate a marginally mixed response and could reflect the day they answered the question. Finally life worthwhile shows a slight decrease from when originally asked. This may reflect the continuing Covid 19 pandemic and becoming frustrated or tired of the implications of lockdown.

Training

Participants were asked to choose their preferred training from a list of options and were also invited to suggest training they would like to see.

Please see figure 3 below;

Fig 3



The most popular choice was for therapeutic models of engagement. When setting our [research priorities study](#) children's social care identified the impact of trauma as their top priority in their group and overall, thus reflecting how important this area is to the sector for further research and understanding. A study review of [trauma informed models](#) is found on



the evidence store and results indicate limited and weak evidence of its efficacy. Further research in this area is currently being explored.

Continuing professional development

Twenty-three practitioners shared thoughts on what is important to them for their continued professional development. Thematic analysis was conducted on the responses, which found three organising themes: Changes to ways of working, Covid specific training pieces, and singular training pieces.

Changes to ways of working

Two recurring themes throughout the dataset was the importance of *'clinical'* or *'reflective'* supervision and training in *'motivational interviewing'*. Two practitioners also suggested the use of *'coaching'*. One person suggested training on becoming a more data-driven organisation.

One practitioner also highlighted the importance of training on *'anti-racism in social work'*.

Covid specific training pieces

One practitioner expressed that they would like training on the *'impact'* of the pandemic on the *'future delivery of children's social care'*. This suggests some social workers may be feeling uncertain about the future of children's social care. Another person suggested that training on practising in a virtual context is important e.g. on *'chairing meetings'*, and completing *'assessment through virtual platforms'*.

Singular training pieces

Strengthening wellbeing, relationships and communication

This theme focuses on the relational aspect to social work e.g., how employees interact with one another and how professionals relate to families in communication. People expressed a preference for training on *'building positive relationships'*, *'how to manage your manager'*, *'managing conflict'*, *'assertiveness'*, and *'management compassion for staff wellbeing'*. For one person, training on the *'vicarious trauma'* social workers experience is important, which connects back to the reflective and clinical supervision theme above.

Enhancing direct work with families

Another theme focuses on direct work with families and enhancing the knowledge and skillset of professionals. For example, one worker suggests training on:

"Working with perpetrators, attachment, direct work interventions - helping children with anxiety, anger, grief, loss, domestic abuse"

Others suggested *'back to basics refreshers'*, *'updated risk assessment training'*, and training on the *'change cycle'*, to help support parents through change.

Implications for policy and practice

Practitioners have shared a range of CPD needs and wants, from system-level changes such as the introduction of clinical supervision, to Covid-specific training, to singular training pieces, which fall into two broad categories: A). Strengthening wellbeing, relationships, communication, and B). Direct work with families. Whilst these responses are not representative of the views of all social workers in England, they provide insightful comment and a basis for further exploration.



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 815 social workers currently registered to participate.