

# Polling results report: 26th May 2020

## 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 805 social workers currently registered to participate.

## This report

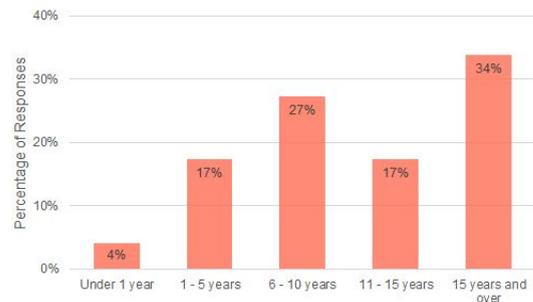
This report covers the period between the 12th May and 26th May 2020. Participants during this period were asked about the impact of Covid-19 on supervision and multi-agency working.

121 Social Workers replied to this poll, with 11 social workers giving additional qualitative information on their experiences of multi agency working in a virtual world.

## Length of time as a qualified social worker.

Participants were asked about how long they had been qualified - figure 1. The largest response of 34% was from those who had 15 years experience or more. 78% of the cohort have over 6 years social work experience and therefore bring a wealth of experience when responding to the polling questions.

Fig 1

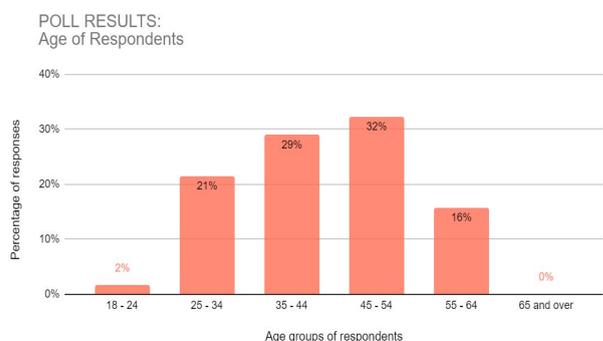


The high proportion of experienced social workers in the cohort does not reflect previous research in this area which finds that the average working life of a social worker is just over seven years (Baginsky 2013), suggesting that our sample is unrepresentative.

## Age

Participants were also asked about their age - figure 2, below. The highest response was from those aged between 45 - 54.

Fig 2



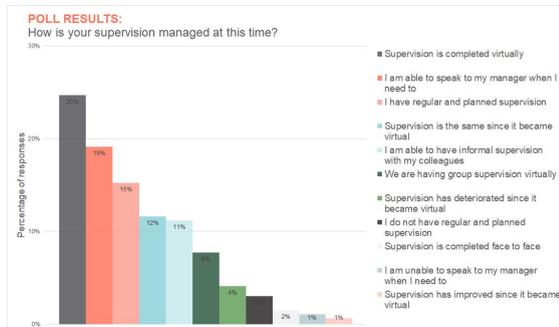


The Department for Education’s annual workforce census, also indicated greater representation within the 30 - 50 age range. (Source: Children and family social work workforce census 2018 -19).

### Impact of Covid - 19 on Supervision

Participants were asked about Supervision - figure 3 below. Most participants are receiving supervision virtually as they continue to work from home. Reassuringly they felt they could speak to their manager at any time and that their supervision was regular and planned.

Fig 3



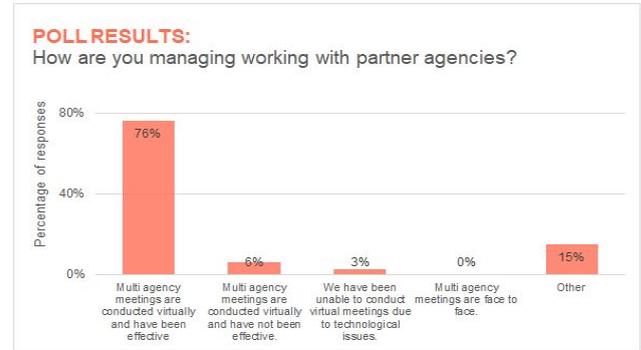
Research suggests that social workers like to have regular supervision and that this can lead to higher job satisfaction and job retention. Although the link has limited causal evidence, it appears that the perception from workers is that it is positive.

(Source: <https://whatworks-csc.org.uk/evidence/evidence-store/intervention/social-work-supervision/>).

### Impact of Covid - 19 on Multi - agency working.

Participants were asked about working with partner agencies -figure 4. 76% of the participants responded that virtual multi agency meetings had been effective.

Fig.4



Of those who gave text responses, the following themes arose;

#### Strengths of virtual multi-agency meetings

*“Some meetings have been better attended since we have been meeting virtually, especially where people normally have to travel from different locations across a wide geographical area.”*

#### Barriers to successful virtual multi-agency meetings

Several practitioners noted *‘technical difficulties’* or *‘technological problems’*. Some agencies may be better equipped to attend virtual meetings than others. There is inconsistency in the platforms different organisations promote, and use, therefore *‘it is difficult to find a platform everyone can use’*. As another practitioner notes: *‘different agencies have access to different technologies as do service users’*.

Another challenge is in the way staff are being prepared for facilitating multi-agency virtual meetings. One practitioner noted that the quality of the meeting is dependent upon *‘the number of people on the call and the technology’*. Another challenge is being able *‘to get in contact with people, which can be an issue’*.

#### Implications for practice

Guidelines on how to attend virtual multi-agency meetings are helpful e.g. the advice for *‘everyone to mute their microphones until it is their turn to speak’*.



It is helpful in these environments for a chair or senior participant to establish ground rules and social norms at the outset of the meeting. In addition, practitioners may benefit from, and value, training on how to conduct virtual multi-agency meetings rather than sending out individual reading for busy practitioners. Being guided by the family or young person's preference to communicate may be good practice in a context whereby different organisations are using different platforms.

#### References:

Baginsky, M. (2013) Retaining experienced social workers in children's services: The challenge facing local authorities in England.  
<https://www.kcl.ac.uk/scwru/pubs/2013/reports/baginsky13retaining.pdf>. (Accessed 29/05/20)