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for Education

Longitudinal study of local authority child and family social workers (Wave 3)

Research report

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Executive Summary

Introduction and background

In 2018, the Department for Education (DfE) commissioned a consortium led by IFF Research, working with social work academics at Manchester Metropolitan University and the University of Salford, to conduct a longitudinal study tracking the careers of local authority child and family social workers in England. This landmark study aimed to collect robust evidence on recruitment, retention and progression in child and family social work by tracking individuals over a five-year period.

In Wave 3, new questions were added about the impacts of Covid-19 on child and family social workers' workplace wellbeing, access to learning and development, flexible working, relationships with colleagues, and relationships with children, families and carers.

In Wave 1, 5,621 local authority child and family social workers took part in the survey, comprising almost one in six of the population. In Wave 2, 3,355 took part (3,099 in the Wave 2 survey and 256 in a boost survey among social workers who had recently started their Assessed and Supported Year in Employment or ASYE).¹ This report covers the third year of the research, which involved a number of elements:

- Wave 3 of the longitudinal survey, conducted between September and December 2020. In total, 2,240 of those who completed the Wave 2 survey and agreed to be re-contacted took part in Wave 3: a response rate of 67%. The report demonstrates how the circumstances and experiences of the cohort have changed across the three waves of the survey, rather than providing a representative 'snapshot' of the entire child and family social work profession at the time of the Wave 3 survey. Wave 3 participants are similar demographically to Wave 1 and to the original population profile.
- Another ASYE boost survey: this consisted of 283 newly qualified social workers doing their ASYE, who started this role between July 2019 and June 2020. As the 'main' sample has moved on by a year and is no longer a representative snapshot of the profession, given that ASYE social workers have mainly moved into front line practitioner roles, there is a need for an annual boost sample of ASYEs to monitor new entrants' initial experiences of working in local authority child and family social work.

¹ DfE, Longitudinal Study of Child and Family Social Workers – Wave 1:
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/longitudinal-study-of-local-authority-social-workers>

- 40 follow-up qualitative telephone interviews split between those still in local authority child and family social work at Wave 3 (who planned to stay in local authority child and family social work over the next 12 months), those who planned to leave the profession within 12 months of completing the Wave 3 survey, and agency workers. The qualitative interviews took place between January-March 2021.

The report identifies areas where the Wave 3 findings are consistent or different to previous waves: only statistically significant differences (at the 95% confidence interval) are discussed (unless otherwise specified). The report also identifies statistically significant differences between sub-groups, within Wave 3.

How many are still working in local authority child and family social work?

The majority (88%) of respondents were still in local authority child and family social work at Wave 3. This is significantly lower than at Wave 2 (94%) and at Wave 1 (98%). Movement out of local authority child and family social work over time is expected within the sample given that the starting sample at Wave 1 was collected from local authorities, meaning almost everyone was working in local authority child and family social work at Wave 1.

Of those who were in local authority child and family social work at Wave 1, 89% remained so at Wave 3; this can be broken down into 74% working directly for a local authority, 13% for an agency, and three per cent on some other basis (e.g. self-employed).

Overall, 82% of those employed in local authority child and family social work throughout the study continued to work at the same local authority, with 18% moving to a different local authority. Only 11% of those directly employed by a local authority had moved to a different one, compared with 64% of agency workers.

Around one in ten (11%) who worked in local authority child and family social work at Wave 1 had left by Wave 3. The most common destinations were moving to work in a child and family social work role in the private or voluntary sector (four per cent) or to have become inactive in the labour market due to factors like retirement or ill health (three per cent).

Over one in five (22%) had moved to a higher job grade between Wave 1 and Wave 3. Just over one in ten (11%) had been promoted between Wave 2 and Wave 3.

Seven per cent of local authority child and family social workers had moved from local authority direct employment into agency work since the beginning of the study. Pay was the most commonly cited factor for moving into agency work or self-employment, cited by 60% as a contributing factor and 30% as the main factor.

The most commonly cited single reason for moving to work in a different local authority was a dislike of the working culture at the previous authority (mentioned by 24% as a contributing factor, and 17% as the main factor), followed by previously being on a temporary/fixed term contract.² When combining factors relating to workload, these are shown to be the third most common factor for moving - 'my workload was too high' (cited by 7% as the main factor) and 'better work life balance' (cited by 4% as the main factor).

Workplace well-being

Local authority child and family social workers were contracted to work an average of 35 hours per week but the average number of hours they reported that they actually worked was 40. This compares with 35 hours contracted versus 42 hours actually worked in Wave 2. Evidence from the qualitative research identified increased home working, reduced travelling time and more virtual meetings, due to Covid-19, as having a positive impact on working hours, although there were drawbacks in terms of blurred boundaries between work and home. **ASYEs, in comparison, said they worked an average of 43 hours per week at Wave 3, consistent with previous waves.**

Three-quarters (75%) of social workers reported working more than their contracted hours either 'all the time' or 'most weeks' to keep up with their workload, consistent with Wave 2.

In a typical week, three-quarters of Wave 3 respondents (73%) spent time doing direct work with children, families or carers. The mean number of cases held was 18 overall (19 for case holding full-time workers and 15 for case holding part-time workers), a significant decrease in mean number of cases from previous waves (19 at both Wave 1 and Wave 2). Despite this decrease in the average, there is a lot of variation in caseloads, indicating these have not decreased for all child and family social workers. Number of cases alone should not be the sole indicator of a heavy workload, as complexity of cases is also a factor. Qualitative interviews showed that those with a small number of cases could feel stressed and overworked if the cases were complex, particularly if the cases went to court.

Feelings of stress and having too high a workload have increased since Wave 1 and Wave 2 despite a reduction in average caseloads and working hours. More than half of local authority child and family social workers at Wave 3 agreed they feel

² By 'working culture', social workers were typically referring to the specific working culture at their previous authority, rather than in local authority child and family social work more broadly, and were often considering the culture within their specific teams.

stressed by their job (60%), their workload is too high (58%), and they are asked to fulfil too many roles in their job (55%).

Covid-19 has had a substantial negative impact. Over two-thirds of social workers considered that anxiety (68%), complexity of cases (68%), and workloads (69%) had increased as a result of Covid-19. Three-quarters (73%) felt that work-related stress had increased due to Covid-19.

The majority of social workers (59%) felt that relationships with colleagues had worsened as a result of Covid-19, particularly among front line practitioners. There was a more balanced picture in terms of impacts on relationships with children and families: while 44% felt these had worsened due to Covid-19, 37% felt it had no impact.

Views on employer, line manager and working environment

Amongst those who completed the survey at each wave, the proportion feeling valued by their employer has increased (from 56% at Wave 1 to 61% at Wave 3) while feelings of loyalty have remained consistent.

Views towards line managers have largely remained consistent across the three waves of the study, although fewer agreed that their manager encouraged them to develop their skills at Wave 3 (75%) compared with Wave 2 (78%). Despite this, the proportion who had received employer-supported CPD or learning and development over the preceding 12 months increased (from 89% at Wave 2 to 92% at Wave 3).

The frequency of receiving reflective supervision has reduced significantly since Wave 1, with fewer receiving it every three or four weeks (41% compared with 44% at Wave 1) and more receiving it less frequently than every six weeks (24% compared with 18%). This is driven by a reduction in the frequency of front line practitioners reporting they receive reflective supervision between Wave 1 and Wave 3.

Views on how the Covid-19 pandemic had impacted support received from management were mixed, with 38% thinking there had been no impact, 29% that it had worsened and 31% that it had improved.

Over six in ten (62%) thought that the Covid-19 pandemic had negatively impacted the resources available to support children and families.

Job satisfaction

Most social workers (72%) in Wave 3 found their job satisfying, consistent with previous waves. However, there were three aspects where levels of satisfaction have decreased – sense of achievement, the work itself and opportunities for skills development. In Wave 3, three quarters (77%) were satisfied with the sense of achievement they get from their work; down from 83% in Wave 1 and 79% in Wave 2.

Nearly three quarters (73%) of child and family social workers were satisfied with the work itself; down from 76% in Wave 2 and 78% in Wave 1. Two thirds (68%) were satisfied with the opportunity to develop their skills in their job; lower than in Wave 2 (71%) or Wave 1 (72%).

In contrast, satisfaction levels with job security and pay have increased. In Wave 3, the vast majority (85%) of child and family social workers were satisfied with their job security, up from 81% in Wave 2 and 75% in Wave 1. Six in ten (61%) were satisfied with their pay, up from 58% in Wave 2 and 49% in Wave 1.

Social workers continued to be most likely to feel their career progression was in line with their expectations (57%), with more reporting it was below (19%) than above expectations (13%). However, there was a small but significant increase in the proportion who thought their career progression was above their expectations – 13% in Wave 3 compared with 11% at previous waves.

Short-term career plans

The majority (84%) of local authority child and family social workers (including agency workers) anticipate remaining in local authority child and family social work in 12 months' time (73% employed directly by a local authority and 11% by an agency). Amongst those currently employed directly by a local authority, 14% expected that they would not be in local authority child and family social work in 12 months' time, compared with 22% of agency workers.

Overall, a fifth (20%) of respondents reported that their career plans had been influenced by their experiences of the Covid-19 pandemic. Of those who currently work in child and family social work, people who were thinking of leaving the profession were more likely to report that their experiences of the Covid-19 pandemic had influenced their career plans (34%, vs 19% of those not considering leaving child and family social work). This suggests Covid-19 was more likely to influence considerations about leaving the profession than staying.

The most commonly cited main reason for considering leaving child and family social work was retirement (20%), followed by the dislike of the local authority social work culture (17%) and not making the best use of their skills (12%); these factors are consistent with previous waves of research. However, in combination, the factors relating to overwork (high caseload, working hours, volume of paperwork and incompatibility with family or relationships) were the most commonly cited main factor (22%).

The primary factor that would encourage child and family social workers who were thinking of leaving the profession to remain in child and family social work was a more manageable caseload (13%), followed by a better working culture and a more manageable workload in terms of administration and paperwork (both at 10%).

Reasons for leaving child and family social work

Of the small minority who had left child and family social work but remained active in the labour market, most (70%) had taken the decision to leave the profession permanently and only a minority (24%) thought they might return within the next five years.

Among those who had left but were still active in the labour market, the most common reason for leaving was that they did not like the culture of local authority social work (30%), which was significantly higher than at Wave 2. Combining the three workload-related factors ('the high caseload', 'the working hours in general' and 'it is not compatible with family or relationship commitments') shows factors relating to overwork to be the second most commonly cited main reason (cited by 21%). One in ten cited leaving for more suitable opportunities/opportunities for progression in related fields or for personal reasons (e.g. health).

When those who had left child and family social work but were still active in the labour market were asked what might encourage them to return to the profession, one quarter (25%) considered that 'nothing' would. One in five (19%) identified a more manageable workload in terms of caseload as the main factor that might encourage them back, while one in six (16%) cited a better working culture.

There was **little to differentiate those who had left local authority child and family social work between Wave 1 and Wave 3 from those who remained in terms of demographic characteristics**, for example in terms of: age; gender; ethnicity; having a physical or mental health condition, or; having childcare responsibilities.³ However, those who had left were **more likely to say they were stressed** at Wave 1 (66%, compared with 53% who were still in the role) and **more likely to be dissatisfied with their job overall** (24% compared with 10%). They **were also more likely than those who stayed to have been working as front line practitioners** at Wave 1 (64%, compared with 52% of those still in local authority child and family social work at Wave 3).

ASYE entrants

The profile of new ASYE entrants at Wave 3 was very similar to ASYEs in previous waves, with few demographic differences.

Four in five (78%) ASYE social workers in Wave 3 reported feeling well prepared for a career in child and family social work, consistent with ASYEs in Wave 2 but

³ The base size for those who had left but were still active in the labour market was small (n=94),

significantly higher than in Wave 1 (71%). The proportion who felt very well prepared has increased since Wave 1.

Over half (57%) of ASYE social workers in Wave 3 estimated that they worked for 41 hours or more in a typical week, a significant increase compared with the Wave 1 cohort. The average caseload for ASYEs reported in this wave was 17, consistent with previous waves and lower than other social workers, reflecting the expectation that ASYEs have a protected caseload.

Over two-fifths (44%) of new ASYEs in Wave 3 agreed that 'my overall workload is too high', and that 'I feel I am being asked to fulfil too many different roles in my job' (46%), while nearly two-thirds (65%) agreed that 'I feel stressed in my job'. As in previous waves, too many cases and too much paperwork were cited as the two main reasons causing stress.

Covid-19 has had a substantial impact on ASYEs, with the vast majority reporting it had increased work-related stress (82%), anxiety (77%), complexity of cases (71%) and workloads (67%). Increased work-related stress and anxiety were significantly higher than among the more experienced child and family social workers who completed the Wave 3 survey (among whom, 73% felt that Covid-19 had increased work-related stress and 66% felt that it had increased anxiety). Just over half (55%) of ASYEs in this wave felt that relationships with colleagues had worsened as a result of Covid-19. Although this is in line with the findings for other social workers, it is of potential concern given the importance of such relationships, identified in the qualitative research, for developing resilience and as a protective factor against work-related stress.

ASYEs reported high levels of job satisfaction (79%) in line with previous waves despite reporting high levels of work-related stress. Reflecting this, four fifths (80%) of Wave 3 ASYE social workers planned to be working directly in local authority child and family social work in 12 months' time. The rest most commonly anticipated working in a different area of social work or in child and family social work but not at a local authority (both five per cent), or working for an agency (four per cent). Those who did not expect to be working directly in local authority child and family social work in 12 months' time were significantly more likely to say they work overtime, feel stressed, feel their workload was too high, and to feel they were asked to fulfil too many roles. They were also, significantly less satisfied than those expecting to still be working directly for a local authority in 12 months' time.

Conclusions

Although Wave 3 of the study has revealed changes in jobs and work status, and some attitudes, overall satisfaction had remained consistent with previous waves. While satisfaction with sense of achievement, the work itself and skills development all declined

compared with previous waves, satisfaction with job security and pay have increased, particularly among front line practitioners.

The impacts of Covid-19 on social workers' experiences have been challenging in terms of increased feelings of stress and anxiety, more complex cases, and depleted relationships with colleagues and to a lesser extent, service users. ASYEs in particular report higher levels of stress and anxiety as a result of Covid-19, than more experienced social workers. The impact of Covid-19 on worsening relationships with colleagues, reported by over half of social workers, is potentially concerning given the importance of these relationships as a protective factor in boosting resilience. Further, the impacts of the pandemic are likely to have contributed to the lower levels of satisfaction with sense of achievement, the work itself and skills development.

Despite this, the majority of those in local authority child and family social work at Wave 3 (84%) plan to continue working in the profession. Among those considering leaving child and family social work in the next 12 months, the most common main reason related to overwork (a combination of high caseload, working hours, volume of paperwork and incompatibility with family or relationships), followed by retirement.

Dislike of the culture of local authority child and family social work featured as a key reason underlying moves between local authorities, as well as considerations about, and decisions to, leave the profession – more so at Wave 3 than previous waves. Key features of working culture which could influence decisions to leave or to stay emerged in the qualitative interviews as: a supportive working environment; being treated well and feeling valued both by immediate line managers and the organisation as a whole; having autonomy and feeling trusted to make professional judgements; and scope for development and reflective practice. For some, team rather than organisational culture was more significant in their day-to-day experience.

1. Introduction

In 2018, the Department for Education (DfE) commissioned a consortium led by IFF Research, working with social work academics at Manchester Metropolitan University and the University of Salford, to conduct a landmark new longitudinal study tracking the careers of a cohort of individual local authority child and family social workers over five years. The study therefore provides a unique opportunity to explore not only changes over time at aggregate level, but how individuals' career paths and attitudes may change, and what influences these, over time.

This report covers the third year (Wave 3) of the survey and follow-up qualitative research. It sets out social workers' current employment situations and their views on a range of issues including job satisfaction and career progression, career plans for the next 12 months and the impacts of the Covid-19 pandemic on the profession. Findings from Wave 3 of the survey are compared to Wave 1 and Wave 2 findings throughout this report. There is also some longitudinal analysis which looks at changes among individuals across the three waves.

The Wave 3 survey was conducted between September and December 2020 and the qualitative research in January and February 2021, while the Covid-19 pandemic was ongoing and the working (and personal) lives of many child and family social workers was very different to what they had been pre-pandemic. While some specific questions have been added at Wave 3 to measure the impact of the pandemic, it is important to consider all results from the third wave of the survey within this context. For example, where results have remained consistent with previous waves, this may suggest areas of social workers' working lives which have so far been resistant to the impact of the pandemic. Future waves of the study will also need to be considered through this lens.

In this chapter we set out the background to this research and summarise its aims and objectives. We then provide an outline of the methodology for Wave 3 of the study, before discussing the structure of the report.

Background

The latest Department for Education (DfE) child and family social work workforce data⁴ shows there were 31,854 full-time equivalent (FTE) child and family social workers employed by local authorities (LAs) on 30 September 2020. Agency workers made up 15.4% of the workforce, slightly lower than in 2019 (15.8%) but in line with 2018. The

⁴ [Children's social work workforce data 2020](#)

staff turnover rate was 13.5% (based on FTEs), down from 15% the previous year. The number of reported vacancies was 6,100 (FTEs), slightly more than the previous year (6,000). The national vacancy rate of 16% (based on FTEs) remained stable. The DfE workforce statistics⁵ indicate that 70% of (FTE) children and family social workers leaving a local authority within the reference year had been in service in their local authority for less than five years (up from 68% the previous year). This includes people who have stayed in social work, but moved to work for a different LA.

Aims and objectives

The aim of this landmark longitudinal study is to collect robust evidence on recruitment, retention and progression in child and family social work. In particular it aims to establish a much stronger understanding of recruitment issues, career pathways, choices and decisions and how these differ according to demographics (e.g. age, gender, ethnicity), different entry routes, roles and responsibilities, region, LA performance and local labour markets.

Within this, the specific study objectives are to:

- explore what attracted respondents to child and family social work and how they feel their training path (and ASYE) have prepared them for this career;
- investigate career aspirations, change over time and between different roles;
- distinguish how the experience of performance management and continuing professional development (CPD) affect retention and progression;
- identify specific issues facing particular demographic groups (e.g. people from Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic (BAME) backgrounds, those with caring responsibilities; those with a physical or mental health condition;
- explore whether these issues are similar across different roles and practice areas within children's services;
- understand pull and push factors that influence social workers remaining in post, moving within children's services or leaving the profession;
- find out where social workers go when they leave and why; and

⁵ [Children's social work workforce data 2020](#)

- understand the impacts of the Covid-19 pandemic on the profession.

For the purposes of the study, a child and family social worker is defined as a qualified social worker registered with the Health and Care Professions Council (HCPC) or Social Work England, working in a local authority or Children's Trust⁶, in a children's services department or (if working in an authority where the services are joined up) a social worker that works exclusively on children and families work. This includes social workers regardless of their position in the organisation, i.e. at all levels of seniority and in all relevant areas of practice. Agency social workers employed in local authorities and social workers on secondment to Regional Adoption Agencies are also included within the scope of the research.

Methodology

Wave 3 of the study comprised two components:

1. A longitudinal mixed-methods online and telephone survey of child and family social workers. The third wave, conducted between September and December 2020, comprised two surveys:
 - Wave 3 longitudinal survey: all respondents who completed the Wave 2 survey and consented to be recontacted for the next wave were invited to complete this survey, where contact details were held. People were still eligible to complete the survey if they had moved job or employer or were no longer working in social work. This survey allows the experiences of the cohort to be tracked as they move through their careers. This means that changes observed between waves may be attributable to career movement and changes to career plans and therefore are not intended to reflect the current state of the child and family social workforce at the time. Those who completed the ASYE survey in Wave 2 and agreed to recontact were added to the sample for the Wave 3 longitudinal survey. This means that the sample at Wave 3 includes those who were on an ASYE in Wave 1 or Wave 2. Wave 3 ASYEs were given the ASYE survey (see below bullet) and analysed separately to the main sample.
 - ASYE survey: this survey consisted of social workers doing their ASYE, who started in this role between July 2019 and June 2020. This window

⁶ Where we refer to local authorities in the remainder of this report this includes Children's Trusts.

was specified to avoid picking up ASYE social workers who had already completed Wave 2 of the survey.

2. Forty follow-up qualitative telephone or video-conferencing interviews (e.g. via Microsoft Teams or Zoom) were conducted with front line workers and team managers; with a mixture of those still in local authority child and family social work at Wave 3 (defined as those who indicated that they planned to stay in local authority child and family social work over the next 12 months), those who indicated they planned to leave local authority child and family social work over the next 12 months, and those working for agencies. The sample for the qualitative interviews was structured into three groups, as follows:

- 15 social workers who expect to stay in the profession in 12 months' time;
- 15 social workers that expect to leave the profession in 12 months' time; and
- 10 agency workers (with varying expectations about their future in the profession).

Sample building

In order to build the original starting sample of local authority child and family social workers, in summer 2018, prior to the first wave of the survey, IFF wrote to Directors of Children's Services in all 152 local authorities / Children's Trusts in England to invite them to take part in the research. Ninety-five agreed to participate in the study. This accounted for approximately two-thirds of all local authorities / Trusts in England, providing a good spread by region and Ofsted rating (see Tables 1.2 and 1.3 for a detailed breakdown of completes at Wave 3).

Local authorities took part either by providing a census of their in-scope staff work email addresses, and in some cases work telephone numbers (via a secure transfer site), or by sending out an open link to their in-scope staff on our behalf. Where sample was provided direct to IFF it was possible to send an individualised survey link, targeted reminders, and (where a work phone number was provided) to conduct a final top-up survey using Computer Assisted Telephone Interviewing (CATI). Where the survey was conducted using an open link, the relevant local authorities were asked to send out reminders to staff, but these could not be targeted at non-responders and therefore were less frequent. Respondents to the Wave 3 survey comprised social workers who were recruited through this method, who completed the Wave 2 survey and consented to being contacted to take part in the Wave 3 survey. These respondents received a similar, but shorter survey to the one completed in Wave 1, as with Wave 2. Questions about current situation, experiences and career plans were repeated in Wave 3, but other questions, such as entry routes into the profession, were removed as there was no need to ask these again. In Wave 3, questions relating to the Covid-19 pandemic were added, to aid in understanding the impacts of the pandemic on the profession.

To ensure that the study continues to represent new entrants to the profession, a supplementary sample of social workers doing their ASYE is being collected at each wave. A similar sample-building exercise as the one conducted for Wave 1 of the main sample was carried out with local authorities at Wave 3 to build a supplementary sample of ASYE social workers, who received a survey very similar to the Wave 1 questionnaire.

At each wave, those who completed the ASYE survey the previous year and agreed to recontact are added to the previous survey sample and invited to take part in that wave's survey. For example, those who completed the ASYE survey at Wave 3 and agreed to recontact will be added to the main sample at Wave 4 and invited to take the Wave 4 survey.

Response rates

The sample outcomes and response rates for Wave 3, and for the ASYE supplementary survey, are shown in the tables overleaf. The overall response rate for the Wave 3 follow-up survey was 67% of Wave 2 respondents who agreed to be recontacted, across both online and telephone modes (including respondents from the Wave 2 ASYE survey who agreed to recontact). For the Wave 3 ASYE survey, the response rate for sampled contacts was 33%. It is not possible to calculate the response rate for respondents who completed through the open link as not all local authorities provided ASYE population data. The response rate and recontact rates across all three waves of the main survey are displayed in Table 1.1 below.

More detailed information on the methodology is contained within the Technical Annex.

Table 1.1 Response rates and recontact rates (Wave 1 - Wave 3)

	Wave 1	Wave 2	Wave 3
Starting sample	21,000	4,597	3,347
Online (n)	4,177	1,701	1,284
Online response rate (RR)	20%	38%	38%
Telephone top-up	1,411	1,601	956
Total response	5,588	3,302	2,240
% agreeing to recontact	82%	95%	98%
Overall RR (as % of starting sample at each wave)	27%	72%	67%

Table 1.2 Responses by local authority region and Ofsted rating (Wave 3 survey)

		Online <i>[valid emails provided]</i> <i>n</i>	Online <i>[valid emails provided]</i> <i>%</i>	Telephone <i>[approached via telephone]</i> <i>n</i>	Telephone <i>[approached via telephone]</i> <i>%</i>	Total response <i>[Online and telephone]</i> <i>n</i>	Total response <i>[Online and telephone]</i> <i>%</i>
Overall		1,284	39%	956	51%	2,240	67%
Region	North East	103	40%	72	49%	175	67%
	North West	107	37%	80	48%	187	63%
	Yorkshire and the Humber	92	45%	49	53%	141	68%
	East Midlands	151	38%	104	44%	255	64%
	West Midlands	101	37%	78	51%	179	65%
	East of England	181	41%	122	52%	303	68%
	South East	220	40%	161	50%	381	67%
	South West	120	45%	75	54%	195	72%
	Greater London	209	34%	215	57%	424	68%
Ofsted	Outstanding	227	39%	171	51%	398	68%
	Good	472	40%	350	53%	822	68%
	Requires improvement	421	40%	299	51%	720	67%
	Inadequate	151	35%	124	47%	275	62%

Table 1.3 Response by local authority region and Ofsted rating (ASYE survey)

Overall		Sampled responses: Online	Sampled responses Online	Sampled responses Telephone	Sampled responses Telephone	Total sampled response	Total sampled response	Open-link responses	Sampled & open link TOTAL
		<i>[valid emails provided] n</i>	<i>[valid emails provided] %</i>	<i>[approached via telephone] N</i>	<i>[approached via telephone] %</i>	<i>[Online and telephone] n</i>	<i>[as % of starting sample]</i>	Online	Total ASYE responses
		90	17%	103	36%	193	33%	90	283
Region	North East	5	8%	11	30%	16	26%	6	22
	North West	14	24%	17	41%	31	45%	13	44
	Yorkshire and the Humber	16	22%	8	35%	24	32%	<5	27
	East Midlands	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	6	6
	West Midlands	8	9%	18	30%	26	27%	10	36
	East of England	11	27%	8	53%	19	40%	12	31
	South East	8	9%	17	31%	25	26%	11	36
	South West	6	25%	5	42%	11	42%	15	26
	Greater London	22	21%	19	42%	41	36%	14	55
Ofsted	Outstanding	11	11%	20	32%	31	31%	16	47
	Good	37	22%	21	40%	58	32%	31	89
	Requires improvement	36	16%	44	34%	80	33%	36	116
	Inadequate	6	12%	18	43%	24	39%	7	31

Sample characteristics and weighting

The profile of the Wave 3 participants was largely in line with both previous waves, which in turn was similar to the population statistics in the DfE workforce data collection. Table A.11 in the technical annex gives a full breakdown of achieved sample in Wave 3 compared with 2018 population statistics. The data is weighted back to the 2018 population statistics, that being the year the study began; as the study is tracking the same group of social workers over time, the data is weighted to the population profile at the point in time the sample was collected. As with previous waves, it was weighted to correct for minor differences in whether or not the social worker was directly employed by their local authority or employed through an agency, and by region.

While there was some variation in Ofsted rating between the achieved profile and the population figures, weighting was not applied by Ofsted rating as this is a fluid, frequently changing measure.

Wave 3 non-responders

Of the 3,302 respondents who completed the Wave 2 survey, 1,178 did not complete the Wave 3 survey, which equates to 36% of Wave 2 completes. The rest of this section details key differences between those who completed the Wave 3 survey and those who did not, by demographic information, employment characteristics and attitudes towards their working lives, as captured through the survey. The data in this section is from Wave 2 of the survey as this was the last point at which there was directly comparable data for Wave 3 responders and Wave 3 non-responders. The data here is unweighted, as it is an analysis of the sample for the study rather than the wider population of child and family social workers. A full comparison of demographic and employment characteristics as well as some key attitudinal measures can be found in Table A.12 below.

Demographic and employment characteristics

Overall, demographic characteristics of Wave 3 non-responders were fairly similar to the Wave 3 responders. However, as with Wave 2, non-responders were slightly more likely to be Black / Black British (9% compared with 7% of Wave 3 responders) and less likely to be White (77% compared with 80%).

Non-responders were also more likely to: be aged between 35-44 years old (29% compared with 25% of Wave 3 responders); be front line practitioners (56% compared with 52%); have been at their employer for 2-3 years (28% compared with 22%), and; work at a local authority with an 'Inadequate' Ofsted rating (15% compared with 11% of Wave 3 responders).

There was very little variation in employment situation between the two groups, although non-responders were slightly more likely to work in local authority child and family social work at Wave 2 (95% compared with 93%). Wave 3 non-responders were, however, less

likely to think that they would be directly employed by a local authority in 12 months' time (72% compared with 75%) and slightly more likely to think they would be working in agency work (8% compared with 6%).

Attitudes

Attitudes at Wave 2 of the Wave 3 responders and non-responders differed for some measures, although non-responders were not always more negative about their working lives, as one might expect.

Non-responders were less satisfied overall and more stressed at Wave 2:

- 73% of Wave 3 non-responders reported being satisfied overall with their social work careers to date, compared with 76% of responders.
- 57% of Wave 3 non-responders reported feeling stressed by their jobs, compared with 54% of responders.

However, Wave 3 non-responders were less likely to disagree that they felt valued by their employer than responders (18% disagreed, compared with 22% of responders) and more likely to disagree that their workload was too high (27% disagreed, compared with 23% of responders). This did not mean that more Wave 3 responders agreed with each measure though, with the difference driven by more Wave 3 responders answering 'neither agree nor disagree'.

The structure of this report

The rest of this report is structured as follows:

- Chapter 2 looks at the **profile of who is still working in local authority child and family social work**, the extent of job moves between different LAs, and the extent of moves out of LA child and family social work into other roles either within social work or outside the profession altogether;
- Chapter 3 focuses on child and family social workers' **working hours, caseloads and workplace place wellbeing** including the impacts of Covid-19 on workplace wellbeing;
- Chapter 4 details child and family social workers' **views on their employer, line manager, and working environment** including the impacts of Covid-19;
- Chapter 5 explores **job satisfaction and career progression** in child and family social work;
- Chapter 6 focuses on child and family social workers' **short-term career plans and what influences these**, why people are considering leaving and potential influences on remaining in the profession;
- Chapter 7 looks at child and family social workers' **reasons for leaving social work and what influenced this decision**, among those who left the profession between Wave 2 and Wave 3;
- Chapter 8 focuses on the **experiences of current ASYEs**, comparing their views with those of ASYEs in previous waves, and;
- Chapter 9 highlights the **key conclusions** from this stage of the study.

Throughout the report, the survey and qualitative data are reported by topic area and theme, making it clear which findings are based on the survey and which are drawn from the qualitative research. Only statistically significant survey findings (at the 95% confidence interval) are referred to in the text of the report, unless otherwise specified. Data labels in charts accompanied by an asterisk (“*”) indicate a statistically significant difference between Wave 2 and Wave 3, charts accompanied by a double asterisk (“**”) indicate a statistically significant difference between Wave 1 and Wave 3.

2. Who is still working in local authority child and family social work?

This chapter explores the employment situation of child and family social workers at Wave 3, compared with the previous waves of the study. It examines the employment status of those working in child and family social work (including movement from direct employment to agency work and vice versa) as well as those who have moved out of the profession. The chapter begins with a brief summary of the profile of child and family social workers participating in Wave 3 of the study.

The key findings from this chapter are:

- The majority (88%) of respondents were still in local authority child and family social work at Wave 3. This is significantly lower than at Wave 2 (94%) and at Wave 1 (98%). Movement out of local authority child and family social work over time is expected within the sample given that the starting sample at Wave 1 was collected from local authorities, meaning almost everyone was still in local authority child and family social work at Wave 1.
- Of those who were in local authority child and family social work at Wave 1, 89% remained so at Wave 3; this can be broken down into 74% working directly for a local authority, 13% for an agency, and three per cent on some other basis (e.g. self-employed).
- Overall, 82% of those who had been in local authority child and family social work throughout the study remained at the same local authority at Wave 3, with 18% moving. Only 11% of those directly employed by a local authority had moved, compared with 64% of agency workers.
- Around one in ten (11%) had left local authority child and family social work by Wave 3. The most common destinations were to be still working in child and family work but not at a local authority, for example in the private or voluntary sector (four per cent) or to have become inactive in the labour market due to factors like retirement or ill health (three per cent).
- Over one in five (22%) had moved to a higher job grade between Wave 1 and Wave 3.
- Seven per cent of local authority child and family social workers had moved from local authority direct employment into agency work since the beginning of the study. Pay was the most commonly cited factor for moving into agency work or self-employment, cited by 60% as a contributing factor and 30% as the main factor.

- The most commonly cited single reason for moving to work in a different local authority was a dislike of the working culture at the previous authority (mentioned by 24% as a contributing factor, and 17% as the main factor), followed by previously being on a temporary/fixed term contract.⁷ When combining factors relating to workload, these are shown to be the third most common factor for moving - 'my workload was too high' (cited by 7% as the main factor) and 'better work life balance' (cited by 4% as the main factor).

Profile of local authority child and family social workers

As expected, the profile of local authority child and family social workers has remained largely consistent with previous waves.

The majority of local authority child and family social workers are women, and this continues to be represented in the sample at Wave 3, with 81% women and 18% men. This is comparable with both previous waves of the study, where 82% were women.

The overall age profiles have also remained largely consistent, although the sample is ageing as would be expected in a longitudinal study of this nature. There was a fairly even spread of ages: 22% were aged under 35; 26% between 35-44; 26% between 45-54, and; 25% aged over 55. Since Wave 1, significantly fewer social workers were aged below 35 (falling from 25% to 22% in Wave 3). Over the same period, while not statistically significant, there has been an upward trend in the proportion aged between 55-64 years old since Wave 1 (from 20% to 22%). This is partly due to Wave 3 non-responders being more likely to be younger social workers in front line practitioner roles.

Almost eight in ten (79%) of the local authority child and family social workers at Wave 3 were White (76% White British). Nine per cent were Black or Black British, three per cent were Asian or Asian British, three per cent were of a Mixed ethnicity and three per cent of another ethnicity. This was in line with previous waves of the study.

At Wave 3, 20% had a physical or mental health condition expected to last 12 months or more; 79% did not have a health condition and one per cent did not disclose this information. This is consistent with the previous wave of the study, but higher than at Wave 1 (15% had a condition in Wave 1).

Half (51%) had caring responsibilities. This was most commonly for school-aged children (35%), followed by caring for other family members or friends (14%) and for pre-school-

⁷ By 'working culture', social workers were typically referring to the specific working culture at their previous authority, rather than in local authority child and family social work more broadly, and were often considering the culture within their specific teams.

aged children (11%). Only a small number (2%) cared for children with disabilities. The proportion caring for other family members or friends has increased significantly since Wave 2 (from 12% to 14%), to be expected with an ageing sample, although it may also reflect people in England needing care as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic.

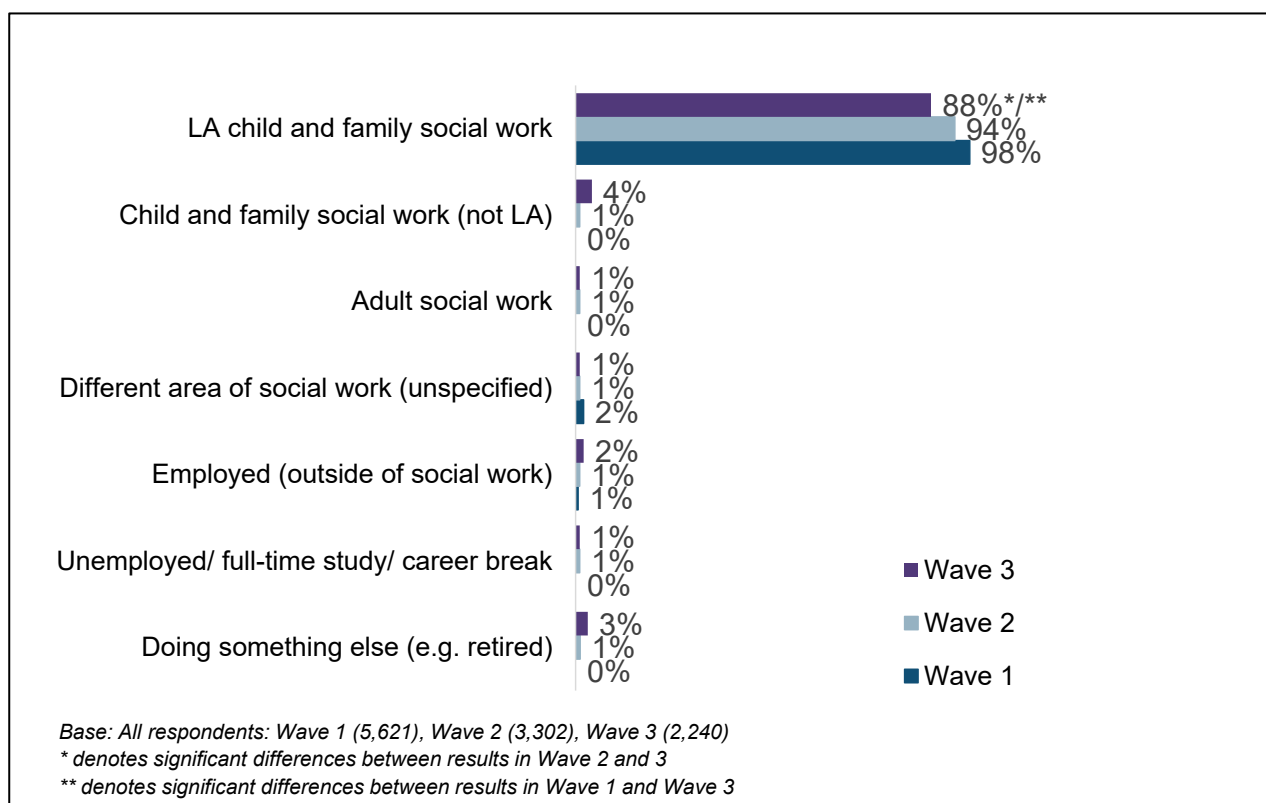
Employment status

Figure 2.1 below shows the employment status of the whole sample at each wave, from Wave 1 to Wave 3, providing a 'snapshot' of the sample at Wave 1 to Wave 3.

The majority (88%) of respondents at Wave 3 were still employed in local authority child and family social work. As shown in Figure 2.1, this proportion has fallen significantly from 98% in Wave 1 and 94% at Wave 2. As the starting sample for the study was collected from local authorities, it is to be expected that almost all would be in local authority child and family social work at Wave 1 and that this would gradually decline through the course of the research. In Wave 3, four per cent were working in child and family social work, but not at a local authority, compared with one per cent in Wave 2.

The circumstances of the minority working outside of child and family social work at Wave 3 remained largely consistent with previous waves. One per cent were working in adult social work; one per cent in another area of social work; two per cent working but outside of social work altogether; fewer than one per cent each were either unemployed and looking for work, undertaking full-time study or on a career break, and; three per cent were doing something else, which included retirement. The proportion 'doing something else' has increased significantly between Wave 2 and Wave 3, from one per cent to three per cent. It should be noted that the proportion reporting they were now doing something else in the survey is likely to be an underestimate of the proportion of the population of local authority child and family social workers, because those who have left the profession may be less likely to respond to the survey.

Figure 2.1 Employment status (Wave 1 to Wave 3)

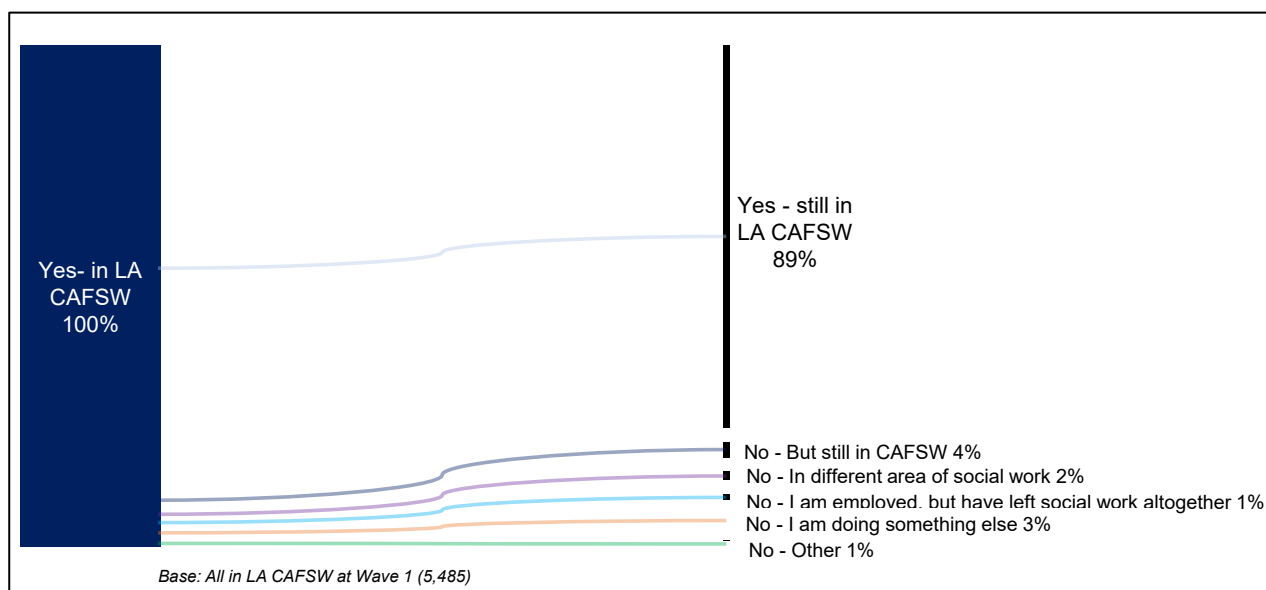


Journey of local authority child and family social workers since Wave 1

Wave 1 consisted of 5,621 respondents. As shown in Figure 2.1, almost all of these were in local authority child and family social work (98%), with the remaining two per cent working in another area of social work or working outside of social work.

This section focuses on the 2,087 people who were in local authority child and family social work at Wave 1 (98% of the Wave 1 sample) and remained in the research at Wave 3. As can be seen (Figure 2.2), the vast majority were still in local authority child and family social work (89%). This means 11% had left local authority child and family social work between Wave 1 and Wave 3. The most common destinations were to be still working in child and family work but not at a local authority, for example in the private or voluntary sector (four per cent) or to have become inactive in the labour market due to factors like retirement or ill health (three per cent). It is worth noting that the 11% who had left since the start of the study may be an underestimate, as the status of non-responders is unknown and these may have disproportionately left local authority child and family social work.

Figure 2.2 Sankey chart showing Wave 3 employment status of those in local authority child and family at Wave 1



Still in local authority child and family social work at Wave 3

The 89% of survey respondents who were still in local authority child and family social work at Wave 3 can be broken down into: 74% employed directly by a local authority; 13% employed by an agency, and; three per cent employed on another basis, such as self-employed.⁸ Below we take a look at the key differences between those employed directly by an authority and those working for an agency, in terms of demographic and employment characteristics.⁹

- **Gender:** Those working directly for an authority were more likely to be female (84% were, compared with 64% of agency workers).
- **Ethnicity:** Those employed by an agency were more likely to be Black / Black British (24% compared with six per cent of direct employees) or Asian / Asian British (six per cent compared with two per cent). Only 57% of agency workers in the sample were White British, compared with 80% of social workers who were employed directly by a local authority.

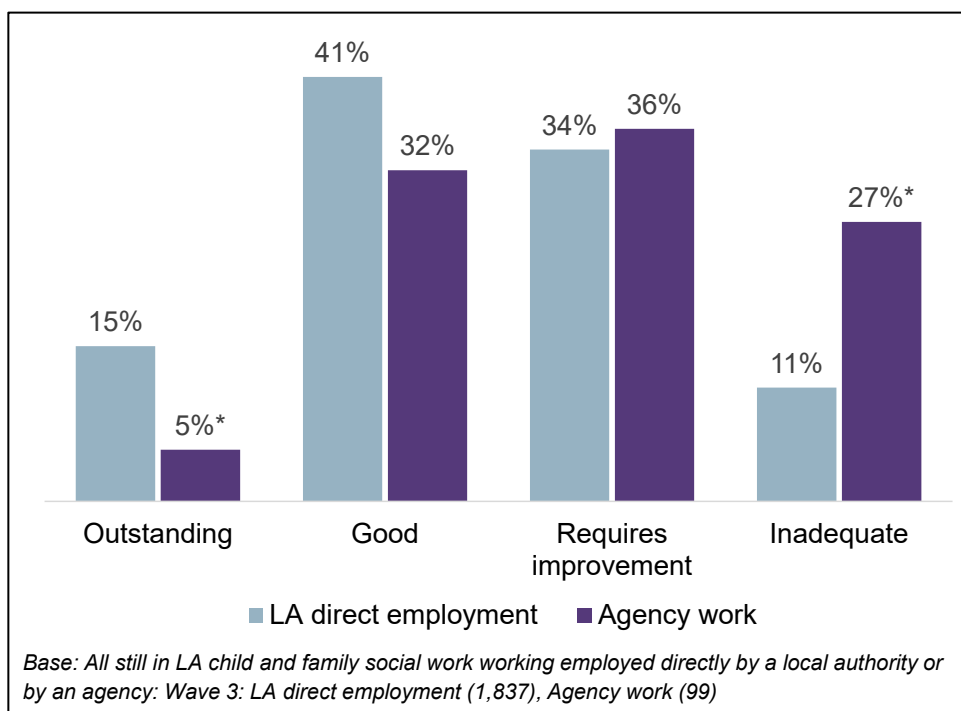
⁸ The proportion of agency workers have been weighted to be representative in line with the agency worker population as defined by the Social Workforce Data 2018. The unweighted proportion of agency workers at Wave 3 was five per cent.

⁹ Where characteristics are not listed (e.g. age, physical/mental health condition), this is because there were no statistically significant differences between the profiles of those employed directly by a local authority and those employed by an agency.

- **Region:** Those employed by an agency were more likely to work in London (24% did compared with 15% who were employed directly by a local authority) or the South West (19% compared with seven per cent).
- **Entry route:** Agency workers were more likely to have entered the profession through an undergraduate degree (51% did), compared with direct employees (41%).
- **Ofsted rating of local authority:** Agency workers were more likely to work at an 'Inadequate' rated authority (Figure 2.3): 27% of the agency workers worked at one of these authorities, compared with only 11% of those employed directly. Conversely, agency workers were less likely than direct employees to work at an 'Outstanding' rated authority (five per cent compared with 15%).
- **Job role:** Agency workers in the sample were more likely to work as front line social workers, 73% working in this role, compared with 48% of those employed directly by a local authority. On the other hand, direct employees were more likely to work as practice supervisors (eight per cent did, compared with one per cent of agency workers).
 - Front line agency workers were significantly more likely than those employed directly by a local authority to have worked in local authority child and family social work for 10+ years (46%, compared with 36% employed directly). Those employed by a local authority in front line positions were significantly more likely to have only been in the sector for 2-3 years at Wave 3 (23% compared with 13% of agency workers).

Of all those employed directly by a local authority at Wave 3, 97% had been at Wave 1 too, with two per cent moving from agency work and one per cent having been employed on some other basis. Only 40% of agency workers at Wave 3 had been employed by an agency at Wave 1, while 54% had been employed directly by a local authority and 6% on some other basis.

Figure 2.3 Distribution of local authority Ofsted rating by those employed directly by a local authority and those employed by an agency (Wave 3)

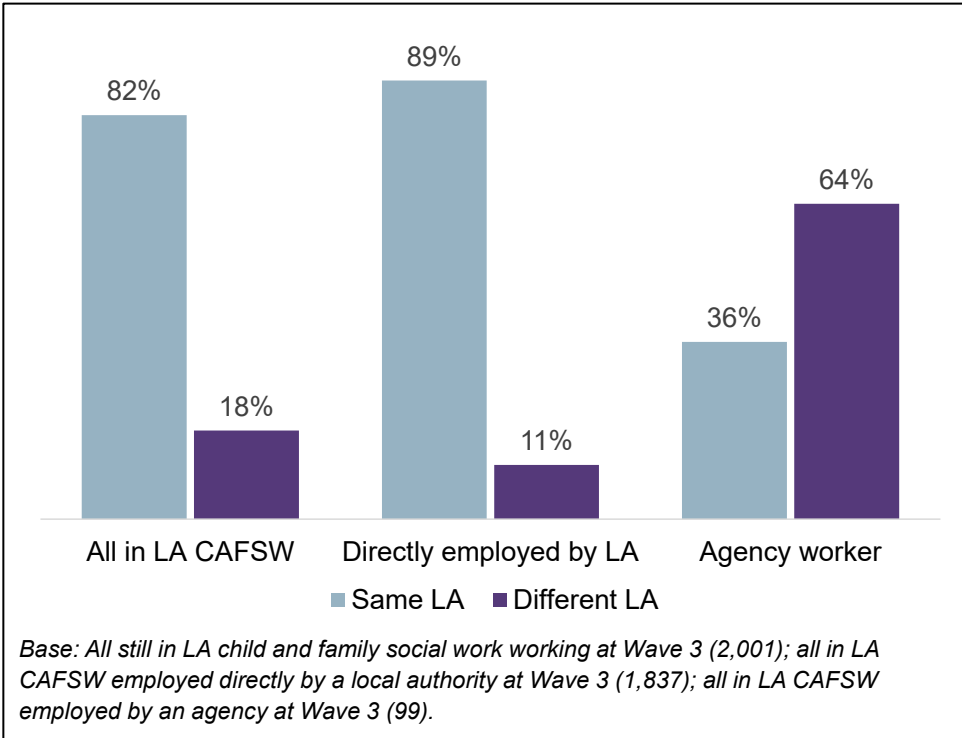


Movement between local authorities

Of those local authority child and family social workers whose local authority was known at both Wave 1 and Wave 3, overall 82% were at the same authority. This includes both those employed directly by a local authority and agency workers. When taking each of these groups separately, the picture is vastly different: 89% of those employed directly by a local authority at Wave 1 were working for the same one at Wave 3, while only 36% of agency workers had stayed at the same local authority between Wave 1 and Wave 3.

Taking all local authority child and family social workers who had moved local authority between Wave 1 and Wave 3 together, there are some interesting differences in terms of employment characteristics, and attitudes towards their employer.

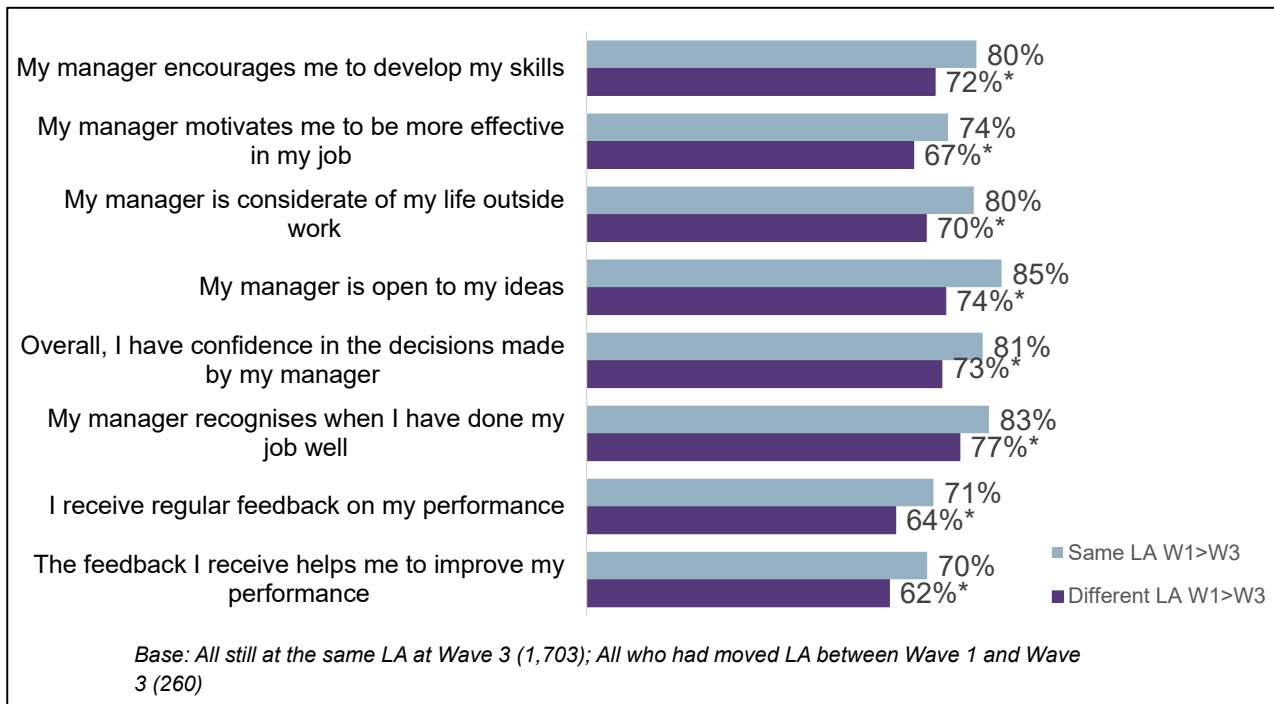
Figure 2.4 Movement between local authority from Wave 1 to Wave 3, by those employed directly by a local authority and those employed by an agency



Those who had moved local authority between Wave 1 and Wave 3 were more likely than those who had remained at the same local authority to work full-time hours at Wave 1 (36+ per week); 82% who had moved worked full-time, compared with 73% who had not moved. In addition, almost one in ten (nine per cent) of those who had moved reported working over 51 hours per week at Wave 1, compared with five per cent who had not moved.

Social workers who had moved local authority since Wave 1 were less positive about the management at their local authority at Wave 1, across all measures, compared with those who had not moved (Figure 2.5). For example, only 72% agreed that their manager encouraged them to develop their skills (compared with 80% who had stayed at the same authority), and only 64% agreed that they received regular feedback on their performance (compared with 71% who had remained). They were also more stressed at Wave 1 (59%, compared with 51%). There were no differences between the two groups in terms of feeling loyal to and valued by the local authority, and views on the tools and resources available to them.

Figure 2.5 Views towards management at Wave 1, amongst those who had moved local authority and those who remained at the same authority between Wave 1 and Wave 3



Not in local authority child and family social work at Wave 3

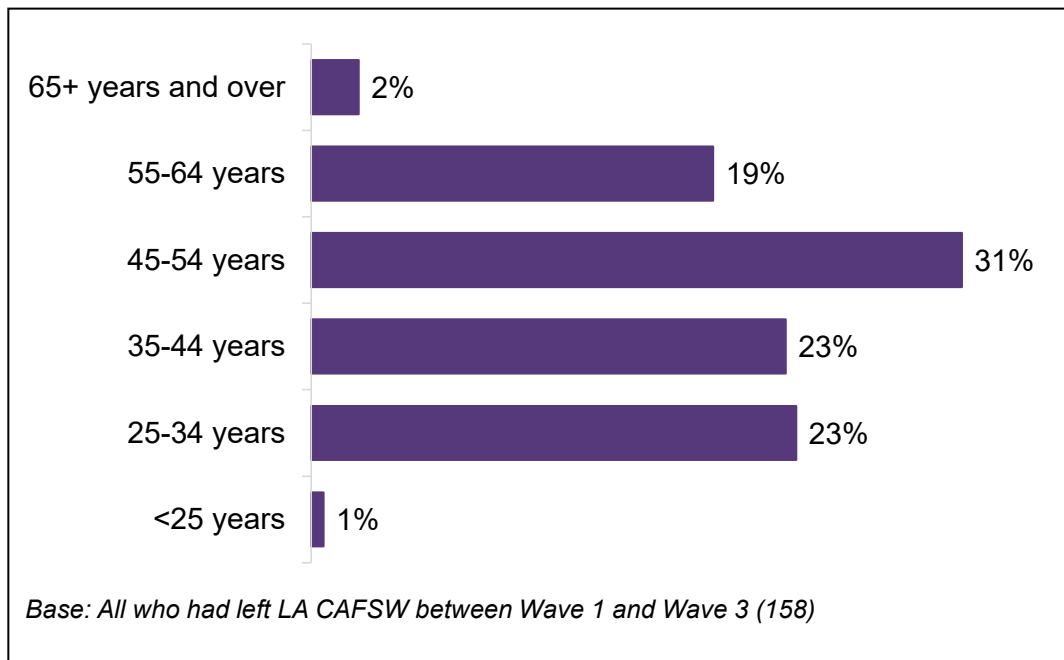
This section is based on the 11% who were not in local authority child and family social work at Wave 3, as seen in Figure 2.2.

Looking at those who had left between Wave 1 and Wave 3 (which includes those who had left between Wave 2 and Wave 3) the main difference in terms of demographic characteristics was that those who had left were more likely to be older than those who were still in local authority child and family social work. Almost four in ten (38%) who had left were aged 55+, compared with 26% of those who had not left. There were no significant differences between the two groups in terms of: gender; ethnicity; having a physical or mental health condition, or; having childcare responsibilities.

Those who left were also more likely than those who stayed to work as front line practitioners at Wave 1 (62% did, compared with 52% of those still in local authority child and family social work at Wave 3).

As shown in Figure 2.6, those who had left local authority child and family social work between Wave 1 and Wave 3 were most likely to be aged 45-54 years old (31%), with 23% aged 35-44 years old and 23% aged 24-34 years old.

Figure 2.6 Age profile of those who had left local authority child and family social work between Wave 1 and Wave 3



Those who had left local authority child and family social work by Wave 3 had more negative attitudes about various aspects of their jobs compared with those who were still in local authority child and family social work.¹⁰ Those who had left were significantly more likely to be dissatisfied with their jobs overall (20%, compared with 10% who had not left). They were also more likely to report that they were stressed by their jobs (64% compared with 53% who had not left) and that they were asked to fulfil too many different roles (58%, compared with 48% still in the role) at Wave 1.

Further, as shown in Figure 2.8, they were more negative about their employer, manager and the tools and resources at their disposal. For example, only 55% agreed they felt loyal to their organisation (compared with 75% still in the role) and only 59% agreed they received regular feedback on their performance (compared with 70%).

In addition to attitudinal measures, those who had left were significantly more likely to report that they worked above their contracted hours 'all the time' (47% said they did, compared with 40% who had not left).

¹⁰ These measures use scores from Wave 1, that being the last point that all those who left and those who were still in local authority child and family social work were asked these questions.

Figure 2.8 Attitudes towards working in local authority child and family social work between those who left since Wave 1 and those who were still working in the sector at Wave 3



Current role in local authority child and family social work

This section examines the Wave 3 profile of local authority child and family social workers in terms of job role and area of practice. It also explores movement between grades of job across the study so far.

Job role

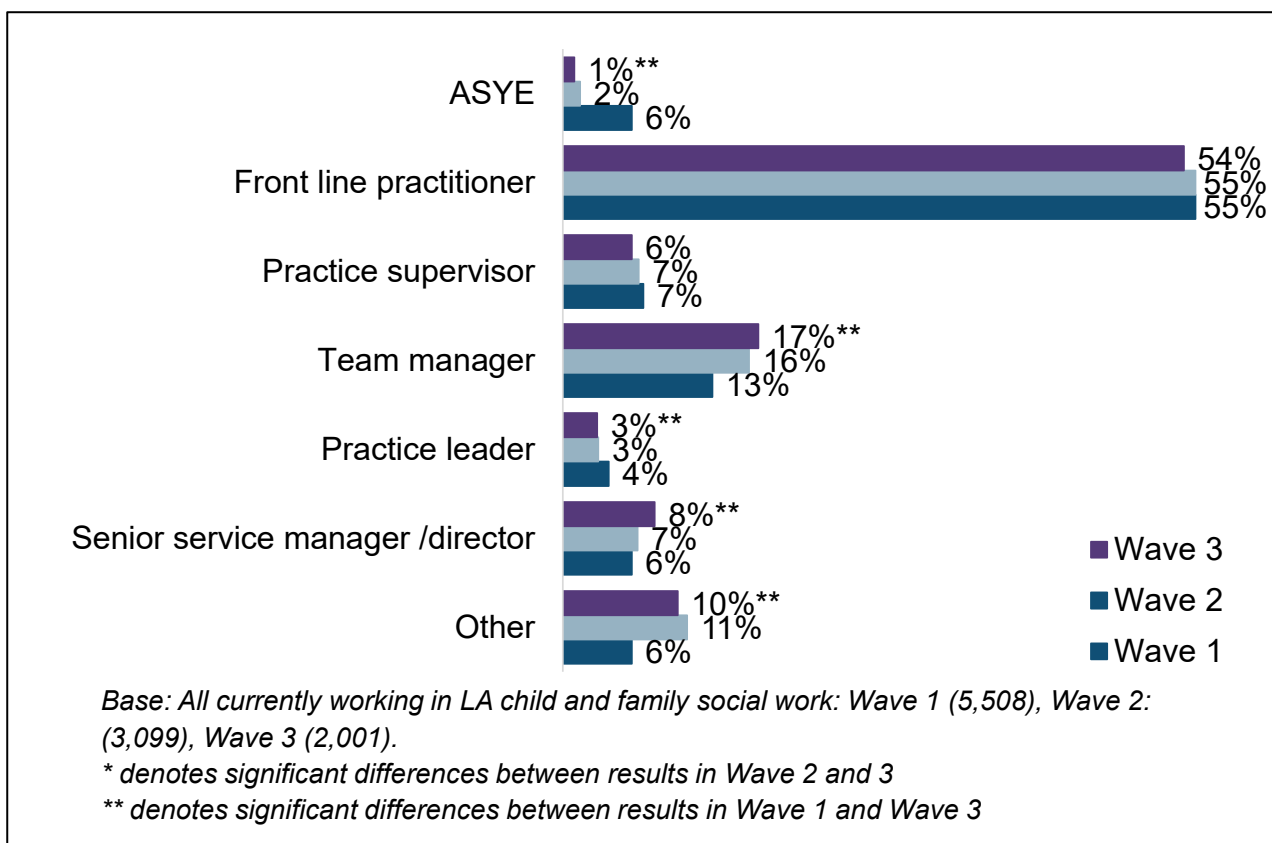
Figure 2.9 shows the job role of those working in local authority child and family social work across the three waves of the research. While the overall profile has not changed significantly since Wave 2, changes since the first wave show how the profile of the sample is growing into more senior roles throughout the study. For example, significantly more were working as a team manager at Wave 3 (17% compared with 13%) or a senior service manager or director (eight per cent compared with six per cent). Movement between job grade is discussed in more detail later in this section ('Movement between grades of job').

Job roles were linked to length of time in child and family social work and age, as one would expect, with younger social workers with less experience more likely to work in junior roles and older social workers with more experience being more likely to work in senior positions. For example, 71% of those aged 25-34 worked as front line practitioners, compared with 45% of those 45 years old or older, while 12% of those 45 or older worked in senior manager or director roles, compared with four per cent of those below 45.

As well as job role being linked to length of time in child and family social work and age, those in front line practitioner roles were more likely to:

- Be an agency worker: 73% of the agency workers at Wave 3 were front line practitioners, compared with 51% employed directly by a local authority
- Be of a Black / Black British ethnicity: 68% of the Black / Black British social workers at Wave 3 were front line practitioners compared with 52% of the White British social workers
- Have a physical or mental health condition: 62% of those with a health condition were front line practitioners compared with 52% without a condition. Of those with a health condition, 12% were team managers (compared with 18% without a health condition) and six per cent were senior service managers or directors (compared with nine per cent who did not have a health condition).

Figure 2.9 Job role within local authority child and family social work (Wave 1 to Wave 3)



Movement between grades of job

Since the start of the study, 22% of local authority child and family social workers had moved into a higher position by Wave 3. This is primarily indicative of career progression and promotion.

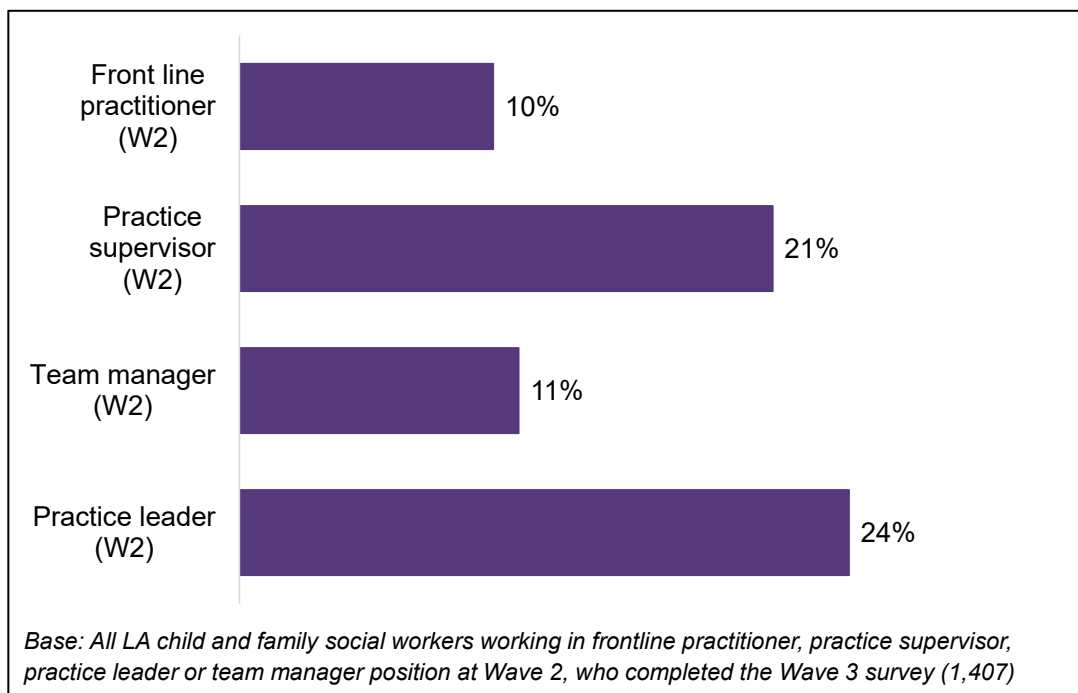
Between Wave 2 and Wave 3, 11% of social workers had progressed into a more senior role.¹¹ The remainder (89%) stayed in the same level of role they had been in at Wave 2. Promotion was most common in child protection roles (14%), while agency workers were less likely than those employed directly by a local authority to be promoted (five per cent compared with 12%).

The proportion promoted between Wave 2 and Wave 3 varied considerably by job role. As shown in Figure 2.10 below, 24% of those who were practice leaders at Wave 2 had been promoted to more senior positions, compared with 21% of practice supervisors, 10% of front line practitioners and 11% of team managers.¹²

¹¹ Promotion calculations only includes those whose job role was one of the following at Wave 2 and Wave 3: ASYE; front line practitioner; practice supervisor; practice leader; team manager; senior service manager or director. Although these job descriptions are fairly standard across the profession, there may be instances where each grade is not consistently considered more senior than the previous job role – for example, some principal social workers may consider themselves a practice leader level and some may consider themselves senior service managers or directors.

¹² This chart excludes those promoted into a role coded as 'other' at Wave 3, as the seniority of staff in this category is not always comparable to the job roles in the survey.

Figure 2.10 Proportion of local authority child and family social workers promoted between Wave 2 and Wave 3, by job role held at Wave 2



Practice area

The distribution of the sample in terms of area of practice has remained fairly consistent across the three waves of the study. The most common practice areas continued to be child in need / child protection (49% worked in this area) followed by looked after children (32%). Consistent with changes between Wave 1 and Wave 2, the proportions of social workers decreased across many practice areas. For example, 16% were working in assessment at Wave 3, which is significantly lower than at Wave 1 (26%).

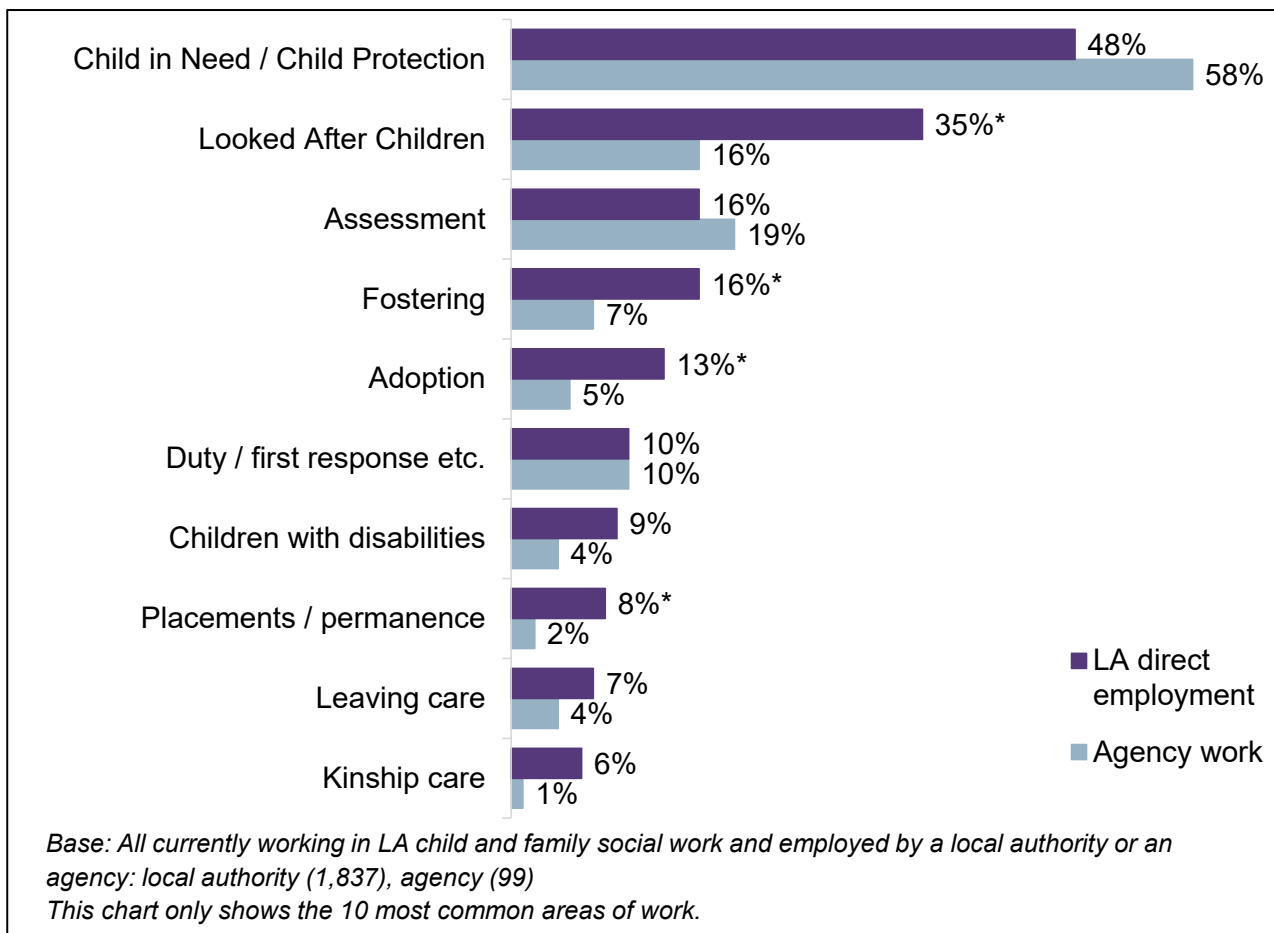
The characteristics of workers in specific practice areas are largely consistent with previous waves of the research. Younger, less experienced social workers more commonly worked in child protection / children in need, while those working in adoption and fostering were more likely to be older, more experienced social workers. For example, 55% of 25-34 year olds worked in child protection, compared with 47% of 45-54 year olds and 41% of 55-64 years olds. Conversely, 20% of 55-64 years olds and 17% of 45-54 years olds worked in fostering, compared with just nine per cent of 25-34 year olds. Older social workers aged 55-64 were also more likely than 25-34 year olds to work in adoption (16% compared with 10%).

There were also differences between practice areas in terms of gender. While the majority of social workers in the study are women (81% at Wave 3), proportionally men were more likely to be working in child protection (56%, compared with 47% of women),

while women were more likely to work in fostering (16% compared with 10% of men) and adoption (14% compared with six per cent).

There were a number of practice areas where it was more common to be directly employed and less common to be an agency worker (Figure 2.11). These were: looked after children (35% of those employed directly by a local authority reported working in this area, compared with 16% of agency workers); fostering (16% compared with seven per cent); adoption (13% compared with five per cent), and; placements/permanence (eight per cent compared with two per cent).

Figure 2.11 Main area(s) of practice, by local authority direct employment or agency work (Wave 3)



Length of time in child and family social work and at current employer

Figure 2.12 shows that at Wave 3, 55% of the local authority child and family social workers had been in the sector for at least 10 years, with a further 19% for 6-10 years. This is significantly higher than at Wave 1, where 49% had been working in child and family social work for at least 10 years.¹³ This reflects the ageing profile of the sample as the study progresses, and that younger social workers, in front line roles are more likely to drop out of the research over time.

Child and family social workers move roles frequently, both within the same local authority and to a different employer. As shown in Figure 2.13, 67% of the Wave 3 sample had been in their current role for less than three years, while 40% had been at their employer for less than three years.

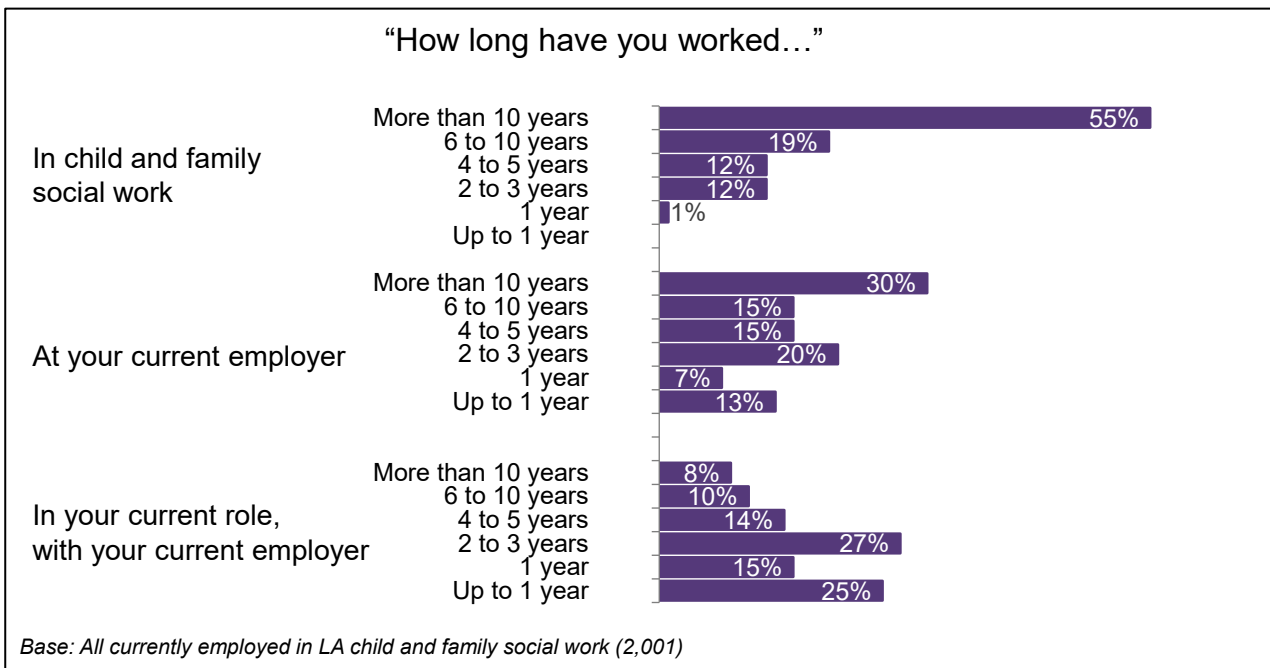
As to be expected, given the temporary nature of their work, agency workers were significantly more likely than those directly employed by a local authority to have been in their job for a year or less (70% compared with 10%).

Those working at 'Inadequate' rated authorities were more likely to have only been employed for a short space of time (36% of staff at these authorities had been employed for a year or less, compared with 20% overall). This is indicative of a higher proportion of agency staff working at these authorities; survey responses show that 28% of the sample at 'Inadequate' rated local authorities were agency workers, compared with 14% on average.

A higher proportion of the Asian / Asian British (22%) and Black / Black British (26%) social workers at Wave 3 had been in their role for less than six months, compared with only 12% of White British social workers. Again this is indicative of the agency workers more commonly being Asian / Asian British (33% worked for an agency) and Black / Black British (39% worked for an agency) compared with White British social workers (10% worked for an agency).

¹³ This change may be partly because non-responders at Wave 3 were more likely to be younger, therefore skewing the age of the sample slightly towards older social workers.

Figure 2.12 Length of time: in child and family social work; at current employer; in current role with current employer (Wave 3)



Motivations for becoming an agency worker or self-employed

Seven per cent of those who were in local authority child and family social work at Wave 3 had moved from being employed directly by a local authority to being employed by an agency since Wave 1.

Figure 2.13 shows all factors and the main factor which influenced social workers to move into agency work or self-employment between Wave 2 and Wave 3.¹⁴ The primary factor was better pay, both when citing all factors (60%) and the single main factor (30%). Other important factors were a better work-life balance (28% ‘all factors’, 16% ‘main factor’) and more flexibility about when they worked (30% ‘all factors’, 11% ‘main factor’). While 27% cited more opportunities to gain experience in different roles, only five per cent said this was the main reason for making the transition.

Compared to Wave 2, more people said they had moved into agency work or self-employment for a better work-life balance (16% compared with four per cent at Wave 2), while fewer had moved because of the flexibility to work when they wanted (11% compared with 27% at Wave 2) or to gain experience of different roles (five per cent

¹⁴ Question only asked of those who had moved into agency work / self-employment between Wave 2 and Wave 3, so do not hold this data for all who moved between the beginning of the study (Wave 1) and Wave 3.

compared with 16% at Wave 2). While these differences are statistically significant, they are based on relatively low numbers (60 at Wave 3 and 88 at Wave 2), so findings should be interpreted with caution.

Figure 2.13 Reasons for moving to agency work or self-employment (Wave 3)

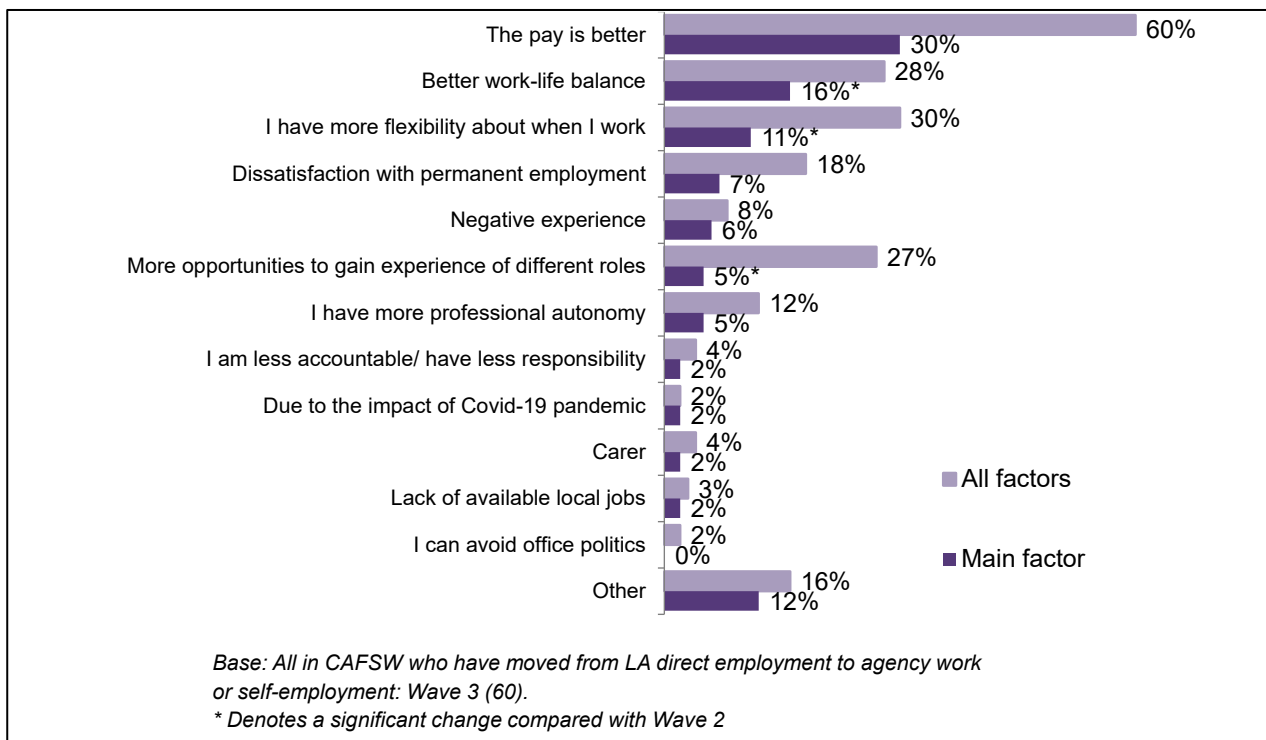
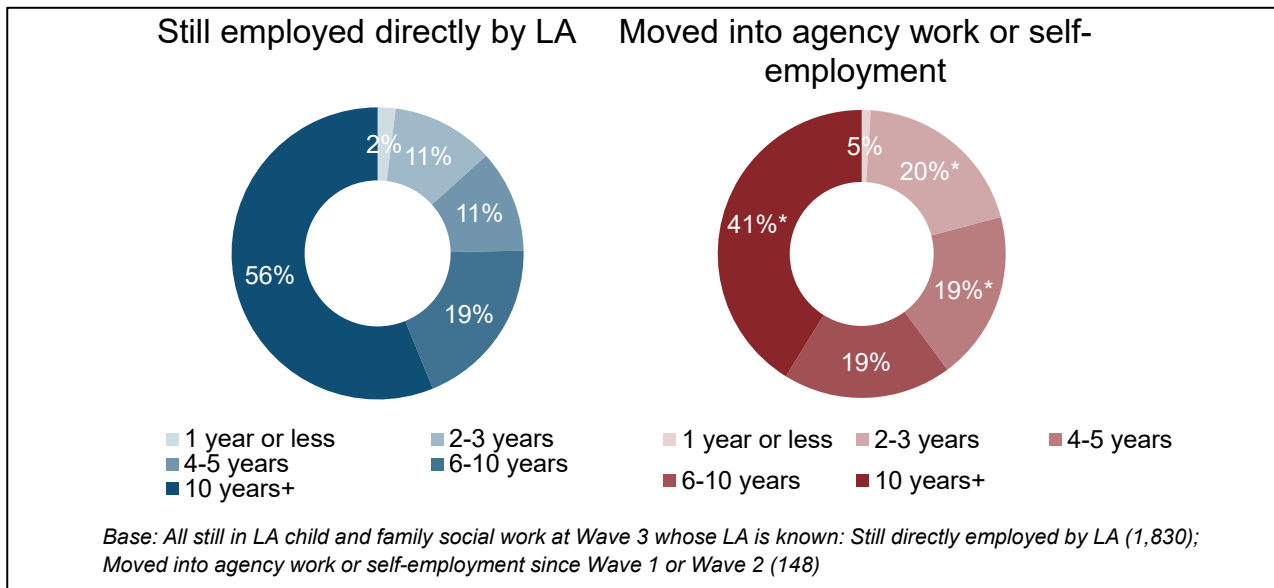


Figure 2.14 shows the length of time in the profession at Wave 3, broken down by those who had remained in local authority child and family social work since previous waves, and those who had moved into agency work or self-employment by Wave 3. As the charts show, those who moved into agency work or self-employment were significantly more likely to have only been in the profession for just 2-3 years (20%, compared with 11% of those still employed by a local authority) or 4-5 years (19%, compared with 11%), whereas those who were still employed by an authority were more likely to have been in child and family social work for 10+ years (56% compared with 41% who had moved).

Figure 2.14 Length of time in child and family social work, by those who have remained in local authority direct employment, or who had moved into agency work or self-employment since Wave 1 (Wave 3)



The qualitative research explored reasons for moving into, and staying in, agency work, in greater depth. Agency workers discussed many reasons for their decision to become, and in some cases, remain as locum practitioners. As identified by the survey, a key attraction was the financial incentive, as it is widely recognised that agency staff have a higher take home pay.

“The girl next to me, ever such a lovely girl, same age, both had families, and she was doing exactly the same job as me but getting paid double what I was.”
(Agency worker in LA CAFSW, front line social worker)

Some agency workers were also taking the opportunity to work for different teams or local authorities to help them crystallise longer-term plans to move back into permanent roles and were prepared to wait to secure employment in the local authority they had ‘scoped out’ via an agency contract.

“I’ve come to the realisation that maybe, in terms of going permanent and being stable, that is the local authority for me, because I think the team is a very good team, we support each other.” (Agency worker in LA CAFSW, front line social worker)

Agency workers were attracted to the freedom offered by agency work. Some described having a better work-life balance as agency workers than during their experience of permanent employment at a local authority. These workers were at various stages in their careers from newly qualified through to near-retirement and identified that they were able to spend more time with their families and take longer periods of leave, with the higher salary enabling them to do this without paid annual leave.

“It’s just the money. The money is a lot more, and from what I gather, well I know from where I work the agency don’t get any more cases, then I could also afford to have the summer holidays off.” (No longer in LA CAFSW, front line social worker)

Agency workers also appreciated the freedom that short notice periods offered them, enabling them to move around the country and not have to worry about changes in management influencing their long-term working environment, as they could seek employment elsewhere within a very short period. For some, agency work was a lifestyle choice, and little would encourage them to consider a permanent position:

“Whenever I’ve started to feel tired or that an environment is getting me down, I’ve been able to simply up sticks and move to a different part of the country. Which I have loved.” (Agency worker in LA CAFSW, front line social worker)

Motivations for moving to a different local authority

As seen above, 18% of those still in local authority child and family social work at Wave 3 were working at a different local authority than they were in Wave 1 – this includes both those employed directly by a local authority and agency workers. Of those who were in local authority child and family social work at Wave 2, 11% had moved authority by Wave 3.

Figure 2.15 shows reasons given by those working in local authority child and family social work (whether employed directly or through an agency) for moving local authority between Wave 2 and Wave 3.¹⁵ These social workers most commonly cited a dislike of the working culture at their previous local authority as the reason behind the move. While the proportion citing this as a contributing factor was consistent with Wave 2 (both 24%), it was more common as the ‘main’ factor in Wave 3 compared with Wave 2 (17% vs. eight per cent).

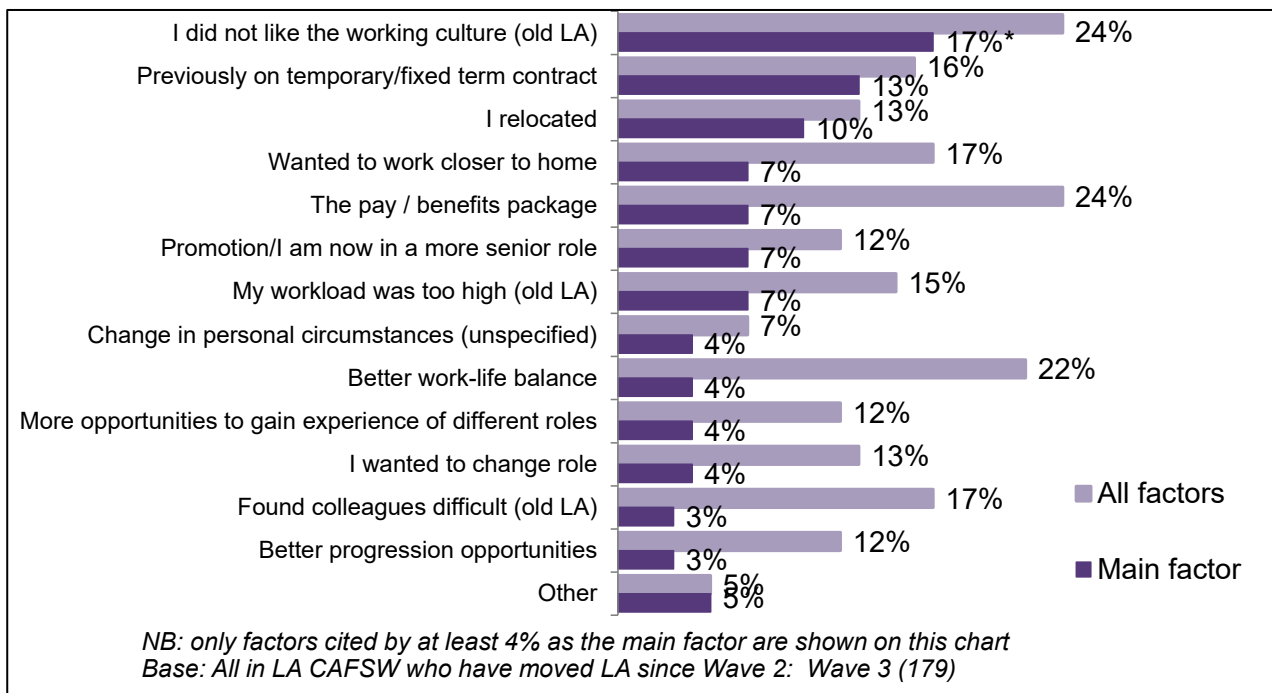
When combining the workload-related categories ‘my workload was too high’ (cited by 7% as the main factor) and ‘better work life balance’ (cited by 4% as the main factor), moving to a new local authority because of the workload at the previous local authority becomes the third most commonly cited ‘main’ reason for moving, cited by 11%.

The other most commonly cited ‘main’ factors were previously having worked on a temporary or fixed term contract (13%) and relocating (10%). While the pay and benefits package and seeking a better work-life balance were amongst the most commonly cited

¹⁵ Question only asked of those who had moved local authority between Wave 2 and Wave 3, so do not hold this data for all who moved between the beginning of the study (Wave 1) and Wave 3.

factors that contributed to decision to move (mentioned by 24% and 22% respectively), they are less prevalent as a key motivation for moving between local authorities. Only a small proportion mentioned these as a key factor (7% pay and 4% work-life balance).

Figure 2.15 Reasons for moving to a different local authority (Wave 3)



The qualitative research explored reasons for moving to a different local authority, as well as aspects of working culture more generally which could influence this decision. Moving to a different local authority was often associated with feeling a need for change, either in terms of progression or to a different team or area of practice. One of the main ‘push’ factors in this regard was a sense of stagnation or lack of opportunities to progress:

“My morale and enthusiasm and job satisfaction's quite low, and that's more recently over the last six to twelve months...I'm very stagnant now at where I am, and I feel quite trapped.” (No longer in LA CAFSW, team manager)

This could be associated with the working culture within the local authority, or even the specific teams in which social workers operated. Aspects of working culture are discussed in more detail in Chapter 6, in light of reasons for considering leaving local authority child and family social work. Key features of working culture which could influence decisions to leave or to stay emerged as: the working environment and how supportive this was; being treated well and feeling valued both by immediate line managers and the organisation as a whole; having autonomy and feeling trusted to make professional judgements; and scope for development and reflective practice.

3. Workplace wellbeing

This chapter explores social worker wellbeing by considering working hours and caseloads, reported stress levels and workload demands, views on the extent of managerial support for work-life balance, and the impacts of the Covid-19 pandemic.

Key findings in this chapter include:

- Overall, three-quarters (75%) of social workers reported working more than their contracted hours either 'all the time' or 'most weeks' to keep up with their workload, consistent with Wave 2.
- The mean number of cases amongst those in case holding roles was 18 (19 for case holding full-time workers and 15 for case holding part-time workers).
- More than half of social workers at Wave 3 agreed they feel stressed by their job (60%), their workload is too high (58%) and they are asked to fulfil too many roles in their job (55%). Feelings of stress and having too high a workload have increased since Wave 2 despite a reduction in mean caseloads and working hours.
- Over two-thirds of social workers considered that anxiety (68%), complexity of cases (68%), and workloads (69%) had increased as a result of Covid-19. Three-quarters (73%) felt that work-related stress had increased.
- The majority of social workers (59%) felt that relationships with colleagues had worsened as a result of Covid-19, particularly among front line practitioners. There was a more balanced picture in terms of impacts on relationships with children and families: while 44% felt these had worsened due to Covid-19, 37% felt it had no impact.

Contracted and actual working hours

Social workers were asked how many hours they were contracted to work per week. Throughout this section full-time work is considered to be more than 35 hours and part-time as any range between 1-35 hours, recognising that 31-35 hours is on the cusp of full-time work (8% of child and family workers worked between 31 and 35 hours).

Contracted working hours were consistent with both Wave 1 and Wave 2. Most social workers held full-time contracts with 77% contracted to work between over 36 hours a week. The mean number of contracted hours remains at 35, in line with both previous waves of the study (Figure 3.1).

Working on a part-time contract (in particular, 30 hours per week or below) was more common among women than men (25% compared with 17%), as in both previous waves. Part-time contracts continued to be more prevalent among those who had caring responsibilities (27%, compared with 19% of those who did not have any caring

responsibilities). Older social workers aged 55-64 (26%) and in particular those aged 65+ (51%) were more likely than those aged 25-34 (16%) to be on a part-time contract.

There were also distinctions between staff seniority and areas of practice, similar to previous waves. People working in front line practitioner roles were more likely than those in senior service leader/Director, practice leader and team manager roles to be contracted to work part-time (25%, compared with 11%, 16% and 14% respectively). In the qualitative interviews, an interviewee commented on the lack of opportunities they perceived to work part-time as a manager, and hoped that increased flexible working brought about by the Covid-19 pandemic might lead to a 'culture shift' in terms of opportunities for part-time working in more senior roles:

“What is interesting for me, we're such a female profession and yet women drop out in mid-30s because they are having children...we're still really bad at part time managers, and this might hopefully show people can work in different flexible ways and it does work.” (Still in LA CAFSW, team manager)

Part-time working was also more common among staff working in adoption (32%) and fostering (30%) especially compared with duty/ first response/ MASH roles (15%), Children in Need (18%) and Looked After Children (19%).

Social workers were also asked the *actual* number of hours they typically worked per week (regardless of their *contracted* hours). Overall, and in line with previous waves, three-quarters (75%) of social workers reported working more than their contracted hours to keep up with their workload either 'all the time' (39%) or 'most weeks' (36%).

Social workers on average reported they worked five hours more per week than their contracted hours, with a mean of 40 actual hours compared with a mean of 35 contracted hours (Figure 3.1). The mean number of actual hours reported per week has reduced from 42 hours at Wave 1 and Wave 2. Average hours were reduced across job roles; for example, average hours fell from 41 to 39 for front line practitioners from Wave 2 to Wave 3; from 43 to 39 for practice supervisors; from 44 to 43 for team managers; from 42 to 41 for practice leaders, and; from 46 to 44 for senior service managers and directors. While hours decreased across job role, the largest decrease was for practice supervisors, working on average four hours per week less in Wave 3 compared with Wave 2.

The qualitative research found that a reason for this is likely to be reduced travelling time and more virtual meetings. There was an acknowledgement that some of the local authority working arrangements for Covid-19 had increased effectiveness in relation to reducing travelling times and allowing meetings to be held online:

“I've probably found it less stressful because I'm not having to travel extensive distances for meetings and things, which has given me a lot more time....., I'm now

sitting doing that on my computer, it's taking half the time.” (No longer in LA CAFSW, front line social worker)

This positive adaption for Covid-19 was also seen for virtual meetings with other professionals and families:

“I think definitely online meetings. I think it works really, really well. For all professionals, actually because if you've got a meeting where you've got three different schools, all those teachers have to travel. You've got a midwife, you've got a health visitor. It's taking huge chunks out of people's day to come and sit in a meeting when actually, the same outcome can be achieved online.” (No longer in LA CAFSW, front line social worker)

However, increased home working could also have a negative impact in terms of difficulties in 'switching off' from work, discussed later in this chapter.

Figure 3.1 Contracted working hours and mean reported hours worked per week (Wave 1 to Wave 3)

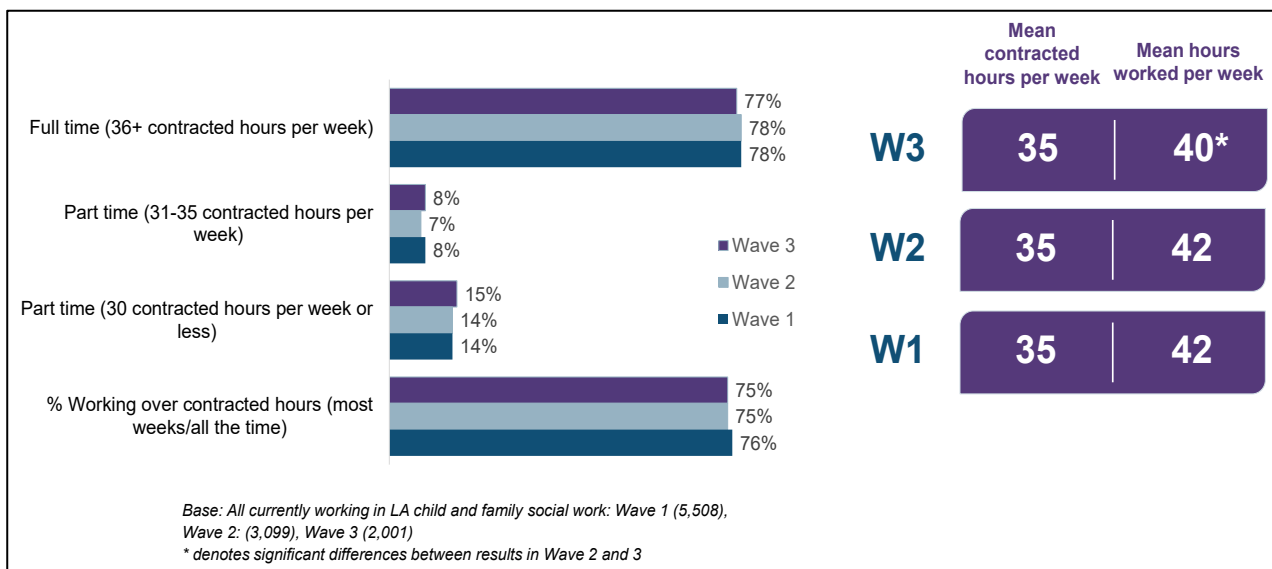


Table 3.1 shows that, in a typical week, those whose contracted hours were on the cusp of full-time work (31-35 hours per week) were most likely to work more hours than they were contracted (82%), a decrease since Wave 2 (87%). The proportion of those contracted to work 36-40 hours, who were actually reporting they worked above 40 hours per week, had also declined compared with Wave 2 (falling from 69% to 63%).

In terms of reported actual hours worked, senior service managers/ Directors and team managers worked the longest hours compared to other job roles. They were more likely to report working more than 40 hours in a typical week compared with the average social worker (75% and 69% respectively, compared with 55%). Senior service managers/ Directors and team managers were also more likely to report typically working 46+ hours per week (34% and 33% respectively) compared with most other job roles (for example,

24% of front line practitioners, 23% of practice supervisors, and 21% of practice leaders). Reflecting their long hours, team managers and senior service managers/Directors were also more likely to say they work overtime 'all the time' (47% and 51%, respectively) compared with 39% on average.

Looking at social workers who were contracted to work full-time hours of between 36-40 hours per week, team managers and senior service managers and directors were significantly more likely to exceed these hours (76% and 78% worked over 40 hours per week respectively), compared with front line practitioners (63%), practice supervisors (63%), and practice leaders (50%).

Although these patterns are in line with previous waves, the qualitative research identified that the team manager role was made more complicated by working on a fully remote basis, which could lead to extra work. One team manager who was moving to a new job was feeling 'burnt out' by her experiences in the pandemic and felt she needed to move to a role without supervisory responsibilities:

"What I've struggled with more than anything is the dynamics within teams, the virtual working, the being able to support people virtually has been difficult. But it creates a lot of complexities as well in terms of managing people's performance. Managing the dynamics of a team, in terms of [people saying] 'They're doing this, they're not doing that,' and created a real imbalance for people with regards to welfare." (No longer in CAFSW, front line social worker)

Table 3.1 Contracted working hours versus actual working hours (Wave 3)¹⁶

Red shading denotes work above contracted hours.

	Contracted hours				
		16-20	21-30	31-35	36-40
		%	%	%	%
Actual hours	1-15	4%	5%	1%	4%
	16-20	29%	1%	-	-
	21-30	63%	49%	2%	1%
	31-35	1%	26%	11%	1%
	36-40	-	16%	40%	28%
	41-45	-	2%	33%	34%
	46-50	-	1%	9%	24%
	51+	-	-	-	5%
	Don't know	4%	-	-	-
Any additional hours		64%	45%	82%	63%
<i>Base excl. those unable to state either their contracted or actual hours</i>		85	211	161	1,511

Notably, social workers in local authorities which Ofsted rated as 'inadequate' were more likely than those working in other authorities to report working more than 45 hours per week (36%, compared with 24% among those in 'outstanding' LAs, 22% among those in LAs rated 'good' and 26% among those rated 'requires improvement'). They were also more likely to state they are working above their contracted hours 'all the time' (45%, compared with 32% in LAs rated as 'outstanding').

Working overtime 'all the time' was more common in the practice areas associated with longer hours, as we might expect: social workers in Children in Need (44%) and Looked

¹⁶ Figures for those with 1-15 contracted hours or 41+ contracted hours are not shown because the base size is <25 for these groups, which is too few to be considered statistically

After Children (43%) were more likely to report working above their contracted hours 'all the time' than those in fostering (27%), kinship care (32%) or adoption (33%).

Other significant demographic differences include:

- Black/ Black British social workers were more likely to work overtime 'all the time' (48% compared with 39% on average). This may be partly explained by them more likely to be working in local authorities rated as 'inadequate' by Ofsted, and in the 'Children in Need' area of practice, which both reported higher rates of working overtime 'all the time';
- social workers with a mental or physical health condition were more likely than those who did not have a health condition to work overtime 'all the time' (45% compared with 38%);
- those with caring responsibilities for family and friends were more likely to report working overtime 'all the time' whereas those with caring responsibilities of pre-school aged children were the least likely (48% and 29% respectively). This was linked to age, with those who cared for family and friends more likely than average to be aged between 45-64 (22% compared with 14% on average), and this age group more likely than average to work overtime 'all the time' (43% did, compared with 39% on average). Conversely, those with pre-school aged children were most likely to be aged between 25-34 (22% of whom cared for pre-school aged children, compared with 11% on average) and less likely than average to work overtime 'all the time' (33%).

Direct work with families

Social workers were asked how many hours in a typical week they spend doing direct work with children and families/carers. In line with Wave 2, three-quarters (73%) of the social workers in the study reported they spent time in a typical week doing any direct work with children, families or carers, while one-quarter (26%) did not. In terms of role type, almost all (96%) of front line practitioners worked directly with children and families, with this significantly lower for more senior job roles: 40% for team managers; 61% for practice supervisors; 38% for practice leaders and 25% for senior service managers or directors.

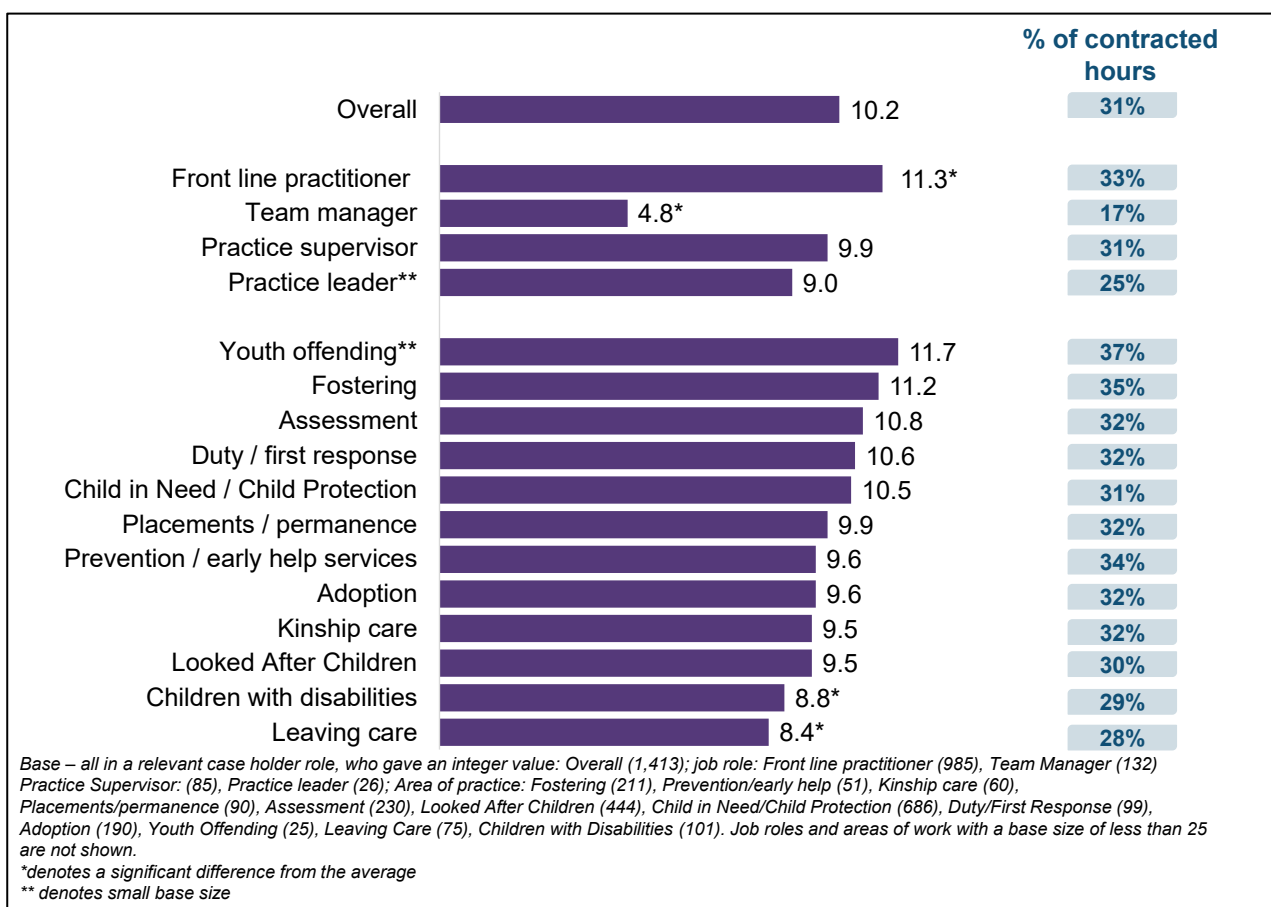
One third (34%) of social workers who worked directly with children and families estimated that they spent between 6-10 hours per week doing so, on average, and this was consistent with Wave 2 (33%). The proportion spending 5 hours or less per week on direct work with children and families had reduced to 31%, from 35% in Wave 2 and 37% in Wave 1. The proportion spending between 11 and 15 hours per week was 14% consistent across waves (11% at Wave 2 and 12% at Wave 1). Overall, the proportion spending at least 16 hours directly with children and families was consistent across waves (16% in Wave 2 and Wave 3, and 17% in Wave 1).

For those whose job involves working directly with children and families, the mean number of hours spent in a typical week directly working with children, families or carers was 10.2, as shown in Figure 3.2. This is in line with Wave 2 suggesting that Covid-19 has not led to a reduction in average time spent working directly with children and families/ carers.

Front line practitioners spent more time working directly with children and families compared to the overall average (11.3 hours compared to 10.2 hours) – this was consistent with Wave 2 (10.8 hours). In terms of area of work, those working in youth offending (11.7 hours) and fostering (11.2 hours) spent the most direct time working with children and families. Those working in leaving care spent significantly less time than average doing direct work (8.4 hours), as did those working with children with disabilities.

Figure 3.2 also shows the proportion of social workers' contracted hours spent working with children and families directly. At an overall level this was 31% of contracted hours, and by job role: 33% for front line practitioners, 17% for team managers; 31% for practice supervisors and 25% for practice leaders. Team managers worked a significantly lower proportion of their contracted hours directly with children and families compared with front line practitioners and practice supervisors, as well as the average across all job roles.

Figure 3.2 Time spent working directly with children and families by job role and areas of practice – mean time per week and % of contracted hours (Wave 3)



Due to the increased need to work remotely because of the Covid-19 pandemic, local authority child and family social workers who worked directly with children and families were asked how much time they spent per week working with them remotely, and how much time was spent working with them face to face.

On average, those who worked directly with children and families spent significantly more time working with them remotely (5.8 hours per week) than they did face to face (5.1 hours per week).¹⁷

Agency workers spent significantly more time than those employed directly by their local authority working face to face with children and families (6.5 hours compared with 4.5 hours), as did those working at an authority in the South West of England (7.2 hours compared with 5.1 on average), which is likely to reflect the lower Covid infection rates in that region than many other regions while Wave 3 fieldwork was running.

Whether time was spent working with children and families remotely or face to face varied by area of work. Those working in adoption spent significantly more time than other practice areas working face to face (7.1 hours, compared with 5.1 hours on average) and only 4.1 hours working with them remotely. Similarly, those in child in need/child protection worked 6.1 hours per week face to face with children and families (compared to 5.1 on average). Conversely, those working in adoption only spent an average of 3.7 hours working face to face but 6.6 hours remotely.

Caseloads

Social workers were asked how many cases they were currently allocated¹⁸. As shown in Figure 3.3, it was most common for those in relevant case holder roles to be responsible for 16-20 cases (27%, in line with Wave 2). Just over two in five (43%) reported having 16-25 cases, compared with half (50%) at Wave 2. One-third (34%) had 21 or more cases, lower than in Wave 2 (38%).

The proportion with 26+ cases had increased since Wave 2, from 14% to 18%. This change is explained by more of the following groups working on at least 26 cases: front line practitioners (rising from 14% to 18%); those at 'Inadequate' (13% to 22%) or

¹⁷ Mean calculations based on 1,073 child and family social worker who gave an integer value for: all hours spent working with children and families; hours spent working with children and families face to face, and; hours spent working with them remotely. This is therefore lower than the total who reported that they spent time working with children and families (1,466).

¹⁸ Cases were defined as "an individual allocated to a social worker (for example a family of three siblings would be three individual cases) and/or a carer or carers allocated to a social worker for the purposes of foster or adoption."

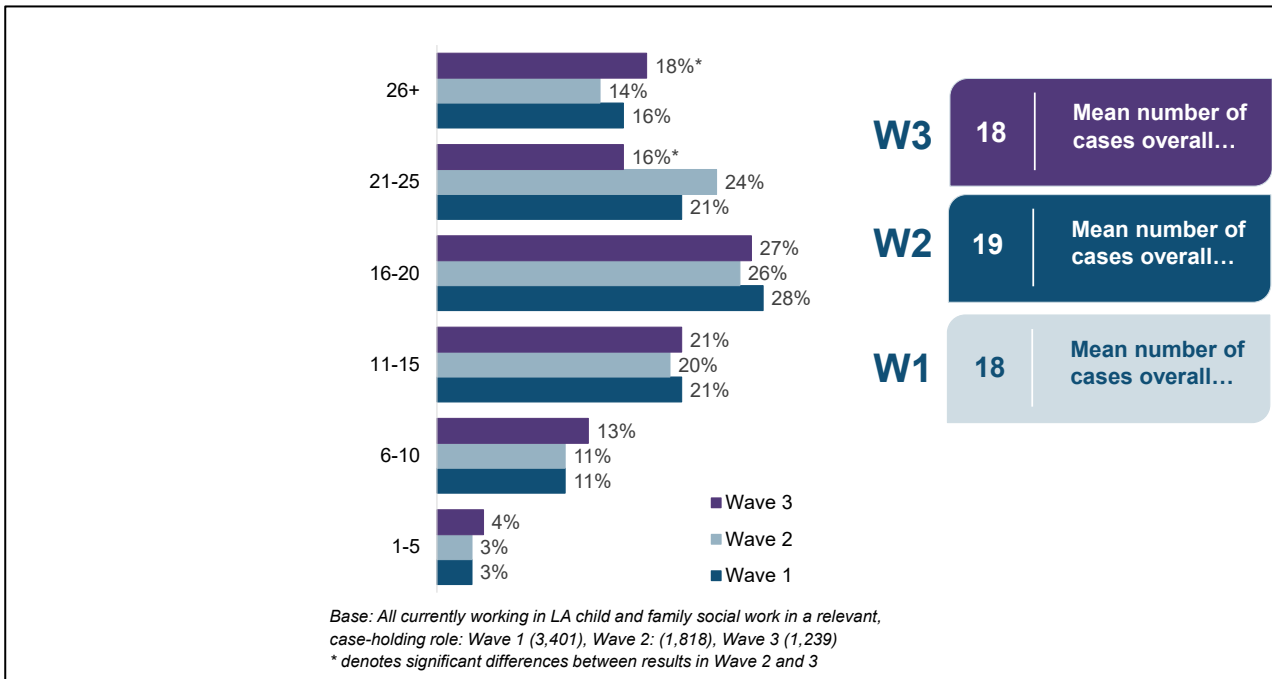
'Requires improvement' rated authorities (15% to 23%); those aged 55-64 (from 8% to 23%), and; those working with looked after children (rising from 14% to 22%).

The mean number of cases local authority child and family social workers in case holding roles reported they held overall was 18, statistically significantly lower than at Wave 2 or at Wave 1 (both 19).¹⁹ The mean number of allocated cases varied by contracted hours and job role, as expected, but patterns were generally consistent with previous waves. Full-time social workers had a mean of 19 cases compared with 15 for part-time workers. Social workers who had been in child and family social work for 2-3 years had significantly higher caseloads than average (19 compared with 18) and compared with those who had been in practice for 6-10 years (18) and more than 10 years (17). Those who had been with their current employer between one and three years had the highest mean caseloads (21 for those with their employer for one year and 20 for those with their employer for 2-3 years).

Social workers in the North East and North West (both 20) reported the highest mean caseloads, significantly higher than the East of England (15), Greater London (16) and the South East (17). Social workers in authorities rated as 'requires improvement' had the highest mean caseload (19), which was significantly more than in local authorities rated 'good' (17) but not significantly more than in those rated 'outstanding' (18).

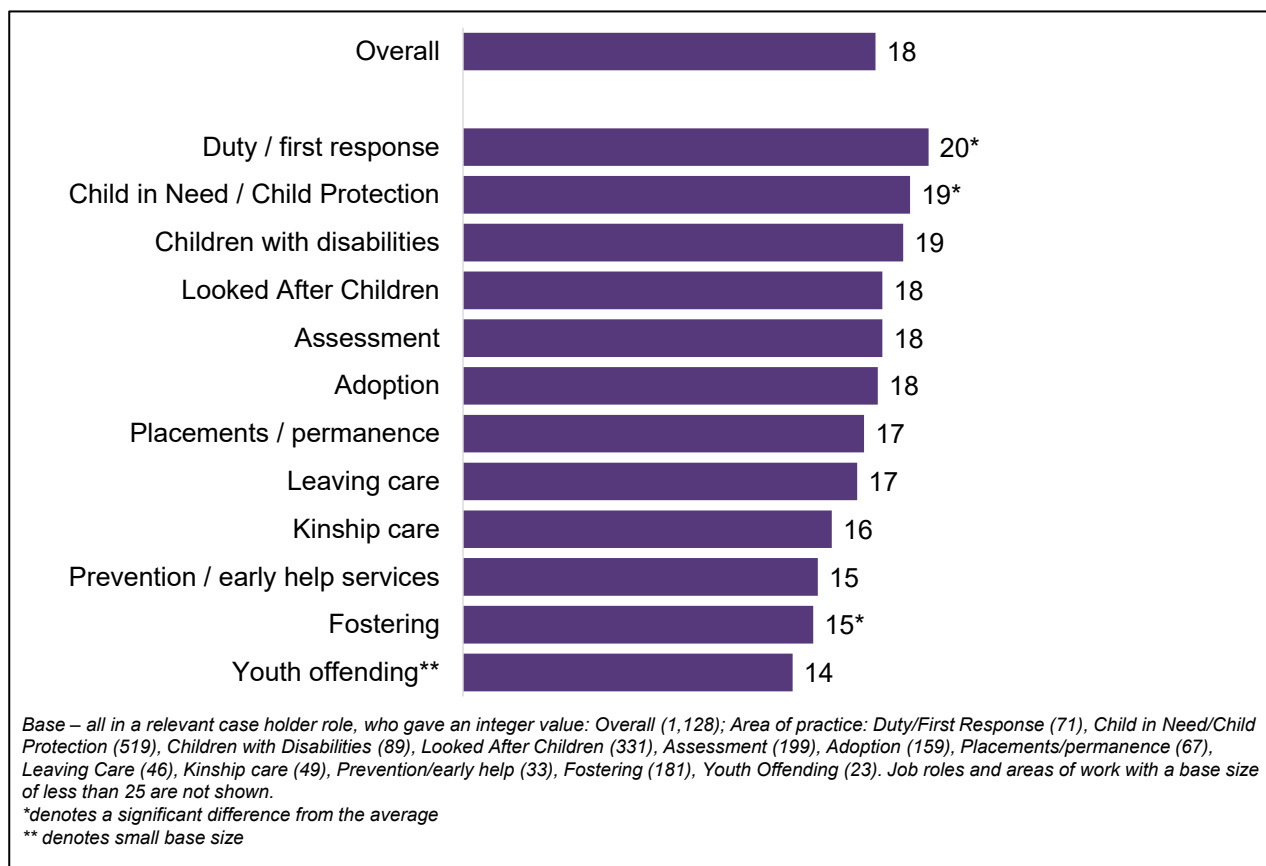
¹⁹ Despite this decrease at an overall level, there is a lot of variation in the caseload measure, indicating caseloads have not decreased for all child and family social workers.

Figure 3.3 Number of cases held (Wave 1 to Wave 3)



In terms of practice area, social workers in youth offending and fostering both had the lowest mean caseloads (14 and 15 respectively) while duty/ first response/ MASH and Children in Need had significantly higher caseloads than some other practice areas (20 and 19 respectively) (Figure 3.4). Clearly, the number of cases that social workers are allocated at any point in time will vary depending on numerous factors including their contracted working hours, level of seniority/experience, practice area, wider staffing issues within their team (for example, if people are off sick or there are unfilled vacancies) and the complexity of the cases themselves. A lower mean number of cases might imply that the cases are more complex or require closer monitoring, for example.

Figure 3.4 Mean caseload by area of practice (Wave 3)



In the qualitative interviews, some social workers raised the complexity of cases (as well as volume) but also the urgency that certain areas of work demanded, in particular child protection roles where caseloads were highest. One participant who had recently moved into a new role as a project manager found her current workload more manageable and much less stressful than her previous role which was front line child protection:

“I did my day to day work but what would often tip me over into doing extra hours was some of the crisis incidents that were coming. So, we couldn't plan for those.... But I think even my daily work was probably unrealistic, the amount of work that I needed to cover.” (Still in LA CAFSW, team manager)

Another had moved from front line child protection to a more specialised role, and noted the difference with their current post, where they were not having to work evenings and were able to be quite disciplined in keeping work time and family time separate. This contrasted with their experiences in a front line team:

“So yes, that was a tough few years when I did that work, it's just really high pressure and there's just not enough resources...it's just too high caseloads.” (Still in LA CAFSW, front line social worker)

Another social worker who had recently moved into a different area of practice from child protection felt she had more time to engage (with families) compared to her previous

experience in child protection, where high caseload demands limited the in-depth work that could be undertaken with families:

“You're not doing social work. You're not doing intervention. I mean, you're literally just firefighting and you're just dealing with things”. (Still in LA CAFSW, team manager)

Social workers identified that work came in peaks and troughs and that caseload did not always reflect workload, with complex cases requiring more attention and thus reducing time available for completing other work. Complex cases could also be more emotionally draining:

“Sometimes, some of the cases can be so complex it would take you, when you have court proceedings and very complex family situations, some of them will just take all your energy over the week.” (Agency worker in LA CAFSW, front line social worker)

Stress levels and workload demands

All local authority child and family social workers were asked the extent to which they agreed with the following statements:

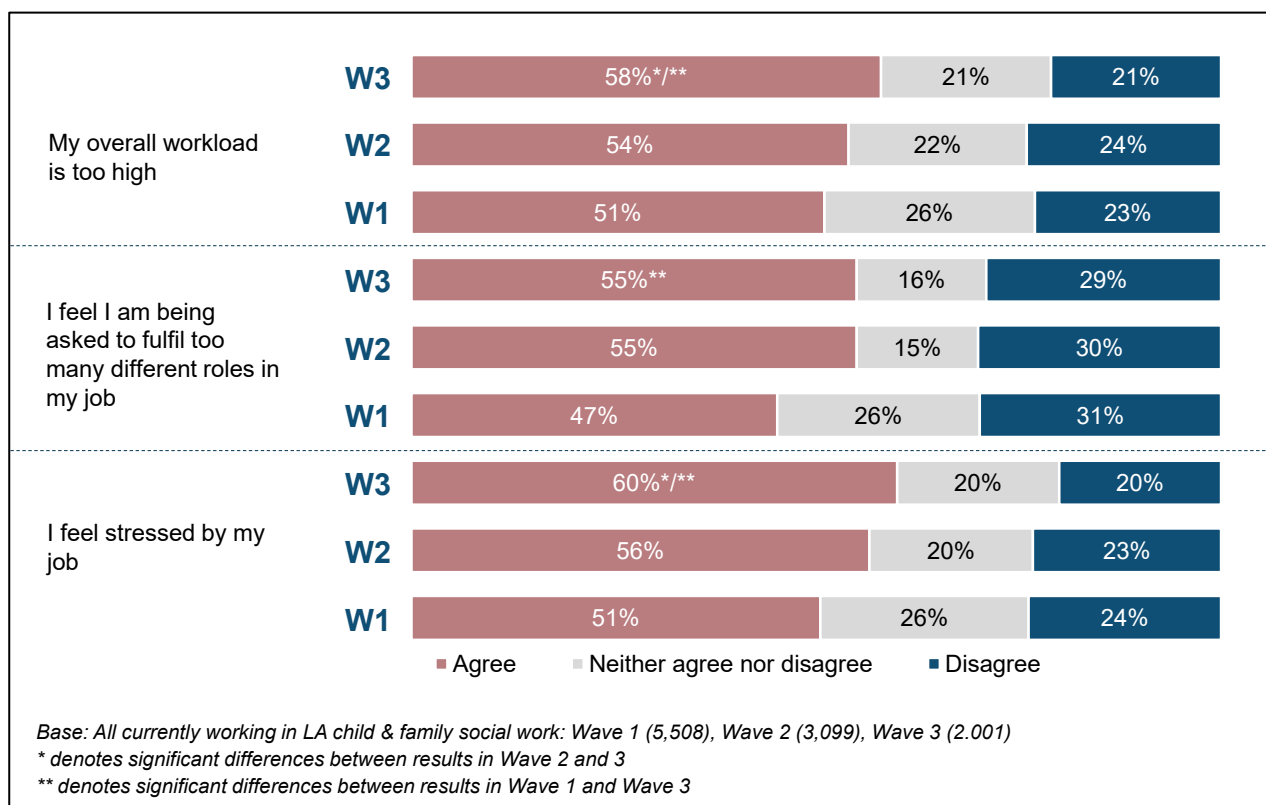
- ‘I feel stressed by my job’;
- ‘My overall workload is too high’; and
- ‘I feel I am being asked to fulfil too many different roles in my job’.

Figure 3.5 shows that three in five social workers at Wave 3 agreed that their workload was too high and they felt stressed by their job (58% and 60% respectively), and each of these is an increase compared with Wave 2 and Wave 1. Over half (55%) felt they were being asked to fulfil too many roles in their job, consistent with Wave 2.

Views on stress levels and workload demands varied by job role. Front line practitioners were more likely than average to agree they felt stressed (68% compared with 60%), including when compared with Wave 2 (63%), but no more likely to say their workloads were too high.

On the other hand, team managers were more likely than average to say their workloads were too high (69%) – an increase compared with Wave 2 (58%). While they were no more likely to report they felt stressed by their job, they were more likely to feel they were being asked to fulfil too many roles in their job (62% compared with 55% overall). This may be linked with the increased intensity of managing teams in a more virtual way due to Covid-19, that was highlighted in the qualitative research.

Figure 3.5 Overall agreement levels regarding stress and workload demands (Wave 1 to Wave 3)



A similar pattern of increasing stress and workload demands is observed when only looking at those who have completed all three waves of the research (i.e. removing Wave 2 and Wave 3 non-responders). For this group, feeling stressed has increased from 53% in Wave 1, to 56% in Wave 2 and 60% in Wave 3, while agreement that workloads are too high has increased from 50%, to 54%, to 58%. Feeling they were being asked to fulfil too many roles at Wave 3 was consistent with Wave 2 (both 55%), but significantly higher than Wave 1 (48%).

Having too high a workload

Overall, 58% reported that their workload is too high. Social workers in ‘outstanding’ rated local authorities were significantly less likely to agree they had too a high workload (47%) compared with those in services rated as ‘inadequate’ (66%).

Feelings of having too high a workload were also greater among:

- social workers with caring responsibilities (60%) compared with those who had no caring responsibilities (55%), in particular among those with school-aged children (61%); and
- social workers with a physical or mental health condition (64%, compared with 56% without a health condition).

Those who had been in child and family social work for more than ten years were less likely than those who had been in the sector for less than ten years to report they had too high a workload (56% compared with 59%).

As at previous waves, social workers dissatisfied in their job were more likely to agree their workload is too high (78%) compared with those who were satisfied (52%).

Fulfilling too many job roles

Fifty five percent of social workers felt that they are being asked to fulfil too many different roles in their job. This is linked with the Ofsted rating of the service: as in Wave 2, social workers in 'outstanding' rated services were less likely than average to agree that they are asked to fulfil too many roles (44% compared with 55% overall). Social workers with a physical or mental health condition were more likely to agree that they are asked to fulfil too many roles (60%) compared with their counterparts without a condition (54%).

Social workers dissatisfied with their job were much more likely (78%) than those who were satisfied (48%) to feel they are asked to fulfil too many roles. It is thus not surprising that those who agreed that they were asked to fulfil too many roles were more likely to be thinking of leaving (72% compared with 55%).

Feeling stressed by their job

Overall, 55% of social workers said that they felt stressed by their job. Although feeling stressed was closely linked with local authority Ofsted rating at Wave 2, the only difference at Wave 3 was that social workers in areas rated as 'requires improvement' were more likely to agree than those in areas rated as 'outstanding' (62% vs. 55%).

As at Wave 2, social workers with a physical or mental health condition, those who were dissatisfied with their job and those who were considering leaving the profession were also more likely to agree they felt stressed. Two-thirds (66%) of social workers with a physical or mental health condition agreed they feel stressed compared with 58% of social workers without a condition. Almost nine in ten social workers who were dissatisfied with their job felt stressed (87%) compared with half of social workers who were satisfied (52%). Three-quarters (75%) of social workers thinking of leaving local authority child and family social work felt stressed (compared with 58% of those who were not considering leaving).

Social workers who agreed that they felt stressed by their job were also more likely than average to:

- be aged 25-34 years (71%) or have worked in child and family social work for 2-3 years (73%); and
- to work in a front line practitioner role (68%).

Around three-quarters of those who felt stressed at Wave 1 (72%) and Wave 2 (75%) also felt stressed at Wave 3. Of those who agreed that they felt stressed at Wave 1, 10% had left local authority child and family social work by Wave 3, compared with four per cent of those who disagreed that they felt stressed.

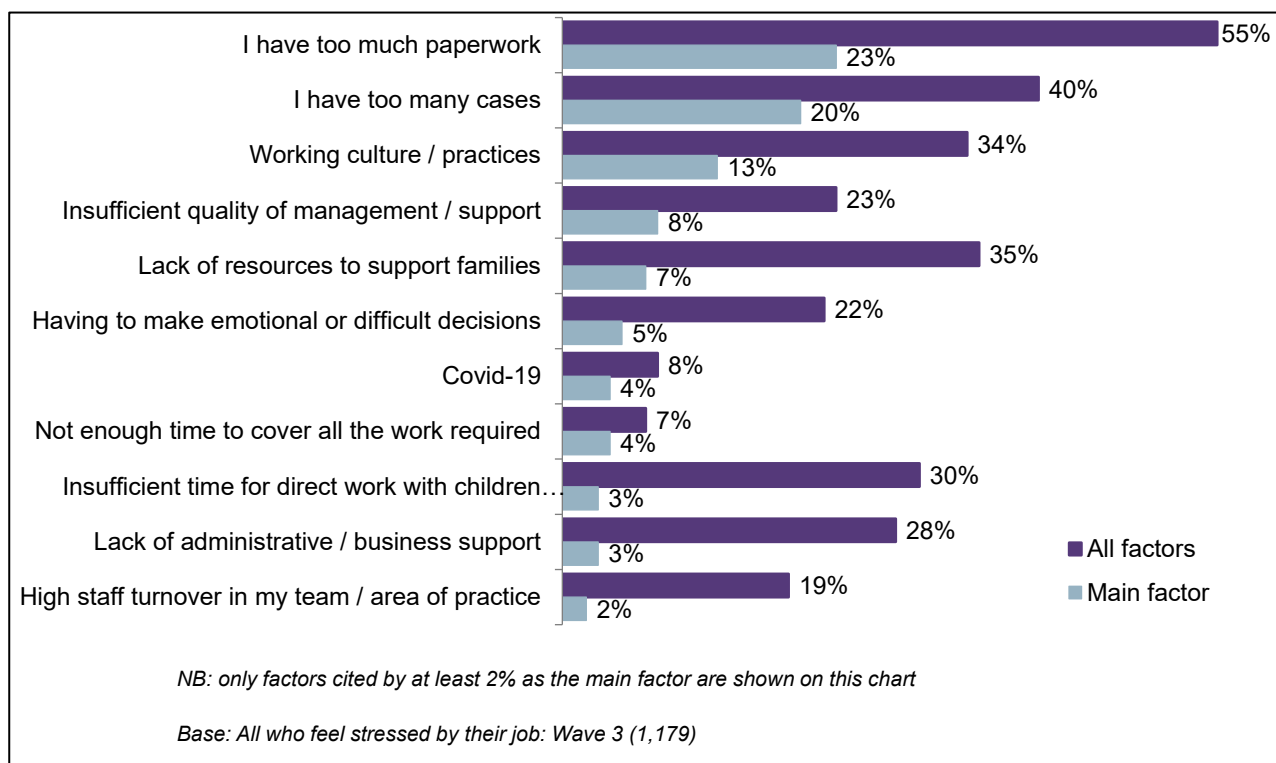
Reasons for feeling stressed by work

Those who agreed with the statement, 'I feel stressed by my job' were asked what factors they felt were causing this stress, and to identify the main factor, if there was more than one.

Figure 3.6 shows that too much paperwork was the single main source of feeling stressed at Wave 3 (23%, similar to 22% in Wave 2, but still lower than 30% in Wave 1). This was followed by having too high a caseload (20%, down from 24% in Wave 2, but similar to 21% in Wave 1).

When looking at all reasons for feeling stressed by their jobs (rather than the one main reason), concerns among front line practitioners remain distinct from others and relate to completing their day-to-day roles. They were more likely than average to cite too much paperwork (60% compared with 55% on average), too many cases (45% compared with 40%), not enough time for direct work with children and families (40% compared with 30%), and insufficient quality of management (26% compared with 23%).

Figure 3.6 All and main reported reasons for feeling stressed (Wave 3)



The qualitative interviews explored issues influencing work-related stress and workload in greater depth, highlighting the interplay between perceived high levels of paperwork, number of cases, and insufficient time for in-depth work with children and families. This could lead social workers to feeling disheartened by the work and feeling that they were not doing as good a job as they wanted to, in terms of supporting children and families. This in turn could lead to feelings of low morale and doubt about their future in the profession:

“It's always been way too much paperwork and not as much time with the children. And, I think, also, what just frustrates me is the repetition of the paperwork...I do feel like it's complete repetition and you, almost, are just, I'd say, 60% of your job is just doing admin.” (No longer in LA CAFSW, front line social worker)

“I don't think it's manageable, within a normal working week. I also don't think it's manageable as in doing the families justice and feeling like I've done a good job. Yes, I can just about scrape through if I'm working over hours and bash out what I need to do but in terms of actually spending quality time with children, really doing those in-depth bits of direct work, there is just no time for that at all.” (No longer in LA CAFSW, front line social worker)

Too much paperwork and lack of administrative support was a perennial issue raised in both the Wave 1 and Wave 2 reports, but some local authorities had taken approaches to address this. In the qualitative interviews one manager felt supported in his role due to the local authority vision that additional support staff enhanced the team experience:

“You have the luxury of having a social work assistant, where there is a specific piece of workand we have social work support officers who would do minute taking of core meetings...I cannot remember the last time I managed my own diary...or booked a meeting... it takes away a huge part of your work and stress level.” (Still in LA CAFSW, team manager)

Impacts of Covid-19 on workplace wellbeing

In Wave 3, which took place between September and December 2020, social workers were asked directly about whether various aspects of workplace wellbeing had increased, decreased, or remained the same as a result of the pandemic.

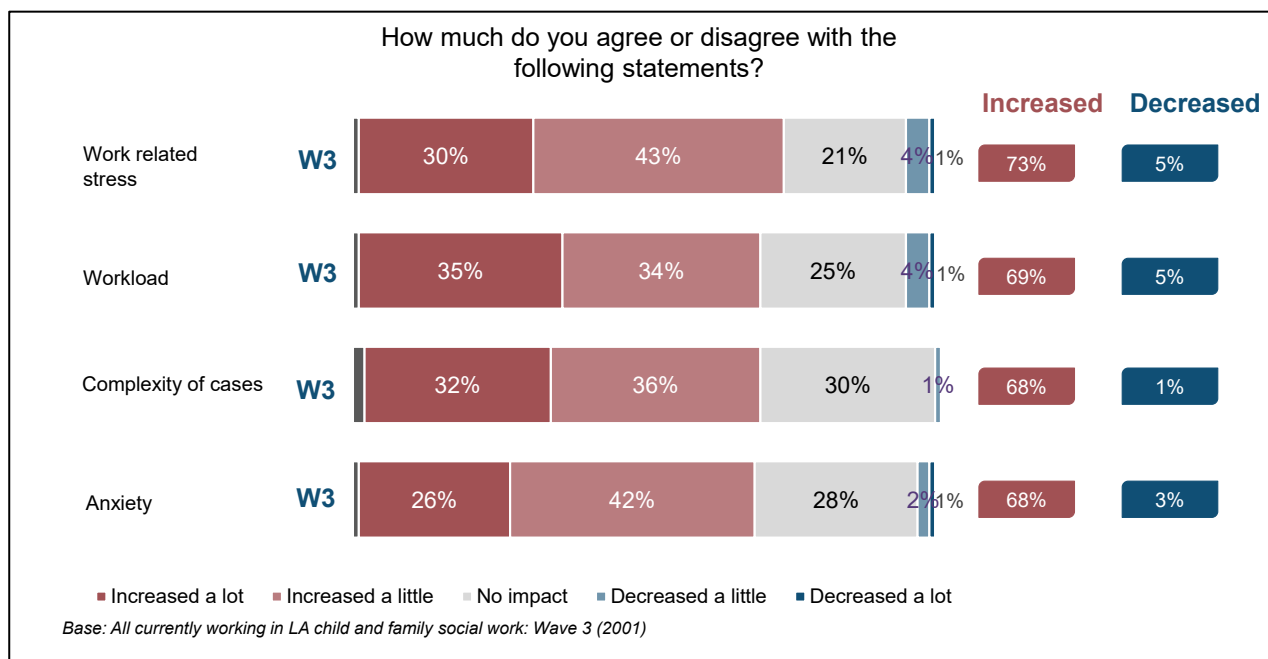
Over two-thirds of social workers considered that anxiety, complexity of cases, and workloads had increased as a result of Covid-19, and three-quarters felt that work-related stress had increased (Figure 3.7).

In terms of increased stress, notably there were no significant differences by Ofsted rating of the LA. The groups more likely than average (73%) to report that Covid-19 had increased work-related stress were:

- Social workers with 2-3 years' experience (81%) – i.e. who are in their first years of practice after completing their ASYE;
- Social workers in duty/ first response/ MASH, and assessment (77% each)
- Front line practitioners (76%), and;
- Social workers with school-aged children (76%).

Increased complexity of cases due to Covid-19 was also more commonly reported by social workers in duty/ first response/ MASH (76%) and assessment (74%), and among those with 4-5 or 6-10 years' experience (74% and 75% respectively).

Figure 3.7 Social workers' views on the impacts of Covid-19 on workplace wellbeing (Wave 3)



Notably, while front line practitioners were more likely to report feeling work-related stress had increased as a result of Covid-19, they were not significantly more likely than average to cite increased anxiety or workload due to Covid-19. Those most likely to say workloads had increased due to Covid-19 compared to the average (69%) were team managers (74%) and senior service managers/ Directors (81%), likely because of additional management time and planning. In addition, social workers working with children who had disabilities (77%), those in duty/ first response/ MASH (80%), and those working with Looked After Children (72%) were more likely than average to say Covid-19 had increased their workload.

There were few significant differences in reports of increased anxiety as a result of Covid-19, across different work-related variables. However, this was more likely to have been felt by women than men (70% vs 62%) and by social workers who had a physical or mental health condition, compared with those who did not (73% vs 67%), potentially reflecting concerns about their own health during the pandemic.

Various Covid-19 lockdowns and government guidelines to work from home if possible have led to increased flexible working arrangements for many people who are able to work from home, and social workers are no exception. The vast majority (80%) reported that Covid-19 had led to increased flexible working, with very few significant differences by demographic and employment characteristic. Social workers in Looked After Children (76%) and youth offending (74%) were less likely than average to agree.

The qualitative interviews explored the combined impacts of Covid-19 on flexible working and workplace wellbeing in greater depth, highlighting the complexities of how different factors were interlinked. For example, while many social workers welcomed the opportunity to work from home and found this helpful in terms of reducing travel time, people frequently described the challenges of being able to 'switch off' and the blurring of boundaries between work and home life. While this is not specific to child and family social workers during the Covid-19 pandemic, social workers felt the consequences of this 'crossover' of work into their home lives were more acute given the more stressful nature of their work. Some had actively tried to put symbolic boundaries in place:

“Working from home I've got a little shelf in the kitchen which my husband says, that can be where you put your laptop away. Just like a symbolic place where everything then goes...symbolic, putting work away.” (Still in LA CAFSW, team manager)

The high level of agreement among social workers about increased anxiety and complexity of cases due to Covid-19 was also apparent in the qualitative interviews. Some interviewees pointed out that anxiety could be about broader issues than work, and that increased anxiety overall was often a combination of having to deal with a demanding job, concerns about their own and their families' health, and other issues like juggling home-schooling. One agency worker, from a BAME background identified the anxiety induced by knowing they were at increased risk from Covid-19 when at work, and suggested counselling for workers impacted by this:

“Some form of counselling for social workers, as well, because, like I say, some of us are from an ethnic minority, and if we're listening to the news, they talk about the fact that it's affecting this ethnic group, it's affecting that ethnic group. People were scared about going about their job.” (Agency worker in LA CAFSW, front line social worker)

In addition, some participants in the qualitative interviews felt that cases had become more complex over the last few years, but that this was exacerbated by Covid-19, which they attributed to it taking more time for referrals to come through so that the risk was higher by the time referrals reached them. Respondents identified that it was taking longer to progress families and close cases, as support services were less accessible and risk assessment was more challenging under the current Covid-19 restrictions. Other interviewees felt that absolute numbers of referrals had increased:

“We've probably had more worries raised by people [during Covid] because their children aren't being seen...there's probably a little bit higher rate of referral.” (Still in LA CAFSW, team manager)

In broader terms, the very nature of working from home meant that people found it more difficult to detach themselves from work and put themselves under more pressure to be regularly checking and responding to emails, even when they were not meant to be working:

“But to say that you are supported at home, I wouldn't say so because, yes, you say like go for breaks, and all the rest of it, but the trouble is, is that you feel tied to the laptop in your own home because you can't go anywhere and you are constantly checking in thinking, 'Do I need to do something, has something come in?' So it becomes a vicious circle.” (No longer in LA CAFSW, front line social worker)

This was a particular issue raised by managers in the qualitative interviews, who felt under pressure to be constantly available for their teams and to more senior colleagues:

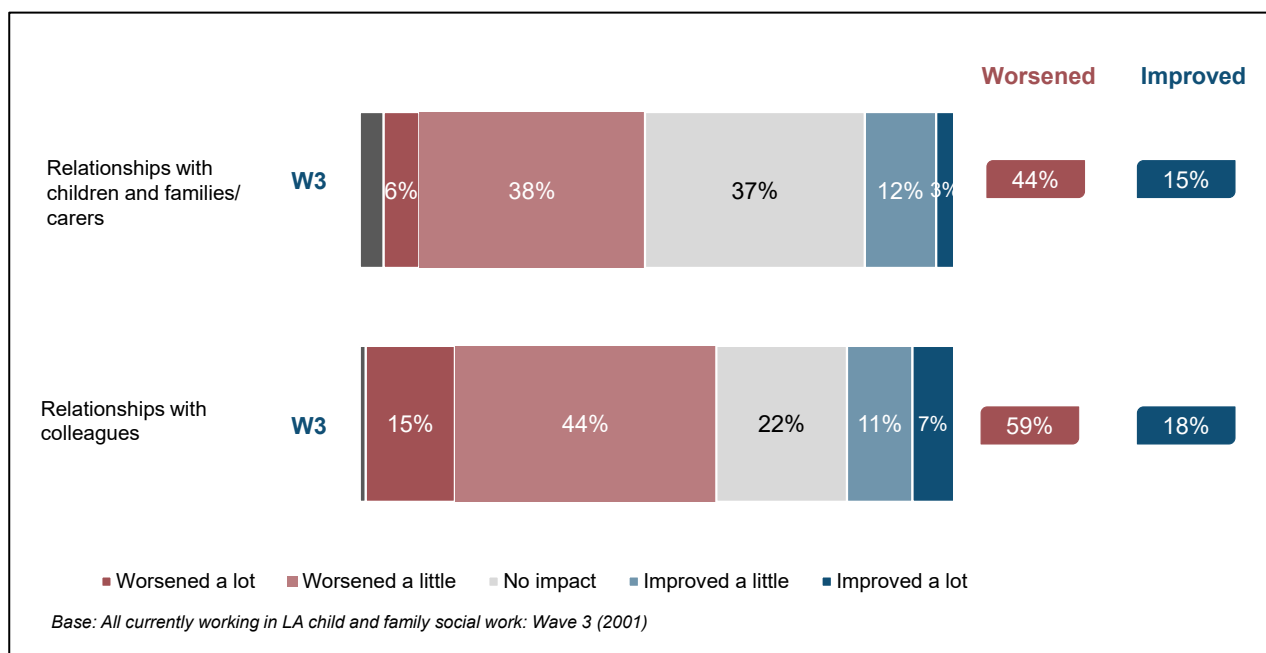
“I think there's a pressure on us, there's an expectation that you're sat in front of your laptop 24/7, and you're able to immediately respond because you're not in a car travelling.” (Still in LA CAFSW, front line social worker)

Impacts of Covid-19 on relationships with colleagues and service users

Social workers were also asked about whether Covid-19 had improved, worsened, or had no impact on relationships with their colleagues and with children and families (service users).

Figure 3.8 shows that the majority (59%) felt that relationships with colleagues had worsened as a result of Covid-19. Just over one in five (22%) felt it had no impact and just below one in five (18%) felt it had improved their relationships with colleagues.

Figure 3.8 Social workers' views on the impacts of Covid-19 on workplace wellbeing (Wave 3)



Looking at Covid-19's impact on relationships with colleagues is particularly important given the importance of these relationships for social workers' resilience and morale. Front line practitioners (64%) and those with 4-5 years' experience in social work (68%) were particularly likely to feel Covid-19 had a negative impact on their relationships with colleagues, as did those working with Looked After Children (62%). Compared with social workers in LAs with an 'outstanding' Ofsted rating, those in LAs rated as 'requires improvement' and 'inadequate' were also more likely to feel relationships with colleagues had worsened due to the impacts of Covid-19 (61% and 62% respectively, vs 53% in outstanding-rated LAs).

Similar to the findings on anxiety, women were more likely than men to think that relationships with colleagues had worsened as a result of Covid-19 (61% compared with 52%).

Social workers in duty/ first response/ MASH (51%) and working with children who had disabilities (48%) were less likely than average to feel Covid-19 had worsened relationships with colleagues. Those working with children who had disabilities were more likely to say relationships had actually improved (29% compared with 18% overall).

Agency workers were less likely than direct employees to feel Covid-19 had worsened their relationships with colleagues (50% compared with 60%) and more likely to feel it had not made any difference (31% compared with 20%). This is likely to be related to the transitory or short-term contract nature of most agency employment which means that agency workers may already have had less close relationships with colleagues.

Impacts on relationships with colleagues were a key feature of the qualitative interviews and revealed a range of concerns about having a reduced 'support network' when most people are predominantly working from home. The main concerns were about having less immediate interactions with colleagues (and line managers), and reduced contact more generally, which made some people feel more isolated in doing their work. It also meant that social workers had less opportunity to immediately share difficult decisions. This was true of managers as well as front line practitioners. Working from home was generally recognised as providing less opportunity to 'off load' or de-stress following challenging visits or family contacts:

"Those poor social workers are going to come out of a visit, feel rubbish... it is harder to make that phone call, and say, 'Oh, I'm crying' whereas if someone can see you that way they can say 'Okay, let's go for a cup of tea'". (No longer in LA CAFSW, front line social worker)

The virtual team meetings, sometimes held daily, did help but ad hoc contact and support from team colleagues in an office context were harder to achieve:

"In terms of teams and staff you can't beat having people sat next to you to be able to talk to and share". (Still in LA CAFSW, team manager)

"We forget or dismiss the hidden stuff. I worked in an open plan office, I knew managers from different services within that open plan office, I'd go and have conversations that I could ask them questions.... I'm not quite sure if you can measure what we lose, but I think we do lose a lot through that." (Still in LA CAFSW, team manager)

"Because I know when I worked in the office with my manager, I'd be able to go in and out if there was an issue.... and be, like, 'This is kicking off.' Like, 'I need you to reach out.' But we don't have that now because it's all virtual. And I think that's harder". (Still in LA CAFSW, front line social worker)

Social workers reflected that the key importance of losing this through remote working was the risk of greater stress and less resilience among social workers, reflecting on the importance of team relationships for feeling valued and supported, and hence for retention:

"I think being part of a team is a real retention factor. You need to feel you are part of a team to stay somewhere and I think all this virtual stuff we don't feel part of a team so much." (No longer in LA CAFSW, front line social worker)

"I think without my team, we always say to each other, without you, I don't know what I would do because I think there is such an importance there of being able to rely upon your team for support. I do absolutely feel that I can call any of my team

members at any point during the day. If I was struggling, I wouldn't think twice about it. They do it with me". (No longer in LA CAFSW, front line social worker)

There was a more balanced picture in terms of impact of Covid-19 on relationships with children and families: while 44% felt that relationships had worsened due to Covid-19, 37% felt it had no impact. A small minority (15%) felt it had led to improved relationships. There were very few differences among social workers, either by demographics or job role. Those working in duty/ first response/ MASH (54%) and assessment (44%) were more likely than average to feel Covid-19 had no impact on their relationships with children and families, which may be related to the nature of their role.

In the qualitative interviews, where social workers felt there had been a negative impact this was generally due to the increase in remote working and conducting fewer face-to-face visits. Respondents who were working with newly allocated families or younger children identified this as a particular challenge:

"They need to trust you, they need to form a relationship with you, and it is difficult to form relationships remotely, you need to see the person." (Agency worker in LA CAFSW, front line social worker)

Some, however, felt that using methods like WhatsApp and Facetime to communicate with teenagers had improved relationships:

"It suits them better and that's the way they communicate with their friends as well so I think it would be easier for them to communicate with their social worker that way, because it was the old school way of visiting them and I'm gaining more out of my service users now because, I mean, I'm calling them, they are chilled in their rooms, we chat about all sorts of stuff and it's virtually." (Agency worker in LA CAFSW, front line social worker)

Key drivers of stress

As front line social workers were significantly more likely than those in other job roles to report feeling stressed (68% compared with 60% on average across all job roles), a key driver analysis was conducted to determine the factors that drive this stress. See Appendix 1 for technical details.

The measure that the model sought to explain was agreement with the statement 'I feel stressed by my job', measured on a 'strongly agree' to 'strongly disagree' scale.

Figure 3.9 shows the variables that had the biggest impact on this measure; the model produces a percentage to indicate how strongly each variable contributes towards agreement with feeling stressed by their job, so the higher the percentage the higher the impact.

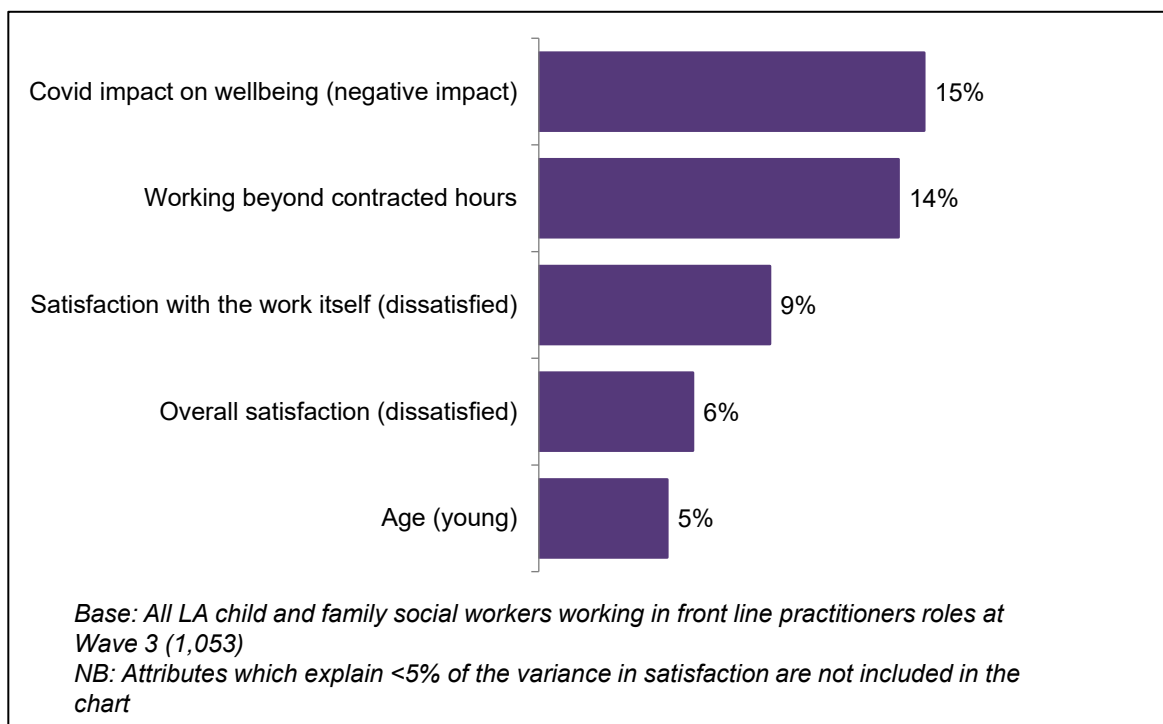
The analysis showed that the impact of Covid-19 was the largest driver of stress, explaining 15% of the variance. This means that for those who felt that the pandemic had negatively impacted on work related stress, anxiety, workload and complexity of cases, that this played a significant part in feeling stressed in their jobs. This was closely followed by working beyond contracted hours, which explained 14% of the variance in stress, meaning that as social workers worked further beyond their contracted hours, this had a more negative impact on their stress levels.

The third and fourth key drivers were satisfaction with the work itself (nine per cent of the variance) and overall job satisfaction (six per cent of the variance). These both had a negative impact on the model, meaning that as satisfaction decreased, levels of stress increased.

The fifth key driver of stress was age, with those who were younger being more likely to be stressed – this explained five per cent of the variance in stress.

The model also produces a separate measure which indicates how effective the model is in explaining satisfaction. This model accounts for 43% of the variance in the question ‘I feel stressed by my job’, which is considered quite robust for this type of multivariate analysis. Therefore, we can be confident that this model explains the key reasons why front line social workers felt stressed by their jobs overall.

Figure 3.9 Key Driver Analysis: main influences on social workers’ agreement that ‘I feel stressed by my job’



4. Views on employer, manager and working environment

To better understand the work experience of child and family social workers, the survey explored how they felt about various aspects of their working life. This chapter explores: social workers' feelings of loyalty to and being valued by their employer; aspects of their relationship with their managers; experiences of receiving and providing reflective supervision; views on the resources at their disposal and their working environment; access to the right learning and development opportunities, and; involvement in the National Assessment and Accreditation System (NAAS). The chapter also looks at how the Covid-19 pandemic has impacted attitudes towards these aspects of their working life.

The key findings from this chapter are:

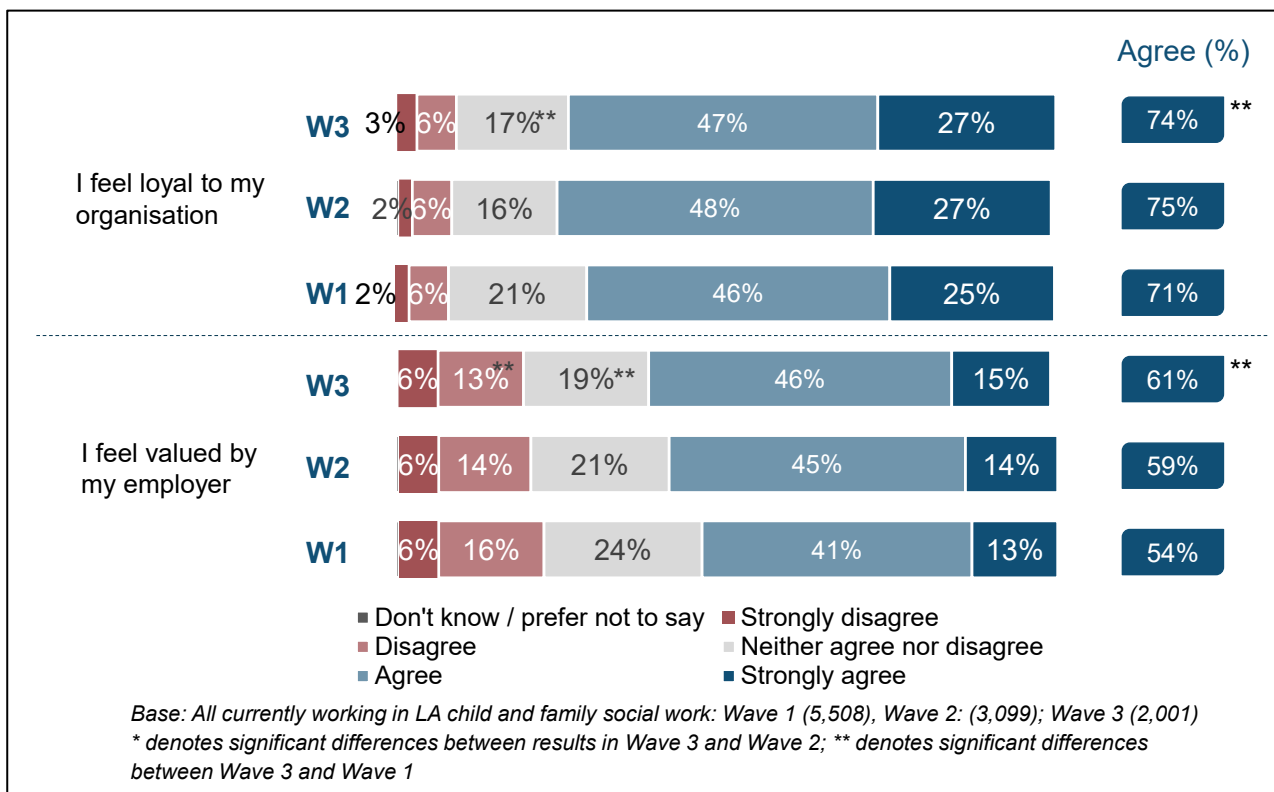
- Feelings of loyalty (74%) and being valued by the employer (61%) have increased significantly since Wave 1. The increase in proportion of those feeling loyal is explained by more negative views of those who responded at Wave 1 but not in Wave 3. However, when looking only at those who have completed each wave of the survey, feeling valued by the employer has increased (from 56% at Wave 1 to 61% at Wave 3).
- Views towards line managers have largely remained consistent across the three waves of the study, although significantly fewer agreed that their manager encouraged them to develop their skills at Wave 3 (75%) compared with Wave 2 (78%). Three in four (76%) agreed in Wave 1, consistent with Wave 3.
- Views on how the Covid-19 pandemic has impacted support received from management were mixed, with 38% thinking there had been no impact, 29% that support had worsened and 31% that it had improved.
- Child and family social workers were significantly more positive about the tools, resources and IT systems available to support them doing their jobs, compared with both Wave 1 and Wave 2. Three in four (76%) agreed they had the right tools to do their jobs effectively at Wave 3 (73% at Wave 2 and 72% at Wave 1), 60% that they had the right resources to do their jobs effectively at Wave 3 (55% at Wave 2 and 53% at Wave 1), and 57% that the IT systems and software supported them to do their jobs (49% at Wave 2 and 50% at Wave 1).
- However, over six in ten (62%) thought that the Covid-19 pandemic had negatively impacted the resources available to support children and families.
- The frequency of receiving reflective supervision has fallen significantly since Wave 1, with fewer receiving it every three or four weeks (41% compared with 44% at Wave 1) and more receiving it less frequently than every six weeks (24% compared with 17%). This is driven by a reduction in the frequency of front line practitioners receiving reflective supervision between Wave 1 and Wave 3.

- The proportion who had received employer-supported CPD or learning and development over the preceding 12 months increased (from 89% at Wave 2 to 92% at Wave 3).
- More child and family social workers had been assessed through NAAS compared with Wave 2 (11% compared with 8%). There was no increase in those who had been neither endorsed nor assessed (75% had not been at both waves), indicating the increase was due to those who had been endorsed but not assessed at Wave 2 having taken the assessment by Wave 3.
- A majority (67%) thought that the Covid-19 pandemic had no effect on opportunities for career progression, while 23% thought opportunities had decreased. However, almost six in ten (57%) thought that time for learning and development had decreased due to the pandemic.
- Front line practitioners were typically more negative than those in senior roles. For example, 69% felt loyal to their employer compared with 84% of team managers, and only 73% agreed they had the right tools to do their jobs effectively, compared with 85% of practice leaders and 84% of team managers. This was also linked to age and length of time in child and family social work, with older, more experienced social workers typically more positive.
- As one would expect, social workers who were more positive about their overall job satisfaction were more positive about their employers, managers and working environment.

Feeling valued by and loyal to their employer

Local authority child and family social workers were asked about their loyalty to, and the extent to which they felt valued by, their employer. As shown by Figure 4.1 they were more likely to feel loyal (74% agreed) than to feel valued (61% agreed). These views have remained consistent with Wave 2 but are more positive than at Wave 1, for both feeling loyal and feeling valued. The proportion reporting they felt loyal to their organisation increased significantly from 71% to 74% from Wave 1 to Wave 3. This coincided with a decrease in the proportion saying they neither agree nor disagree (from 21% to 17%); there has been no significant change in the proportion disagreeing across the three waves (nine per cent in Wave 3 and eight per cent in the first two waves). The proportion agreeing that they felt valued by their employer increased significantly from 54% to 61% from Waves 1 to Wave 3, driven by a decrease in those 'slightly' disagreeing (from 16% to 13%) or neither agreeing nor disagreeing (from 24% to 19%).

Figure 4.1 Social workers' perceptions of loyalty to and feeling valued by their employer (Wave 1 to Wave 3)



When looking at only those who completed the survey across all three waves, views remain consistent: at Wave 1, 73% agreed they felt loyal, and 75% at Wave 2. This indicates that the significant difference in feelings of loyalty between Wave 1 and Wave 3 across the whole sample at each wave, as seen in Figure 4.1 above, is being driven by those who are more likely to feel loyal remaining in the study, while those less likely to feel loyal had dropped out by Wave 3.

In terms of feeling valued by their employer, views of those who have completed across all waves of research have become more positive over time, rising from 56% at Wave 1, to 59% at Wave 2 and 61% at Wave 3. This shows that within the group of social workers who have completed all three waves of the survey, they now feel more valued by their organisations overall.

As with virtually all attitudinal measures related to social workers' wellbeing and satisfaction with their jobs, those who had been promoted between Wave 2 and Wave 3 were more positive than those who had not. They were significantly more likely to feel loyal (81% agreed, compared with 75% who had not been promoted) and valued (70% compared with 61%) by their employer. This is linked to those in more senior positions feeling both more loyal and more valued than front line practitioners.

Those who had moved local authority between waves were less likely to feel loyal (67%) compared with those who had not moved (76%), but more likely to feel valued (71% compared with 60%). This is in line with length of time at employer, which indicates newer employees felt more valued compared to average (69% if they had only been employed for one year or less, compared with 61% on average) but less loyal (67% compared with 74% on average and 78% of those at the same employer for at least 10 years).

When looking at how feelings of loyalty and value differ by child and family social workers directly employed by a local authority and those working for an agency, agency workers were significantly more likely to feel valued by their employer (70% agreed) compared with those in direct employment (60% agreed). Agency workers may be considering the agency they work for here, or the local authority. There were no differences in terms of feelings of loyalty for agency workers.

Many of the same differences regarding feelings of loyalty and value that were apparent in Wave 1 and Wave 2 were also apparent in Wave 3. As with previous waves, those in senior roles felt more loyal and valued than front line practitioners. For example, 84% of team managers and 83% of both senior managers / directors and practice leaders agreed they felt loyal to their employer compared with 69% of front line practitioners. Findings for feeling valued are similar: 76% of senior managers / directors, 74% of practice leaders and 68% of team managers felt valued, compared with 57% of front line practitioners.

The picture of senior social workers feeling more loyal and valued is reinforced when looking at the age profile of social workers, job role and age typically being linked. Those aged between 25-34 were significantly less likely to feel loyal (68%) than 45-64 year olds (76%) and those aged 65+ (91%), while those aged over 65+ were significantly more likely to feel valued (78%) than those aged 25-34 (59%).

Those who expected to still be working in local authority child and family social work in 12 months' time were more likely to feel both more loyal and more valued than those who expected to be working elsewhere. For example, 79% of those who expected to be employed directly by a local authority and 72% of those who expected to be employed by an agency reported feeling loyal to their employer, compared with 52% who expected to be in child and family social work in the private or voluntary sector, 57% who expected to be in social work but not child and family social work, 50% who expected to be working outside social work and 65% who thought they would not be working at all. A similar picture emerges when looking at feelings of value: 65% expecting to be employed directly and 69% expecting to be employed by an agency felt valued, compared with 41% expecting to be in the private or voluntary sector, 46% in other areas of social work and 25% outside social work.

In terms of how views changed by demographic characteristics:

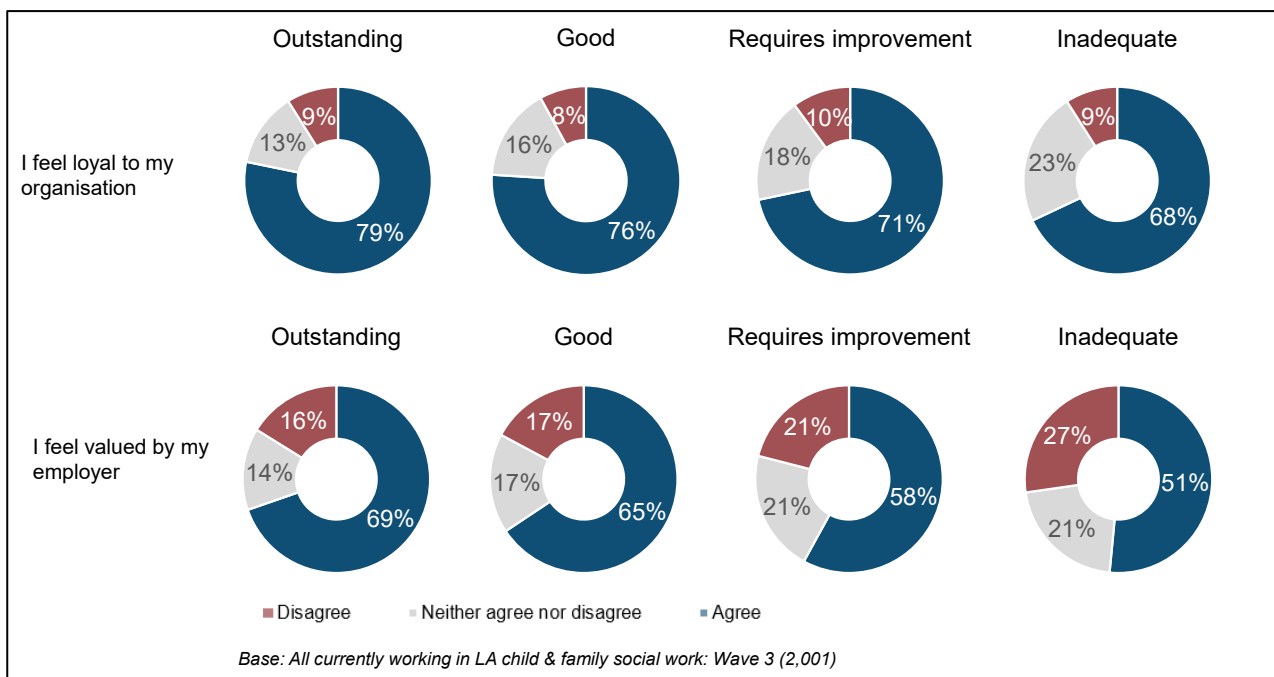
- White British social workers were more likely than Asian or Asian British social workers to feel loyal to their employer (76% agreed, compared with 63%).
- Men were more likely to feel valued than women (70% agreed, compared with 60%).
- Those with a physical or mental health condition felt both less loyal (68% compared to 76% with no condition) and less valued (51% compared to 64%).

Other differences of interest, although not altogether unsurprising given similarities to previous waves include:

- A positive correlation between higher feelings of loyalty and value and better Ofsted rating, as shown in Figure 4.2.
- Main area of practice – those working in child protection were more likely than average to feel loyal (76% compared with 74%) and valued (66% compared with 61%). Those working in first response / MASH were more likely than average to disagree they felt loyal (16% compared with nine per cent).
- Those working for a local authority in the South East of England were less likely than average to either feel loyal (69% compared with 74% on average) or valued (56% compared with 61%).

Notably social workers who had received employer-supported CPD in the 12 months preceding being surveyed were more likely to feel loyal (76%) and valued (63%) compared with those who had not (57% felt loyal and 45% felt valued)

Figure 4.2 Views on loyalty and value, by Ofsted rating (Wave 3)



The qualitative interviews found that feeling valued was a key component of positive organisational culture. Indeed, some participants defined culture as the way in which staff are treated and valued by an organisation:

“How you're treated as a person, an individual...we're in quite a nurturing, learning, progressive culture... you're a person as well as an employee and I think that, for me, is culture.” (Still in LA CAFSW, team manager)

“It's an ethos, it's a sense of how you feel working there, it's a sense of how you feel respected and valued and thought about and considered.” (Still in LA CAFSW, team manager)

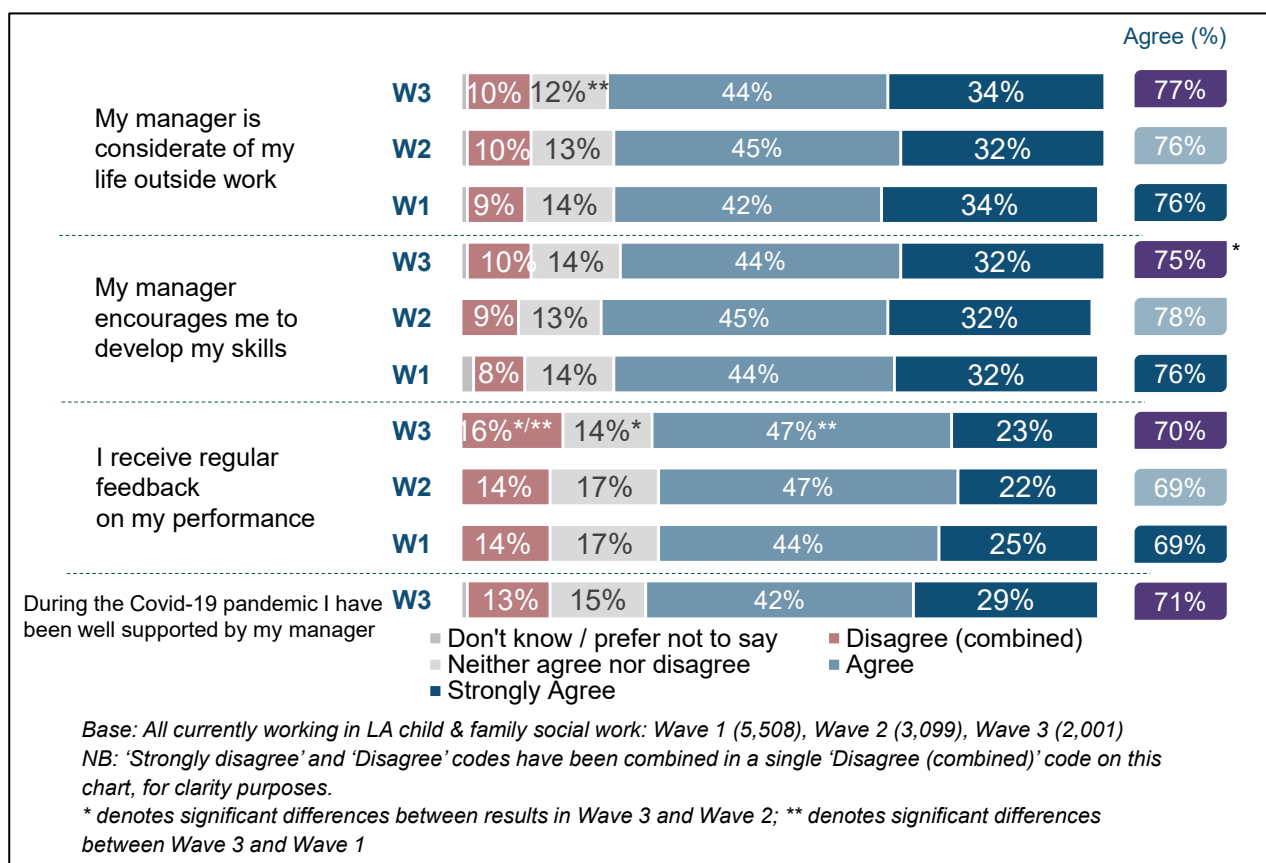
Views about line management

Child and family social workers were asked about four key aspects of their relationship with their line manager(s). Figure 4.3 shows they were typically positive about this relationship. They were most positive about their manager being considerate of their lives outside of work (77% agreed) and encouraging them to develop their skills (75% agreed). They were slightly less positive that they had been well supported by their manager during the Covid-19 pandemic (71% agreed) and about receiving regular feedback on their performance (70% agreed).

Overall these views have remained consistent across the three waves of the study, although compared to Wave 2, social workers at Wave 3 were less positive about their managers encouraging them to develop their skills (falling from 78% to 75% at Wave 3).²⁰

²⁰ The statement “During the Covid-19 pandemic I have been well supported by my manager” was introduced at W3, so comparison against previous waves is not possible.

Figure 4.3 Social workers' views on their line manager (Wave 1 to Wave 3)



As with feelings of loyalty to the employer, analysis of only those who completed the survey across all three waves shows that views towards their manager have remained consistent amongst this group. This indicates that the significant decrease between Wave 2 and Wave 3 in those agreeing that their manager encourages them to develop their skills is primarily driven by Wave 3 non-responders being more positive about this measure in Wave 2 than the Wave 3 completers had been.

Many of the same differences observed on views of feeling loyal and valued are consistent with views on management, although there were no significant differences in views according to whether the social worker was employed directly by a local authority or by an agency.

Front line practitioners were less positive than those in other job roles about their managers in terms of support received during the Covid-19 pandemic (69% agreed they felt supported, compared with 71% on average across all job roles) and their managers' consideration of their lives outside of work (12% disagreed compared with 10% on average). Those who had been in child and family social work for 2-3 years were also more likely to disagree that their managers were considerate of their lives outside of work (14% disagreed).

In terms of differences by demographic characteristics, social workers were more likely to agree that they received regular feedback on their performance if they were of an Asian / Asian British (83%) or Black / Black British (80%) ethnicity compared with White British (69%) or a Mixed ethnicity (60%).

As with other aspects, women were less likely than men to feel positively about their managers, across all measures. For example, 18% of women disagreed that they received regular feedback on their performance compared with 10% of men and 11% of women disagreed that their managers were considerate of their lives outside of work compared to just six per cent of men.

Those with a physical or mental health condition felt less well supported by their managers. Three-quarters (72%) agreed that their managers encouraged them to develop their skills compared with 77% without a physical or mental health condition, 69% that their manager was considerate of their lives outside of work (compared with 80%) and 67% that they felt supported by their manager during the Covid-19 pandemic.

Other differences of note include:

- A positive association between feeling supported by line managers and local authority Ofsted rating. For example, those at 'Outstanding' authorities were more likely than average to agree their manager encourages them to develop their skills (80% compared with 75%) and more likely than average to agree they had been well supported through the pandemic (77% compared with 71%). Those at 'Inadequate' rated authorities were less likely than average to agree they receive regular feedback (64% compared with 70%).
- Social workers were more likely to agree that their manager encouraged them to develop their skills if they worked in leaving care (86% agreed) and child protection (80%), while those working in duty/ first response / MASH were least likely to agree (69%).
- There was a stark difference in views on management depending on whether social workers had done employer-supported CPD or training in the preceding 12 months. Those who had taken part in CPD were more positive about encouragement to develop skills, as one might expect (77% agreed compared with 55% who had not undertaken CPD or training). However, they were also more likely to agree that their manager: was considerate of their lives outside work (79% agreed, compared with 58%); provided regular feedback on performance (71% compared with 47%), and; supported them well throughout the Covid-19 pandemic (73% compared with 53%).

Local authority child and family social workers were asked how the support from management had changed as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic. As shown by Figure 4.4, views on this were split fairly evenly. Most commonly, social workers thought there

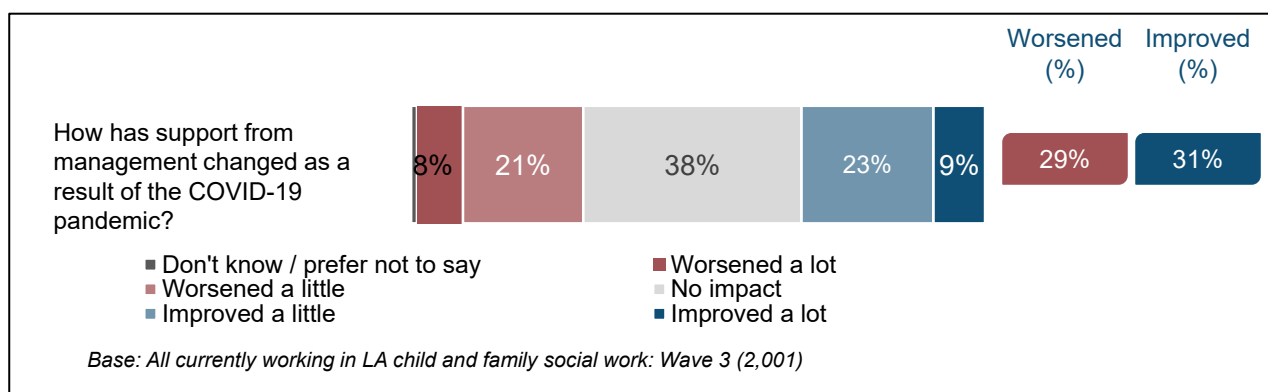
had been 'no impact' (38%), with 31% saying support had improved and 29% saying it had worsened.

Looking specifically at those who reported that support had worsened, it was more likely to be those employed directly by a local authority (31%) compared with agency workers (18%). It was also most commonly front line practitioners, typically younger and having been in child and family social work for a shorter period of time. For example, front line practitioners were more likely than average to say this (32% compared with 29%), as were those aged 25-34 (34%) and those who had been in child and family social work for 2-3 years (35%).

Other groups who felt their support from managers had worsened due to the pandemic were:

- White British social workers compared with Black / Black British social workers (31% compared to 18%) – this is linked to the higher proportion of those employed directly by a local authority reporting support had worsened compared with agency staff, as mentioned previously. A higher proportion employed directly by an authority were White British (80%, compared with 56% of agency workers).
- Female social workers (31% thought it had worsened, compared to 20% of men).
- Those who had not undertaken CPD or training in the preceding 12 months (40% compared with 29% who had).

Figure 4.4 Views on how support from management has changed as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic (Wave 3)



Views on working environment, tools and resources

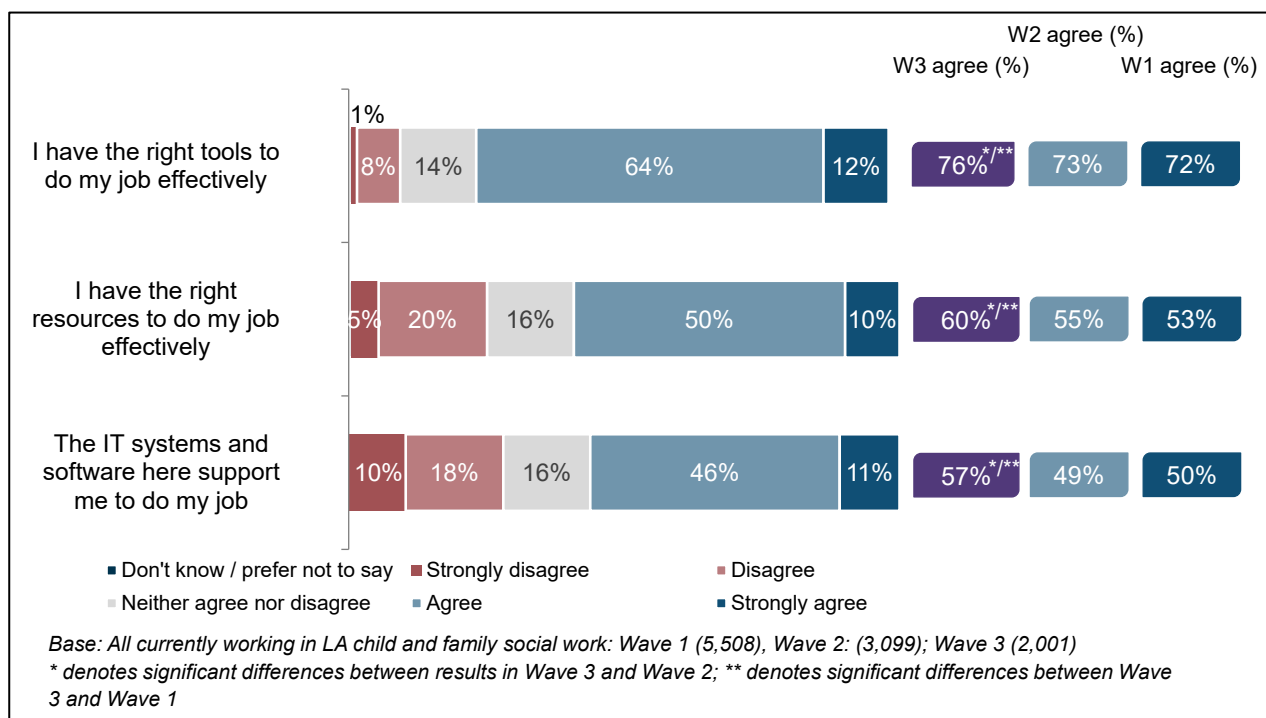
Social workers in LA child and family social work were asked about their work environment and the tools and resources at their disposal. Specifically, they were asked

the extent to which they had the right tools, resources and IT systems to do their jobs effectively.²¹

As shown in Figure 4.5, views were fairly mixed, ranging from 76% agreeing that they had the right tools do their job effectively, 60% agreeing that they had the right resources to do their job effectively, to 57% agreeing that the IT systems and software support them to do their jobs. Social workers were significantly more positive about all three measures compared to both previous waves.

Consistent with the upward trend in these scores across the whole sample at each wave, those social workers who had completed all three waves have grown more positive about these measures over the course of the study. For example, agreement that they had the right resources has increased from 52%, to 54% to 60% across the three waves, in line with the overall sample.

Figure 4.5 Views on working environment and resources (Wave 1 to Wave 3)



²¹ In the survey, social workers were asked separately about their views on the tools and resources available to them at their local authority. Tools were in reference to things that are designed to enable social workers to carry out an action specific to their jobs, for example, risk assessment tools and planning tools, whereas resources were things that they can access that assist them in their day to day jobs, such as petty cash.

In general, there has been a consistent increase in positive views across social workers in various job roles, age groups, ethnicities and LA Ofsted ratings, amongst other factors.

Perhaps unsurprisingly, given that attitudes towards the employer, manager, resources and working environment are interlinked, the same groups that were more positive or negative towards their employer and manager typically felt the same about the resources at their disposal. Most pertinently:

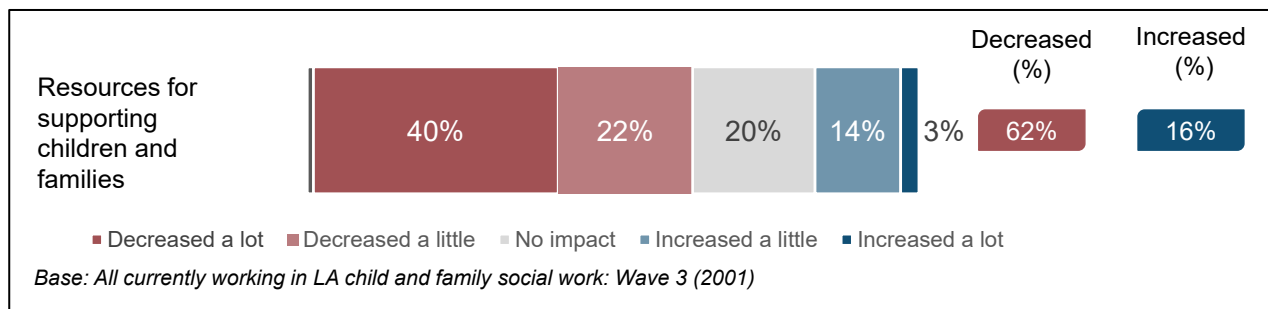
- Front line practitioners were less positive than those in senior roles. For example, 73% agreed they had the right tools, compared with 85% of practice leaders and 84% of team managers; 53% agreed the IT systems supported them to do their jobs, compared with 70% of practice leaders; 62% of team managers and 66% of senior service managers or directors. A similar pattern was observed in terms of younger social workers feeling less positive about having access to the right resources to do their jobs; 30% of 25-34 year olds disagreed they did, compared to 25% on average.
- Those working at a local authority with a higher Ofsted rating typically felt more positive. For example, 85% at an 'Outstanding' authority agreed they had the right tools to do their jobs effectively, falling to 77% at 'Good', 74% at 'Requires improvement' and 69% at 'Inadequate' rated authorities.
- Black / Black British social workers were more likely to be positive than White British social workers. For example: 69% of Black/ Black British social workers agreed they had access to the right resources to do their jobs effectively compared to 59% of White British social workers.
- Those with a physical or mental health condition were significantly less positive about all three measures than those without such a condition. For example, only 49% agreed they had the IT systems and software to support them to do their jobs (compared with 59% without a health condition) and only 48% agreed they had the right resources to do their jobs effectively (compared with 63% without a condition).
- Those who had undertaken CPD or training in the preceding 12 months were significantly more positive across all three measures than those who had not undertaken any CPD.

These social workers were also asked about the impact Covid-19 had had on the resources available for supporting children and families. As shown in Figure 4.6, 62% of social workers thought that this had decreased to some degree because of the pandemic, with 40% saying it had decreased 'a lot'. One in five (20%) thought there had been no impact while 16% thought that this had increased.

Amongst those who thought the support had decreased, it was more common that they were: in a younger age group (66% of 25-34 years olds said this, compared with 60% on average); female (63%); working at a local authority that rated 'Requires improvement'

(67%); White British than Black / Black British (64% compared with 47%), and; working in assessment (67%) or child protection (66%).

Figure 4.6 Views on how resources for supporting children and families have changed as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic (Wave 3)



Reflective supervision

To better understand perceptions of professional development and performance management, the survey explored experiences of reflective supervision, both in terms of receiving and providing supervision.²²

Receiving reflective supervision

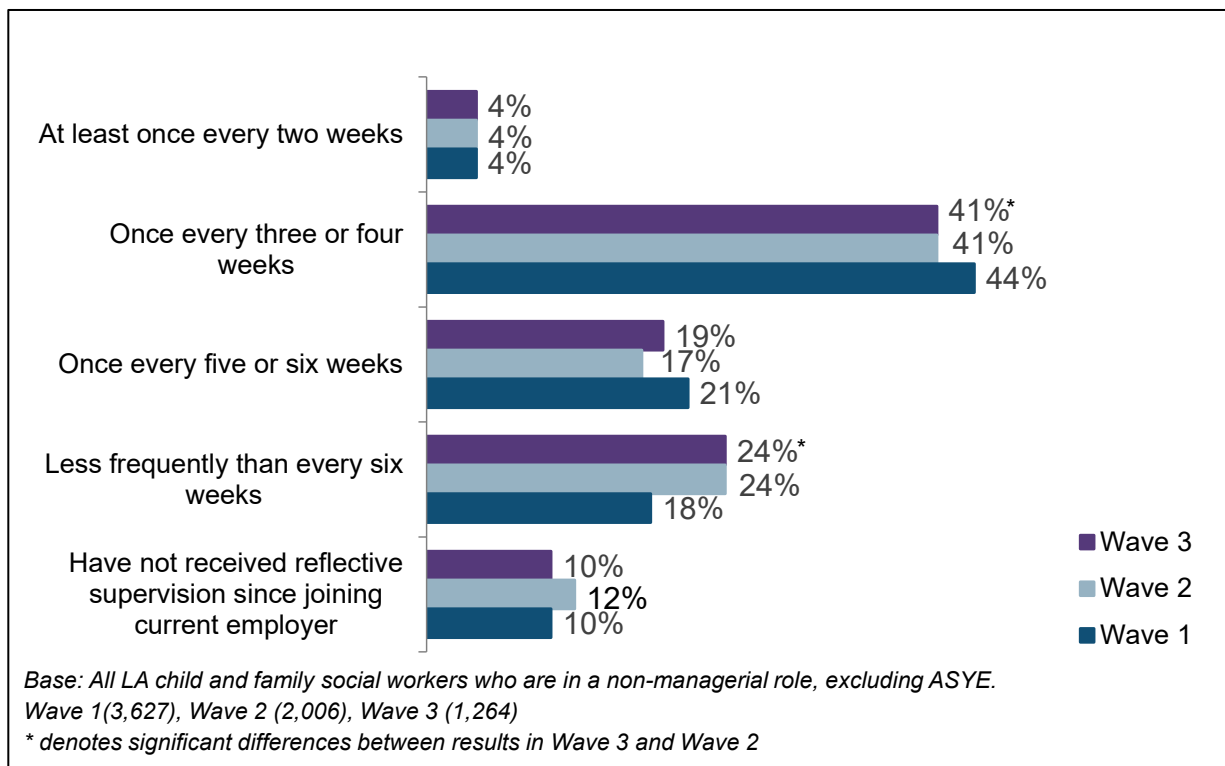
LA child and family social workers in non-managerial roles were asked about the frequency of receiving reflective supervision. As shown in Figure 4.7, it was most common for social workers to say they receive reflective supervision every three or four weeks (41% received it this frequently), although 24% received it less frequently than every six weeks and 10% had not received any since joining their current employer. ASYE social workers from each wave were removed from the calculations, as the nature of their position means they have more supervision than other, more senior, job roles.

Compared with Wave 2, the frequency of receiving reflective supervision was consistent. However, compared with Wave 1, social workers reported receiving reflective supervision less frequently. The proportion receiving supervision once every three or four weeks has dropped significantly, from 45% in Wave 1 to 42% in Wave 3, while the proportion receiving it less frequently than every six weeks increased significantly from 18% to 23% over the same period. The reduction in frequency of reflective supervision between Wave 1 and Wave 3 is primarily driven by front line practitioners receiving supervision less

²² In the Wave 3 survey, reflective supervision was defined as: a learning process that allows the practitioner to explore the factors influencing their practice, including emotions, assumptions, and power relationships; develop an understanding of the knowledge base informing their practice and its limits; and, to identify next steps.

frequently; the proportion receiving supervision every three to four weeks fell from 44% in Wave 1 to 41% in Wave 3, while the proportion receiving it less frequently than every six weeks rose from 18% in Wave 1 to 24% in Wave 3.

Figure 4.7 Frequency of receiving reflective supervision (Wave 1 to Wave 3)



There is a link between perceived determinants of wellbeing and the frequency of reflective supervision. Social workers who say they receive reflective supervision every three to four weeks were also more likely to say they were satisfied overall with their current job (46% compared to 28% who were dissatisfied) and were more likely to say that they were not stressed by their jobs (49% compared with 36% who were stressed). Equally, those who say they receive supervision less frequently than every three to four weeks or not at all were more likely to report they were dissatisfied with, and stressed by, their jobs. Although this link does not prove which factor drives the other, it does indicate a link between receiving supervision frequently and better workplace wellbeing and satisfaction. This link was also observed in Wave 2.

In terms of job role, front line practitioners were more likely to say they received reflective supervision every three or four weeks than practice leaders, as one might expect (42% did so, compared with 28% of practice leaders) and less likely to receive it every six weeks or less (23% compared with 39% of practice leaders). There is, however, less of a correlation between receiving reflective supervision by age or job role, than has been observed in feelings about employer, manager and work environment. For example, social workers receiving reflective supervision every 3-4 weeks were more likely to be 45-54 years old (46% received it this frequently), compared with 38% aged between 25-44

years old. Social workers aged between 25-34 years old were the most likely group to receive reflective supervision once every 5-6 weeks (25% compared with 19% on average).

It was significantly more likely that those working in looked after children would only receive reflective supervision less than every six weeks (28% compared with 24% on average). Those working in fostering more likely to not have received reflective supervision since joining their current employer (16% compared with 10% on average). Those who had been working in child and family social work for more than 10 years were also more likely than others to never have received reflective supervision since joining their current employer (13%).

Although it remains positive at Wave 3, compared with Wave 2 there is a weaker correlation between Ofsted rating and the proportion receiving reflective supervision every three to four weeks. Those receiving reflective supervision every three or four weeks were most likely to work at an 'Outstanding' rated local authority (49% did), although it was those working at an authority rated as 'Requires improvement' who were least likely to receive it this frequently (36%), rather than 'Inadequate'.

The qualitative interviews underlined the importance of reflective supervision not only for individuals but for fostering an open and supportive organisational culture. Managers identified the challenge of offering constructive and reflective supervision and social work practitioners generally felt they did not receive sufficient reflective supervision due to the fast paced nature of working:

"I think if we could establish a culture within which proper reflection was allowed to happen on a regular basis, then I think that would be a reward in itself". (Still in LA CAFSW, team manager)

One practitioner noted that supervision is easier to access in certain practice areas like adoption than in front line child protection teams:

"Front line work is.... fast-paced, so what you end up doing in supervision is just babbling on about the cases...and then reflective supervision is missed, that will then build up over time, those stresses....and then it all bubbles over at a point when you don't want it to". (Still in LA CAFSW, front line social worker)

Another practitioner identified that the authentic experience of her team leader was valuable in providing high quality reflective supervision:

"Through supervision, they should be able to guide you from a place of understanding how to do it. Not just telling you 'you should do this', but from personal experience, of being able to have done direct work, any of the complexities that we face. So, somebody who's got a hands-on [experience], remembers it and understands it". (Still in LA CAFSW, front line social worker)

In the qualitative interviews some team managers considered they would benefit from better reflective supervision themselves, feeling that there was less support and time for this at their level:

“We are the holders and we are the containers of all those anxieties, difficulties, challenges, be they work, home, whatever. And I think at my level, actually, I've got nowhere to send that to. My supervision isn't very reflective, it's more of a task.” (Still in LA CAFSW, team manager)

Another team manager had identified a strategy for managing his own stress as he did not receive any reflective supervision from his own line manager:

“I don't look forward to supervision, it's something for me that I have to almost get through as well, which is a shame because I think it is very important”. (Still in LA CAFSW, team manager)

Subsequently he had promoted a peer support network with other team managers, including reflective group supervision, which he felt was important for alleviating stress:

“I think that reduces some of the pressure as a key worker, because the majority of workers' stress in our job is the level of risk we carry as an individual”. (Still in LA CAFSW, team manager)

Providing reflective supervision

The proportion of child and family social workers responsible for providing reflective supervision has gradually increased over the course of the study. At Wave 3, 29% of child and social workers were responsible for providing supervision, compared with 27% at Wave 2 and 25% at Wave 1; the change from Wave 1 is statistically significant. This increase reflects both the growing experience and seniority of the sample over time and the higher likelihood of front line practitioners to stop taking part in the research over time, leaving a higher proportion of senior people in the sample.

Those in permanent roles at a local authority were more likely to have supervision responsibility than agency workers (30% compared with 25%). This is because agency workers are considerably more likely than those being employed directly by a local authority to work as front line practitioners (73% compared with 51%), who much less frequently provide reflective supervision (just six per cent do, compared with 29% on average).

In Wave 3, the vast majority of those responsible for providing supervision reported feeling confident of providing 'adequate support and supervision during the Covid-19 pandemic (95%). Younger, less experienced social workers were less confident (although still in the majority). Nine in ten (88%) of those in child and family social work

for 4-5 years felt confident (compared with 95% overall). Thirteen per cent of those aged between 25-34 disagreed that they felt confident, compared with five per cent overall.

The qualitative interviews underlined team managers' views of the importance of reflective supervision but the challenges for team managers to deliver this, such as pressures on time, were evident, and often exacerbated by the remote context of working during Covid-19:

“When you start doing face to face again, you do really realise, I think, that there is a real difference and you do pick up a lot more from people by doing it like that”. (Still in LA CAFSW, team manager)

“I would like to have a lot more time to do the reflective supervision properly, but I don't think I would be the only person saying that”. (Still in LA CAFSW, team manager)

Learning and development

Local authority child and family social workers were asked whether: they were able to access the right learning and development opportunities when they needed to; they had undertaken employer- supported learning and development or CPD over the last 12 months, and; whether they had been endorsed or assessed through the National Assessment and Accreditation System (NAAS).

Views on access to the right learning and development opportunities have remained consistent across the study, with 69% agreeing that they did have access to these in each of the three years of research. This trend remained consistent when analysing just those who had completed the survey at all three waves.

Those who had moved local authorities between waves, or had moved from an agency or self-employed role into being directly employed by a local authority, were less likely to agree that they had access to these opportunities. Seven in ten (71%) who remained at the same local authority agreed compared with 59% who had moved local authorities and 58% who had moved into local authority direct employment from an agency or self-employed role.

The groups that agreed they had access to these opportunities are consistent with those who were positive about their managers, resources and working environment:

- Those who worked at local authorities with higher Ofsted ratings – 74% at ‘Outstanding’ and 72% at ‘Good’ agreed they had these opportunities, compared with 68% at ‘Requires improvement’ and 59% at ‘Inadequate’ rated authorities.
- Those of a Black or Black British ethnicity (78%) were more likely to agree than White British social workers (69%).

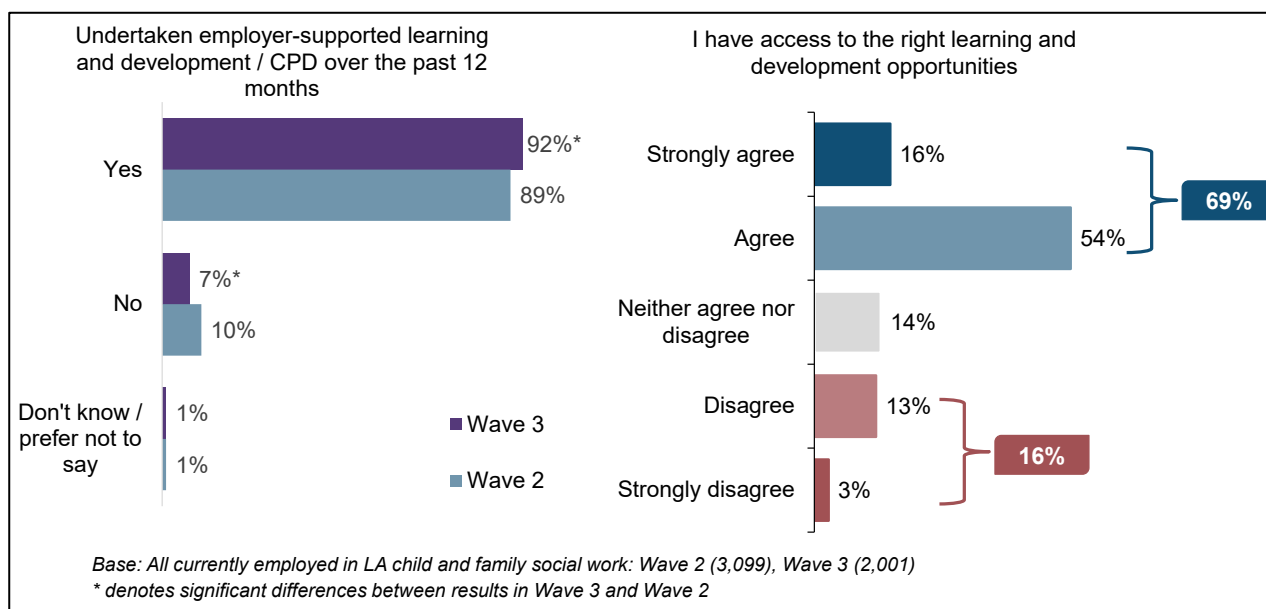
- Those without a physical or mental health condition (72%) were more likely to agree than those who had a physical or mental health condition (60%).

At Wave 3 the proportion reporting that they had undertaken learning and development or Continuous Professional Development (CPD) supported by their employer in the 12 months before the survey increased in comparison to Wave 2, from 89% to 92%, shown in Figure 4.8.²³

Again, it was least common for new employees, including those who had moved local authorities between waves or had moved into local authority direct employment to have undertaken learning and development or CPD. Eight in ten (83%) who had been at their employer less than a year or who had moved local authority, and 85% of those who had moved into local authority employment from agency or self-employed roles, had undertaken learning and development or CPD, compared with 92% on average.

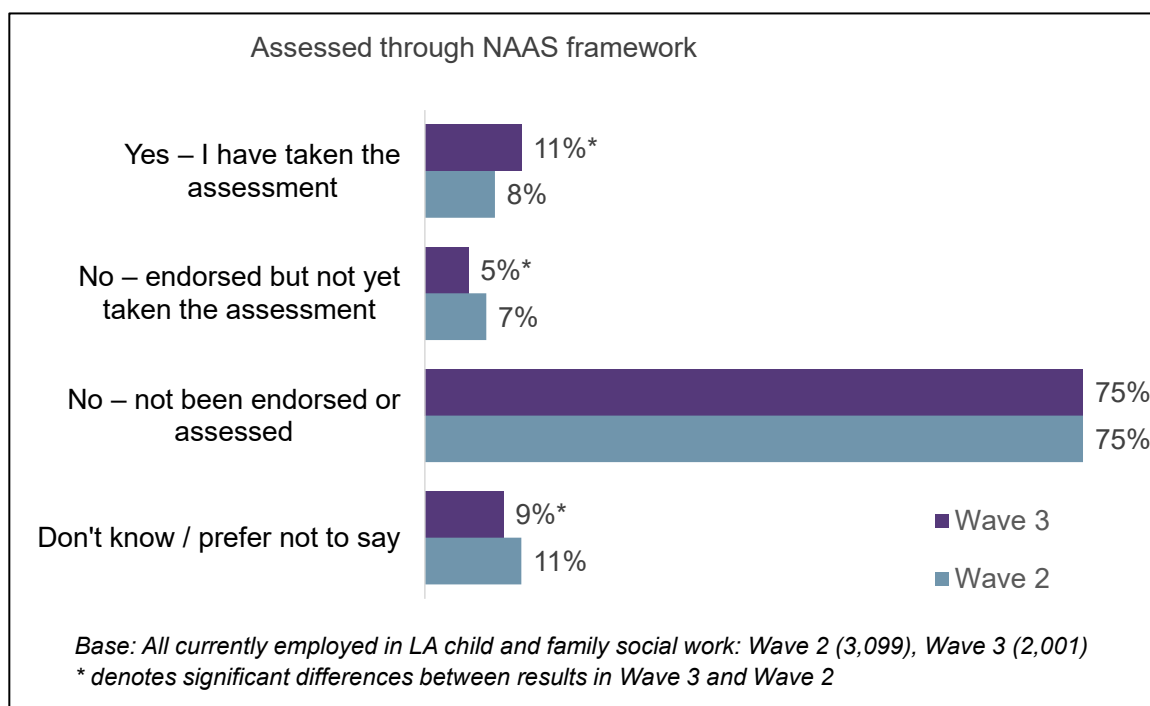
The vast majority of those employed directly by a local authority had undertaken these development opportunities (94%), significantly more so than agency workers (83%). Those who had undertaken learning and development or CPD were also more likely: to work full time (93%) than part time (90%); be of a Black / Black British ethnicity (96%) and to work in child protection or with looked after children (both 94%).

Figure 4.8 Employer supported CPD and access to the right learning and development opportunities (Wave 2 and 3)



²³ The question was not asked in Wave 1.

Figure 4.9 Involvement in NAAS (Wave 2 and Wave 3)



A minority of child and family social workers had been endorsed (5%) or assessed through NAAS (11%). A majority had neither been endorsed nor assessed (75%); this is consistent with Wave 2 (Figure 4.9). There has, however, been an increase in those who have now undertaken the assessment, increasing from eight per cent in Wave 2 to 11% in Wave 3.

Of all those in the Wave 3 sample who had been assessed through NAAS, 42% were front line practitioners, 21% team managers, nine per cent practice supervisors, 13% senior service managers or directors and five per cent practice leaders. This is consistent with the Wave 2 profile. However, proportionally it was more common for those in senior roles to have been assessed through NAAS than front line practitioners. Around one in five (18%) of senior managers or directors had undertaken the assessment, 15% of team managers, 18% of practice leaders and 17% of practice supervisors, compared with just nine per cent of front line practitioners.

In terms of practice area, it was most common for those in education to have undertaken the assessment (35%), followed by prevention / early help (20%) and duty/ first response/ MASH (18%).

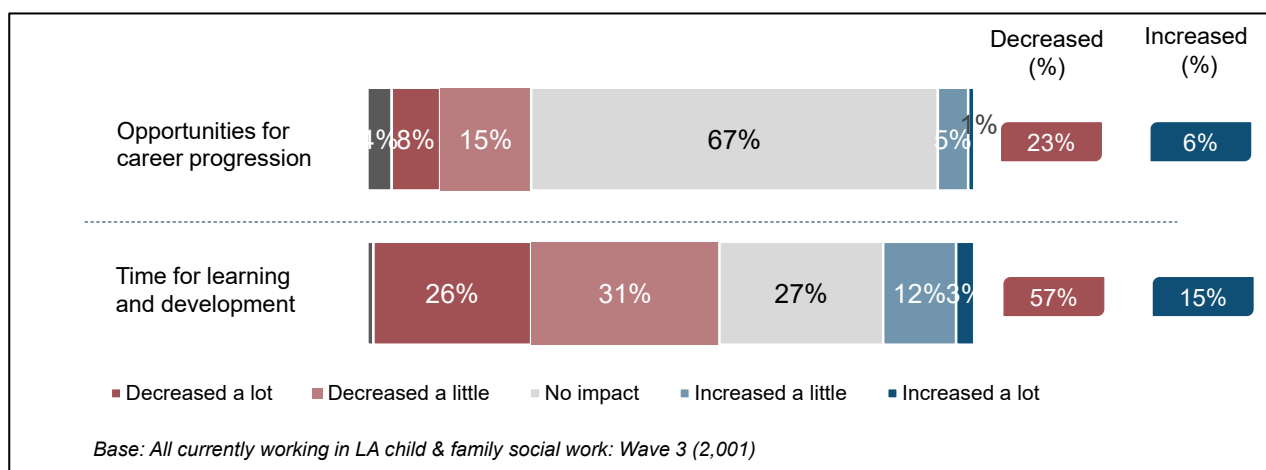
Impacts of Covid-19 on career progression and learning

The Wave 3 survey sought to determine the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on career development. All those working in child and family social work were asked the extent to which opportunities for career progression and time for learning and development had increased or decreased due to the pandemic.

As shown in Figure 4.10, a majority (67%) thought that Covid-19 had had no impact on their opportunities for career progression, while 23% thought it had decreased these opportunities and six per cent felt it had increased them.

However, a majority (57%) felt that time for learning and development had decreased (26% saying it had 'decreased a lot'), with 27% saying there had been no impact and 15% saying it had increased.

Figure 4.10 Views on how opportunities for career progression and time for learning and development have changed as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic (Wave 3)



In terms of those who thought career progression opportunities had decreased, it was more likely to be front line practitioners than those in the most senior job roles (26% compared with 15% of team managers and 16% of senior managers or directors). Linked to this was age, with 25-34 years old most likely to say they had decreased (30%), falling to 24% of 35-44 year olds and 19% of 45-64 years olds.

Other groups who were more likely to say career progression opportunities had decreased were:

- White British social workers, who again appear to feel more negative about their career progression opportunities than Black / Black British social workers (24% said opportunities had decreased compared with 16%)
- Those in the South East and South West (both 28%)

- Those with a physical or mental health condition (28% compared with 22% without a condition)
- Those working in duty/ first response / MASH (30%).

The specific groups reporting that time for learning and development had decreased were similar to those reporting a reduction in opportunities for career progression: 25-34 year olds (63% said this had decreased, compared with 57% of all local authority child and family social workers); White British social workers compared with Black / Black British (58% compared with 49%), and; those with a physical or mental health condition (64% compared with 55% of those without a condition).

In addition, the following groups were also more likely to think that time for learning and development had decreased:

- Those in the South West and Yorkshire and the Humber (both 66%, compared with 57% on average across all regions);
- Women (58% compared with 51% of men), and;
- Those working with looked after children (63% compared with 57% on average across all practice areas).

5. Views on job satisfaction and career progression in child and family social work

This chapter reports on overall levels of job satisfaction and then examines how satisfied social workers were with different aspects of their job. The chapter also explores how satisfaction with various aspects of the job differs for those working inside and outside local authority child and family social work. Finally, the chapter looks at whether social workers' career progression has met their expectations, so far.

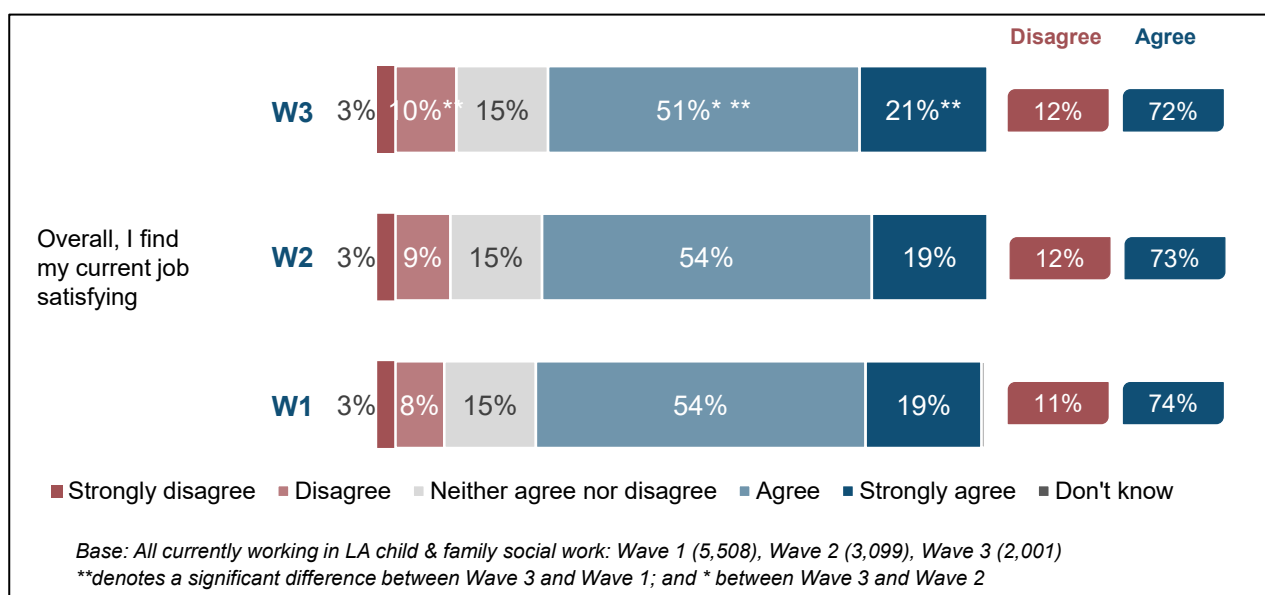
The key findings are as follows:

- Most social workers (72%) in Wave 3 found their job satisfying; not significantly different from the 73% in Wave 2 and the 74% in Wave 1.
- In Wave 3, satisfaction with public respect for the work done remained low among social workers, with only just over a quarter (26%) satisfied; similar to previous waves.
- There were three aspects where levels of satisfaction have decreased – sense of achievement, the work itself and skills development. In Wave 3, just over three quarters (77%) were satisfied with the sense of achievement they get from their work; down from 83% in Wave 1. Nearly three quarters (73%) of child and family social workers were satisfied with the work itself; down from 76% in Wave 2 and 78% in Wave 1. Two thirds (68%) were satisfied with the opportunity to develop their skills in their job; lower than in Wave 2 (71%) or Wave 1 (72%).
- In contrast, satisfaction levels with job security and pay have increased. In Wave 3, the vast majority (85%) of child and family social workers were satisfied with their job security, up from 81% in Wave 2 and 75% in Wave 1. Six in ten (61%) were satisfied with their pay, up from 58% in Wave 2 and 49% in Wave 1.
- The same patterns emerge for job satisfaction when looking at only those who had completed all three waves of the survey, indicating the changes in satisfaction measures across the three waves are not attributable to differences in views among Wave 3 non-responders.
- Social workers continued to be most likely to feel their career progression was in line with their expectations (57%), with more reporting it was below (19%) than above expectations (13%). However, there was a small but significant increase in the proportion who thought their career progression was above their expectations – 13% in Wave 3 compared with 11% at previous waves.

Overall job satisfaction

The level of job satisfaction overall among those working in local authority child and family social work was broadly consistent wave-on-wave (Figure 5.1). Over seven in ten (72%) of social workers who took part in Wave 3 agreed that they found their current job satisfying. This was consistent with results in Wave 2 and Wave 1 (73% and 74% respectively). However, the proportion who strongly agreed was significantly higher in Wave 3 (21%) than in Wave 1 (19%).

Figure 5.1 Extent of agreement with overall job satisfaction (Wave 1 to Wave 3)



Social workers who completed the survey across all three waves have become less satisfied over time: 76% agreed that they found their job satisfying at Wave 1, 73% in Wave 2, and 72% in Wave 3 – the decrease from Wave 1 to Wave 3 is statistically significant.

Those who had been promoted between Wave 2 and Wave 3 reported significantly higher levels of overall job satisfaction in Wave 3 (82%) than those who had not been promoted (72%). There was no difference among those who moved to a different local authority.

There was no significant difference in overall job satisfaction in Wave 3 according to whether they worked for the LA directly or through an agency. There had been a significant difference observed at the previous two waves, where those employed directly by a local authority were more likely to report they were satisfied overall than agency workers.

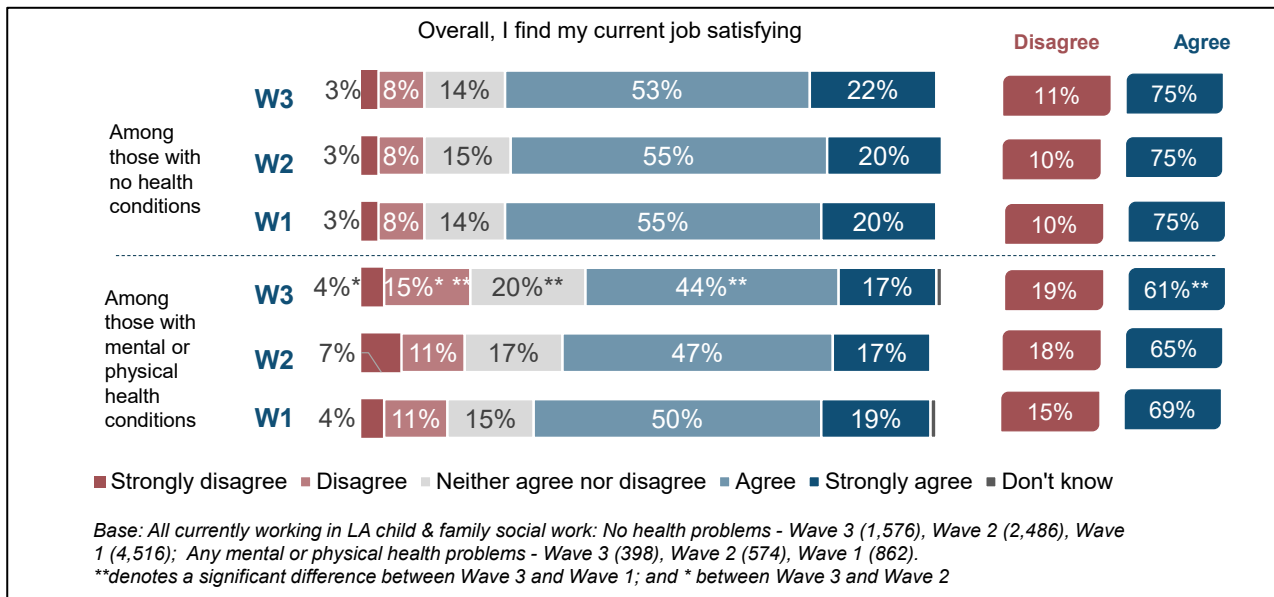
Nevertheless, there were various aspects of their job role that had a bearing on overall levels of job satisfaction:

- front line practitioners were less satisfied with their job overall than those in more senior roles (66%, compared to 81% of team managers and 89% of senior service managers). These variances were also apparent at previous waves.
- Those who had been working in local authority child and family social work for 2-3 years were significantly less satisfied (66%) than those who had been working in the sector for 6-10 years (74%) or 10+ years (73%).
- As at Wave 2, overall job satisfaction was linked to the CPD opportunities available to social workers. Three-quarters (74%) of social workers who had undertaken employer-supported CPD in the last 12 months agreed that they were satisfied with their job, compared with just over half (54%) who had not done any CPD.
- Those who worked in the Leaving care (80%) and Adoption (79%) practice areas had higher overall job satisfaction compared with the average of all in local authority child and family social work (72%).
- Those working in local authorities that had an 'Outstanding' Ofsted rating had significantly higher overall job satisfaction (79%) than those rated 'Good' (72%), 'Requires improvement' (70%) and 'Inadequate' (70%); as did those working in East of England region (81%).

Overall job satisfaction also varied according to the respondents' health. Social workers who had a physical or mental health condition were less satisfied than those who did not (61%, compared with 75%). This gap has widened with each successive wave: in Wave 2 the equivalent results were 65% and 75%, whilst in Wave 1 the equivalent proportions were 69% and 75%. Figure 5.2 shows that the decrease in overall satisfaction among those with any physical or mental health conditions between Wave 1 and Wave 3 was statistically significant.

A similar pattern is observed when looking at only those who had completed all three waves of the survey. Satisfaction amongst those with a health condition had fallen significantly, from 71% in Wave 1, to 66% in Wave 2 and 61% in Wave 3. While satisfaction for those who did not have a condition had also fallen significantly since Wave 1 (from 78% to 75%), this was only by three percentage points, compared with ten percentage points amongst those with a condition. This indicates those with a health condition are growing disproportionately more dissatisfied with their jobs in local authority child and family social work compared with those who do not have a health condition.

Figure 5.2 Extent of agreement with overall job satisfaction, by wave, according to whether have a mental or physical health condition (Wave 1 to Wave 3)



The qualitative research explored the different facets of job satisfaction and found it was derived from two broad components – one concerned with participants’ commitment to children and families social work, and feelings about the value and effectiveness of the work, and the other related to the organisational context. This includes extrinsic factors such as remuneration, management, leadership and CPD opportunities, covered in other sections of this chapter, but also the culture or climate of the organisation (discussed in Chapter 6).

In the qualitative research, those still in local authority child and family social work at Wave 3 reported a sense of satisfaction arising from their commitment to the aims of social work with children and families, and their ability to contribute to that within their roles. Some talked about having a ‘passion’ for the work, or described it as a ‘calling’, and suggested that this sense of commitment overcame the challenges and frustrations that they sometimes experienced:

“I think it's about, for me the satisfaction, often it's the relationships we build with people and the therapeutic element of relationships in and of itself, and having to do direct work with children, helping them understand their circumstances through life story work, and sometimes just direct work about different issues they may be facing... Yes, that's the part that I find satisfying... I feel that that's my calling if you want to say.” (Still in LA CAFSW, front line social worker)

“I love my job, I have the dream job...but I am a pragmatist. We have had ten years of austerityso there are limits to the expectations we can have and what

we can provide...I do think we make a significant difference within that.” (Still in LA CAFSW, team manager)

The ability to fulfil that commitment and deliver support to children and families was a significant factor in job satisfaction:

“The support that we can actually offer to families and how that brings positive changes and outcomes to the families.” (Still in LA CAFSW, team manager)

Reasons for reduced satisfaction were lack of informal peer support due to working from home, failure of senior management to listen to front line staff and sometimes mismatched expectations between the role they had expected and the work they were doing. One other implication for some interviewees which impacted on their satisfaction has been the demands to pick up extra work because of the Covid-19 situation:

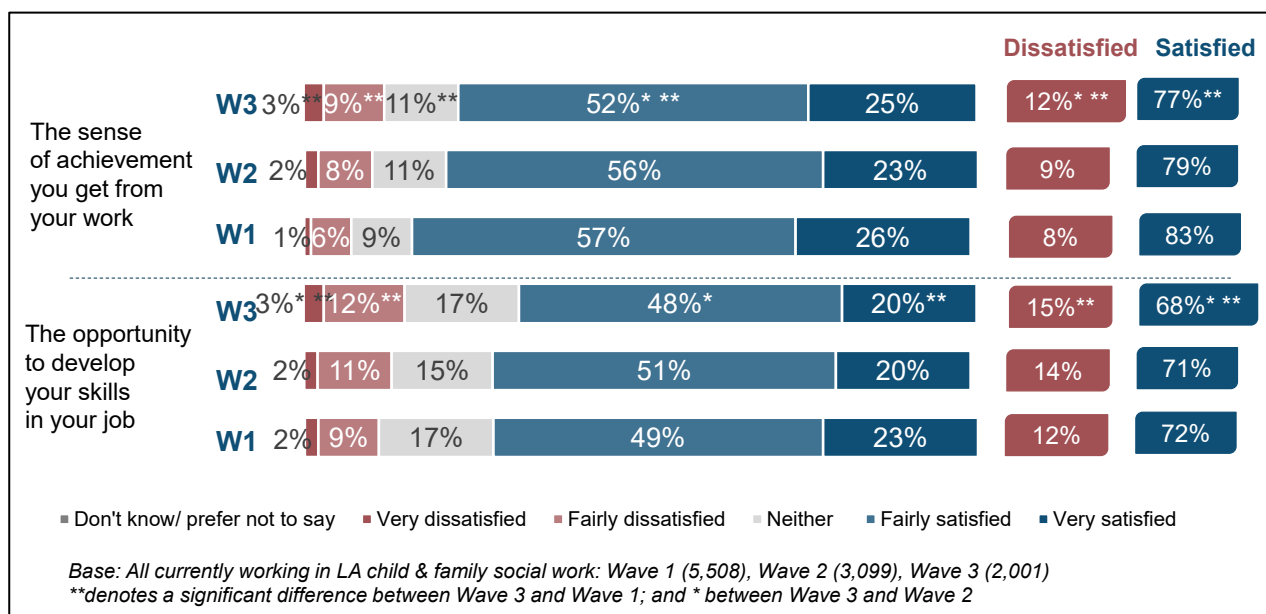
“They're also asking us to do an awful lot more areas that we didn't have, used to have to cover.... checking on school attendance every week which would've been done normally by an education welfare officer...We're now having to take on a role of being a finance officer as well and again that would've normally been with the finance team...before it was very much, the focus was on working directly with the young people. Now the focus is very much on getting the statistics done.” (No longer in LA CAFSW, front line social worker)

Sense of achievement and skills development

This section explores two key aspects of the job – the sense of achievement social workers feel and the opportunity to develop their skills in the job.

In Wave 3, three-quarters (77%) were satisfied with the sense of achievement they get from their work, whilst two-thirds (68%) were satisfied with the opportunity to develop their skills in their job. Figure 5.3 shows how satisfaction with both of these measures has declined over time: in Wave 3 sense of achievement was significantly lower than in Wave 1 (77% compared with 83%), and the satisfaction with opportunity for skills development was significantly lower than in both waves (68% compared with 71% in Wave 2 and 72% in Wave 1). The proportion who were dissatisfied has increased at each successive wave.

Figure 5.3 Social workers' satisfaction with sense of achievement and opportunity to develop skills (Wave 1 to Wave 3)



Turning to just look at those who completed the survey across all three waves, satisfaction with sense of achievement from their work shows a similar downward trend (as observed among all respondents): 85% satisfied in Wave 1, 79% in Wave 2 and 77% in Wave 3 – the decline from Wave 1 to Wave 3 being significant. Likewise, respondents in all three waves show falling satisfaction with the opportunity to develop their skills, with 73% satisfied in Wave 1, 70% in Wave 2 and 68% in Wave 3. These longitudinal results show that the social workers who have completed all three waves, now feel a lesser sense of achievement and less opportunity to develop their skills. The overall downward trends cannot be explained just by the departure of some respondents (from social work or from the survey) between waves.

Those who had been promoted between Wave 2 and Wave 3 were significantly more positive on the sense of achievement from their work in Wave 3 (88% satisfied) than those who had not been promoted (76%).

In Wave 3, social workers' satisfaction with the sense of achievement they get from their work varied according to certain job characteristics:

- Front line practitioners were less satisfied (73%) than team managers (81%) or senior service managers/directors (91%).
- Social workers who had worked more than ten years in the profession were more satisfied (80%), compared with those in the profession for 2-3 years (73%), 4-5 years (73%) and 6-10 years (74%).
- Those employed in child and family social work by an agency or directly by a local authority were less satisfied (74% and 77% respectively) than those employed in other ways (88%), such as on secondment or self-employed.

- Those who worked in Prevention/ early help services (87%) and Adoption (82%) had a higher sense of achievement than the average of all local authority child and family social workers (77%). Those who worked in Assessment (72%) and Duty / first response / front door / MASH (70%) had a lower sense of achievement.
- Those who had undertaken employer-supported CPD in the previous 12 months had a greater sense of achievement than those who had not (78% vs. 67%).

Satisfaction with the sense of achievement they get from their work also varied significantly with the following demographic characteristics:

- Those of Black / Black British ethnicity were more satisfied (86%) than the average for all social workers (77%).
- Satisfaction with the sense of achievement from their work was higher among older social workers aged 55-64 (81%) or 65 and over (91%). The 25-34s were the least satisfied (71%).
- Those who had a mental or physical health condition were less satisfied than those who did not (69% vs. 79%).

Turning to satisfaction with the opportunity to develop their skills in their job, there were variations by certain features of their role:

- Unsurprisingly, those who had undertaken employer-supported CPD in the previous 12 months were much more satisfied with opportunity to develop their skills than those who had not undertaken any CPD recently (71% vs. 40%)
- Front line practitioners were less satisfied (65%) than team managers (76%) or senior service managers/directors (77%)
- Those who worked in Fostering had significantly lower satisfaction (63%) with opportunity for skills development than social workers generally
- Those working in local authorities with an 'Inadequate' Ofsted rating were less satisfied than others with their opportunity for skills development (62%). Almost three in four (73%) at an 'Outstanding' rated authority were satisfied with these opportunities, while 69% at authorities rated 'Good' and 68% at 'Requires improvement' were satisfied.

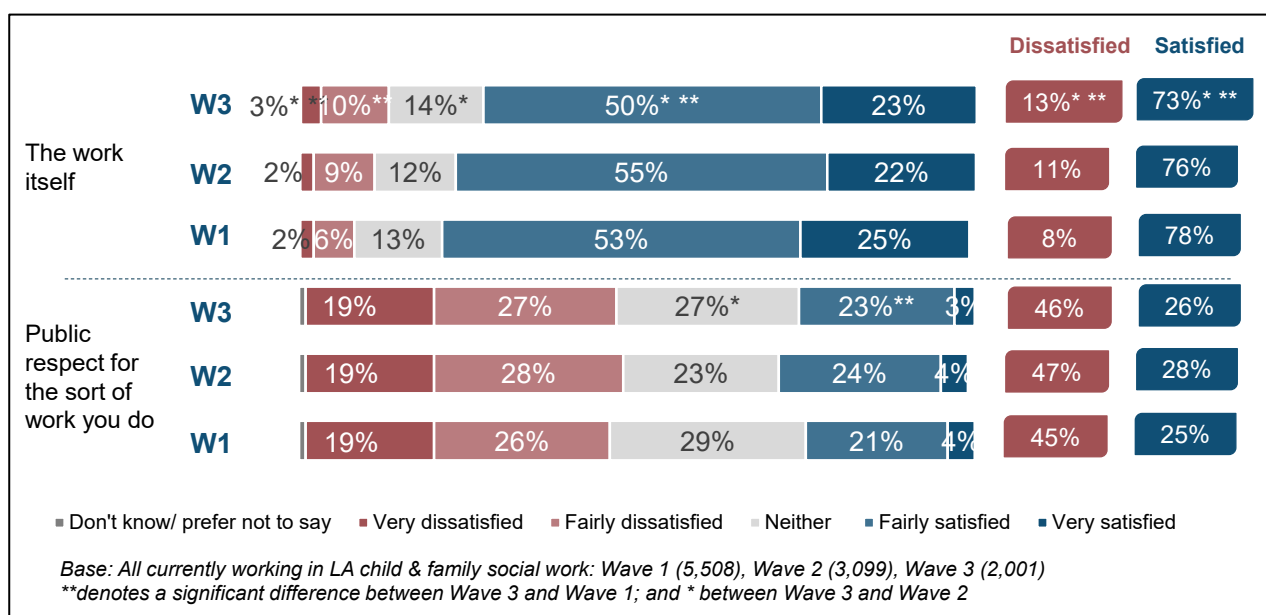
Satisfaction with opportunity for developing their skills in the job also varied significantly with the following demographic characteristics, which are in keeping with the findings on overall and other aspects of job satisfaction:

- Those of Black / Black British ethnicity were more satisfied (79%) than White British social workers (68%) or those of a Mixed ethnicity (62%).
- Those who had a mental or physical health condition were less satisfied than those who did not (60% vs. 71%).

The work itself

In Wave 3, nearly three quarters (73%) of child and family social workers were satisfied with the work itself. As with sense of achievement and opportunities for skills development, social workers' level of satisfaction with the work itself has decreased compared with Wave 2 (76%) and Wave 1 (78%). Meanwhile, the proportion who were dissatisfied has increased wave-on-wave.

Figure 5.4 Social workers' satisfaction with the work itself and public respect for the sort of work they do (Wave 1 to Wave 3)



Among those who completed the survey across all three waves, satisfaction with the work itself declined significantly from 81% in Wave 1, to 76% in Wave 2 and 73% in Wave 3 – so the decline is also apparent among those remaining in the profession over all three waves. For this group, views on public respect for the work done remained consistent (26% in Wave 1, 28% in Wave 2 and 26% in Wave 3).

Those who had been promoted between Wave 2 and Wave 3 were significantly more positive on the sense of achievement from their work in Wave 3 (88% satisfied) than those who had not been promoted (76%).

There were significant variations in the degree of satisfaction with the work itself by features of their role:

- In line with previous findings, front line practitioners were less satisfied (68%) than team managers (80%) or senior service managers/directors (87%)
- Satisfaction with the work itself increased significantly with length of time in child and family social work: rising from 63% of those with 1 years' experience, to 67%

with 2-3 years' experience, 72% with 4-5 years, 73% with 6-10 years, through to 75% if more than 10 years' experience.

- Satisfaction with the work itself was significantly higher among those working in the following practice areas: Youth offending (92%), Leaving care (83%) and Adoption (79%); and was significantly lower among those working in Duty / first response / front door / MASH (67%), This pattern is similar to other aspects of satisfaction.
- Those who had undertaken employer-supported CPD in the previous 12 months were more satisfied with the work itself than those who had not undertaken any CPD recently (75% vs. 60%).

Satisfaction with the work itself also varied significantly with gender, age, time in the profession and health:

- Women were more satisfied with the work itself than men (74% vs. 69%)
- Older social workers were more satisfied with the work itself - ranging from 67% of under 25s, rising steadily to 84% of over 65s. Social workers aged 25-34 had significantly below average satisfaction (68%) while those aged 55-64 had significantly above average satisfaction (78%).
- Related to age, those who had been in child and family social work for more than 10 years were more likely to be satisfied than those who had been in the profession for 2-3 years (75% compared with 63%).
- Those who had a mental or physical health condition were less satisfied with the work itself than those who did not (64% vs. 76%). This is in line with a range of related findings on aspects of job satisfaction.

Public respect for the work social workers do

As presented in Figure 5.4, satisfaction with public respect for the sort of work done by social workers remained low among social workers, with just over a quarter (26%) satisfied. This is similar to previous waves (28% in Wave 2, and 25% in Wave 1).

Focusing on the Wave 3 findings, the proportion who were satisfied varied significantly by certain characteristics, following similar patterns as those identified elsewhere in this chapter:

- Those working in Kinship care (34%), Adoption (32%), Fostering (32%) had higher than average levels of satisfaction with public respect for the sort of work done by social workers while those working in Child in Need/ Child Protection (21%), Assessment (20%) and Duty / first response / front door / MASH (16%) had lower than average satisfaction.

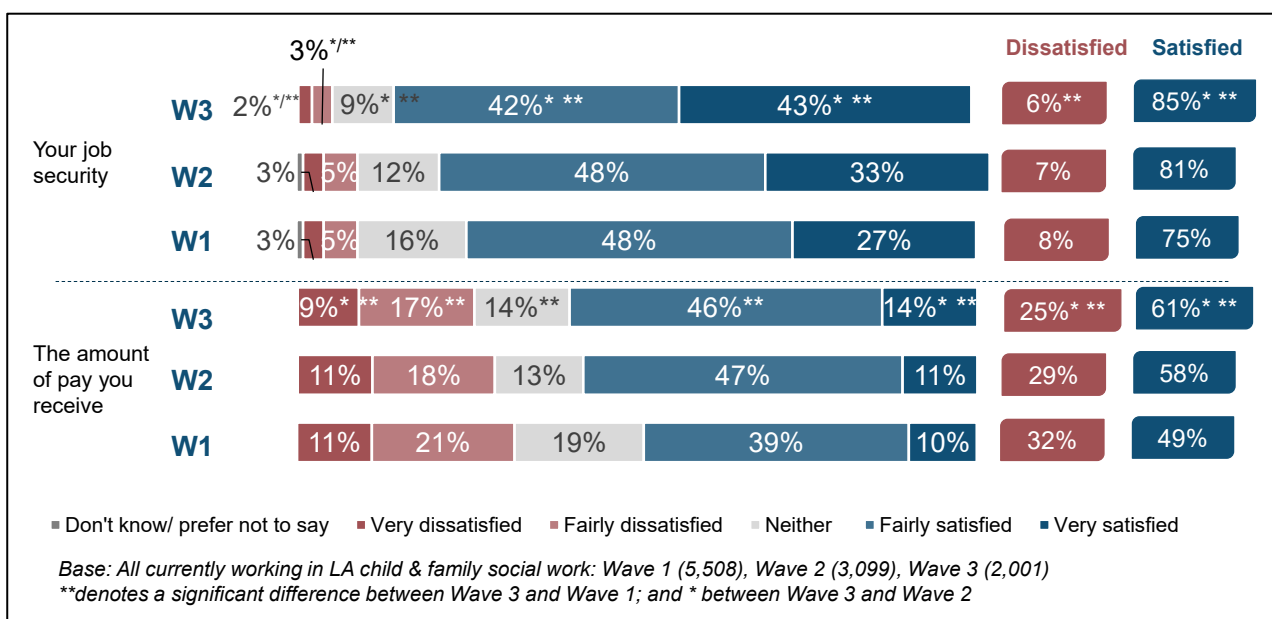
- Those with 2-3 years' experience were less satisfied (19%), as were those with 6-10 years' experience (20%); whilst those with over 10 years' experience were more satisfied (30%).
- Satisfaction with public respect for the work done also increased significantly with age: rising from 8% of under 25s, 19% of 25-34s, 26% of 35-44s, 29% of 45-54s, and 30% of 55-64s.
- Respondents from Black / Black British ethnic groups were much more satisfied with public respect for the work done (43%) compared with 24% of White British social workers, 18% of White Other and 27% of Mixed ethnicity social workers.

Pay and job security

In Wave 3, the vast majority (85%) of child and family social workers were satisfied with their job security, and six in ten (61%) were satisfied with their pay.

In contrast to the downward trends in satisfaction with the work itself, the sense of achievement it brings and opportunity for skills development (reported in the previous sections), satisfaction with job security and pay has increased over time (Figure 5.5). In Wave 3, satisfaction with job security (85%) was significantly higher than in Wave 2 (81%) or Wave 1 (75%). Similarly, satisfaction with pay was 61%, up significantly from 58% in Wave 2 and 49% in Wave 1. The proportion who were dissatisfied with job security had reduced significantly compared with Wave 1 (from eight per cent to six per cent), while the proportion dissatisfied with pay had reduced to 25% in Wave 3 (down from 29% in Wave 2 and 32% in Wave 1).

Figure 5.5 Social workers' satisfaction with job security and the amount of pay they receive (Wave 1 to Wave 3)



Considering just those who took part in the survey across all three waves, the proportion satisfied with job security shows a very similar trend (as observed among all respondents): 76% in Wave 1, up to 80% in Wave 2 and 85% in Wave 3. Wave 3 is significantly higher than the two previous waves. Likewise, the upward trend on satisfaction with pay is apparent longitudinally, among those taking part in all three waves: 50% were satisfied in Wave 1, 59% in Wave 2 and 61% in Wave 3.

Those who had been promoted between Wave 2 and Wave 3 were significantly more satisfied at Wave 3 than those who had *not* had a promotion, on both pay (68% vs. 60%) and job security (94% vs. 83%).

Those who had stayed at the same local authority since Wave 2 were much more satisfied with their job security at Wave 3 than those who had moved local authority (87% vs. 66%). Conversely, those who had moved to a different local authority since Wave 2 were much more satisfied with pay (81%) than those who had stayed at the same local authority (59%).

In Wave 3 satisfaction with job security varied with certain aspects of social workers' role:

- Agency status had a significant bearing, as might be expected given the short-term nature of agency work: 89% of those directly employed by a local authority were satisfied with their job security, compared with 58% of those working for an agency.
- Those working part-time were more satisfied than those working full-time (88% vs. 84%)
- By seniority of the role there were significant variations: practice supervisors were the most satisfied with job security (91%), followed by team managers (90%). Front line practitioners and practice leaders were the least satisfied (82% and 81% respectively).
- Satisfaction with job security varied by local authority Ofsted rating: 86% in 'outstanding' and 87% in 'good' Ofsted-rated LAs but lower in LAs rated as 'requires improvement' (83%) or 'inadequate' (81%). The key differences were in the proportions who were 'very satisfied' which decreased significantly from 50% in 'outstanding' rated LAs to 35% in those rated as 'inadequate'. This is partly due to the higher proportion of agency workers working at inadequate local authorities, who were less satisfied with their job security than those employed directly by local authorities.

In Wave 3, satisfaction with job security also varied significantly with the following demographic characteristics:

- Women were more satisfied with job security than men (87% vs. 75%)

- Those aged 25-34 were more satisfied with job security (88%) than average (85%) but especially compared with 45-54 year olds (82%) and those aged 65 or older (75%)
- White British social workers had above average satisfaction with job security (87%) while Black / Black British social workers had below average satisfaction (75%), linked to their greater likelihood of being in agency roles.

As at previous waves, the characteristics of social workers who were satisfied with their pay differed markedly from those who were satisfied with their job security; indeed, those most satisfied with pay were sometimes least satisfied with job security (e.g. agency workers). In Wave 3 satisfaction with pay varied significantly with the following aspects:

- Agency workers were much more satisfied with their pay (78%) than those who were employed directly by their local authority (58%). One in four (27%) of those employed directly were dissatisfied with their pay compared with just 11% of agency workers.
- Satisfaction with pay increased steadily with increasing seniority (and pay grade): 54% of front line practitioners were satisfied, 60% of practice supervisors, 71% of practice leaders, 69% of team managers and 79% of senior service managers /directors.
- In line with this, those with 2-3 years' or 4-5 years' experience were less satisfied with their pay than average (54% and 52% respectively) whereas those with more than 10 years' experience in the profession were more satisfied (65%).
- Social workers who had a mental or physical health condition were less satisfied with their pay than those who did not (54% vs. 63%).

Key drivers of overall satisfaction

In order to identify the main influences on front line child and family social workers' overall job satisfaction, a key driver analysis was used to determine the variables which contributed most to overall satisfaction scores, which are not always apparent from bivariate analysis. See Appendix 1 for technical details. The analysis was focused on front line social workers as they were less satisfied with their jobs overall compared with other job roles.

The outcome measure the model sought to explain was agreement with the statement: 'Overall, I find my current job satisfying', measured on a 'strongly agree' to 'strongly disagree' scale.

As shown by Figure 5.6 below, the composite wellbeing measure (aggregating scores about feeling stressed, overworked and being asked to fulfil too many roles), was the main driver of overall satisfaction, accounting for 14% of the variance in the model.

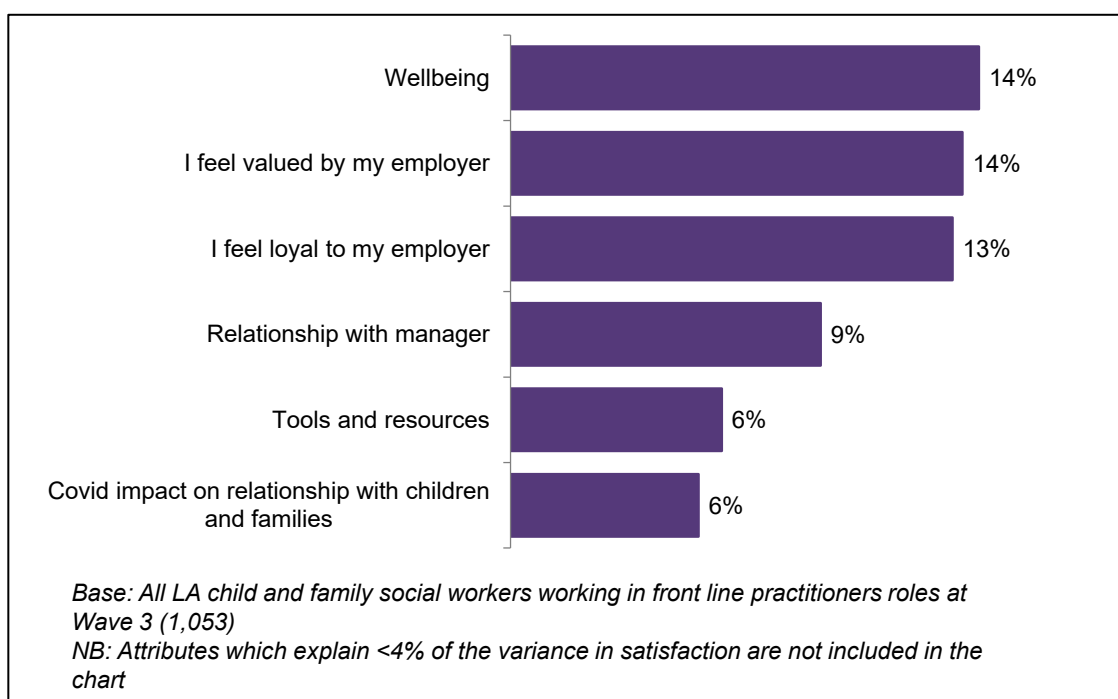
Those reporting negative workplace wellbeing were less likely to be satisfied with their current job.

Marginally less important than wellbeing were feeling loyal to and valued by the employer, accounting for 14% and 13% of the impact on overall satisfaction respectively. These had positive effects on the model, so the more valued and more loyal the social worker felt, the more likely they were to be satisfied with their jobs overall.

Relationship with management was also another key driver of satisfaction, with a composite measure for this, consisting of a number of attitudinal statements about views towards managers, accounting for nine per cent of the variance. Next most important was a composite measure aggregating views on tools and resources at the social workers' disposal (including IT systems), accounting for six per cent of the variance of the model. Both of these had a positive effect on the model, with a more positive relationship with management and more positive views about the resources and working environment driving overall satisfaction.

The sixth most important driver of overall satisfaction was the impact that Covid-19 had had on social workers' relationships with children and families, with those who had thought that these relationships had worsened being less satisfied. This accounted for six per cent of the variance in the model.

Figure 5.6 Key Driver Analysis: main influences on social workers' agreement that 'Overall, I find my current job satisfying'



The model also produces a separate measure which indicates how effective the model is in explaining satisfaction. Similar to the stress model, this model accounts for 40% of the variance in satisfaction scores.

Comparing job satisfaction of those working inside and outside local authority child and family social work

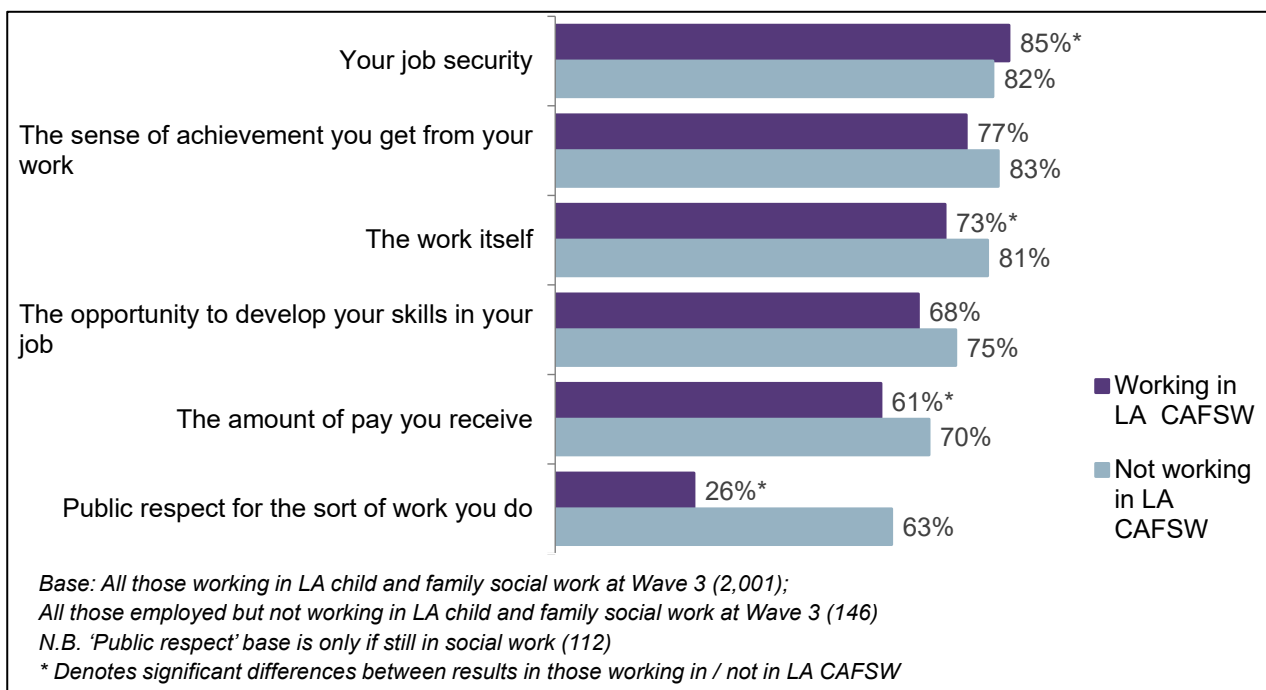
The job satisfaction measures were asked of all participants currently working, irrespective of whether that was inside or outside local authority child and family social work. All those not currently employed in local authority child and family social work, including those working outside of social work altogether and those in other areas of the social work profession, fall into the 'outside local authority child and family social work' category.

In terms of overall satisfaction, 72% of those still employed in local authority child and family social work agreed ("strongly agree" or "agree") with the statement, "Overall, I find my current job satisfying", which was not significantly different from the 77% among those working outside local authority child and family social work. However, those employed in LA child and family social work were significantly less likely to "strongly agree" than those employed outside local authority child and family social work (21% vs. 39%). The difference was due to significantly higher levels of satisfaction among those employed in other areas of social work (43% strongly agree), rather than by those employed in other professions (25% strongly agree). In Wave 2 a similar pattern was apparent.

Figure 5.7 indicates the proportion of participants working inside and outside child and family social work who were satisfied with each aspect of their job.

For four of the six job satisfaction measures, there were significant differences between these two groups of participants. People who had moved out of child and family social work between waves were more satisfied with the work itself in their current job, the pay they receive and the public respect for the work they do. Conversely satisfaction with job security was higher amongst those still working in child and family social work. The pattern of findings was similar to that found in Wave 2.

Figure 5.7 Proportion of participants working inside and outside local authority child and family social work who were satisfied with each aspect of their job (Wave 3)



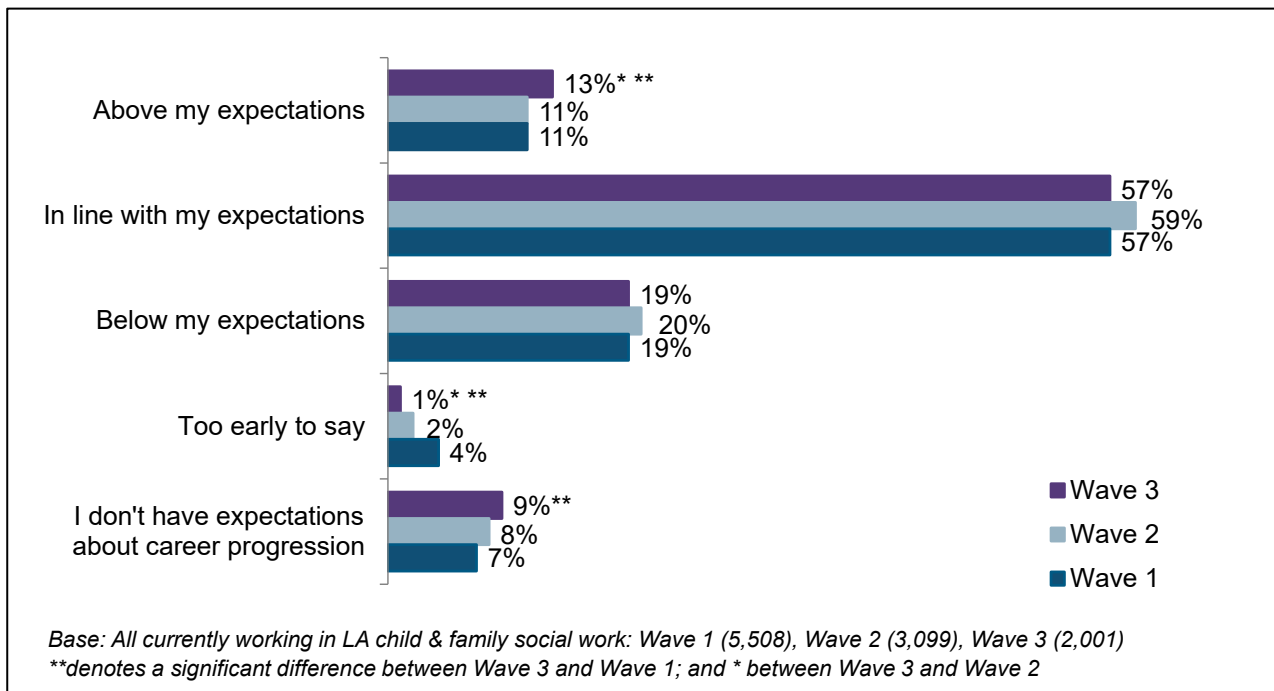
Views about career progression

Figure 5.8 shows that local authority child and family social workers continued to be most likely to feel their career progression was 'in line with their expectations' (57%), with more reporting it was 'below expectations' (19%) than 'above' (13%).

These findings were consistent with previous waves, although encouragingly, there was a small but significant increase in the proportion who thought their career progression was above their expectations at Wave 3 (13% vs. 11% at previous waves).

Focusing just on those who took part in the survey at all three waves, the proportion saying their progression was above their expectations is consistent between Wave 1 and Wave 3 (both 13%), although it does fall to 11% at Wave 2. Further, social workers who had been promoted between Wave 2 and 3 were twice as likely to rate their career progression as 'above their expectations' as those who had not been promoted (25% vs. 12%).

Figure 5.8 Social workers' views on their career progression so far (Wave 1 to Wave 3)



Views on career progression were influenced by whether social workers had undertaken employer-supported CPD in the last 12 months. Social workers who had not received CPD in the last 12 months were more likely to say their career progression was *below* their expectations (27% vs. 18%).

Similarly, those who were in more senior roles were more positive about their career progression. The proportion saying career progression was *above* expectations rose markedly through the ranks from 6% of front line practitioners to 12% of practice supervisors, 17% of practice leaders, 23% of team managers, to 39% of senior managers/directors. The results for front line practitioners, team managers and senior managers were significantly different from the average. One quarter (23%) of front line practitioners regarded their career progression as below expectations.

By length of time in local authority child and family social work, those in the role for 2-3 years were significantly more likely than others to say their career progression was in line with expectations. Those in LA child and family social work for 4-5 years were significantly more likely than others to say their career progression was *below* expectations (28%) – so this appears to be a bit of a pinch point. Whereas those working in LA child and family social work for 6-10 years were significantly more likely than others to say their career progression was *above* expectations (17%).

Those working in certain practice areas were significantly more likely to say that their career progression was *above* their expectations, namely: education (33%), leaving care

(21%), prevention/ early help services (21%), Looked After Children (17%), and Child in Need/Child protection (15%).

Those who reported feeling stressed by their job or having too high a workload were more likely to say that their career progression was below their expectations. For example, 21% who agreed they were stressed said their progress was below expectations, compared with 12% who disagreed they were stressed, and 20% who agreed their workload was too high, compared with 13% who disagreed.

In contrast to Wave 1 and Wave 2, there were no significant differences in social workers' views on career progression at Wave 3 by whether they were employed by the local authority directly versus an agency, or according to the LA Ofsted rating. At previous waves, agency workers and those in LAs with 'inadequate' Ofsted ratings were less positive than others about their career progression.

In terms of views on career progression amongst those in local authority child and family social work, the results varied significantly with the following demographic characteristics:

- Age – younger social workers were more positive. The proportion saying career progression was *above* expectations fell steadily with increasing age, from 24% of under 25 year olds, to 16% of 25-34s, 13% of 35-54s, 9% of 55-64s and 6% of over 65 year olds. The results for 25-34s and 55-64s were significantly different from the average.
- Ethnicity – Black/ Black British social workers were significantly more likely than others to say career progression was *below* expectations (28%). 'White British' respondents were significantly less likely than others to say career progression was *below* their expectations (16%).
- Childcare responsibilities –The proportion who thought their career progression was *below* expectations was significantly higher among those with childcare responsibilities than among those with no childcare responsibilities (20% vs. 16%) and they were less likely to feel career progression had exceeded their expectations (11% vs. 15%).
- Mental or physical health –The proportion who thought their career progression was *below* expectations was significantly higher among those with health conditions than those without (24% vs. 17%). They were also less likely to consider their career progression to be *above* expectations (10% vs. 14%).
- Entry route into social work – those who entered through an undergraduate degree were significantly more likely than those who entered through a postgraduate degree to report their career progression was above their expectations (15% compared with 11%). This suggests those undertaking a postgraduate degree may have higher career expectations than those undertaking an undergraduate degree.

6. Short term career plans and influences on these

An important part of the research is to explore social workers' short-term career plans and to identify the reasons they may consider leaving child and family social work. Understanding the push/pull factors that lead to social workers remaining in their position or wanting to move on will enable a better understanding of how retention can be improved in the sector.

This chapter explores career plans in the next 12 months and factors that influence considerations about leaving or remaining in child and family social work.

The key findings in this chapter are:

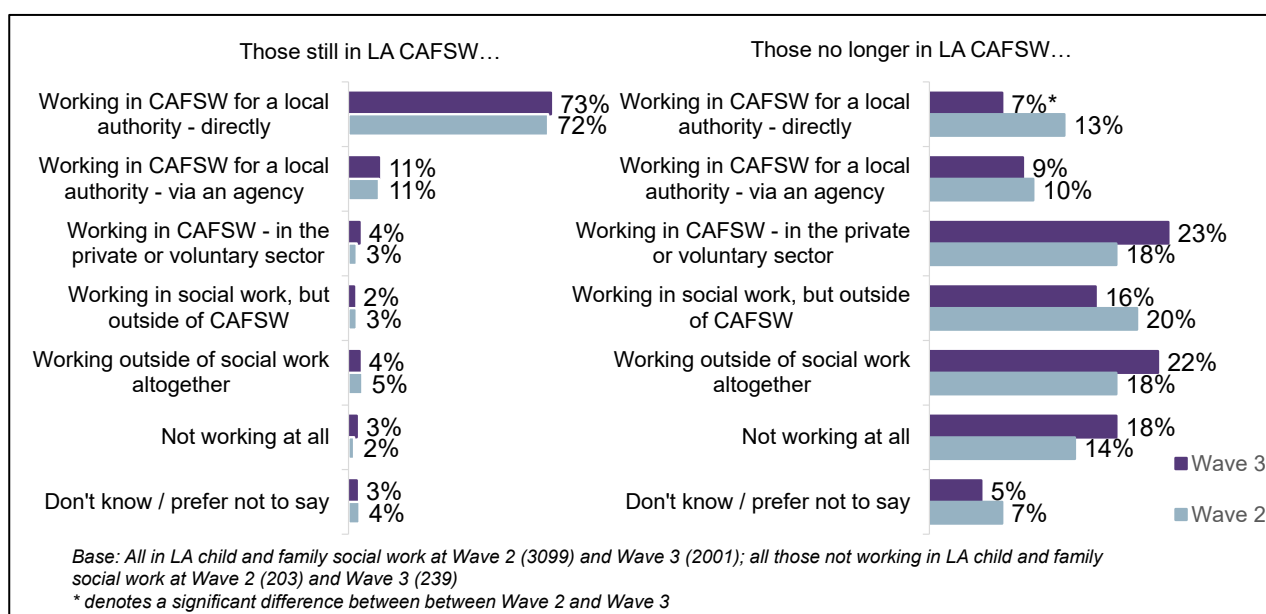
- The majority (84%) of local authority child and family social workers (including agency workers) anticipate remaining in local authority child and family social work in 12 months' time – 73% expect to be employed directly by a local authority and 11% by an agency. Around one in twenty (4%) expect to be working outside of social work altogether. This is consistent with previous waves.
- Amongst those currently employed directly by a local authority, 14% expected that they would not be in local authority child and family social work in 12 months' time, compared with 22% of agency workers.
- Overall, a fifth (20%) of respondents reported that their career plans had been influenced by their experiences of the Covid-19 pandemic.
- The most commonly cited main reason given by those who were considering leaving child and family social work was retirement (20%), followed by dislike of the local authority social work culture (17%) and not making the best use of their skills (12%). In combination, factors related to overwork, such as high caseload, working hours and volume of paperwork, were the most common (22%).
- The primary factor that would encourage child and family social workers who were thinking of leaving the profession to remain was related to workload issues including a more manageable caseload and workload in terms of administration and paperwork (23%), followed by a better working culture (10%).²⁴

²⁴ By 'working culture', social workers were typically referring to the specific working culture at their previous authority, rather than in local authority child and family social work more broadly, and often the culture within their specific teams.

Social workers' career plans in the next 12 months

The survey asked all respondents what they anticipate they will be doing in 12 months' time. As shown in Figure 6.1, of those working in local authority child and family social work in Wave 3 (including agency workers), the majority expected to still be doing so in 12 months' time (84%). Around three-quarters (73%) expected to be working in child and family social work directly for a local authority in 12 months, with one in nine (11%) expecting to be working via an agency. There was no change in these proportions between waves.

Figure 6.1 Anticipated employment situation in 12 months' time (Wave 2 and Wave 3)



Currently in local authority child and family social work

Of the minority who were in local authority child and family social work at Wave 3 (whether employed directly or through an agency) but who thought they would not be in 12 months' time (13%), plans were mixed. Four per cent expected to be in child and family social work in the private or voluntary sector, four per cent working outside of social work altogether, three per cent not working at all (most likely due to retirement or taking a career break), and two per cent in a different area of social work. Those reporting they would not be working at all were mostly over 55 years old (61% were 55-64 and 27% were 65+).

Those employed directly by a local authority (excluding agency workers) typically thought they would still be in the same situation in 12 months' time (82%), while three per cent thought they would be employed by an agency. Of those who did not anticipate being in local authority child and family social work in 12 months' time, anticipated destinations were split equally, with three per cent each saying they would be: working in child and

family social work but not at a local authority; working in a different area of social work; working outside of social work; not working at all (most likely due to retirement or ill health), and; unsure what they will be doing in 12 months' time. Overall (excluding don't knows), 14% of those currently employed by a local authority anticipated that they would not be in 12 months' time and removing the three per cent who thought they would be employed by an agency, 11% thought they would not be in local authority child and family social work at all in 12 months' time.

Of this group (currently employed directly by a local authority, excluding agency workers), front line practitioners were the least likely to expect they would be directly employed by a local authority in 12 months' time (77%), compared with senior staff (88% of those employed as a practice supervisor or above). Front line practitioners were more likely to anticipate they would be working for an agency in 12 months' time (four per cent compared with two per cent of practice supervisors or above). Those who received employer supported CPD within the past 12 months were more likely than those who had not to expect to remain in local authority child and family social work (83% compared with 73%).

The short term career plans of agency workers were more varied. Over half (56%) of those currently at an agency thought they would still be working for one in 12 months' time and one in five (19%) expected they would be employed directly by a local authority; this means 75% of agency workers thought they would still be in local authority child and family social work in 12 months' time, compared with 85% of those directly employed by a local authority. Overall, excluding don't knows, 22% of agency workers thought they would not be working in local authority child and family social work in 12 months' time (compared with 14% of those employed directly). This indicates that agency staff are significantly more likely to plan to leave child and family social work than those employed directly through a local authority.

Not currently in local authority child and family social work

Among those not currently working in local authority child and family social work (including those who left between waves or were not in local authority child and family social work in Waves 1 or 2 either), expectations were more varied. Figure 6.1 shows that nearly four in ten (39%) thought that in 12 months' time they would be working in child and family social work again; 23% in the private or voluntary sector, nine per cent in local authority child and family social work but employed by an agency and seven per cent employed directly by a local authority. The proportion who expected to be back working directly for a local authority in child and family social work has decreased since Wave 2 (when it was 13%). Over one in five (22%) expected to be working outside of social work altogether, 16% expected they would be back in social work, but not child and family social work. Around one in five (18%) did not expect to be working at all.

Impact of Covid-19 on short-term career plans

Overall, one in five (20%) of respondents reported that their career plans had been influenced by their experiences of the Covid-19 pandemic. Of those who currently work in child and family social work, people who were thinking of leaving the profession were more likely to report that their experiences of the Covid-19 pandemic had influenced their career plans (34%, vs 19% of those not considering leaving child and family social work). Those who expected to be employed directly by a local authority in child and family social work in 12 months' time were less likely to report that Covid-19 had influenced their career plans (16%), compared to just under a third (28%) of those who thought they would not be working at all in 12 months' time.

Reasons for considering leaving child and family social work

Of those still working in local authority child and family social work (including agency workers), nine per cent reported that they were considering leaving the child and family social work profession altogether in the next 12 months and this was consistent with previous waves.²⁵ Those who thought they would be working outside child and family social work altogether were asked about their reasoning behind this, and what might encourage them to remain in the sector.

As seen in Figure 6.2, the most commonly mentioned individual reason for considering leaving was dislike of the working culture of the local authority they worked at (33%), followed by 24% who reported they would be retiring. In combination, however, factors related to overwork, such as high caseload and the volume of paperwork (51%) were more common.

When asked to cite the main reason for considering leaving child and family social work, the most commonly reported individual reason was retirement (20%), followed by the dislike of the local authority social work culture (17%) and not making the best use of their skills (12%). Individual factors relating to overwork were cited as the main reason for considering leaving for a minority (only eight per cent mentioned the high caseload, six per cent the working hours, four per cent the amount of paperwork and four per cent said the work was not compatible with family or relationships). When these factors are combined, they show that overwork was the most commonly cited main factor for considering leaving child and family social work (cited by 22% in total).

²⁵ This includes working in local authority child and family social work and working in child and family social work but not at a local authority.

Almost all of those citing retirement were at least 55 years' old: 53% were between 55 and 64 and 45% were aged 65+. Of those considering retiring, 31% said that Covid had influenced these plans, although the base size of those citing retirement here is small (39), so this finding should be interpreted with caution.

Those reporting a physical or mental health condition (13%) were more likely to cite high caseload as the main reason for considering leaving child and family social work (compared with eight per cent overall). Those with caring responsibilities were particularly likely to cite dislike of the culture as their main reason for considering leaving (26%, compared with 17% overall and 11% of those without caring responsibilities).

Figure 6.2. Reasons for considering leaving child and family social work (Wave 3)

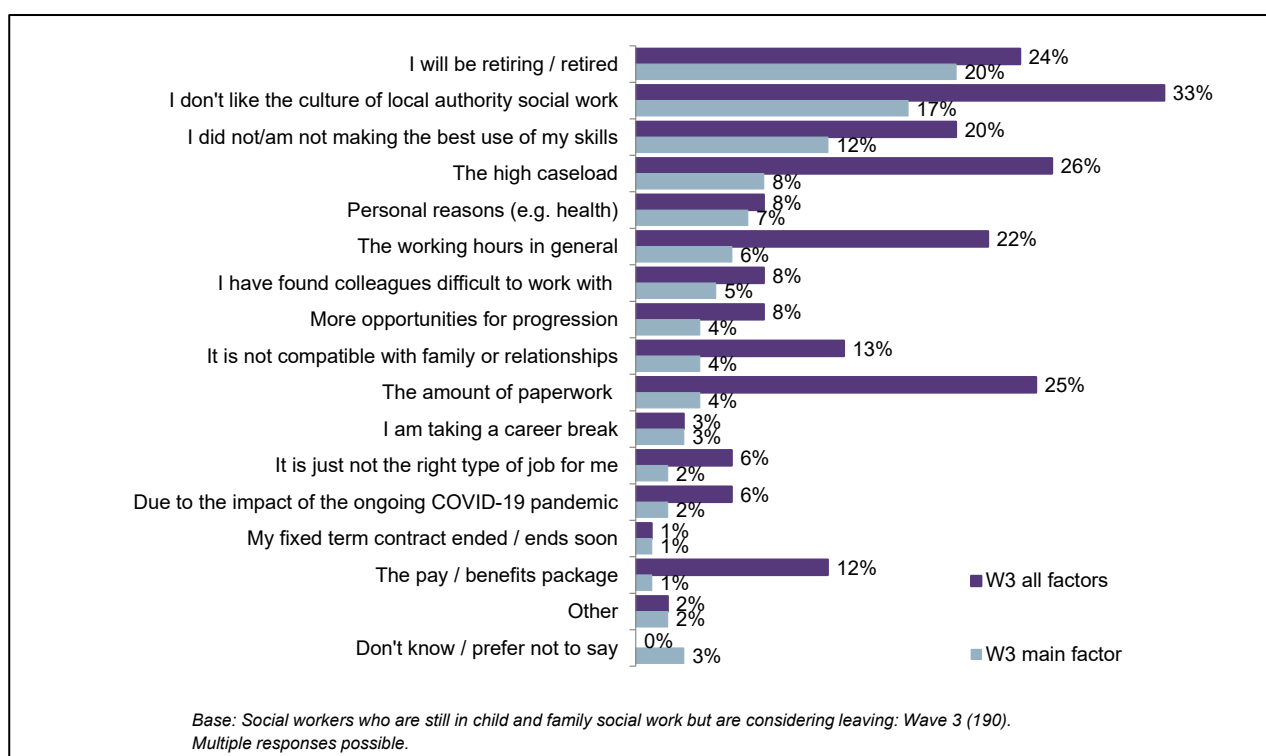
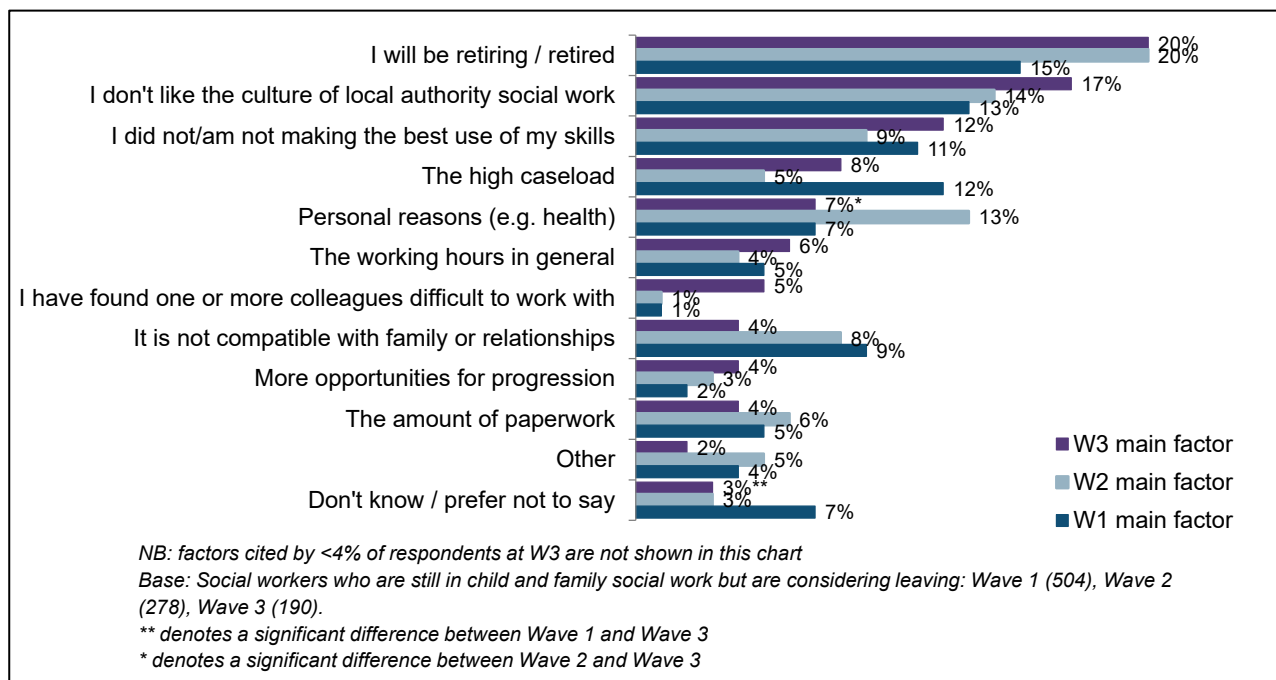


Figure 6.3 shows social workers' main reasons for considering leaving child and family social work, among those still working in the profession who have taken part in all three waves. The most common was because of retirement (20%), which remained consistent with Wave 2, followed by dislike of the working culture at the local authority (mentioned by 17%). Other, less commonly cited reasons have also remained largely consistent with previous waves, although the proportion citing that there are more opportunities for progression outside of child and family social work has increased from two per cent at Wave 1 to six per cent at Wave 3.

Figure 6.3 Main reasons for considering leaving child and family social work (Wave 1 to Wave 3)



The qualitative interviews explored social workers' views of organisational culture and how positive or negative aspects of this could influence decisions about staying in or leaving the profession or moving to a different local authority which was seen to offer a more positive environment.

Key features of working culture which could influence decisions to leave or to stay emerged as: the working environment and how supportive this was; being treated well and feeling valued both by immediate line managers and the organisation as a whole; having autonomy and feeling trusted to make professional judgements; and scope for development and reflective practice.

Social workers who were positive about the culture of their organisation often commented on a congruence between their own commitment to children and families, and the commitment expressed or demonstrated by the organisation, through policies, attitudes, and the qualities of the leaders.

“I feel that people that I work with, whether it's my colleagues, whether it's my manager, or above, are all very committed to the children. It's definitely more than just a job. So, I would say that definitely a lot of hearts, and commitment, and willingness.” (Still in LA CAFSW, front line social worker)

“I do feel [local authority] are really, really, really, really good at trying to improve, you know, their work for children and families. I really do. They're constantly asking for, like, feedback. They're constantly wanting to do more training, to be

progressive, to look at research. It's really good that way." (Still in LA CAFSW, front line social worker)

Some participants defined culture as the way in which staff are treated and valued by an organisation.

"It's an ethos, it's a sense of how you feel working there, it's a sense of how you feel respected and valued and thought about and considered." (Still in LA CAFSW, team manager)

Linked with this, some talked about the importance of working within an organisational culture that supported rather than blamed its employees when things went wrong (although amongst those still in local authority child and family social work at Wave 3, this often seemed to be in a context of high expectations about practice alongside high support):

"I suppose, that's what I'm doing in my job sometimes, I have to take risks and I have to feel that if it does go wrong, that is not going to be something that comes back on me in a really negative way." (Still in LA CAFSW, team manager)

Linked to this, was the importance of openness, challenge and professional autonomy:

"I would describe the culture as open, allowing people to challenge, not defensive. I would describe it as professionals feeling more confident in their decision-making, in their views without that being squashed really. I would describe it as professionals being eager to develop and to want to learn and also if they've got interests, of being flourished and nurtured to do that really, so in relation to their own individual interests." (No longer in LA CAFSW, front line social worker)

For some, team culture rather than organisational culture was more significant in their day to day experience. Team culture was not always reflective of the organisation as a whole (in either a positive or negative sense):

"I would say it really varies from team to team. I think that you can build up good cultures within a team, sort of, setting when there's recognition of that but I think generally the culture of the organisation is that social workers are quite disposable, I think there's people coming and going all the time, there's not really much recognition of that. It's just the norm that social workers are going off sick all the time, even though that shouldn't be the norm." (No longer in LA CAFSW, front line social worker)

The converse of these positives was a more 'negative' culture, which social workers who were leaving their jobs in the qualitative interviews characterised as being related to a very top-down approach from leadership and management (partly as a response to pressures caused by Covid-19), and a sense of always being under scrutiny:

“I feel they are waiting for... their opportunity to report me to Social Work England... So, I don't feel safe. I work but I am constantly looking over my shoulder and constantly worried about what I say.” (No longer in LA CAFSW, front line social worker)

- “We switched from a more collaborative, transparent approach and accessible approach into a more chain of command sort of approach.” (No longer in LA CAFSW, team manager)

Potential influences on retention

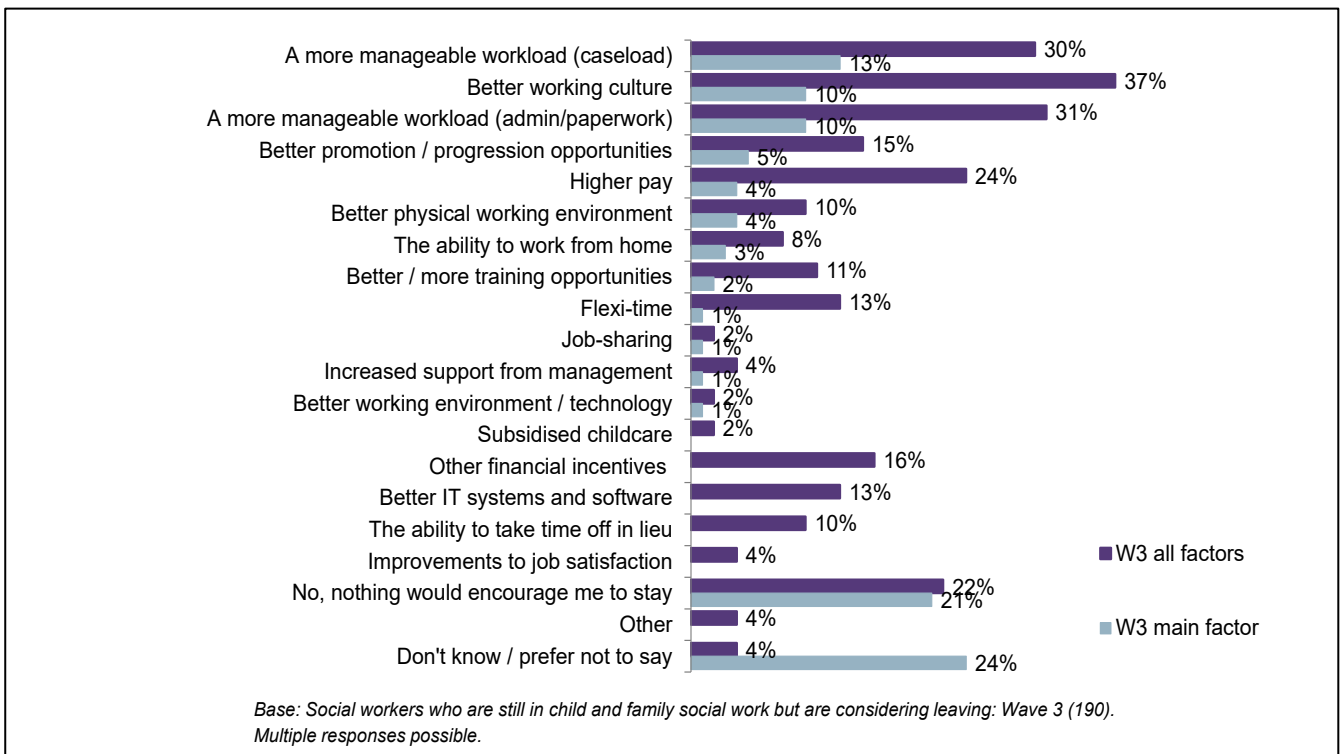
As well as factors that had led child and family social workers to consider leaving the profession, those thinking of leaving were also asked what would encourage them to stay in child and family social work.

As shown in Figure 6.4, in line with the factors that made social workers consider leaving, when asked to cite changes that would persuade them to stay, a better working culture was the most common (37%). Around a third reported a more manageable workload in terms of administration and paperwork (31%) or a more manageable caseload (30%) and a quarter (24%) reported higher pay. Other factors commonly mentioned but not cited as the main factor were: other financial incentives (16%), improvements to IT systems and software (13%) and the ability to take time off in lieu (10%).

When asked to cite the single main factor that would encourage them to remain in child and family social work, a more manageable caseload was the most commonly cited reason (13%), followed by a better working culture and a more manageable workload in terms of administration and paperwork (both at 10%) and better promotion/ progression opportunities at five per cent.

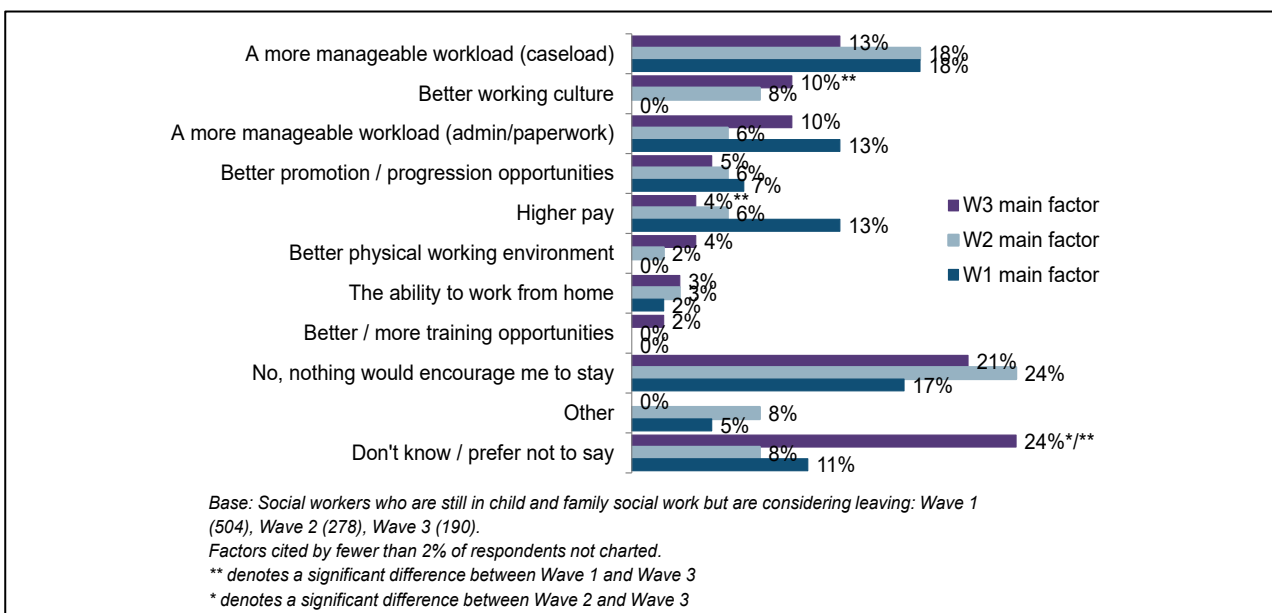
Of those who reported they were considering leaving child and family social work, those who have spent ten or more years in the profession were significantly less likely to report a more manageable caseload as the main factor that would encourage them to remain in social work (6% vs 13% overall) and more likely to report that nothing would encourage them to stay (27% vs. 21% overall), most likely due to retirement. Combining workload related factors (a more manageable caseload and a more manageable workload in terms of paperwork), we see that 23% cited factors relating to overwork.

Figure 6.4 All and main factors that would encourage social workers thinking of leaving to remain in child and family social work (Wave 3)



As seen in Figure 6.5, the importance of a more manageable caseload as a factor to encourage social workers to remain in the profession has decreased (falling from 18% in both Waves 1 and 2, to 13% in Wave 3). Compared with Wave 1, higher pay has become less important as a factor that would encourage people to stay, and a better working culture has become more important.

Figure 6.5 Main factor that would encourage social workers thinking of leaving to remain (Wave 1 to Wave 3)



7. Reasons for leaving and potential influences on coming back

This chapter reports on the reasons why child and family social workers leave the profession (excluding retirement). The chapter explores their perceived likelihood of returning to child and family social work in the next five years, along with potential factors that might encourage them to return to the profession.

The key findings in this chapter are:

- Among people still active in the labour market, the most common reason for leaving child and family social work, cited by three in ten (30%), was that they did not like the working culture at the local authority where they had worked. One in ten cited personal reasons e.g. health, or more suitable opportunities/opportunities for progression in related fields.
- The majority of those who had left child and family social work had taken the decision to leave the profession permanently and only a minority were intending to come back. One quarter (24%) of these individuals thought it was likely they would return to the profession within five years whilst seven in ten (70%) thought it was not likely.
- When those who had left child and family social work were asked what might encourage them to return to the profession, one quarter (25%) considered that 'nothing' would. One in five (19%) identified a more manageable workload in terms of caseload as the main factor that might encourage them back, while one in six (16%) cited a better working culture.

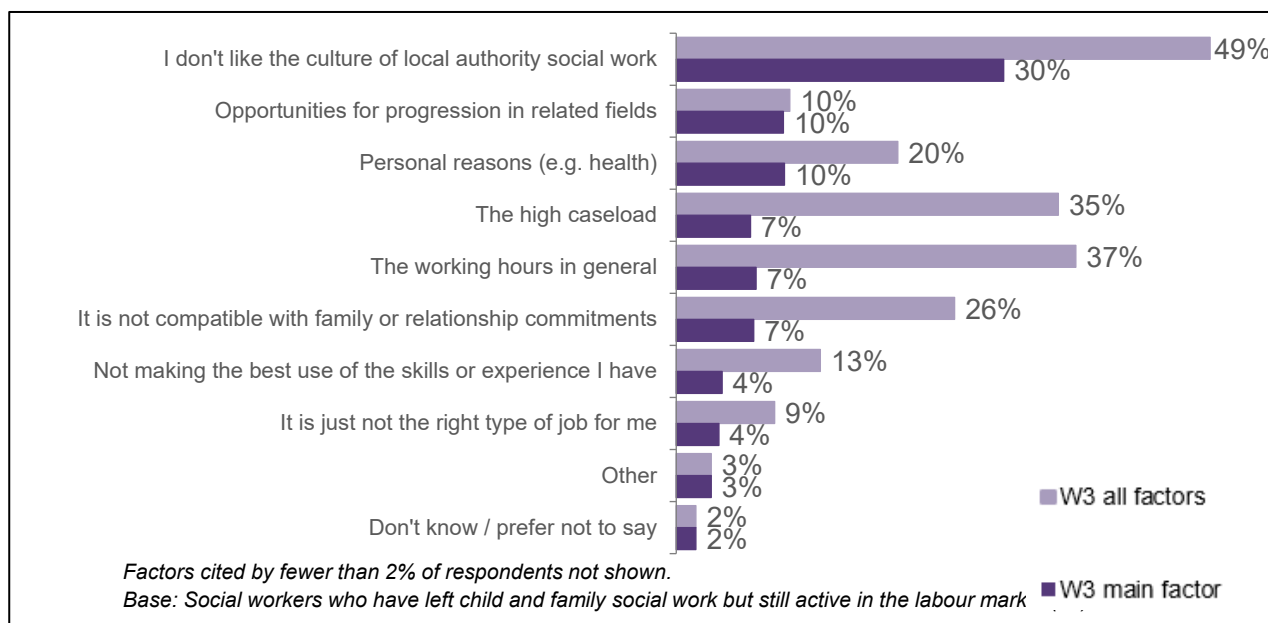
Reasons for leaving

The 94 respondents who had left the child and family social work profession but were still active in the labour market were asked their reasons for leaving and their one main reason (Figure 7.1). Their most common response, cited by three in ten (30%) was that they did not like the culture of local authority social work – this was significantly higher than Wave 2 (11%). One in ten cited personal reasons e.g. health, or more suitable opportunities/opportunities for progression in related fields. A range of other reasons were mentioned including difficult relationships with colleagues, working hours, incompatibility with family or personal relationship commitments and high caseloads.

Interestingly, workload-related factors 'the high caseload', 'the working hours in general' and 'it is not compatible with family or relationship commitments' were each mentioned as a contributing factor by over a quarter of these respondents (35%, 37% and 26%), but were each only cited as the main factor for leaving by 7%. When combining these three

into a single 'workload-related factors' code, this ranks as the second most commonly cited reason, cited by 21%.

Figure 7.1 Reasons for having left child and family social work (all reasons and main reason) (Wave 3)



Those with caring responsibilities were more likely to report that 'it is not compatible with family or relationship commitments' as their main factor for leaving: 13%, compared with 2% of those without caring responsibilities.

New job role

Of those who had left child and family social work but were still active in the labour market, the majority had moved into other social work roles, such as adult social work. Of the small number (34 respondents) who had left social work altogether, but were still active in the labour market, nine were in roles related to social work (such as in education or health) whilst 25 were in roles not related to social work.

These 34 people who had left the social work profession altogether reported similar levels of overall job satisfaction to those remaining in child and family social work (76% compared with 72%). However, people who had left social work altogether were significantly more likely to 'strongly agree' that they found their new job satisfying (38% vs. 21% of those who remained in child and family social work).

Those who were working but no longer employed in local authority child and family social work were asked how often they work over and above their contracted hours in their current job. They were significantly less likely to be working more than their contracted hours. Only 11% said they did so all the time (compared with 39% of those who were still working in child and family social work), 19% did so most weeks (compared with 36%),

47% occasionally (compared with 22%) and 15% said they never worked over their contracted hours (compared with just 3% of child and family social workers). This pattern is consistent with that found among the equivalent group who had left local authority child and family social work at Wave 2.

Potential influences on social workers to return to the profession

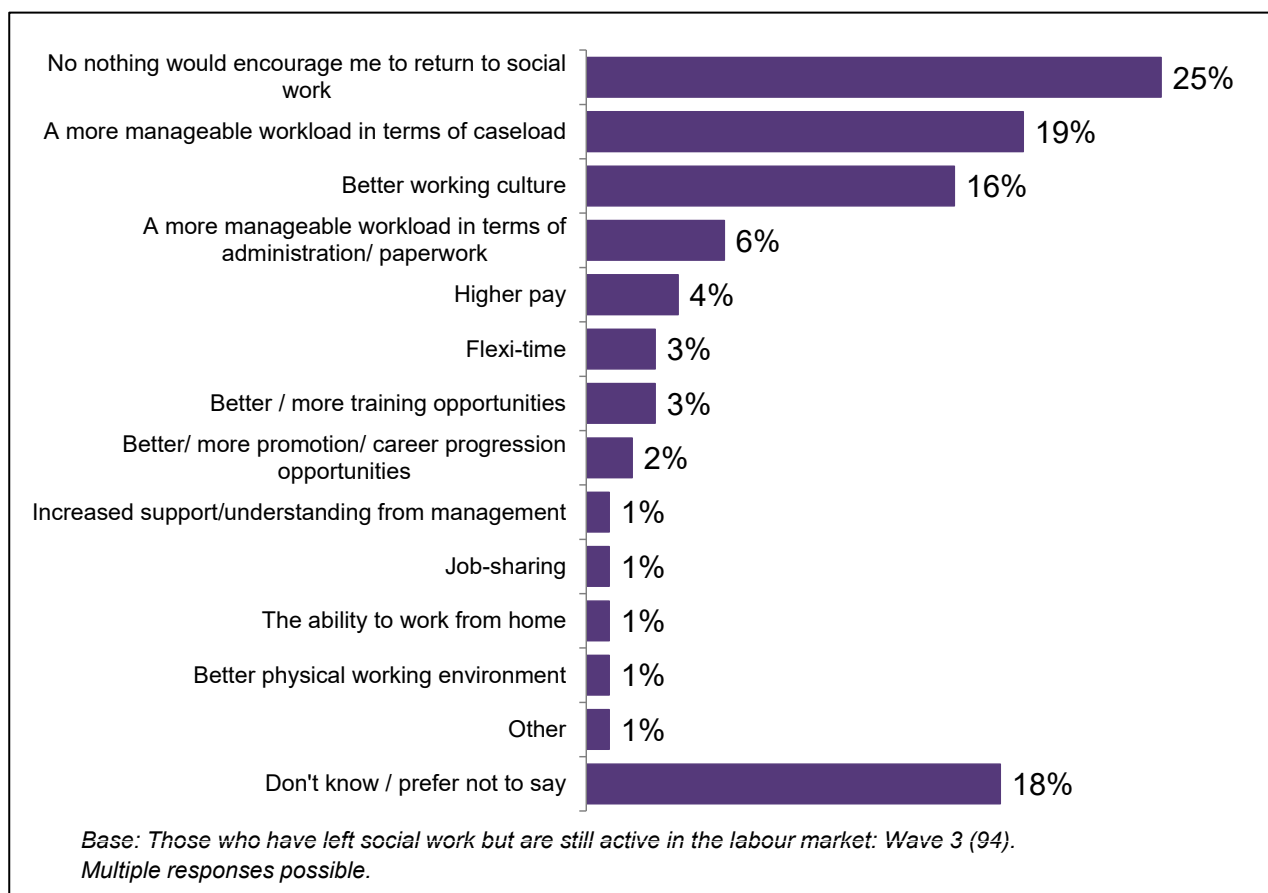
In Wave 3, the 94 respondents who had left the child and family social work profession but were still active in the labour market were asked how likely they would be to return to child and family social work in the next five years. A quarter (24%) of these individuals thought it was likely they would return to the profession within five years (9% very and 15% fairly likely), whilst seven in ten (70%) thought it was not likely (35% not very likely and 35% not at all). So, the majority of them had taken the decision to leave the profession permanently and only a minority were intending to come back.

There were some significant variations according to people's personal circumstances:

- Those with childcare responsibilities thought it more likely they would return to child and family social work within five years (32% likely) than those with without such responsibilities (17% likely).
- Those whose career plans had been influenced by Covid-19 thought it was more likely they would return to child and family social work within five years (56% likely) than those whose plans had not been influenced (17% likely). The suggestion here is that Covid has caused a temporary change of career direction for some people but once the pandemic is over they would plan to get back into social work.

The 94 respondents who were no longer in child and family social work profession but were still active in the labour market were asked whether there was anything that might encourage them to return to child and family social work in future. If they cited multiple reasons, they were then asked which was the one main one (Figure 7.2). The most common response, given by a quarter (25%), was that actually 'nothing' would encourage them back. One in five (19%) said a more manageable workload in terms of caseload and one in six (16%) said a better working culture. The next most popular factors were a more manageable workload in terms of administration/paperwork (6%) or higher pay (4%). Almost one in five (18%) did not know or declined to comment.

Figure 7.2 Main factor that might encourage those who had left child and family social work to return in the future (Wave 3)



The themes raised here are broadly consistent with the main stressors identified by people working in local authority child and family social work who felt stressed by their job (see Chapter 3): too much paperwork, too many cases, and dislike of the working culture/ practices.

8. Assessed and Supported Year in Employment (ASYE): new entrants

The Assessed and Supported Year in Employment (ASYE) was introduced in 2012 as a way to better support newly qualified social workers into the profession. Across England around 2,800 people start the ASYE in child and family social work each year. In Wave 2 of this research, a separate survey was carried out with social workers who started their ASYE between October 2018 and June 2019. In Wave 3, this survey was repeated with a fresh sample who started their ASYE between September 2019 and September 2020. In this chapter the views of the Wave 3 ASYE participants are reported, with comparisons to ASYEs at Wave 2 and Wave 1 where appropriate. It is worth noting that this cohort were completing at least a portion of their ASYE during the COVID-19 pandemic, which may have influenced their experiences and therefore survey responses.

Profile of ASYE participants

This section examines the demographic profile of participating ASYE social workers, looking specifically at gender; age; ethnicity; disability; and caring responsibilities.

Gender and age

Consistent with previous waves, the majority of social workers on their ASYE who participated in the survey were female (85%), with only a minority (14%) of male respondents and one per cent who preferred not to say. This is closely aligned with the overall population figures for child and family social workers (86% female and 14% male).²⁶

Just under half (45%) of the Wave 3 ASYE cohort were aged between 25-34 at the time of completing the survey, which was not significantly different from Wave 2 (51%) or Wave 1 (47%). One fifth (21%) were aged between 35-44, while a smaller proportion were either younger than 25 (17%) or aged 45 or older (17%).

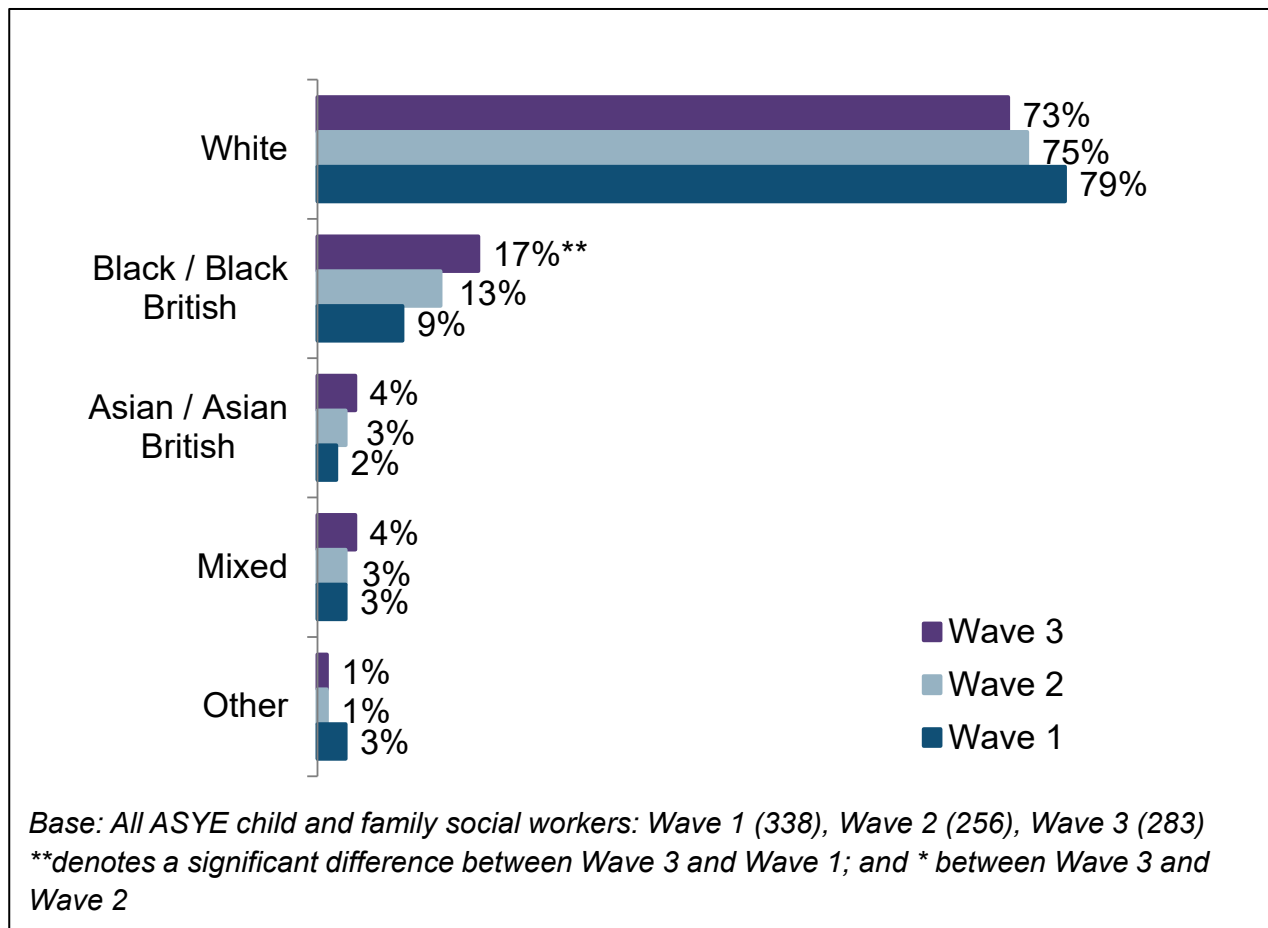
Ethnicity

Nearly three-quarters of social workers on their ASYE who took part in the Wave 3 survey were White (73%), and one in six were Black/Black British (17%). Very few respondents were Asian/Asian British or of Mixed ethnic background, both at four per

²⁶ [Children's social work workforce data 2020](#)

cent. The increase in the proportion of Black ASYE respondents from 9% in Wave 1 to 17% in Wave 3 is statistically significant (Figure 8.1).

Figure 8.1 Ethnicity of ASYE child and family social workers who participated in the survey (Wave 1 to Wave 3)



Disability or long-term health condition

In Wave 3, a small proportion (18%) of ASYE social workers reported that they had a disability or long-term physical or mental health condition (defined as one that had lasted 12 months or more); over three quarters (79%) reported that they did not have such a condition. This is consistent with the proportion of ASYE social workers with a physical or mental health condition at previous waves (15% in Wave 2 and Wave 1).

Caring responsibilities

Over four in ten (44%) of ASYE social workers who took part in the Wave 3 survey had some form of caring or childcare responsibilities. Most commonly, these social workers cared for school-aged children (33%), followed by other family members or friends (12%),

pre-school aged children (8%) and children with a disability (3%). This pattern was consistent with ASYEs at previous waves.

ASYE social workers aged between 45-54 years were the most likely to report having caring responsibilities (84%), closely followed by those aged 35-44 years (81%).

Entry routes into local authority child and family social work

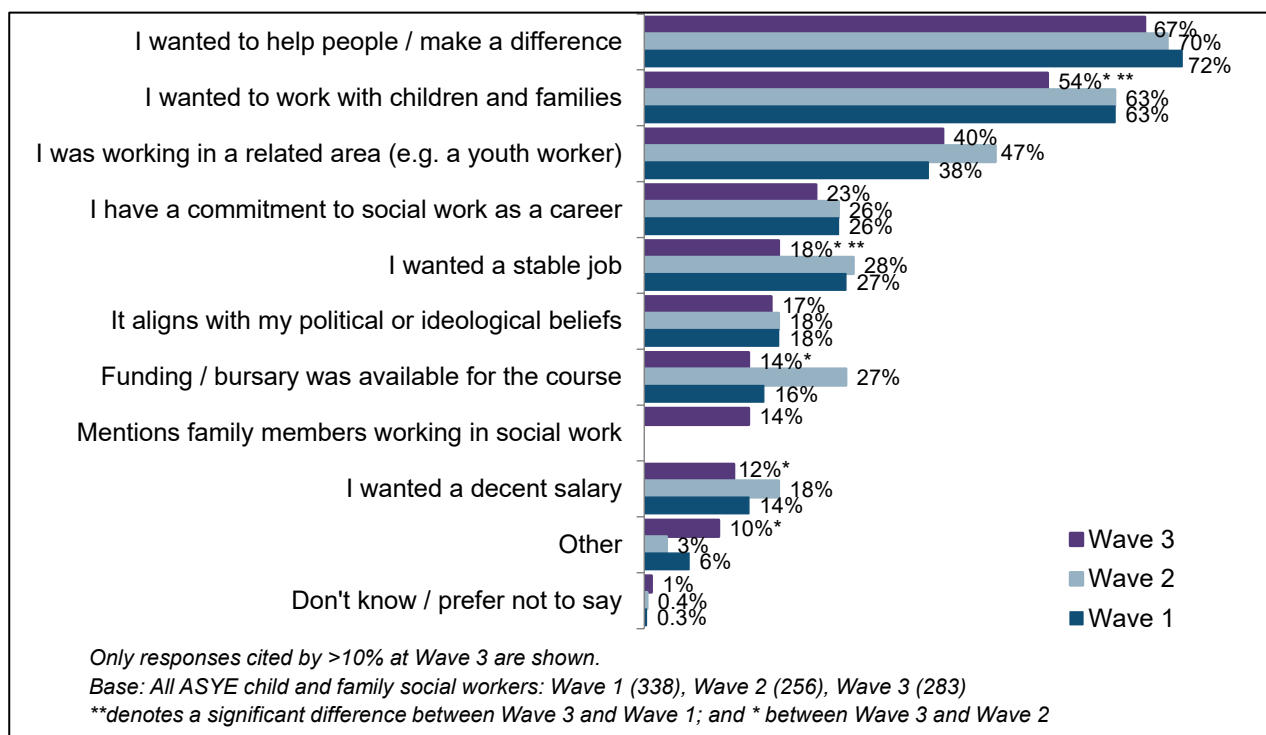
An important part of the research was to explore what attracted people to pursue a career in child and family social work. This section explores:

- motivations for becoming a child and family social worker among the latest ASYE cohort;
- qualification entry routes into the profession and their perceived effectiveness in terms of how well-prepared people felt for the role, and;
- whether ASYE social workers came straight into the profession after qualifying.

Motivations for becoming a social worker

ASYE social workers were asked to cite all the reasons they had for wanting to embark on a career in social work, followed by their main motivation. As shown in Figure 8.2, the most common reasons for embarking on a career in social work were wanting to help people/ make a difference (67%), wanting to work with children and families (54%), and working in a related area already (40%). These reasons were the top three at previous waves too; although significantly fewer mentioned wanting to work with children and families at Wave 3.

Figure 8.2 Reasons for embarking on a career in social work among new ASYEs (Wave 1 to Wave 3)



Job stability was mentioned less frequently than at previous waves; and funding/bursary being available for the course and desire for a decent salary were mentioned significantly less than at Wave 2.

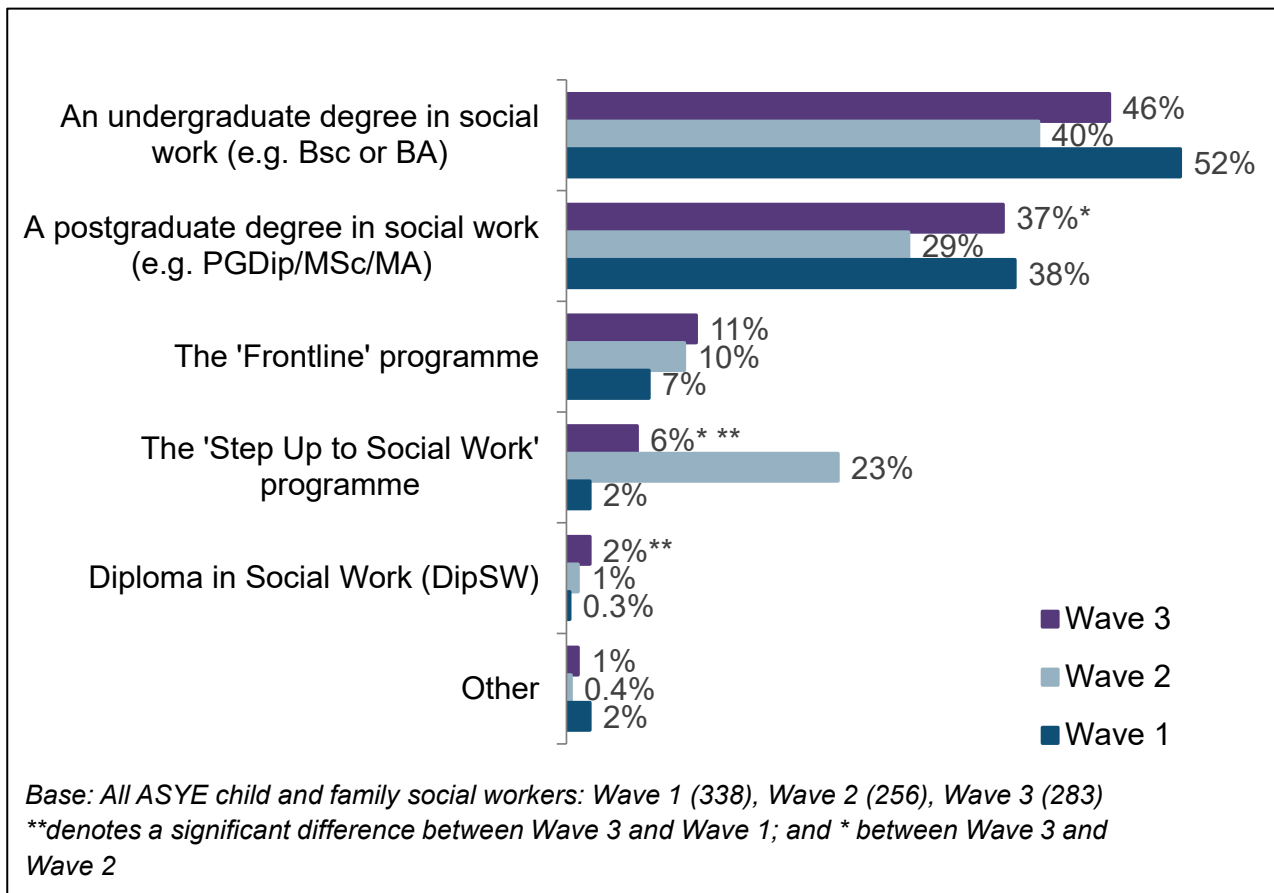
Qualification routes into the profession

All ASYE social workers were asked about their entry qualifications i.e. the qualification(s) that first enabled them to register as a social worker (multiple responses were possible). There are a number of ways through which people can become a qualified social worker.

As shown in Figure 8.3, the most common entry route into child and family social work at Wave 3 was through a degree in social work at either undergraduate (46%) or a postgraduate (37%) level. One in ten (11%) entered via the Frontline programme and 6% via the ‘Step up to Social Work’ programme.

The distribution of entry routes at Wave 3 was more similar to Wave 1 than Wave 2. At Wave 2, nearly a quarter (23%) had entered through the ‘Step Up to Social Work’ programme, which was significantly higher than in Wave 3 and Wave 1. This reflects the structure of the Step Up programme which takes new cohorts every two years.

Figure 8.3 Entry route into child and family social work among new ASYEs (Wave 1 to Wave 3)



For Wave 3 ASYE social workers who entered the social work profession through an undergraduate degree, 25% had achieved a first class degree, 51% a 2:1, 18% a 2:2 and 3% a 3rd. Overall, they had slightly higher attainment than in Wave 2, when 25% had a 1st but significantly fewer had a 2:1 (36%) and significantly more had a 2:2 (30%).

Of those who entered the profession with a postgraduate degree in social work, a larger difference can be seen across classifications achieved. The most common classification achieved was a Merit, with more than a third (46%) achieving this. Almost one in ten (9%) gained the highest classification, a Distinction; with 17% of respondents gaining a Pass. A further 20% said they received the equivalent of a 2:1. This distribution of postgraduate grades was consistent with Wave 2.

Over half (54%) of Wave 3 ASYEs entered the profession having competed an undergraduate degree in a different subject prior to their qualification in social work. This was not significantly different from previous waves. A whole range of different undergraduate degrees were studied by the Wave 3 ASYEs who did not study a social work first degree – the most common were Applied Criminology (9%), Psychology (9%) and Sociology (8%) but no single subject dominated.

Wave 3 ASYEs were also asked the institution they were registered at for their first social work qualification. Institutions were then code into 'high', 'medium' and 'low' UCAS tariff based on the ranking of the institution. The UCAS tariff is a measure of prior attainment which is used in the university admissions process and is an indicator of the selectivity of an institution. It should be noted that tariffs can change over time: this analysis was based on current rankings only, even if the social worker attended the institution several years ago. ASYEs who responded to the survey most commonly attended low tariff (45%) or medium tariff (28%) institutions; two in ten (20%) attended a 'high' tariff institution.

Entry route also differed by UCAS tariff level of the institution where Wave 3 ASYEs studied. Those who studied at an institution with a 'high' tariff ranking were more likely to have taken a postgraduate degree qualification (58% compared with 35% of those at 'medium' tariff and 31% of those at 'low' tariff institutions). On the other hand, ASYEs who entered the profession through an undergraduate degree qualification were most likely to have attended an institution with a 'medium' (53%) tariff ranking compared with 28% on average.

Views on the effectiveness of different qualification routes

New ASYE social workers were asked their views on how well they thought their qualification had prepared them for a career in social work in general, and specifically for working in child and family social work. As seen in Figure 8.4, ASYE social workers typically felt well-prepared for a career in social work (81%), although slightly fewer (78%) reported they felt well-prepared for a career in child and family social work specifically.

The proportion who felt 'very well' prepared for a career in social work in Wave 3 (35%) was significantly higher than in Wave 2 or Wave 1 (24%). The proportion who felt 'very well' prepared for a career in child and family social work in particular has also increased significantly since Wave 1 (from 24% to 34%).

Figure 8.4 ASYE child and family social workers' views on how well they felt their entry route prepared them for social work (Wave 1 to Wave 3)

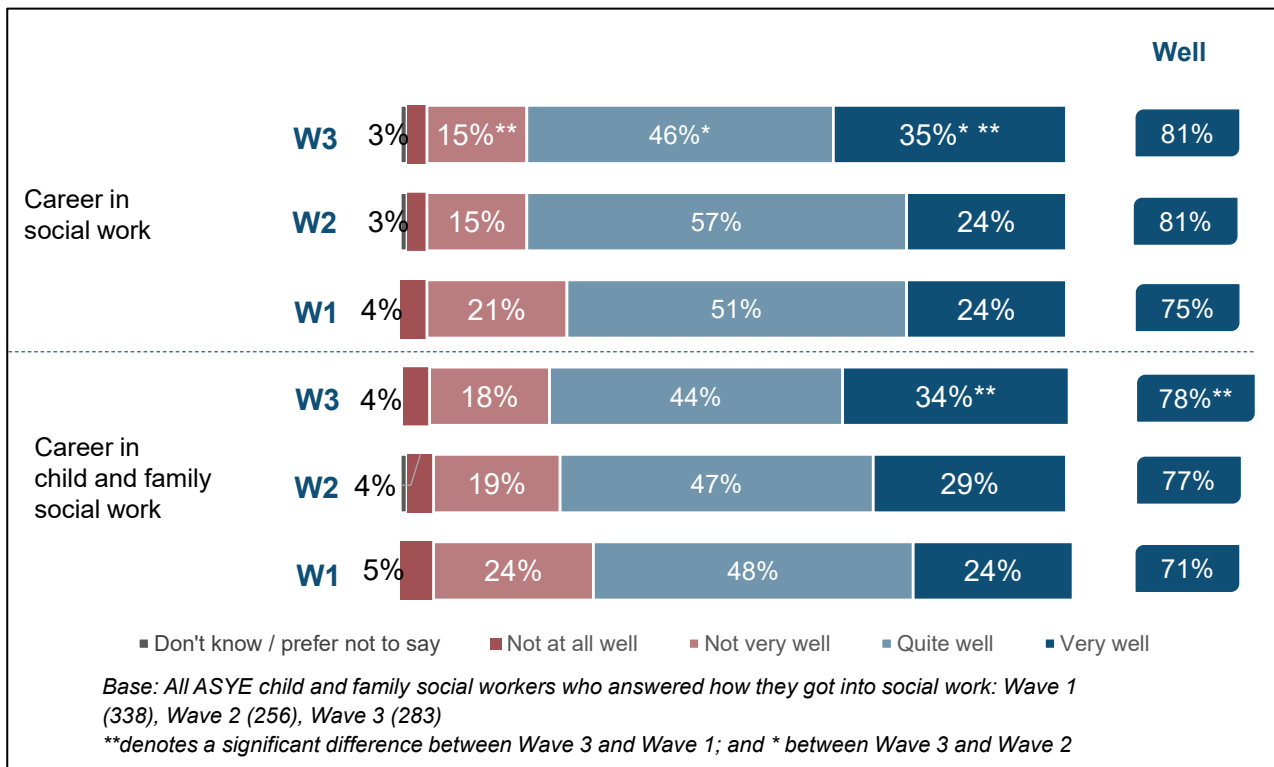
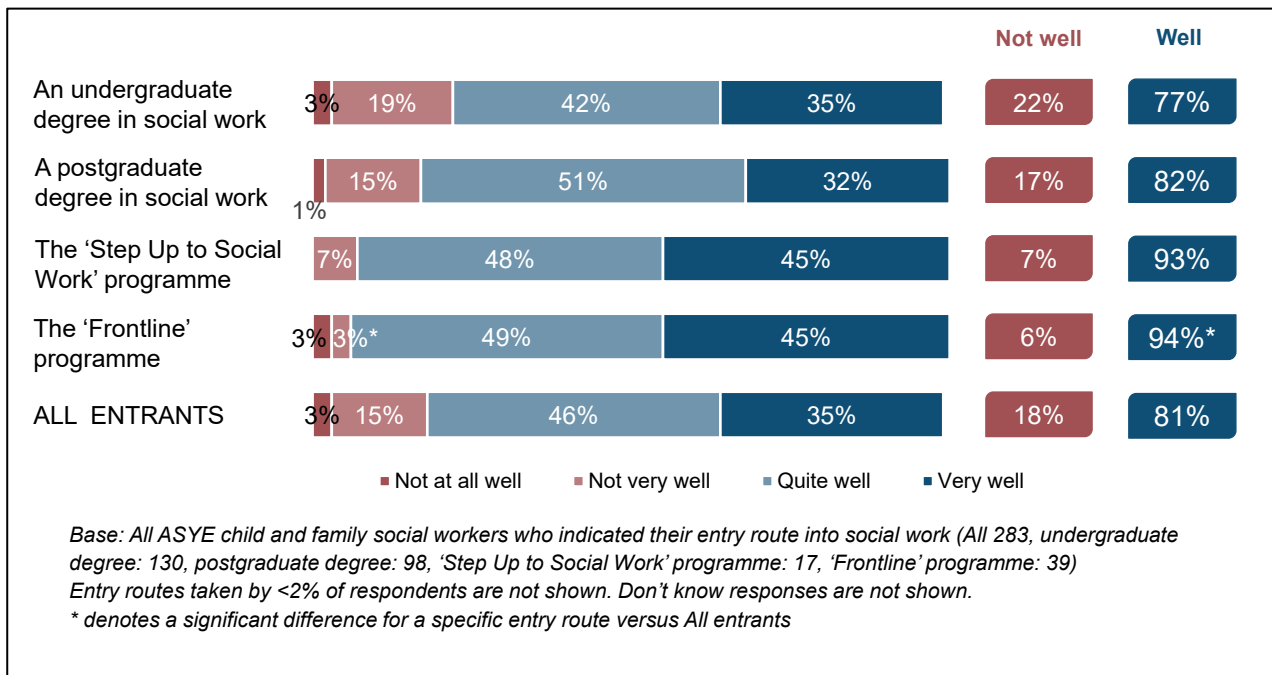


Figure 8.5 shows how well prepared Wave 3 ASYEs felt for a career in social work, by their entry route. While, at an overall level the majority of those who qualified with an undergraduate degree in social work (77%) felt well-prepared for a career in social work, they were the most likely to report they felt not well-prepared (22%). Those who qualified with a postgraduate degree felt slightly more well-prepared (82%), rising to 93% for the ‘Step up to Social Work’ programme and 94% for the Frontline programme. Due to the small number of respondents in each entry route these variations were not statistically significant apart from for the Frontline programme. The findings at Wave 3 were consistent with those at Wave 1 and Wave 2, across all entrants and by entry route.

Figure 8.5 ASYE child and family social workers' views on how well they felt their entry route prepared them for social work, by entry route (Wave 3)



Current employment and career history

This section describes ASYE social workers' professional career to date, in terms of the nature of their work.

After qualifying as a registered social worker, nine in ten (90%) of Wave 3 ASYEs had come straight into child and family social work. This was significantly lower than Wave 1 (95%). ASYEs at Wave 3 mainly worked with both children and families/carers (90%); 8% worked with children only and 2% with families/carers only. Wave 2 and Wave 1 results were almost identical.

In Wave 3, the main area that ASYEs worked in was Child in Need/Child Protection (71%), followed by Assessment (26%) and Looked after Children (25%). Other practice areas were each mentioned by 10% or fewer. The rank order of responses was broadly consistent with earlier waves.

Workplace wellbeing

This section explores ASYE wellbeing by considering working hours and caseloads, reported stress levels and workload demands, views on the extent of managerial support for work-life balance, and access to flexible working arrangements.

Contracted and actual working hours

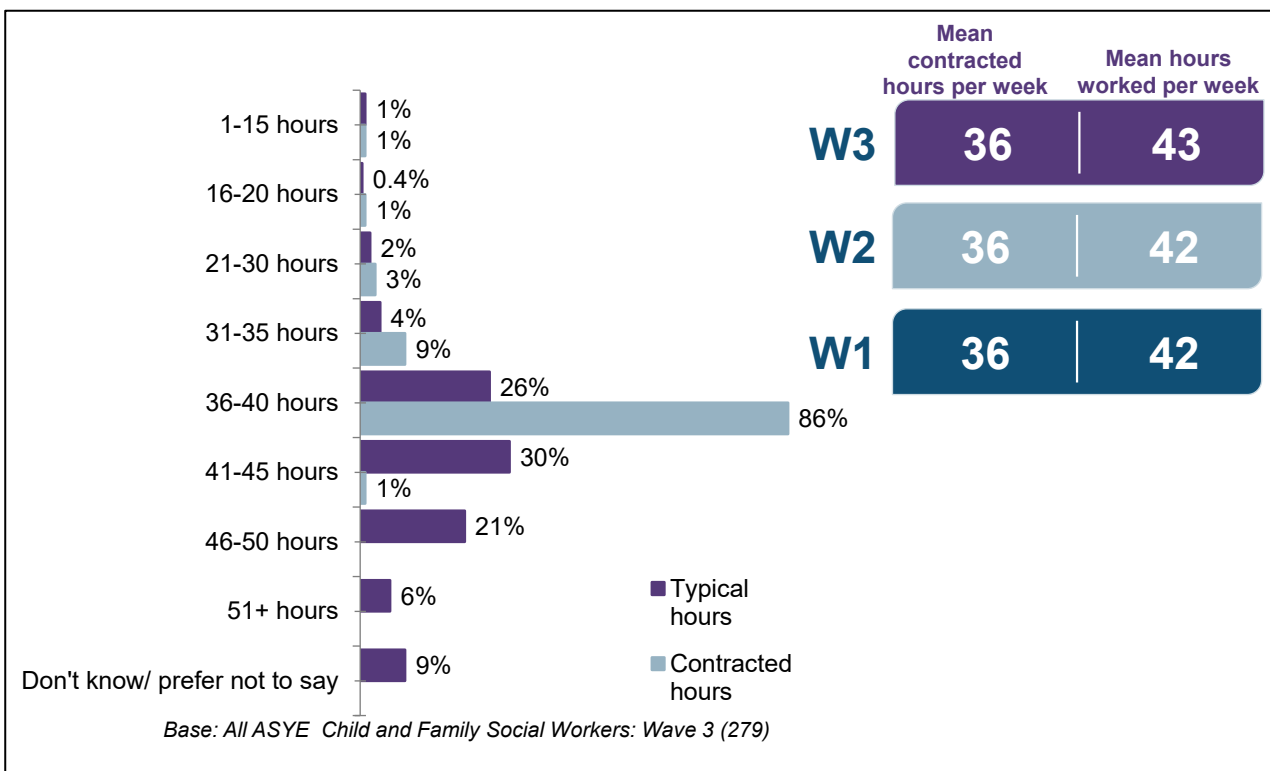
ASYE social workers were asked how many hours they were contracted to work per week. Throughout this section full-time work is considered to be more than 35 hours and part-time as any range between 1-35 hours, recognising that 31-35 hours is on the cusp of full-time work.

The large majority of Wave 3 ASYE social workers were contracted to work full-time, with 86% contracted to work 36-40 hours per week. A minority were contracted to work part-time: nine per cent for 31-35 hours, and three per cent for 21-30 hours. Contracted hours were consistent with previous waves.

On average, ASYE social workers were contracted to work 36 hours per week, but on average worked 42 hours per week, around an extra six hours per week beyond their contracted hours. This was consistent with Waves 1 and 2.

Figure 8.6 illustrates the stark contrast between contracted hours and actual hours worked in a typical week: over half (57%) of ASYE social workers stated that they worked for 41 hours or more (30% 41-45 hours, 21% 46-50 hours, and six per cent 51+ hours). A similar variation between contracted and actual hours was apparent at previous waves. Those working in child protection were more likely than average to work 41-45 hours per week (34% did, compared with 30% on average).

Figure 8.6 ASYE actual hours worked in a typical week versus contracted hours (Wave 1 to Wave 3)

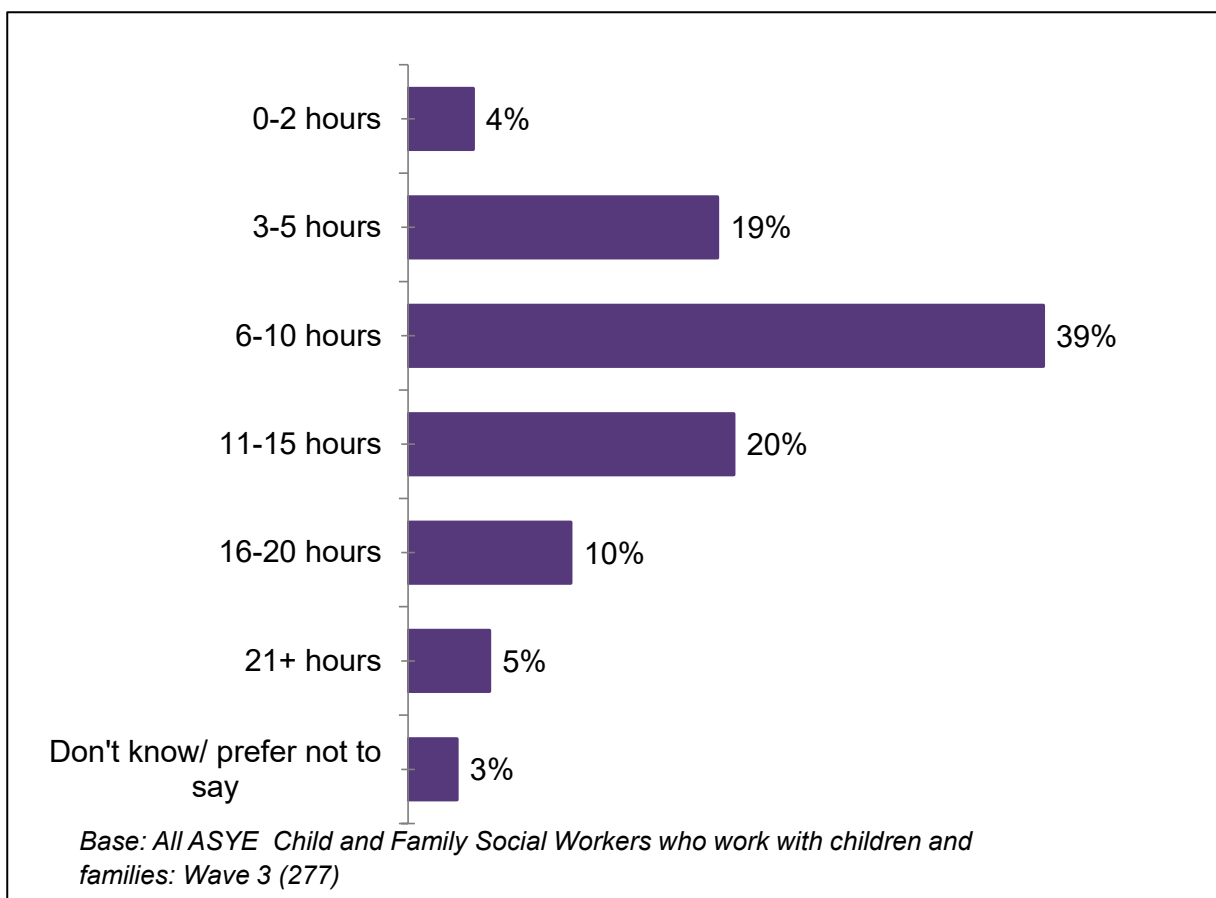


Exploring typical working hours in more detail, four-fifths (83%) stated that they typically work 36+ hours per week, most commonly 36-40 hours (26%) or 41-45 hours (30%). Compared to non-ASYE social workers, ASYEs were more likely to work 36-40 hours per week (24%), whereas non-ASYEs were more likely to work 51+ hours per week (seven per cent, compared with three per cent of ASYEs). Only seven per cent of ASYEs reported working part-time (35 hours or less), compared with 23% of non-ASYEs at Wave 3.

There was a significant increase in the proportion of ASYEs working very long hours since Wave 1. In Wave 3, 57% estimated that they worked at least 41 hours per week, compared with 46% in Wave 1; 21% typically worked 46-50 hours per week compared with 14% in Wave 1.

ASYEs were asked to estimate the number of hours in a typical week that they spend doing direct work with children and families/carers. The modal response was 6-10 hours. Figure 8.7 shows the full distribution. In Wave 3, 35% of ASYEs were typically working 11 hours or more on direct casework, higher than in Wave 2 (27%) and Wave 1 (26%).

Figure 8.7 ASYE hours worked in a typical week doing direct work with children and families/carers (Wave 3)



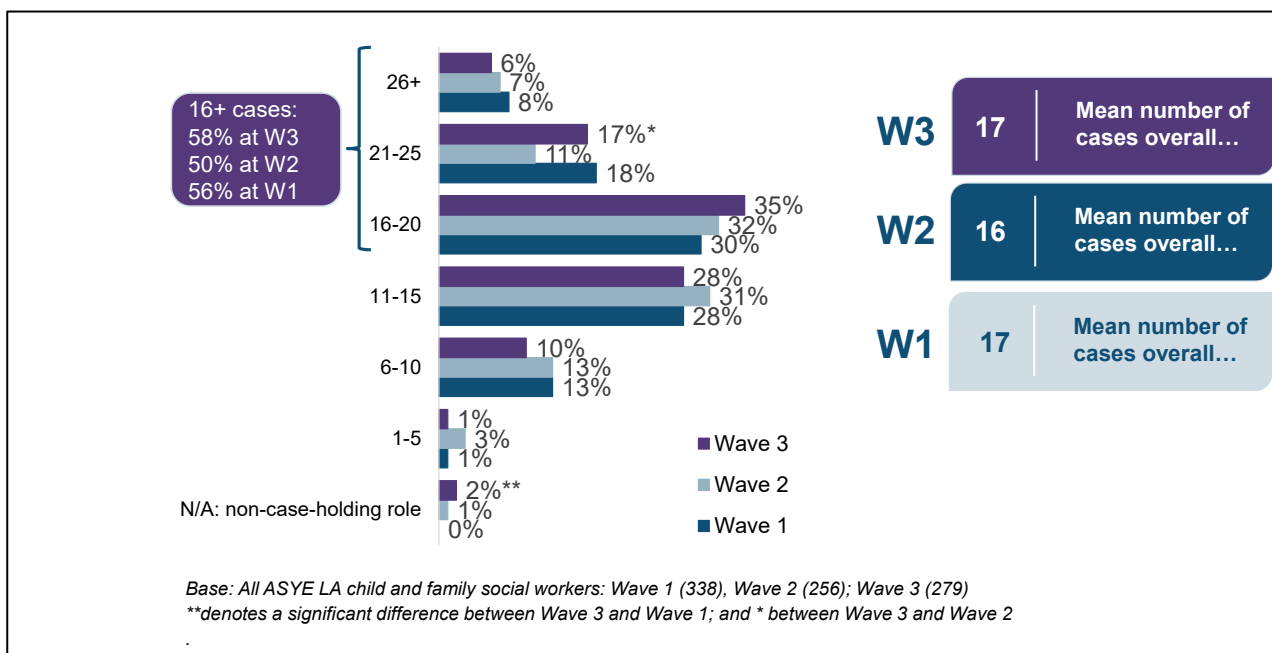
Wave 3 ASYEs were asked how much of the time they spent doing direct work with children and families/carers was on face-to-face contact and how much was remote (e.g. by telephone or videoconference). The modal responses were 81%-100% of direct work spent face-to-face and 0%–20% spent remotely. The mean was 51% spent face-to-face and 29% spent remotely.

Caseloads

ASYE social workers were asked how many cases they were currently allocated²⁷. In Wave 3, caseloads were most likely to fall into the ranges of 16-20 cases (35%) or 11-15 cases (28%), with a mean of 17 cases reported. Around one-quarter (23%) had more than 20 cases and 11% had 10 or fewer.

At every wave, the most common caseload band was 16-20 cases, closely followed by 11-15 cases (Figure 8.8). Although there were subtle changes elsewhere, none of these were statistically significant so the overall picture was broadly consistent wave-on-wave.

Figure 8.8 ASYE caseloads (Wave 1 to Wave 3)



²⁷ Cases were defined as “an individual allocated to a social worker (for example a family of three siblings would be three individual cases) and/or a carer or carers allocated to a social worker for the purposes of fostering or adoption.”

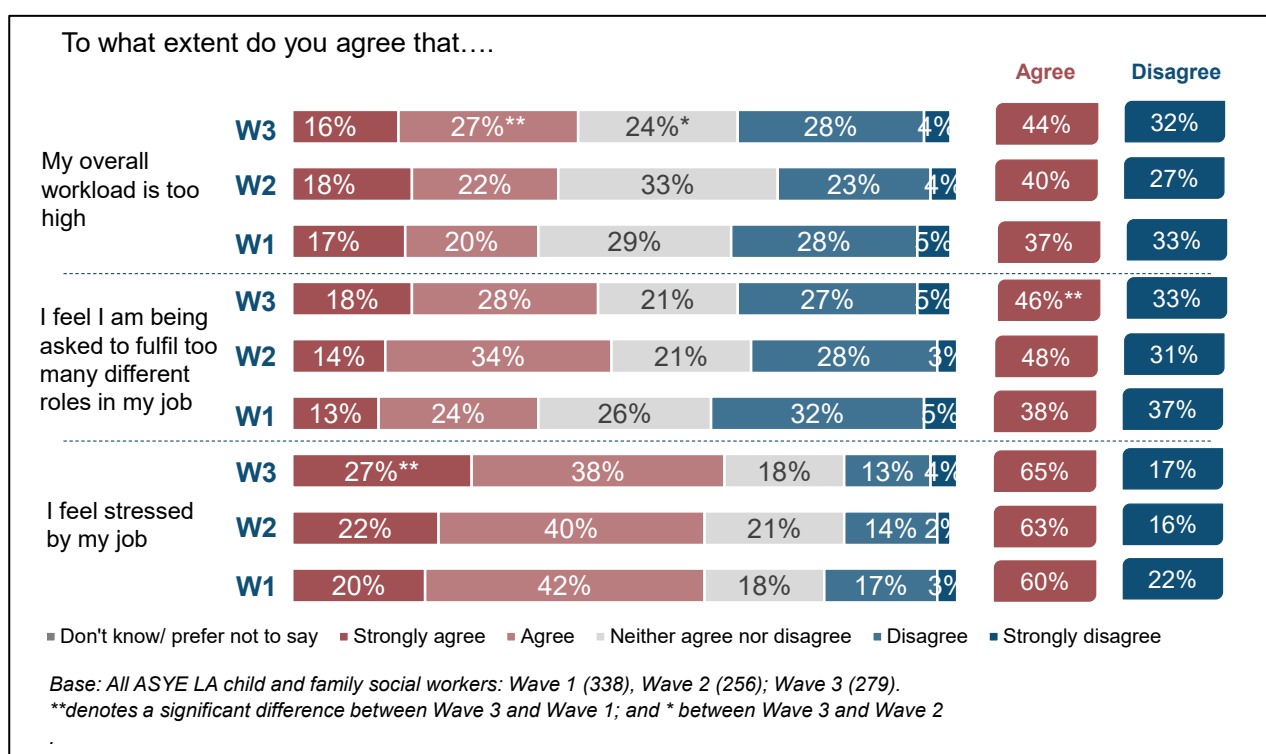
Stress levels and workload demands

ASYE social workers were asked the extent to which they agreed or disagreed with the following statements:

- 'I feel stressed by my job'
- 'My overall workload is too high'
- 'I feel I am being asked to fulfil too many different roles in my job'.

As shown in Figure 8.9, in Wave 3, 44% agreed that 'My overall workload is too high', 46% agreed that 'I feel I am being asked to fulfil too many different roles in my job' and nearly two-thirds (65%) agreed with the statement 'I feel stressed in my job', whilst only one-in-six (17%) disagreed. The differences between waves are not statistically significant.

Figure 8.9 ASYE agreement levels regarding stress and workload demands (Wave 1 and Wave 2)



Reasons for feeling stressed

Those who agreed with the statement 'I feel stressed by my job' were asked what factors they felt were causing this stress and to identify the main factor, if there was more than one.

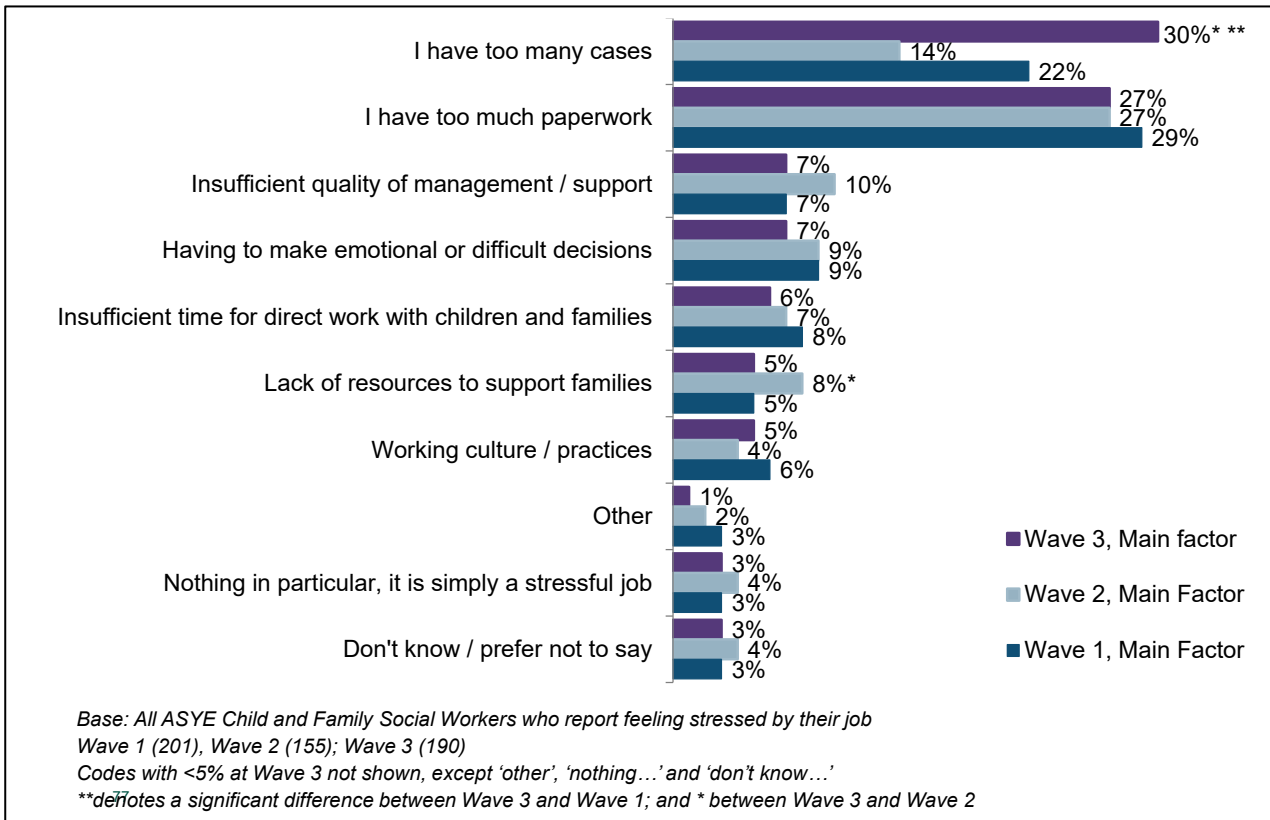
Looking at all reasons mentioned, the top three issues among Wave 3 ASYEs who indicated feeling stressed by their job were: too much paperwork (65%); too many cases (47%) and insufficient time for direct work with children and families (45%). The top two issues were consistent with the main Wave 3 sample; too much paperwork (55%) and too many cases (40%). The next most common answers for ASYEs were lack of resources to support children and families (37%); having to make emotional or difficult decisions (31%); high staff turnover in their team or area of practice (28%); and working culture/practices (26%).²⁸ Other reasons cited by more than one in five were: lack of administrative/business support (23%) and insufficient quality of management/ support (21%).

At previous waves, the same top three issues emerged, with too much paperwork being the most common reason at each wave. However significantly fewer mentioned insufficient time for direct work with children and families at Wave 3 (45%) than at Wave 2 (60%) or Wave 1 (55%). Lack of administrative/business support was mentioned significantly more in Wave 3 and Wave 2 (23%) than in Wave 1 (12%).

Figure 8.10 presents the single main factors identified by ASYE respondents, at each wave (who indicated feeling stressed by their job). In Wave 3 the top answer was 'I have too many cases' (30%), followed by 'I have too much paperwork' (27%); whereas in Wave 2 and Wave 1 volume of paperwork was the most common reason. The proportion citing 'I have too many cases' was significantly higher in Wave 3 (30%) than in Wave 2 (14%) or Wave 1 (22%).

²⁸ By 'working culture', social workers were typically referring to the specific working culture at their previous authority, rather than in local authority child and family social work more broadly, and often the culture within their specific teams.

Figure 8.10 Main reason why ASYEs feel stressed by their job (Wave 1 to Wave 3)

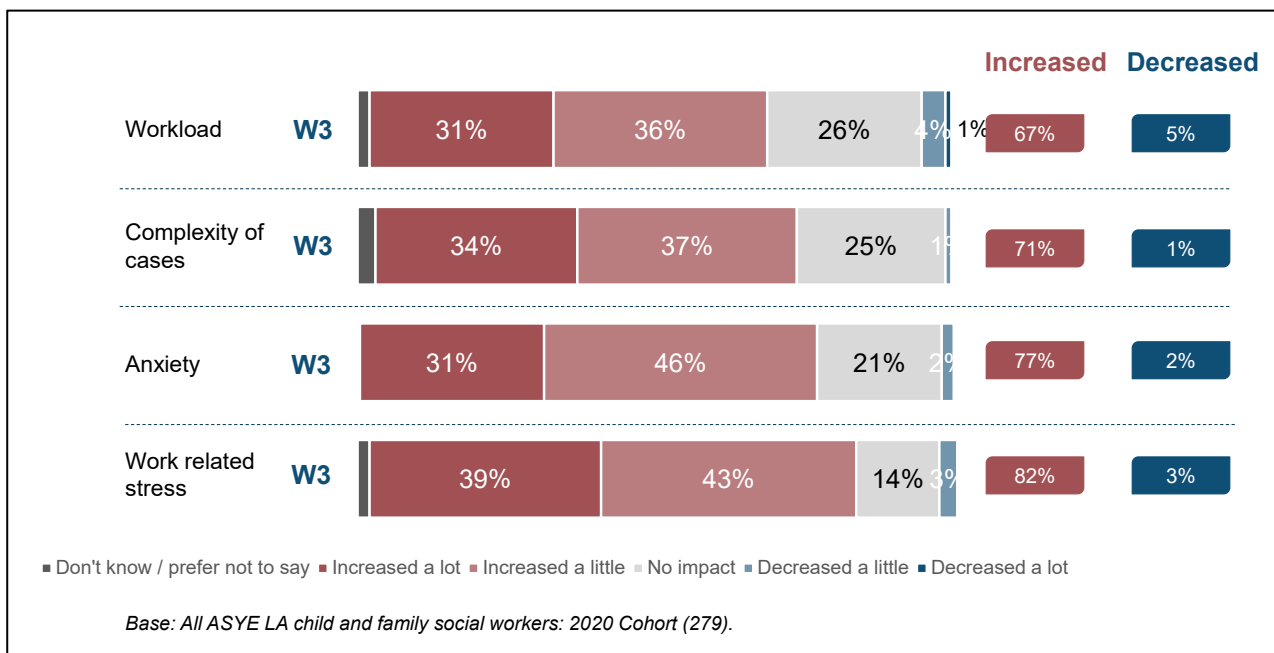


The main Wave 3 cohort, who were further along their career journey than the ASYE sample cited a slightly different pattern of main stressors. Their top three main reasons for feeling stressed were too much paperwork (23%), too many cases (20%) and working culture/practices (13%). Paperwork was mentioned to a similar extent by ASYEs; but ASYEs were significantly less likely to cite working culture/practices (4%) and significantly more likely to say they had too many cases (30%). ASYEs were also more likely than the main Wave 3 sample to say they had insufficient time for direct work with children and families (6% vs. 3%).

Impact of Covid-19 on workplace wellbeing

Wave 3 ASYEs were asked if various aspects of their job had increased or decreased as a result of Covid-19 pandemic. The ASYE sample had started in their roles between July 2019 and June 2020, so would have had varying levels of experience before the pandemic hit in early 2020. Figure 8.11 presents the results for those aspects related to workplace wellbeing and shows there have been considerable negative impacts from the pandemic. Two-thirds (67%) thought their workload had increased, 71% thought complexity of cases had increased, 77% reported an increase in anxiety and 82% reported an increase work-related stress. Over three in ten reported that each of these aspects had increased 'a lot'.

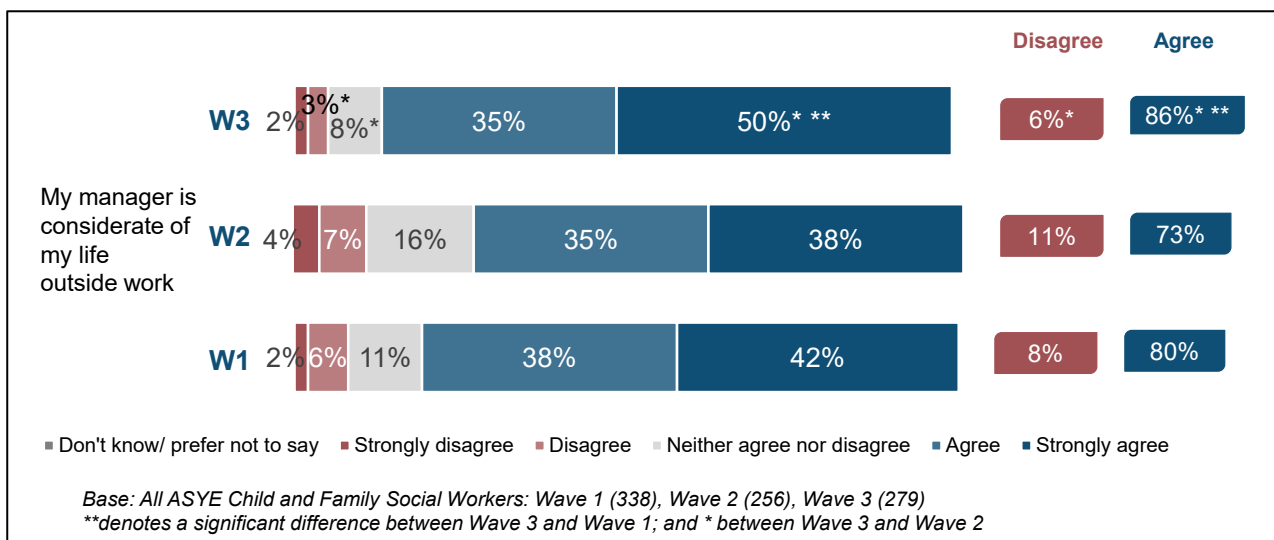
Figure 8.11 Extent to which ‘negative’ aspects of the job have increased or decreased as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic (Wave 3)



Manager consideration of work-life balance

Despite the high proportion of ASYE social workers who were working more than their contracted hours, the vast majority (86%) of Wave 3 ASYEs agreed that ‘my manager is considerate of my life outside work’ (with half saying ‘strongly agree’), whilst 8% were neutral and only 6% disagreed (Figure 8.12).

Figure 8.12 Extent of ASYEs’ agreement that their manager is considerate of their life outside of work (Wave 1 to Wave 3)



The proportion agreeing overall at Wave 3 (86%) is significantly higher than in both previous waves, driven by an increase in the proportion who ‘strongly agree’.

Views on employer, manager and working environment

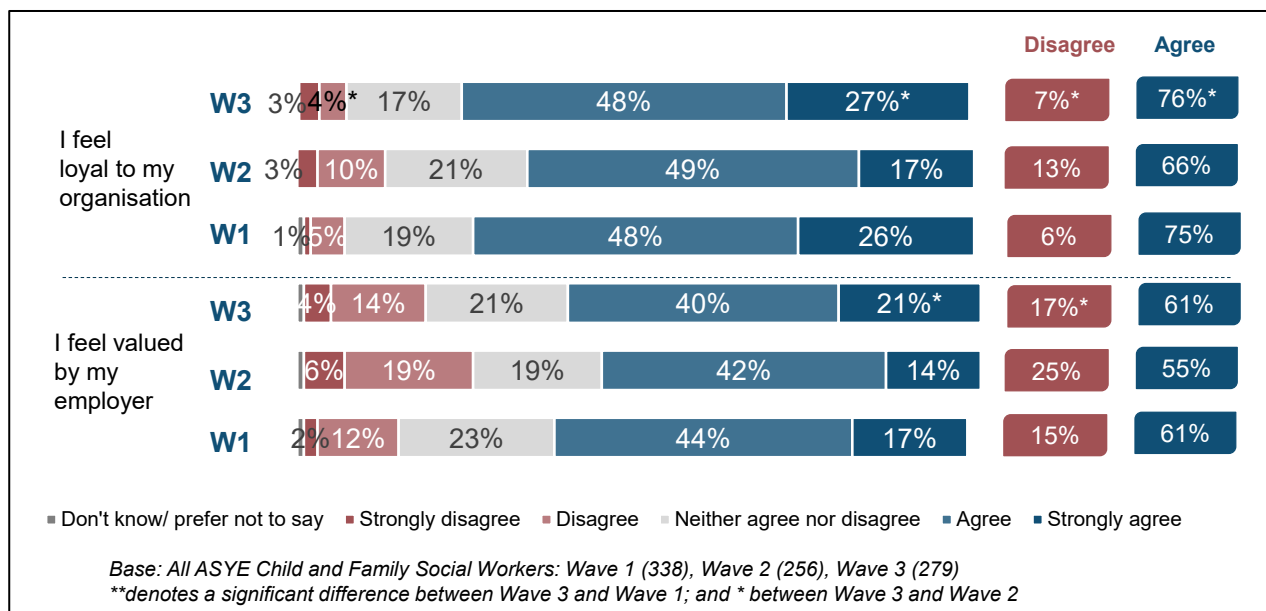
This section explores ASYE social workers’ day-to-day experiences in terms of their feelings of loyalty to and being valued by their employer; relationship with their managers; experiences of receiving reflective supervision; access to the right learning and development opportunities, and views on the resources at their disposal and their working environment.

Feeling valued by and loyal to their employer

Wave 3 ASYE social workers were asked the extent to which they felt loyal to, and valued by, their employer.

As shown in Figure 8.13, loyalty to the organisation was high – three quarters (76%) agreed that they felt loyal, and only 7% disagreed. Six in ten (61%) felt valued by their employer and 17% did not. The ASYEs in Wave 3 felt significantly more loyal and valued than at Wave 2, returning to the levels seen at Wave 1.

Figure 8.13 ASYE social workers’ perceptions of loyalty to and feeling valued by their employer (Wave 1 to Wave 3)



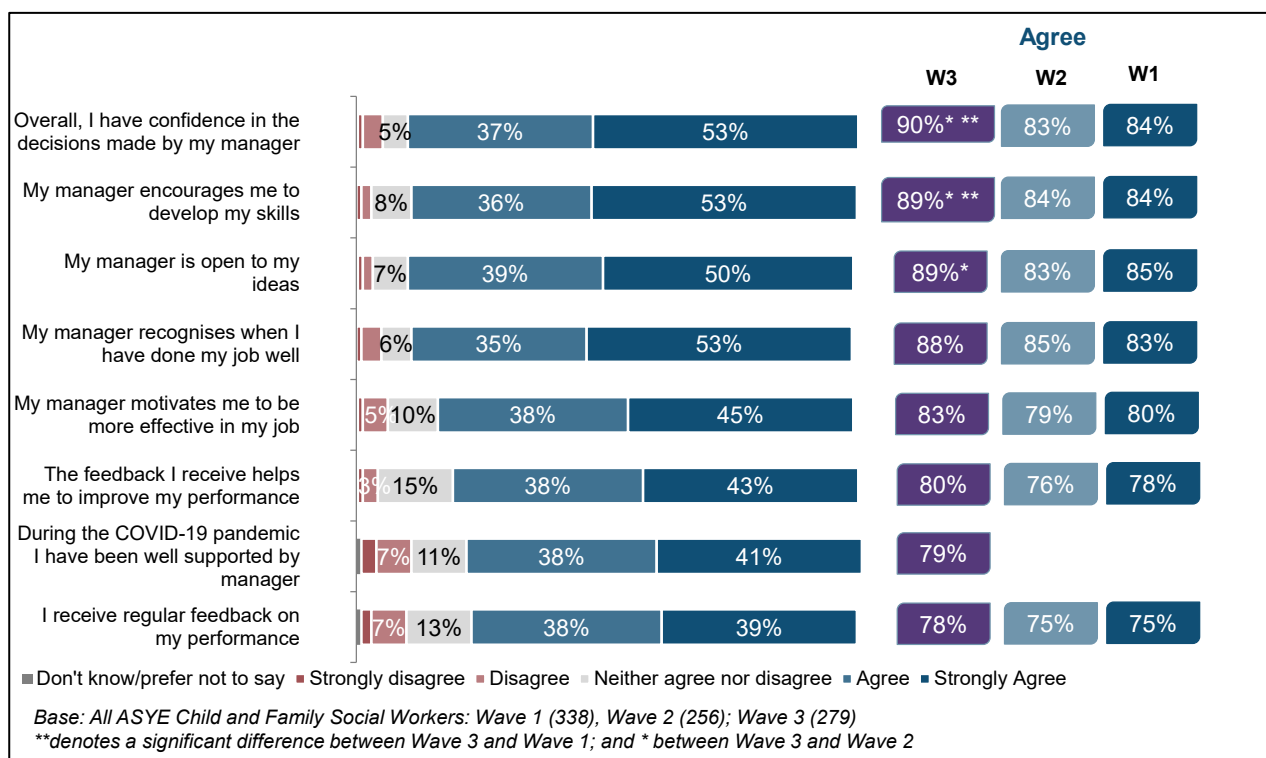
Views on line management

ASYE social workers were asked about various aspects of their relationship with their line manager(s). Figure 8.14 shows that Wave 3 ASYE respondents were generally very positive about their manager, with three-quarters or more expressing agreement with each statement, and rising to nine in ten on some statements. Agreement levels were greatest in respect of having confidence in their manager's decisions (90%), encouraging development of their skills (89%), being open to ideas (89%) and recognising when they had done their job well (88%).

However, respondents were not as positive about feedback received from their manager, in terms of both frequency and quality: 78% agreed that they received regular feedback on their performance, and 80% that the feedback received helped them to improve their performance, while 83% agreed that their manager motivates them to be more effective in their job. Views on line management were consistent across waves.

In Wave 3, 79% of ASYEs agreed that they had been well supported by their manager during the Covid-19 pandemic.

Figure 8.14 ASYE social workers' views on their line manager (Wave 1 to Wave 3)



On three statements there were significant positive variances from the results in previous waves. In Wave 3, ASYEs had greater confidence in their manager's decisions (90% vs. 83% in Wave 2 and 84% in Wave 1); they were more likely to agree that their manager encourages them to develop their skills (89% vs. 84% in Waves 2 and 1); and they were more likely to say their manager was open to their ideas (89% vs. 83% in Wave 2).

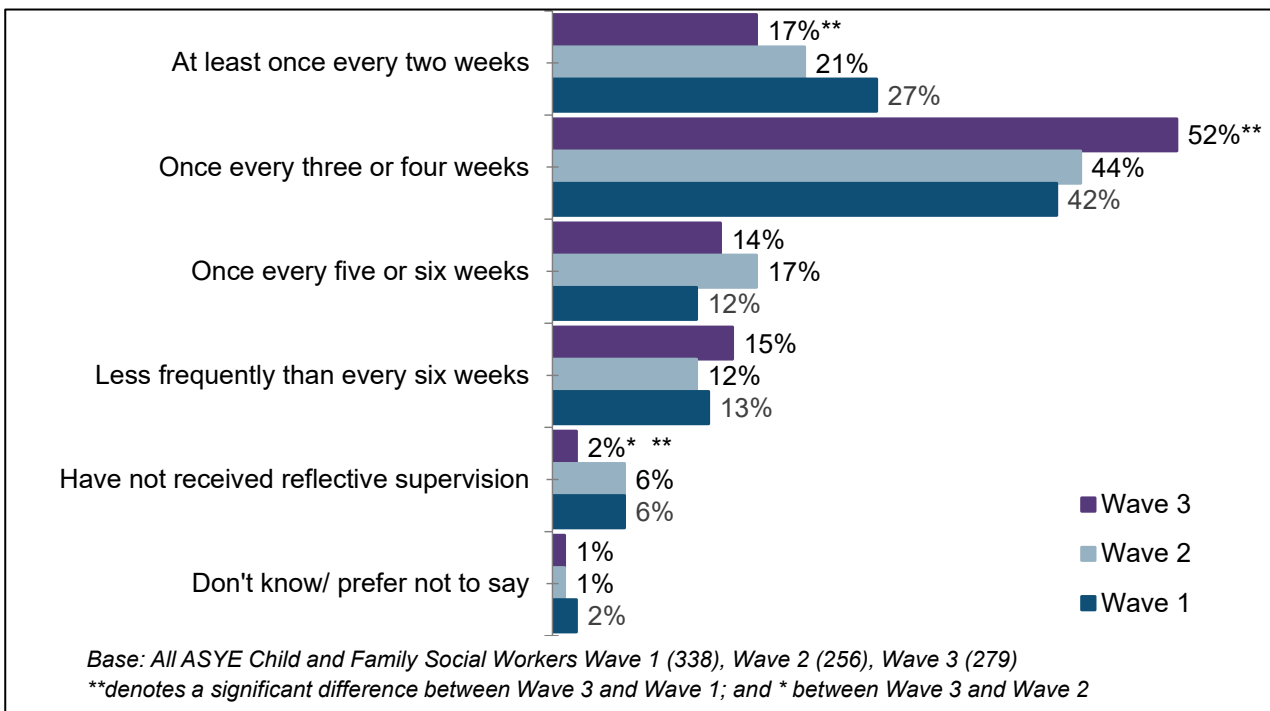
Receiving reflective supervision

Exploring ASYE social workers' experience of reflective supervision is important in understanding perceptions of professional development and performance management.

Overall, there was a wide variation in the amount of reflective supervision received by ASYE social workers (Figure 8.15). The modal amount received in Wave 3 was once every three or four weeks (52%), with 17% who received reflective supervision more frequently, at least once every two weeks. Three in ten (29%) received reflective supervision less frequently – either every five or six weeks (14%) or less often than every six weeks (15%). Only 2% had not received any.

As Figure 8.15 shows, fortnightly supervision is becoming less frequent, with a shift towards receiving supervision once every three or four weeks: 52% in Wave 3, up from 44% in Wave 2 and 42% in Wave 1.

Figure 8.15 Frequency of receiving reflective supervision among ASYEs (Wave 1 to Wave 3)



Amount and quality of reflective supervision

Wave 3 ASYE social workers who had received reflective supervision were asked their views on the amount and quality of supervision received. In terms of amount of supervision, although two-thirds (69%) felt that the amount received was 'about right', three in ten (29%) said it was 'not enough'. Results here were consistent with ASYEs in Wave 2 and Wave 1.

As to be expected, ASYE social workers received reflective supervision more frequently than the Wave 3 cohort (who were not in managing or directing roles). ASYEs were far more likely to receive supervision at least once every two weeks (17% compared with four per cent), or every three or four weeks (52% vs. 41%); and less likely to receive it less frequently than every four weeks (29% compared with 43%).

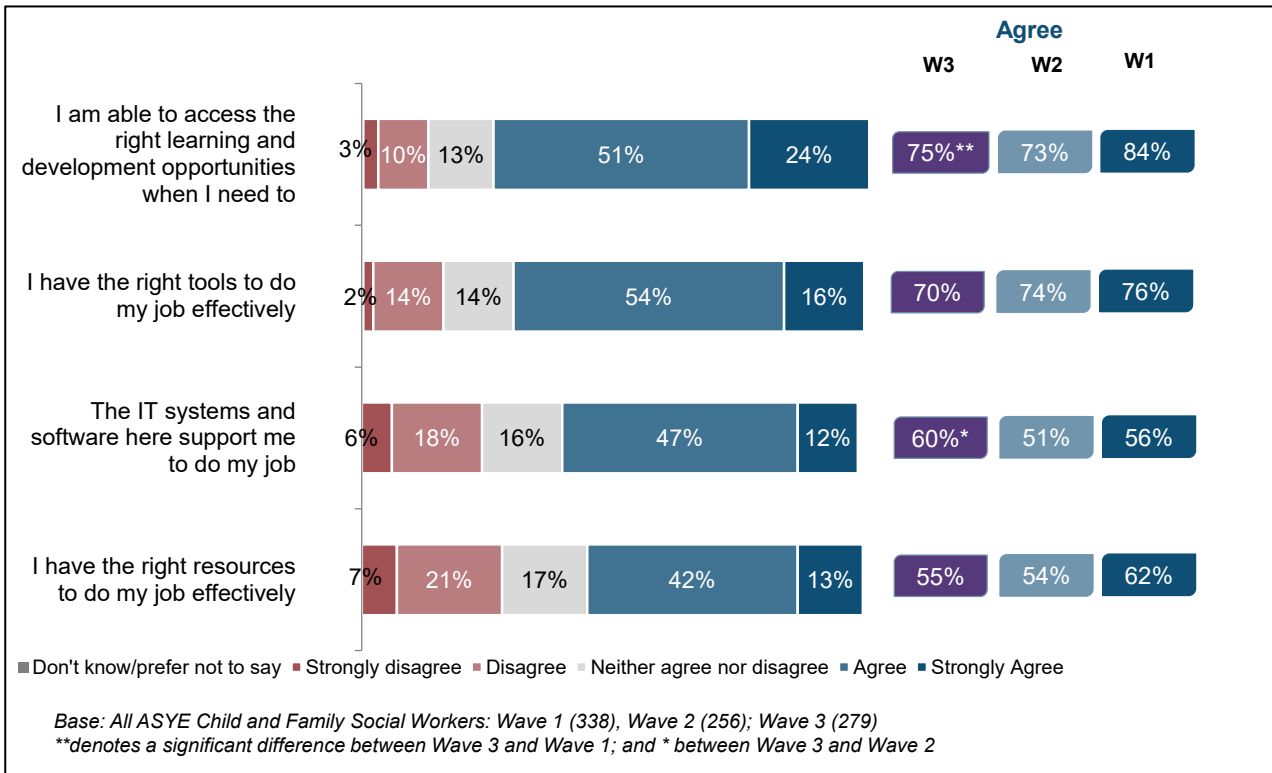
Regarding the quality of reflective supervision received, 35% rated it 'very good', 49% 'good', 12% 'poor' and one per cent 'very poor'. These scores were broadly consistent wave-on-wave; with the exception that in Wave 3 the proportion who rated their supervision as 'very good' (35%) had increased to be significantly higher than in Wave 2 (24%) and returning to similar levels seen at Wave 1 (32%).

Views on working environment, resources and access to learning and development opportunities

The survey asked ASYE social workers for views on their working environment, resources to help them do their jobs, and access to learning/ development (Figure 8.16).

Wave 3 ASYE social workers were most positive having access to the right learning and development opportunities (75% agreed) and about having the right tools to do their job effectively e.g. risk assessment tools etc. (70% agreed). However, somewhat fewer agreed that the IT systems and software supported them to do their job (60%) or that they have the right resources (e.g. equipment, petty cash etc.) to do their job effectively (55%).

Figure 8.16 ASYE views on tools and resources (Wave 1 to Wave 3)

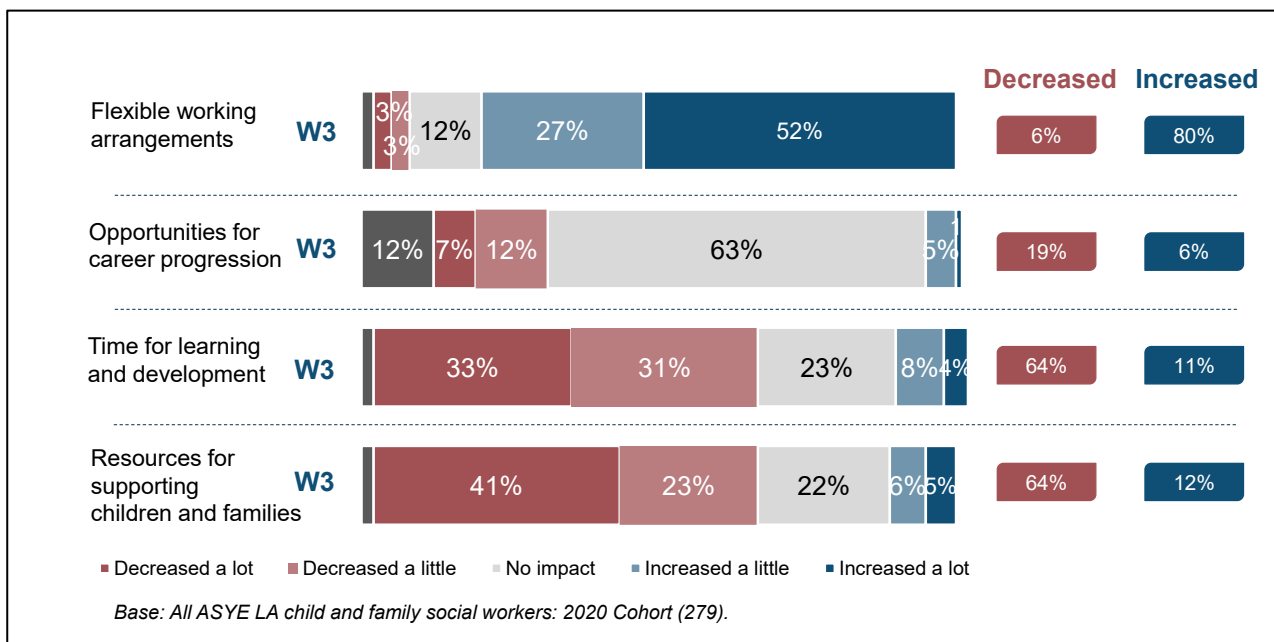


There were a couple of significant variances from results in previous waves. Significantly fewer ASYEs in Wave 3 (75%) felt they had access to the right learning and development opportunities than in Wave 1 (84%). However, significantly more ASYEs in Wave 3 (60%) thought they had supportive IT systems and software than in Wave 2 (51%).

Impact of Covid-19 on working environment and relationships

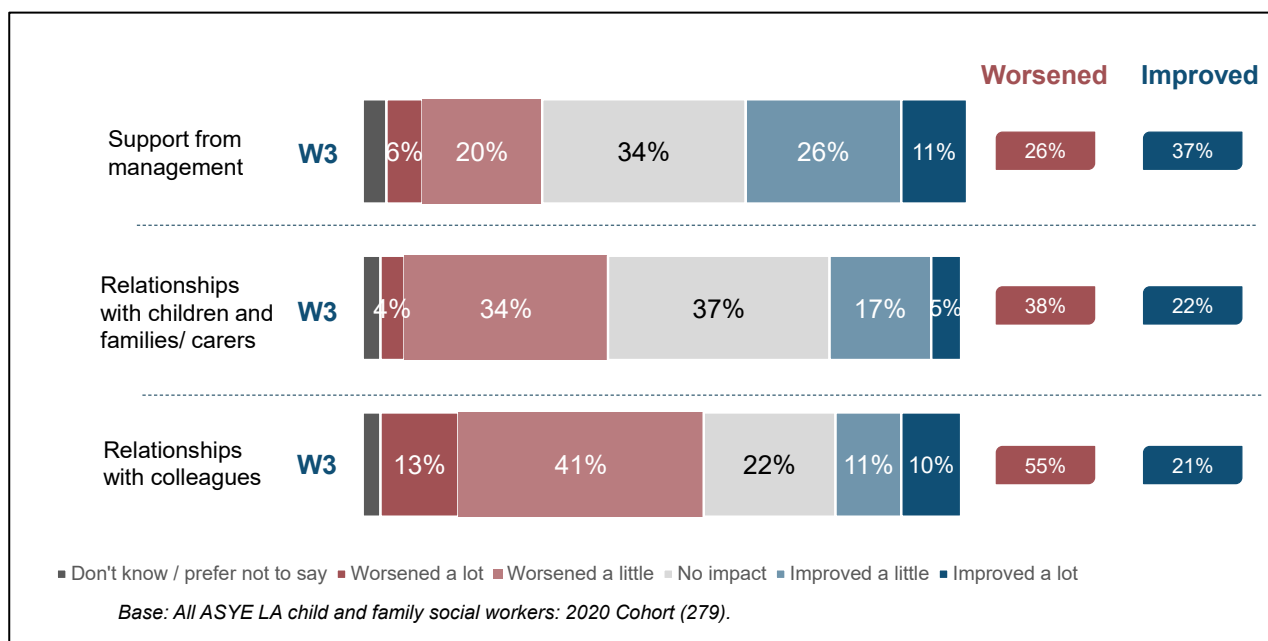
Wave 3 ASYEs were asked if various aspects of their job had increased or decreased as a result of Covid-19 pandemic. Figure 8.17 presents the results for those aspects related to the working environment and relationships and shows that impacts are mixed. Four-fifths (80%) thought that flexible working arrangements had increased ('a lot' or 'a little'), with half (52%) saying 'a lot'. A majority (63%) thought that opportunities for career progression were unchanged. However there had been some negative impacts: nearly two-thirds (64%) thought that time for learning and development had decreased and a similar proportion (64%) thought resources for supporting children and families had reduced.

Figure 8.17 Extent to which 'positive' aspects of the job have increased or decreased as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic (Wave 3)



ASYEs were also asked in Wave 3 whether various working relationships had improved or worsened as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic. Figure 8.18 shows a mixed picture. More said that support from management had improved (37%) than worsened (26%), with a third (34%) saying no impact. However more thought that relationships with colleagues had worsened (55%) rather than improved (21%); and similarly, more thought relationships with service users had worsened (38%) than improved (22%). Most concerning is that over half (55%) felt their relationships with colleagues had worsened. This is of potential concern when considering the importance of connections with colleagues and team support networks, which previous waves of the study have identified as being an important protective factor against work-related stress.

Figure 8.18 Extent to which different aspects of the job have improved or worsened as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic (Wave 3)



Job satisfaction

This section examines how satisfied ASYE social workers were with various aspects of their job, and overall.

Aspects of the job

Wave 3 ASYE social workers were asked how satisfied they were with various aspects of their job, on a 5 point scale from very satisfied to very dissatisfied.

On key features of the job (Figure 8.19), nine in ten (91%) were satisfied with job security, and three quarters (77%) with the work itself, but this fell to just over half (54%) satisfied with the amount of pay received, and only a quarter (24%) with public respect for the work they do. The results here were broadly consistent wave-on-wave. However, more ASYEs were satisfied with job security in Wave 3 (91%) than in Wave 2 or Wave 1 (83%), and more were satisfied with their pay in Wave 3 (54%) than in Wave 2 (41%).

On aspects of how they carry out their job (Figure 8.20) levels of satisfaction were high: 70% were satisfied with the amount of influence they have over their job; 80% with the sense of achievement; 81% with opportunity to develop their skills; 82% with scope to use their initiative and 82% with the extent to which they feel challenged in their role. On these various elements, satisfaction was consistent with previous waves.

Figure 8.19 Percentage of ASYE social workers' who agreed or strongly agreed that they were satisfied with key aspects of their job (Wave 1 to Wave 3)

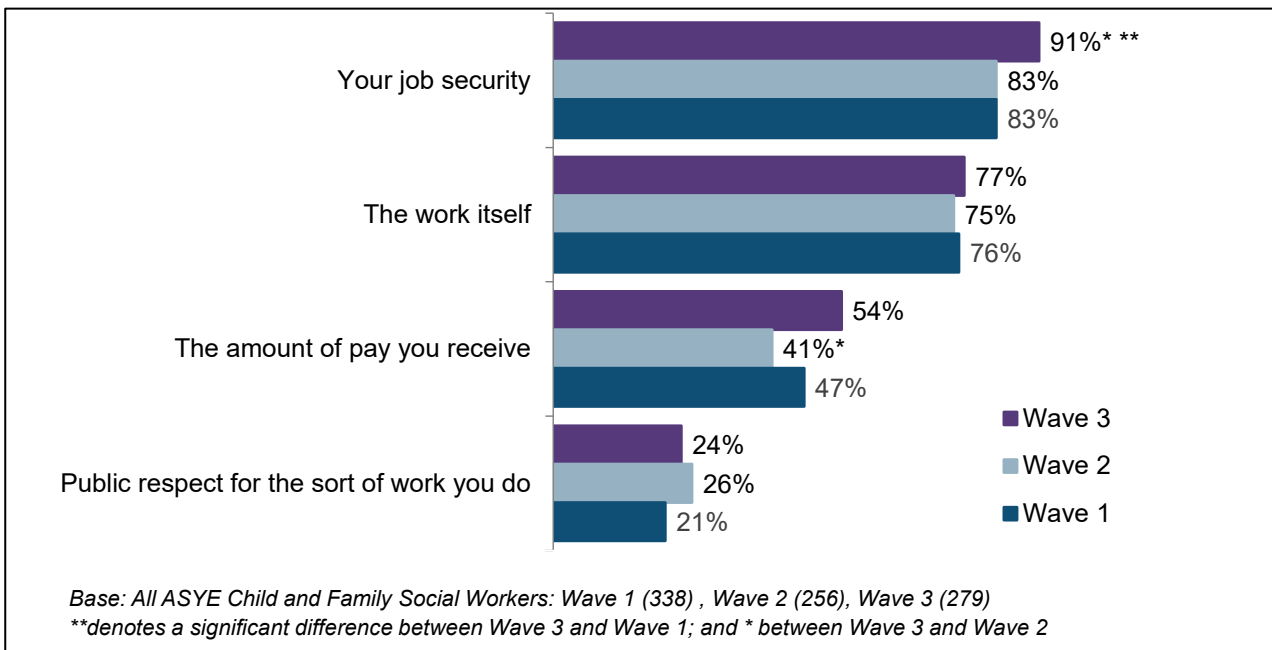
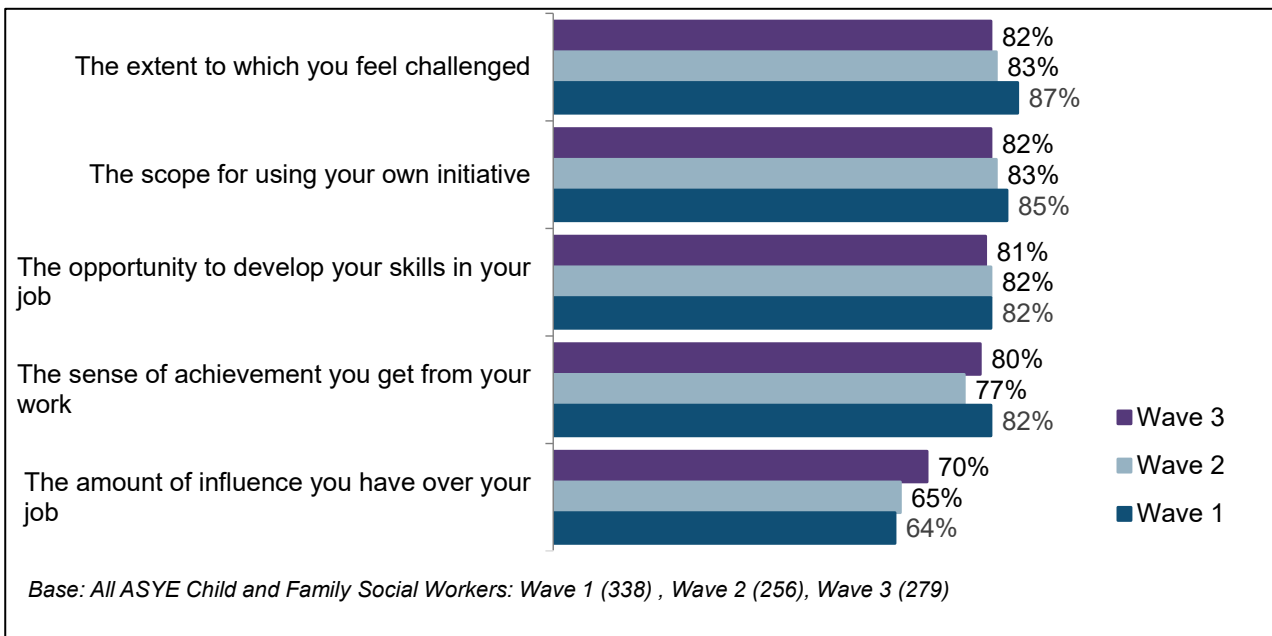


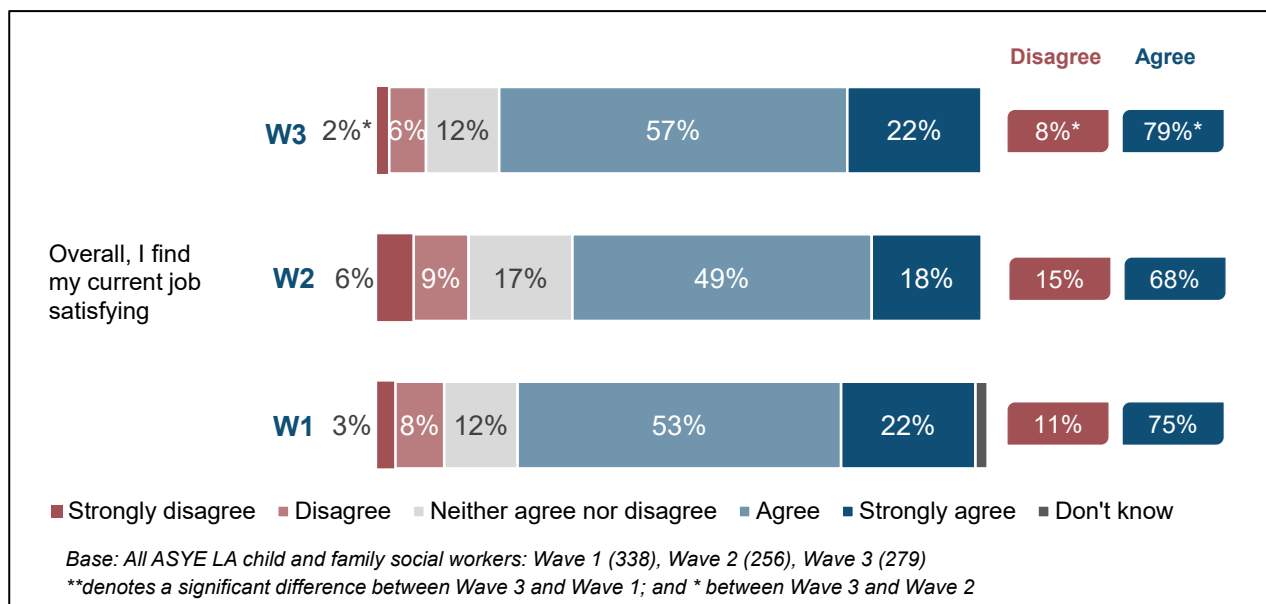
Figure 8.20 Percentage of ASYE social workers' who agreed or strongly agreed that they were satisfied with key aspects of their job (Wave 1 to Wave 3)



Overall job satisfaction

ASYE social workers were asked the extent to which they agreed that their current job was satisfying. In Wave 3, over three-quarters (79%) agreed (22% 'strongly agree' and 57% 'agree'), whilst 8% disagreed (2% 'strongly disagree' and 6% 'disagree'). ASYEs in Wave 3 were more satisfied with their jobs overall than those in Wave 2 (68%).

Figure 8.21 ASYE social workers' overall job satisfaction (Wave 1 to Wave 3)



Views on career progression

Wave 3 ASYEs were asked whether their career progression so far had met their expectations or not.

Six in ten (61%) considered their career progression to be 'in line with expectations', whilst similar proportions rated their career progression as 'below my expectations' (7%) than 'above my expectations' (9%). A fifth (19%) felt it was too early to make this judgement.

There were no statistically significant changes compared with Wave 2 ASYEs. Relative to Wave 1, more said in Wave 3 that their career progression was 'in line with expectations' (61% vs. 53%) and fewer said it was 'too early to say' (19% s. 28%).

Short-term career plans and reasons for wanting to leave social work

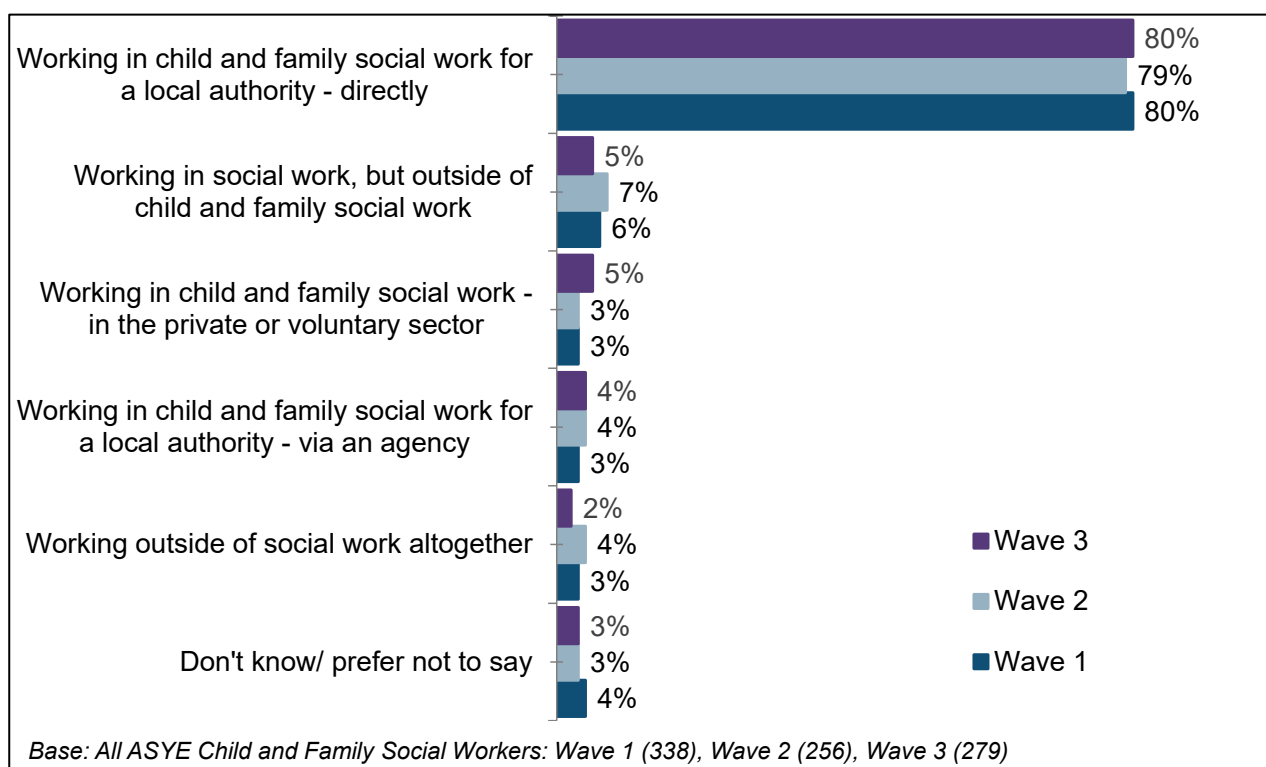
Identifying ASYE social workers' short-term career plans and reasons for leaving or wanting to leave their current positions is important to help to understand how retention might be improved. This section details career plans over the next 12 months and whether these have been influenced by the Covid-19 pandemic, perceived transferability of social work skills outside the sector, reasons for leaving and potential influences on retention.

Career plans in the next 12 months and beyond

All ASYE social workers were asked where they expected to be working in 12 months' time, if at all. Figure 8.22 shows four in five (80%) of Wave 3 ASYEs planned to still be working directly in local authority child and family social work a year hence. Five per cent were planning to be 'working in social work, but outside of child and family social work', 5% 'working in child and family social work in the private or voluntary sector', 4% 'working in child and family social work for a local authority but via an agency', and 2% 'working outside of social work altogether'. Results from Wave 2 and Wave 1 ASYEs were almost identical. Looking at the 17% who did not anticipate working for a local authority directly in 12 months' time we can see that their experience was a lot more negative compared with those who intended to remain working directly for an authority. For example: 92% reported that they worked overtime 'most weeks' or 'all the time' (compared with 68% expecting to be employed directly by an authority); 77% agreed their workload was too high (compared with 33%); 83% agreed they were asked to fulfil too many roles (compared with 36%), and; 90% agreed that they felt stressed (compared with 59%).²⁹ It is therefore not surprising that overall satisfaction with the current job amongst those expecting not to work directly for an authority was only 42%, compared with 90% of those still expecting to be employed directly.

²⁹ The base size for this analysis is fairly small (46), therefore findings should be interpreted with caution.

Figure 8.22 Where ASYE social workers see themselves in 12 months' time (Wave 1 to Wave 3)



In Wave 3 around three in ten ASYEs (32%) said their career plans had been influenced to a great or some extent by the Covid-19 pandemic while two-thirds (67%) said their plans had been influenced either not very much or not at all. However, when compared to the main Wave 3 sample, ASYEs were much more likely to report that their career plans had been influenced to a great or some extent by the Covid-19 pandemic (32%, compared to 20% of the main Wave 3 sample).

Reasons for leaving or considering leaving child and family social work

The 25 ASYE respondents in Wave 3 that were considering leaving (21) or had left (4) local authority child and family social work were asked why, followed by their main reason if they provided more than one. A variety of different reasons were given.

Most likely to be mentioned as reasons were 'it is not compatible with family or relationship commitments' (8/25 respondents), 'the working hours in general' (7), 'the high caseload' (7), the amount of paperwork (6), 'it is just not the right type of job for me' (4), due to impact of the ongoing Covid-19 pandemic (4), 'personal reasons e.g. health' (4), or 'not making best use of their skills or experience' (3). These reasons tended to be mentioned most often at Wave 2 as well.

When asked for the single main reason for leaving or considering leaving local authority child and family social work, the most common cited were 'personal reasons e.g. health'

(4 respondents), 'it is just not the right type of job for me' (3), 'I did not/am not making the best use of the skills or experience I have' (3) or 'it is not compatible with family or relationship commitments' (3). Again this was similar to Wave 2.

Potential influences on ASYE retention

Wave 3 ASYE social workers who said they had left or were considering leaving (25 respondents) were asked what may encourage them to remain in or return to local authority child and family social work in future.

The most commonly mentioned factors related to workloads and culture: 'a more manageable workload in terms of administration / paperwork' (9 respondents), 'a more manageable workload in terms of caseload' (7), and 'better working culture' (6).

When asked for the single main factor that might encourage them to return to, or remain in, child and family social work in future, the responses mirrored the general reasons. The most common main factor given was either 'a more manageable workload in terms of caseload' (6 respondents), 'a more manageable workload in terms of administration / paperwork' (4), or 'better working culture' (3).

9. Conclusions

Although Wave 3 of the study has revealed changes in jobs and work status, and some attitudes, many aspects have remained consistent across the three waves. The **impacts of Covid-19** on social workers' experiences have been challenging in terms of increased feelings of stress and anxiety, more complex cases, and depleted relationships with colleagues and service users, particularly for ASYE social workers. Impacts on relationships with colleagues are potentially concerning given the evidence from previous waves on the importance of these relationships in boosting social workers' resilience. On the other hand, although working remotely has its disadvantages, increased flexible working has been helpful for some social workers (such as reducing travel time between meetings).

The vast majority of study participants were still employed in local authority child and family social work in Wave 3, and among this group most were still working at the same local authority.

Only a small proportion of the sample had left local authority child and family social work since the beginning of the study. This may, however, be an underestimate as non-responders may have disproportionately left the profession. Most of those who had left local authority child and family social work, and who were still active in the labour market, were still employed in social work (either in child and family social work in the private or voluntary sector, or in another area of social work, e.g. adults).

Most social workers still found their job satisfying overall, despite the impacts of Covid-19. However, satisfaction with sense of achievement, the work itself and skills development all declined compared with previous waves. In contrast, satisfaction levels with job security and pay have increased, particularly among front line practitioners.

Self-reported stress levels have increased since Wave 2. There has been an increase in the proportion of local authority child and family social workers who report feeling stressed by their job and that their overall workload is too high (despite average working hours having decreased slightly since Wave 2). Evidence from the interviews suggests that feelings of increased stress and higher workloads is linked with greater pressures from working during Covid-19, including more complex cases, increased feelings of anxiety and weaker relationships with colleagues.

Despite this, the majority plan to continue working in the profession. Of all those currently working in local authority child and family social work, including agency workers, almost three-quarters anticipated remaining in the profession and being directly employed by a local authority in 12 months' time. Just one in twenty expected to be working outside of social work altogether.

Among those considering leaving child and family social work in the next 12 months, the most common main reason related to overwork (a combination of high caseload, working hours, volume of paperwork and incompatibility with family or relationships) followed by retirement.

Dislike of the **working culture at their local authority** featured as a key reason underlying moves between different local authorities, as well as considerations about or decisions to leave the profession. When asked what might encourage those leaving or considering leaving to stay, changes to the working culture were one of the most common mentions. Key features of working culture which influenced decisions to leave or to stay emerged in the qualitative interviews as: a supportive working environment (in terms of peers, managers, and job 'infrastructure' such as flexible working arrangements and effective IT); being treated well and feeling valued both by immediate line managers and the organisation as a whole; having autonomy and feeling trusted to make professional judgements; and scope for development and reflective practice. Social workers who were positive about the culture of their organisation often commented on a congruence between their own commitment to children and families, and the commitment expressed or demonstrated by the organisation, through policies, attitudes, and the qualities of the leaders. Linked to this, was the importance of openness, challenge and professional autonomy, and feeling supported to make decisions. For some, team culture rather than organisational culture was more significant in their day to day experience.

Appendix 1: Methodology

Overview of methodology

The study comprises two core components:

- A longitudinal mixed-methods online and telephone survey of child and family social workers, to be conducted across five years from 2018/19 to 2022/23. The third wave of the survey, conducted between September and December 2020 comprised two surveys:
 - Wave 3 longitudinal survey. All respondents who completed the Wave 2 survey and consented to be recontacted for the next wave were invited to complete this survey, where contact details were held.
 - ASYE survey: the survey for this sample consisted of social workers on their Assessed and Supported Year in Employment (ASYE), who started in their role between July 2019 and June 2020.
- At the end of the Wave 3 survey fieldwork, 40 follow-up qualitative telephone or video-conferencing (e.g. via Microsoft Teams or Zoom) interviews with front line workers and team managers; with a mixture of those still in local authority child and family social work at Wave 3 (defined as those who indicated that they planned to stay in local authority child and family social work over the next 12 months), those who indicated they planned to leave local authority child and family social work over the next 12 months, and those working for agencies were conducted.

Local Authority recruitment and profile

Original longitudinal sample

In order to build a sample of local authority child and family social workers, in summer 2018, prior to the first wave of the survey, IFF wrote to Directors of Children's Services (DCS) in all 152 local authorities/ Children's Trusts to invite them to take part in the research. Ninety-five local authorities/ Children's Trusts in England agreed to participate in the study. This accounted for approximately two-thirds of all local authorities/ Trusts in England, providing a good spread by region and Ofsted rating (see Tables A.1-A.3 overleaf for a detailed breakdown).

Sixty-four areas agreed to take part by providing a census of their in-scope staff work email addresses, and in some cases work telephone numbers (via a secure transfer site) and a further 31 agreed to sending out a link to the online survey to their in-scope staff on IFF's behalf.

Respondents to the Wave 3 survey comprised social workers who were recruited through this method, who completed the Wave 1 and Wave 2 surveys and consented to being recontacted to take part in the Wave 3 survey.

Tables A.1-A.3: The profile of participating Local Authorities/Trusts in England (Main survey)

Number invited	152
Number agreed	95
<i>LA sending invitations</i>	31
<i>IFF sending invitations</i>	64
% of LAs agreed to participate	63%
Declined to take part	40

Region	Total LAs in England	Agreed to participate	% of LAs in each region that agreed to participate
North East	12	9	75%
North West	23	13	57%
Yorkshire and the Humber	15	7	47%
East Midlands	9	7	78%
West Midlands	14	9	64%
East of England	11	8	73%
South East	19	11	58%
South West	16	9	56%
Greater London	33	22	70%
TOTAL (ENGLAND)	152	95	63%

Ofsted Rating ³⁰	Total LAs in England	Agreed to participate	% of LAs in each category that agreed to participate
1 (Outstanding)	3	1	33%
2 (Good)	54	39	72%
3 (Requires improvement)	72	45	64%
4 (Inadequate)	23	10	43%
TOTAL (ALL CATEGORIES)	152	95	63%

³⁰ Local authority children's services departments are regularly inspected by Ofsted and therefore their ratings are subject to change. The distribution in this table is based on Single Inspection Framework (SIF) Ofsted ratings as of June 2018, when local authorities were first approached about taking part in the research. The information is published by the Association of Directors of Children's Services (ADCS):

<https://adcs.org.uk/inspection/article/sif-outcomes-summary>

ASYE supplementary sample

To ensure that the study continues to represent new entrants to the sector, a supplementary sample of ASYE social workers was collected in Wave 3 – each subsequent wave of the research will repeat this exercise.

This exercise was similar to the approach taken to building the original survey sample in summer 2018 and Wave 2 ASYE supplementary sample in Summer 2019. The approach differed in that local authorities / Children’s Services Trusts that took part in previous waves were contacted by Skills for Care, who were able to utilise their links with local authority ASYE leads. IFF wrote to the DCS at local authorities / Trusts that did not take part in previous waves to invite them to take part in the ASYE strand. Local authorities/Trusts sent all ASYE contact details directly to the research team at IFF.³¹

Local authorities / Trusts were asked to provide contact details for ASYE staff who had started in their role between July 2019 and June 2020. This timeframe was chosen to minimise overlap between ASYE staff who took part in the Wave 2 ASYE survey and the Wave 3 ASYE survey– sample for the Wave 2 ASYE survey was collected for those who began their ASYE between October 2018 and June 2019.

Eighty nine (89) local authorities /Trusts agreed to participate in the ASYE strand of the research (see Tables A.4-A.6 for a detailed breakdown). Of these, 31 provided contact details of their in-scope ASYE staff and 58 agreed to circulate the open link survey on IFF’s behalf. The achieved sample consisted of ASYE social workers from 67 local authorities, indicating that in 22 local authorities / Trusts there were no responses. This may have been because no ASYE social workers engaged with the survey (especially where there were only a small number of in-scope potential respondents) or it may have been because the local authority did not disseminate the open link.

³¹ NB: there were fewer local authorities / Children’s Services Trusts at Wave 3 (148) than at Wave 1 (152) due to the merging of some authorities / Trusts in this time period.

**Tables A.4-A.6: The profile of participating Local Authorities/Trusts in England
(ASYE survey)**

Number invited	148
Number agreed	89
<i>LA sending invitations</i>	58
<i>IFF sending invitations</i>	31
% agreed to participate	60%
Declined to take part	59

Region	Total LAs in England	Agreed to participate	% of LAs in each region that agreed to participate
North East	12	9	75%
North West	23	11	48%
Yorkshire and the Humber	15	9	60%
East Midlands	9	6	67%
West Midlands	14	9	64%
East of England	11	7	64%
South East	18	7	39%
South West	15	12	80%
Greater London	31	19	61%
TOTAL (ENGLAND)	148	89	60%

Ofsted Rating	Total LAs in England	Agreed to participate	% of LAs in each category that agreed to participate
1 (Outstanding)	16	11	69%
2 (Good)	56	33	59%
3 (Requires improvement)	55	37	67%
4 (Inadequate)	21	8	38%
TOTAL (ALL CATEGORIES)	148	89	60%

Social worker invitations

Where sample was provided direct to IFF it was possible to send an individualised survey link, targeted reminders, and (where a work phone number was provided) to conduct a final top-up survey using Computer Assisted Telephone Interviewing (CATI). Where the survey was conducted using an open link, the relevant local authorities were asked to send out reminders to staff, but these could not be targeted at non-responders and therefore were less frequent.

Soft launch

A soft launch of each survey was conducted 15-19 September 2020, with 10% of the total sample for the Wave 3 survey (335 records) 18% for the ASYE survey (100 records). Data collected through this exercise were subjected to a series of quality control checks, to ensure the survey was working and interpreted as intended. Respondents were also given the opportunity to email queries to a dedicated survey inbox, although no queries were received during this period. Quality checks of soft launch data confirmed that no revisions were necessary ahead of the full survey launch.

A pilot was not considered necessary for either the Wave 3 or the ASYE surveys as both were largely based on the Wave 1 questionnaire, which had been piloted twice prior to its launch.

Mainstage

The mainstage online survey launched on 23 September 2020 and concluded on 10 November, except for a small minority for whom IFF held no telephone contact details. The mainstage follow-up telephone surveys with people who had not responded to the online survey launched on 9 November 2020 and concluded on 18 December 2020. A final email reminder was sent to all who had yet to respond on 15 December 2020.

A total of 5 online reminders were sent via the direct link for each survey. Alongside this, participating local authorities circulating the ASYE open survey link were asked to send survey reminders to their in-scope staff multiple times. Suggested reminder email text was shared with open link local authorities as part of these communications.

Response rates

A breakdown of overall response rates and response rates by mode is shown in Tables A.7-A.8 overleaf. As Table A.7 shows, the Wave 3 survey response rate was 67% of those who had agreed to be recontacted at Wave 2, achieving a good spread of response by local authority Ofsted rating and region.

It is difficult to calculate an overall response rate for the ASYE strand as the survey was only distributed directly to relevant social workers in around half of local authorities who took part. The remaining local authorities distributed the survey themselves; as not all local authorities provided population figures for their ASYE social workers, we are unable to calculate a response rate for ASYE workers who completed through the open link. Therefore, only the response rate from sampled ASYE contacts can be calculated: this was 33% overall.

Table A.7: Response by local authority region and Ofsted rating (Wave 3 survey)

		Online <i>[valid emails provided]</i> <i>n</i>	Online <i>[valid emails provided]</i> <i>%</i>	Telephone <i>[approached via telephone]</i> <i>n</i>	Telephone <i>[approached via telephone]</i> <i>%</i>	Total response <i>[Online and telephone]</i> <i>n</i>	Total response <i>[Online and telephone]</i> <i>%</i>
Overall		1,284	39%	956	51%	2,240	67%
Region	North East	103	40%	72	49%	175	67%
	North West	107	37%	80	48%	187	63%
	Yorkshire and the Humber	92	45%	49	53%	141	68%
	East Midlands	151	38%	104	44%	255	64%
	West Midlands	101	37%	78	51%	179	65%
	East of England	181	41%	122	52%	303	68%
	South East	220	40%	161	50%	381	67%
	South West	120	45%	75	54%	195	72%
	Greater London	209	34%	215	57%	424	68%
Ofsted	Outstanding	227	39%	171	51%	398	68%
	Good	472	40%	350	53%	822	68%
	Requires improvement	421	40%	299	51%	720	67%
	Inadequate	151	35%	124	47%	275	62%

Table A.8: Response by local authority region and Ofsted rating (ASYE survey)

Overall		Sampled responses: Online	Sampled responses Online	Sampled responses Telephone	Sampled responses Telephone	Total sampled response	Total sampled response	Open-link responses	Sampled & open link TOTAL
		<i>[valid emails provided]</i> <i>n</i>	<i>[valid emails provided]</i> <i>%</i>	<i>[approached via telephone]</i> <i>n</i>	<i>[approached via telephone]</i> <i>%</i>	<i>[Online and telephone]</i> <i>n</i>	<i>[as % of starting sample]</i>	Online	Total ASYE responses
		90	17%	103	36%	193	33%	90	283
Region	North East	5	8%	11	30%	16	26%	6	22
	North West	14	24%	17	41%	31	45%	13	44
	Yorkshire and the Humber	16	22%	8	35%	24	32%	<5	27
	East Midlands	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	6	6
	West Midlands	8	9%	18	30%	26	27%	10	36
	East of England	11	27%	8	53%	19	40%	12	31
	South East	8	9%	17	31%	25	26%	11	36
	South West	6	25%	5	42%	11	42%	15	26
Greater London	22	21%	19	42%	41	36%	14	55	
Ofsted	Outstanding	11	11%	20	32%	31	31%	16	47
	Good	37	22%	21	40%	58	32%	31	89
	Requires improvement	36	16%	44	34%	80	33%	36	116
	Inadequate	6	12%	18	43%	24	39%	7	31

Telephone sample outcomes

Tables A.9 and A.10 show the outcomes from the telephone survey. For the Wave 3 survey, the telephone response rate was 51% overall: as a proportion of completed usable contacts this equates to 55% adjusted response rate.

Table A.9: Telephone survey outcomes (Wave 3 survey)

	n	As % of total starting sample
Total starting sample	1,874	-
All confirmed unusable sample	142	8%
Unobtainable	64	3%
No longer works at LA and no forwarding number given	14	1%
Requested to complete online	36	2%
Wrong / invalid number	4	0%
Not available during fieldwork	24	1%
All confirmed usable sample	1,732	92%
Soft appointment	47	3%
Other live sample (general call backs)	668	36%
Completed contacts	1,017	54%
Refusals	28	2%
Breakdown	12	1%
Completed via phone	956	51%
Subsequently completed online	21	1%

For the ASYE survey, the telephone response rate was 36% overall, or 44% of completed usable contacts.

Table A.10: Telephone survey outcomes (ASYE survey)

	n	As % of total starting sample
Total starting sample	285	
All confirmed unusable sample	53	19%
Unobtainable	22	8%
No longer works at LA and no forwarding number given	13	5%
Requested to complete online	11	4%
Wrong / invalid number	<5	1%
Not available during fieldwork	<5	1%
All confirmed usable sample	232	81%
Soft appointment	5	2%
Other live sample (general call backs)	118	41%
Completed contacts	108	38%
Refusals	<5	1%
Breakdown	<5	1%
Completed	102	36%
Subsequently completed online	<5	<1%

Analysis

Wave 3 weighting

The survey data was weighted to correct for minor differences in the achieved profile of the sample and the population according to the available DfE workforce statistics in 2018, at the time the research began (before Wave 1), where possible.

After comparing the profile of the Wave 3 achieved sample against the 2018 population statistics it was decided to weight by whether or not the social worker was directly employed by their local authority or employed through an agency (as shown in Table A.11 below), and by region, the same approach taken in Wave 2 and Wave 1.

While there was some variation in Ofsted rating between the achieved profile and the population figures, weighting was not applied by Ofsted rating as this is a fluid, often changing measure.

Table A.11 Profile of achieved interviews at Wave 3 compared with 2018 DfE workforce statistics

Demographic		Survey (n)	Survey (%)	2018 DfE statistics
Age band	Under 25 years	22	1%	n/a
	25 – 34 years	485	22%	n/a
	35 – 44 years	575	26%	n/a
	45 – 54 years	574	26%	n/a
	55 – 64 years	512	23%	n/a
	65 years +	63	3%	n/a
	Prefer not to say	9	<1%	
Gender	Male	359	16%	14%
	Female	1866	83%	86%
	Other	<5	<1%	-
	Prefer not to say	13	1%	-
Agency worker WEIGHTED	Yes	115	5%	15%
Region of LA WEIGHTED	East Midlands	231	11%	8%
	North East	167	8%	6%
	South East	350	17%	15%
	East of England	295	14%	9%
	Greater London	382	18%	16%
	North West	165	8%	14%
	South West	178	9%	9%
	West Midlands	169	8%	11%
	Yorkshire and the Humber	138	7%	12%
Ofsted rating of LA ³²	Outstanding	318	15%	9%
	Good	882	43%	37%
	Requires improvement	629	30%	41%
	Inadequate	246	12%	13%
Ethnicity ³³	White	1790	83%	79%
	Mixed	79	4%	3%
	Asian/Asian British	58	3%	5%

³² Local authority children's services departments are regularly inspected by Ofsted and therefore their ratings are subject to change. The distribution in this table is based on Single Inspection Framework (SIF) Ofsted ratings as of June 2018, when local authorities were first approached about taking part in the research. The information is published by the Association of Directors of Children's Services (ADCS): <https://adcs.org.uk/inspection/article/sif-outcomes-summary>

³³ The ethnicity profiles compared in this table have been re-based both for the survey and for the DfE workforce statistics, to exclude 'unknown/ information not provided'. This provides a more clear-cut comparison and shows that the known survey profile is very similar to the known profile in the DfE workforce statistics.

Demographic		Survey (n)	Survey (%)	2018 DfE statistics
	Black/ Black British	164	8%	11%
	Other Ethnicity	71	3%	1%
UNWEIGHTED BASE		2240	100%	

ASYE weighting

As with Wave 2, Wave 3 ASYE data was weighted by Region and Ethnicity, using the latest population statistics (2019-20), reflecting the time period that the survey was administered. Due to the nature of the sample being those employed by local authorities on their ASYE, there were no agency staff in the sample so weighing by this variable was not necessary.

Statistical significance

In terms of statistical confidence in the findings, the confidence interval for the main survey is 2, and for the ASYE survey 5.6. This means we can be 95% confident that the true figure lies within + or – 2 or 5.6 percentage points of the survey finding, based on the whole sample and a percentage of 50%.

Recontact for next wave and qualitative follow-up research

Respondents were asked separate questions about willingness to be re-contacted for the qualitative follow-up interviews and willingness to be recontacted for the next wave of the survey research. There was a high level of agreement on both measures, particularly for the Wave 3 survey respondents, the target of the qualitative interviews. 87% of W3 survey respondents agreed to be re-contacted for the qualitative follow-up and 98% to be re-contacted for Wave 4 of the survey. 91% of ASYE respondents consented to be re-contacted for the next wave of the survey.

The qualitative interviews took place between January and February 2021, and were all conducted by telephone, lasting around 45 minutes to one hour. The topic guides were designed by researchers from Manchester Metropolitan University, the University of Salford, and IFF Research, in consultation with the DfE.

The 40 interviews were split between the following three groups:

- 15 social workers who expect to stay in the profession in 12 months' time;
- 15 social workers that expect to leave the profession in 12 months' time; and
- 10 agency workers (with varying expectations about their future in the profession)

Within each group, interviews were recruited to ensure a spread of characteristics, such as job role, number of years in social work, LA Ofsted rating, gender, age band etc.

Interviews were digitally recorded with the permission of respondents, and transcribed. The transcriptions formed the material for analysis. Respondents were each offered a £20 voucher incentive as a thank-you for their participation.

Key Driver Analysis

At Wave 3, two ‘Key Driver Analysis’ (KDA) models, using linear regression, were used to explore the impact of a range of explanatory variables on the following two statements:

- “Overall, I find my current job satisfying”
- “I feel stressed by my job”

The models were run only on front line social workers working in local authority child and family social work at Wave 3, this being the group who were less satisfied with their jobs and more stressed than those in more senior job roles.

A long list of variables covering measures directly related to child and family social work, such as Ofsted rating, reflective supervision and length of time as a social worker, were included alongside demographics (gender, age, ethnicity). The full list is included in Table A.12 below.

Table A.12 Variables used for KDA

Individual characteristics	Job related characteristics
Gender	Main focus of their work (B7)
Age	Employment status in LA CAFSW (directly employed or employed by agency)
Ethnicity	Length of time as a qualified social worker (B8)
Region	Length of time at current employer (B8)
Qualification(s)	Views of employer (E1)
Childcare responsibilities	Relationship with manager (E2)
Physical/ mental health conditions	Tool and resources (E9)
	Wellbeing – workload, roles, stress (H1)
	Causes of stress (H2)
	Reflective supervision (E4, E5)

	OFSTED rating
	Impact of Covid-19 on various job-related factors (H4, H5)
	Number of cases (B10)
	Hours worked (B14)
	Time spent working above contracted hours (B12)
	CPD in previous 12 months (E10)
	Satisfaction with various aspects of the job (G1)

Prior to running the KDA models, factor analysis was used to group together responses to questions that both statistically and theoretically respondents answered in ways that are aligned indicating that these questions might represent an underlying concept. Four sets of questions were grouped in this way, as shown in Table A.13.

KDA produces a measure called R2, which gives an indication of how consistent the model is in explaining the variance of data in the model. Typically, the higher the R2 number, the more confident one can be that the KDA accurately explains the impact of the dependent variables on the dependent variable. Initial outputs from the satisfaction and stress models produced an R2 measure of 59% for both model; this is surprisingly high for survey research and indicates some multicollinearity in the model.³⁴

In order to reduce this multicollinearity and therefore the R2 measure, some variables were removed from each model, which were thought to have caused this. While not indicating a great deal of correlation in the correlation matrices run ahead of factor analysis, the following variables were removed:

- Satisfaction model: all G1 questions, asking about satisfaction with various aspects of the job (e.g. the sense of achievement, the pay received, the work itself)

³⁴ This variable was separated for the initial stress model, to see the impact the workload and feeling they are being asked to fulfil too many roles had on stress. These were subsequently removed from the model due to multicollinearity effects.

- Stress model: “My workload is too high” and “I feel I am being asked to fulfil too many different roles in my job”

With these models removed, the R2 squared measure reduced to 40% for the satisfaction model and 43% for the stress model – these are the models that are presented in the report. The key drivers for each model, and the impact they had on variance of each model, are shown in Table A.14 below.

Table A.13 Composite variables used for KDA

Composite variable	Individual variables
Relationship with manager	My manager encourages me to develop my skills
Relationship with manager	My manager is considerate of my life outside work
Relationship with manager	During the COVID-19 pandemic I have been well supported by my manager
Relationship with manager	I receive regular feedback on my performance
Tools and resources	The IT systems and software here support me to do my job
Tools and resources	I have the right resources to do my job effectively
Tools and resources	I have the right tools to do my job effectively
Well-being ³⁵	My workload is too high
Well-being	I feel I am being asked to fulfil too many different roles in my job
Well-being	I feel stressed by my job
Covid impact on Well-being	Work related stress
Covid impact on Well-being	Anxiety
Covid impact on Well-being	Complexity of cases
Covid impact on Well-being	Workload

³⁵ Only used as a composite variable in the overall satisfaction model.

Table A.14 KDA model results

"Overall, I find my current job satisfying"	Variance (%)
Well-being (H3)	14
I feel valued by my employer (E1)	14
I feel loyal to my employer (E1)	13
Relationship with manager (E2)	9
Tools and resources (E9)	6
Covid impact on relationship with children and families (H5)	6
"I feel stressed by my job"	Variance (%)
Covid impact on wellbeing (H4)	15
Working beyond contracted hours (B12)	14
Satisfaction with the work itself (G1)	9
Overall satisfaction with current job (G2)	6
Age (J1)	5

Non-responders at Wave 3

Of the 5,621 respondents who completed the Wave 1 survey, 2,319 (41%) did not participate in the research at Wave 2. Of the 3,302 respondents who completed the Wave 2 survey, 1,178 (36%) did not participate at Wave 3. This means that of the original 5,621 respondents who participated at Wave 1, 3,497 (62%) did not participate in the research at Wave 3.

The rest of this section details key differences between those who completed the Wave 3 survey and those who had dropped out of the research between Wave 2 and Wave 3, by demographic information, employment characteristics and attitudes towards their working lives, as captured through the survey. The data in this section is from Wave 2 of the survey as this was the last point at which there was directly comparable data for Wave 3 responders and Wave 3 non-responders. The data here is unweighted, as it is an analysis of the sample for the study rather than the wider population of child and family social workers. A full comparison of demographic and employment characteristics as well as some key attitudinal measures can be found in Table A.15 below.

Demographic and employment characteristics

Overall, demographic characteristics of Wave 3 non-responders were fairly similar to the Wave 2 responders. However, as with Wave 2, non-responders were slightly more likely to be Black / Black British (9% compared with 7% of Wave 3 responders) and less likely to be White (77% compared with 80%).

Non-responders were also more likely to: be aged between 35-44 years old (29% compared with 25% of Wave 3 responders); be front line practitioners (56% compared with 52%); have been at their employer for 2-3 years (28% compared with 22%), and;

work at a local authority with an 'Inadequate' Ofsted rating (15% compared with 11% of Wave 3 responders).

There was very little variation in employment situation between the two groups, although non-responders were slightly more likely to work in local authority child and family social work (95% compared with 93%). Wave 3 non-responders were, however, slightly less likely to think that they would be directly employed by a local authority in 12 months' time (72% compared with 75%) and slightly more likely to think they would be working in agency work (8% compared with 6%).

Attitudes

Attitudes of Wave 3 responders and non-responders differed for some measures, although non-responders were not always more negative about their working lives, as one might expect.

Wave 3 non-responders were less satisfied overall at Wave 2, compared with Wave 3 responders: 73% of Wave 3 non-responders reported being satisfied overall with their social work careers to date, compared with 76% of responders.

However, Wave 3 non-responders were more likely to disagree that they felt valued by their employer than responders (18% disagreed, compared with 22% of responders) and that their workload was too high (27% disagreed, compared with 23% of responders). This did not mean that more Wave 3 responders agreed with each measure though, with the difference driven by more Wave 3 responders answering 'neither agree nor disagree'.

Table A.15: W3 non-response, compared with Wave 3 responders (Wave 2 data)

NB: * in the W3 non-responders (%) column indicates a statistically significant difference compared with the W3 responders, at a 95% confidence level.

Demographic/characteristic (unweighted)		W3 responders	W3 responders	W3 NON-responders	W3 NON-responders
		W2 data (n)	W2 data (%)	W2 data (n)	W2 data (%)
Age	Under 25 years	26	1%	28	2%
	25 – 34 years	474	22%	279	24%
	35 – 44 years	532	25%	334	28%*
	45 – 54 years	565	27%	289	25%
	55 – 64 years	486	23%	206	18%*
	65 years +	33	2%	26	2%
	Don't know / prefer not to say	8	0%	16	1%
Gender	Male	343	16%	202	18%
	Female	1768	83%	968	82%
	Other	<5	<1%	0	-
	Don't know / prefer not to say	11	1%	8	1%
Ethnicity	White	1695	80%	911	77%
	Mixed	74	4%	35	3%
	Asian	56	3%	38	3%
	Black	154	7%	111	9%*
	Arab	-	-	-	-
	Other	-	-	-	-
	Don't know / prefer not to say	77	4%	56	5%
Region	East Midlands	234	12%	144	13%
	North East	153	14%	88	14%
	South East	347	19%	194	19%
	East of England	275	8%	152	8%
	Greater London	371	8%	210	9%
	North West	161	18%	101	17%
	South West	163	8%	76	7%
	West Midlands	154	8%	96	9%
	Yorkshire and the Humber	126	6%	66	6%
Ofsted	Outstanding	322	16%	179	16%
	Good	741	37%	396	35%
	Requires improvement	696	35%	382	34%
	Inadequate	225	11%	170	15%*
Agency worker	Yes	95	5%	64	6%
Job role	ASYE	21	1%	26	2%
	Front line practitioner	1031	52%	623	56%
	Practice supervisor	161	8%	80	7%
	Practice leader	68	3%	30	3%
	Team manager	336	17%	177	16%

Demographic/characteristic (unweighted)		W3 respondents W2 data (n)	W3 responders W2 data (%)	W3 NON-responders W2 data (n)	W3 NON-responders W2 data (%)
	Senior service manager/director	145	7%	59	5%*
	Other	216	11%	116	10%
	Don't know / prefer not to say	<5	<1%	8	1%
Length of time at employer	Less than 6 months	81	4%	40	4%
	6 months to 1 year	64	3%	26	2%
	1 year	135	7%	89	8%
	2 to 3 years	433	22%	310	28%*
	4 to 5 years	293	15%	175	16%
	6 to 10 years	326	17%	163	15%
	More than 10 years	644	33%	311	28%*
	Don't know / prefer not to say	<5	<1%	5	<1%
Satisfied with career to date	Agree	1566	76%	842	73%*
	Disagree	232	11%	126	11%
	Neither agree nor disagree	265	13%	192	17%*
	Don't know / prefer not to say	6	<1%	<5	<1%
Loyal to employer	Agree	1494	76%	864	77%
	Disagree	171	9%	77	7%
	Neither agree nor disagree	309	16%	169	15%
	Don't know / prefer not to say	6	<1%	9	1%
Valued by employer	Agree	1157	58%	663	59%
	Disagree	427	22%	198	18%*
	Neither agree nor disagree	387	20%	250	22%
	Don't know / prefer not to say	9	1%	8	1%
Stressed	Agree	1068	54%	633	57%
	Disagree	476	24%	266	24%
	Neither agree nor disagree	425	22%	215	19%
	Don't know / prefer not to say	11	1%	5	<1%
Workload is too high	Agree	1058	53%	591	53%
	Disagree	452	23%	303	27%*
	Neither agree nor disagree	461	23%	215	19%*
	Don't know / prefer not to say	9	1%	10	1%
Expected situation in 12 months' time	Working in child and family social work for a local authority - directly	1600	75%	843	72%*
	Working in child and family social work for a local authority - via an agency	118	6%	90	8%*
	Working in child and family social work - in the private or voluntary sector	81	4%	43	4%

Demographic/characteristic (unweighted)		W3 responde rs	W3 respo nders	W3 NON- responde rs	W3 NON- respon ders
		W2 data (n)	W2 data (%)	W2 data (n)	W2 data (%)
	Working in social work, but outside of child and family social work	68	3%	49	4%
	Working outside of social work altogether	97	5%	55	5%
	Not working at all	72	3%	39	3%
	Don't know / prefer not to say	88	4%	59	5%
Current situation	Yes	1980	93%	1119	95%*
	No - But I'm still in child and family social work	36	2%	12	1%
	No - adult social work	15	1%	13	1%
	No - but still in social work	20	1%	11	1%
	No - I am employed, but have left social work altogether	18	1%	6	1%
	No - I am unemployed and looking for work	7	<1%	<5	<1%
	No - I am undertaking full-time further study. Please note: if you were studying part-time	<5	<1%	<5	<1%
	No - I am on a career break (for example, travelling, caring responsibilities etc.)	20	1%	<5	<1%
	No - I am doing something else (for example retired, ill-health etc.)	26	1%	9	1%
	Don't know / prefer not to say	0	-	<5	<1%

Appendix 2: Wave 3 survey questionnaire

Telephone screener

ASK PERSON WHO ANSWERS PHONE

S1 **Good morning / afternoon / evening. My name is NAME and I'm calling from IFF Research. Please can I speak to [NAME]?**

Respondent answers phone	1	CONTINUE
Transferred to respondent	2	CONTINUE
Hard appointment	3	MAKE APPOINTMENT
Soft Appointment	4	MAKE APPOINTMENT
Engaged	5	CALL BACK
No reply / Answer phone		CALL BACK
Call back during Consumer hours	14	CALL BACK
Call back during B2B hours	15	CALL BACK
Refusal	6	CLOSE
Not available in deadline	7	CLOSE
Fax Line	8	CLOSE
Business Number	10	CLOSE
Dead line	11	CLOSE
Wrong telephone number	15	CLOSE
Person no longer works here	14	CLOSE
Request reassurances	12	GO TO REASSURANCES
Request reassurance email	13	COLLECT EMAIL ADDRESS THEN CONTINUE OR MAKE APPOINTMENT (SEE APPENDIX FOR EMAIL TEXT)

ASK CORRECT RESPONDENT (S1 = 1 OR 2)

S2 **Good morning / afternoon, my name is NAME, calling from IFF Research, an independent market research company, on behalf of the Department for Education (DFE).**

You might remember that around a year ago you took part in a study of social workers' career experiences, which IFF is conducting on behalf of the Department for Education. At that time you agreed we could re-contact you to see whether your circumstances or views have changed.

We understand that your employment situation may have been affected by the COVID-19 pandemic. If so, we would still like to hear from you, whether or not you are working in child and family social work.

Would you have some time to go through the questions now? The interview should take around 10 minutes.

ADD IF NECESSARY:

The research will improve understanding about what motivates people to enter child and family social work, why they stay or leave, and what impacts on their job satisfaction and career development. It will also help us to understand the impact of COVID-19 on these factors.

We are interested in your experiences, even if you are thinking of changing your job or of leaving the profession, or if you have already changed job or left.

All responses will be anonymous and analysed in aggregate form. No individual staff or local authorities will be identified in the reporting.

For further information you can email SWResearch@iffresearch.com.

**PROVIDE LINK TO THE PRIVACY NOTICE ON REQUEST:PRIVACY STATEMENT:
www.iffresearch.com/longitudinal-study-of-child-and-family-social-workers-privacystatements**

INTERVIEWER NOTE: YOU MUST GET A CLEAR 'YES', OR SIMILAR RESPONSE, TO INDICATE CONSENT TO TAKING PART

Continue	1	CONTINUE
Hard appointment	2	MAKE APPOINTMENT
Soft appointment	3	MAKE APPOINTMENT
Call back during Consumer hours	10	Call back
Call back during B2B hours	11	Call back
Refusal	4	GO TO S3
Refusal – company policy	5	GO TO S3
Refusal – taken part in recent survey	6	GO TO S3
Not available in deadline	7	THANK AND CLOSE

Request reassurances	8	GO TO REASSURANCES
Request reassurance email	9	COLLECT EMAIL ADDRESS THEN CONTINUE OR MAKE APPOINTMENT (SEE APPENDIX FOR EMAIL TEXT)

ASK IF NAMED RESPONDENT NOT ON SITE (S1=14)

S2a Do you have an alternative number we could reach NAME on?

Yes (please type in number)	1	THANK AND CLOSE (THIS BECOMES THE 'REFERRAL NUMBER')
No / Don't know	2	THANK AND CLOSE (GOES INTO UNUSABLE)

IF REFUSED (S2=4-6)

S3 Would you be willing to take part online instead?

Yes	1	CHECK EMAIL ADDRESS, CORRECT IF NEEDED, AND THANK AND CLOSE
No	2	THANK AND CLOSE

IF AGREED TO TAKE PART (S2 =1)

S4 Before we begin, I just need to read out a quick statement based on GDPR legislation: First, all of the information you provide will be treated in the strictest confidence, and you have the right to the following:

- 1) **A copy of your data**
- 2) **Amending your data**
- 3) **Withdrawing from the research at any point**

To guarantee this, and as part of our quality control procedures, all interviews are recorded.

Based on this information, are you willing to take part?

Yes	1	
No	2	THANK AND CLOSE

REASSURANCES TO USE IF NECESSARY

Your details were given to us by [INSERT LA ON SAMPLE].

If respondent wishes to confirm validity of survey or get more information about aims and objectives, they can contact:

- **MRS: Market Research Society on 0800 975 9596**
- **IFF: Jonnie Felton or Alfie Sanders-Earley on 0207 250 3035**

Online landing page

Thank you for your interest in this landmark national study on the career experiences of child and family social workers. You took part in the second survey around a year ago and at that time you agreed we could re-contact you to see whether any of your circumstances or views have changed.

We understand that your employment situation may have been affected by the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic. If this is the case, we would still like to hear about what you are doing at the moment, whether or not you are working in child and family social work.

Your contribution will be invaluable to the research, even if you are thinking of changing job or of leaving the profession, or if you have already changed job or left. The research is being conducted by IFF Research, Manchester Metropolitan University and the University of Salford on behalf of the Department for Education (DfE). Capturing the views of as many people as possible who took part in the first survey is crucial to ensure that the research remains representative.

For further information about the study, or to find out what happens to the survey data and how it is stored, please [click here](#).

Taking part is voluntary and you may withdraw at any point. If at the end of the survey you'd like to request access to your data or have this deleted, please go to www.iffresearch.com/gdpr/ for more information. All information collected will be treated in the strictest confidence, in accordance with the Market Research Society Code of Conduct.

- If you are willing to take part, please click 'Next'.
- IF INDIVIDUALISED LINK: Please note, **you can stop and start as many times as you like** and pick up where you left off. To do this you just need to use the link provided in your email invitation.
- When completing the survey, please only use the 'Next' button on the page rather than the 'Back' and 'Forward' buttons in your browser.

B Current Employment Situation

IF ONLINE DISPLAY TO ALL / IF TELEPHONE READ OUT TO ALL: **Please note: throughout this survey, where we refer to 'local authority' we also include Children's Trusts delivering LA Children's Services.**

ASK ALL

- B1 **Are you currently working in a Local authority/ Trust in child and family social work? By this we mean any role in child and family social work, including more senior roles which do not have a direct caseload.**

If you are currently on furlough due to the COVID-19 pandemic, please count this as employed, even if you are not currently working.

ADD IF NECESSARY: If you are on extended leave – such as maternity leave, or sick leave – but still on the payroll of your employer, then please count this as employed.

IF ONLINE DISPLAY: PLEASE GIVE ONE ANSWER

IF TELEPHONE: DO NOT READ OUT. IF NO, PROMPT AS NECESSARY. SINGLE CODE.

Yes	1	CONTINUE TO B2
No – but I'm still in child and family social work	2	GO B2 & B3 &B4NW-B4C THEN F1C
No – I now work in adult social work	9	GO B2 & B3 &B4NW-B4C THEN F1C
No – I've moved to a different area of social work (outside child and family or adult social work)	10	GO B2 & B3 &B4NW-B4C THEN F1C
No – I am employed, but have left social work altogether	3	GO TO F1A
No – I am unemployed and looking for work	4	GO TO F1
No – I am undertaking full-time further study. <i>Please note: if you were studying part-time alongside work, then please select from the relevant work option (either option 1, 2 or 3)</i>	5	GO TO B1C
No – I am on a career break (for example, travelling, caring responsibilities etc.)	6	GO TO F1
No – I am doing something else (for example retired, ill-health etc.)	7	GO TO F1
IF TELEPHONE DISPLAY: "(DO NOT READ OUT)": Don't know / prefer not to say	8	GO TO F1

IF UNDERTAKING FULL-TIME FURTHER STUDY (B1=5)

B1c **Is the further study that you are undertaking related to social work?**

Yes – it is related to child and family social work	1	GO TO i5
Yes – it is related to another area of social work	2	GO TO i5
No	3	Go to B1D
IF TELEPHONE DISPLAY: “(DO NOT READ OUT)”: Don’t know / prefer not to say	4	GO TO i5

ASK ALL STILL IN SW (B1=1 OR B1=2 OR B1=9 OR B1=10)

B2 **Which ONE of the following best applies to you?**

IF ONLINE DISPLAY: PLEASE GIVE ONE ANSWER

IF TELEPHONE: READ OUT, CODE FIRST THAT APPLIES. SINGLE CODE.

I am employed by [INSERT LA FROM SAMPLE] and I am based in the local authority / Children’s Trust	1
I work in social work at [INSERT LA FROM SAMPLE] but I am technically employed by an agency	2
I am employed by [INSERT LA FROM SAMPLE] but am on secondment to or based in another organisation e.g. CAHMS, NHS Trust, Social Work England or a Regional Adoption Agency	3
I am working at [INSERT LA FROM SAMPLE] on an independent / self-employed basis	4
I am employed by a local authority/ Children’s Trust, but not/no longer by [INSERT LA FROM SAMPLE IF CLOSED LINK AND FROM B1b IF OPEN LINK]	5
I am employed by an agency but not/ no longer work at [INSERT LA FROM SAMPLE IF CLOSED LINK AND FROM B1b (W1) IF OPEN LINK]	6
I am independent / self-employed but not/ no longer work at [INSERT LA FROM SAMPLE]	9
Or are you employed on some other basis (please specify)	7
IF TELEPHONE DISPLAY: “(DO NOT READ OUT)”: Don’t know / prefer not to say	8

IF PREVIOUSLY EMPLOYED BY LA DIRECT BUT NOW EMPLOYED BY AGENCY OR INDEPENDENT/ SELF-EMPLOYED (B2=6 OR 9)

B3 **Why are you now working [IF B2 = 6: for an agency] [IF B2 = 9: on an independent/ self-employed basis] instead of directly with a local authority?**

IF ONLINE DISPLAY: PLEASE GIVE AS MANY ANSWERS AS APPLY.

IF TELEPHONE: DO NOT READ OUT. MULTICODE.

ASK IF MULTICODE AT B3

B3a **And which ONE of these is the main reason you're working [IF B2 = 6: for an agency] [IF B2 = 9: on an independent/ self-employed basis] instead of directly with a local authority?**

IF ONLINE: PLEASE SELECT ONE ANSWER ONLY

IF TELEPHONE PROMPT WITH ANSWERS FROM B3 IF NEEDED. SINGLE CODE.

DS: Only show options selected at B3.

The pay is better	1
I have more flexibility about when I work	2
Better work-life balance	3
More opportunities to gain experience of different roles	4
I am less accountable/ have less responsibility	5
I have more professional autonomy	6
Lack of available local jobs	7
Dissatisfaction with permanent employment	8
Due to the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic	11
Other (please specify)	9
Don't know / prefer not to say	10

ASK IF EMPLOYED BUT NOT/ NO LONGER EMPLOYED BY LA ON SAMPLE OR BY ANOTHER LA DIRECTLY (B2=6, 7, 8 or 9 or B1=2)

B4nw **In your current role, do you work at a local authority/ Children's Trust?**

IF ONLINE DISPLAY: PLEASE SELECT ONE ANSWER

IF TELEPHONE: PROMPT AS NECESSARY. SINGLE CODE.

Yes	1	CONTINUE
No – but it is a public-sector organisation	2	ROUTE TO SECTION F
No – it is a private or voluntary sector organisation	3	ROUTE TO SECTION F
IF TELEPHONE DISPLAY: "(DO NOT READ OUT)": Don't know / prefer not to say	4	CONTINUE

ASK IF NOW WORK AT A DIFFERENT LOCAL AUTHORITY THAN LA ON SAMPLE (B2=5 OR B4NW=1)

B4a **What is the name of the local authority/ Children's Trust you now work at?**

To confirm, results will not be analysed by individual Local authority/ Trust.

IF ONLINE DISPLAY: PLEASE SELECT FROM THE DROP-DOWN LIST.

DO NOT READ OUT: Don't know / prefer not to say	1	THANK AND CLOSE
Local authority is not in England	2	GO TO F1

IF STILL IN SOCIAL WORK BUT AT DIFFERENT LA TO LA ON SAMPLE [B2=5 OR B4NW=1]

B4b Why are you now working at [IF LA given at B4a: 'INSERT LA FROM B4a' instead of; IF B4a=1: a different local authority/ Trust to] [INSERT LA FROM SAMPLE]?

IF ONLINE DISPLAY: PLEASE GIVE AS MANY ANSWERS AS APPLY.

IF TELEPHONE: DO NOT READ OUT. MULTICODE.

ASK IF MULTICODE AT B4b

B4c And which ONE of these is the main reason you are now working at [IF LA given at B4a: 'INSERT LA FROM B4a' instead of; IF B4a=1: a different local authority/ Trust to] [INSERT LA FROM SAMPLE]?

IF TELEPHONE PROMPT WITH ANSWERS FROM B4B IF NEEDED. SINGLE CODE.

DS: Only show options selected at B4b.

The pay/benefits package is better	1
Better working hours	2
Better work-life balance	3
More opportunities to gain experience of different roles	4
Better progression opportunities	5
I have more professional autonomy	6
I relocated	7
Change in personal circumstances (other)	8
Better opportunities to develop skills	9
My workload was too high at [INSERT LA FROM SAMPLE]	10
I did not like the working culture at [INSERT LA FROM SAMPLE]	11
I found one or more colleagues difficult to work with at [INSERT LA FROM SAMPLE]	12
I was only on a temporary/fixed term contract at [INSERT LA FROM SAMPLE]	13
Promotion/ I am now in a more senior role	14
I did not like the physical working environment at [INSERT LA FROM SAMPLE]	15
I moved to a local authority / Children's Trust with a better Ofsted rating	16
I wanted to work closer to home / reduce my commute	17
I wanted to change role / try a different role	18
Poor IT systems and software at [INSERT LA FROM SAMPLE]	19
Due to the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic	22
Other (please specify)	20
IF TELEPHONE DISPLAY: "(DO NOT READ OUT)" Don't know / prefer not to say	21

ASK ALL DIRECTLY EMPLOYED BY AN LA BUT EMPLOYED BY AN AGENCY, SELF EMPLOYED OR NOT IN LA CAFSW IN W2 (B2=1, 3, 5 and SAMPLE_VARIABLE=agency, self-employed or not in LA CAFSW in W2)

B4d Our data shows that when you completed the last wave of the survey you were [FROM SAMPLE: working for an agency; self-employed; not working in local authority child and family social work].

Why are you now employed by a local authority / Children’s Trust directly?

IF ONLINE DISPLAY: PLEASE GIVE AS MANY ANSWERS AS APPLY.

IF TELEPHONE: DO NOT READ OUT. MULTICODE.

ASK IF MULTICODE AT B4d

B4e And which ONE of these is the main reason you are now employed by a local authority / Children’s Trust directly?

SINGLECODE.

IF ONLINE: PLEASE SELECT ONE ANSWER ONLY

IF TELEPHONE PROMPT WITH ANSWERS FROM B3 IF NEEDED. SINGLE CODE.

DS: Only show options selected at B3.

	B4D	B4e
The pay is better	1	1
I have more job security	2	2
Better progression opportunities	3	3
I have more flexibility about when I work	4	4
Better work-life balance	5	5
I wanted more steady / regular employment	6	6
I did not like working at my previous employer	7	7
Lack of available jobs	8	8
Returning after a career break	9	9
Due to the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic (please specify)	10	10
Other (please specify)	11	11
Don’t know / prefer not to say	12	12

ASK ALL: **The next few questions are about your current role.**

ASK ALL STILL IN CAFSW (B1=1)

B5 **Which ONE of the following best describes your current role?**

IF ONLINE DISPLAY: PLEASE GIVE ONE ANSWER

IF TELEPHONE: READ OUT. SINGLE CODE.

Assessed and supported year in employment (ASYE)	1
Frontline practitioner	2
Practice supervisor	3
Team manager	8
Practice leader	4
Senior service manager or Director not directly involved in practice	5
Other (please specify)	6
IF TELEPHONE DISPLAY: "(DO NOT READ OUT)": Don't know / prefer not to say	7

ASK ALL STILL IN CAFSW (B1=1)

B7 **What is the main focus of your work? For example, Children in Need; Adoption; Early help.**

If you work in a support or supervisory role, please select the areas in which those you support or supervise work.

IF ONLINE DISPLAY: PLEASE GIVE AS MANY ANSWERS AS APPLY.

IF TELEPHONE: DO NOT READ OUT. MULTICODE.

Adoption	1
Fostering	2
Children with disabilities	3
Placements/ permanence	4
Leaving care	5
Youth offending	6
Duty/ first response / front door / MASH	7
Health	8
Education	9
Assessment	10
Child in Need/ Child Protection	11
Looked after children	14
Prevention / early help services	15
Kinship care	16
COVID-19 recovery	17
Other (please specify)	12
IF TELEPHONE DISPLAY: "(DO NOT READ OUT)": Don't know / prefer not to say	13

B1

ASK ALL STILL IN CAFSW (B1=1)

B8 **And how long have you worked....?**

READ OUT: Please round to the nearest whole (if required)

IF ONLINE DISPLAY: PLEASE GIVE ONE ANSWER IN EACH ROW

IF TELEPHONE: PROMPT AS NECESSARY. CODE ONE PER ROW.

	Less than 6 months	6 months to 1 year	1 year	2 to 3 years	4 to 5 years	6 to 10 years	More than 10 years	IF TELEPHONE DISPLAY: "(DO NOT READ OUT)" Don't know / prefer not to say
In child and family social work	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
At your current employer	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
In your current role, with your current employer	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8

ASK ALL STILL IN CAFSW (B1=1)

B9 **Thinking about your contractual arrangements, are you on a permanent contract or something different?**

IF ONLINE DISPLAY: PLEASE GIVE ONE ANSWER

IF TELEPHONE: DO NOT READ OUT, PROMPT AS NECESSARY IF NOT ON PERMANENT CONTRACT. SINGLE CODE.

Permanent / open ended contract	1
Fixed term contract lasting 12 months or longer	2
Fixed term contract lasting less than 12 months	3
Temporary agency or casual contract	4
Consultancy contract	5
Secondment	
Some other contractual arrangement (please specify)	6
IF TELEPHONE DISPLAY: "(DO NOT READ OUT)": Don't know / prefer not to say	7

ASK ALL STILL IN CAFSW AND NOT A TEAM LEADER (B1=1 AND B5≠5 OR 8)

B10 **How many cases are allocated to you currently?**

Please note, by 'case' we mean either:

- An individual allocated to a social worker (for example a family of three siblings would be three individual cases); and/or
- A carer or carers allocated to a social worker for the purposes of fostering or adoption

Please only count cases which are assigned directly to you personally rather than all cases held within your team or your department.

WRITE IN	
Not applicable: non-case-holding role	1
DO NOT READ OUT: Don't know / prefer not to say	2

IF DON'T KNOW AT B10 (B10=2)

B10a **Please could you estimate the number of cases allocated to you currently, using the bands below?**

READ OUT: **Please round to the nearest whole (if required)**

IF TELEPHONE: PROMPT AS NECESSARY. SINGLE CODE

1-5	1
6-10	2
11-15	3
16-20	4
21-25	5
26-29	6
30+	7
IF TELEPHONE DISPLAY: "(DO NOT READ OUT)": Don't know / prefer not to say	8

ASK ALL STILL IN CAFSW (B1=1)

B11 How many hours are you contracted to work per week?

IF ONLINE DISPLAY / IF TELEPHONE READ OUT TO ALL: **If no week is 'typical' then please think about the last full week that you worked.**

DS: ALLOW RANGE OF 0-168 HOURS

WRITE IN	
Not applicable e.g. self-employed, zero-hours contracts	1
DO NOT READ OUT: Don't know / prefer not to say	2

IF DON'T KNOW AT B11 (B11=2)

B11a Please could estimate which of the following hourly bands you are contracted to work per week?

READ OUT: **Please round to the nearest whole (if required).**

IF TELEPHONE: PROMPT AS NECESSARY. SINGLE CODE

1-15	1
16-20	2
21-30	3
31-35	4
36-40	5
41-45	6
46-50	7
51+	8
IF TELEPHONE DISPLAY: "(DO NOT READ OUT)": Don't know / prefer not to say	X
Not applicable e.g. self-employed, zero-hours contracts	v

ASK ALL STILL IN CAFSW (B1=1)

B12 **And how often would you say you work over and above your contracted hours to keep up with your workload?**

IF ONLINE: PLEASE GIVE ONE ANSWER.

IF TELEPHONE: READ OUT. SINGLE CODE.

Never	1
Occasionally	2
Most weeks	3
All the time	4
Not applicable e.g. self-employed, zero-hours contract	5
IF TELEPHONE DISPLAY: "(DO NOT READ OUT)": Don't know / prefer not to say	6

DS: B14 AND B15 TO BE DISPLAYED ON ONE PAGE.

IF ONLINE DISPLAY / IF TELEPHONE READ OUT TO ALL: **How many hours in a typical week do you spend doing the following...**

IF ONLINE DISPLAY / IF TELEPHONE READ OUT TO ALL: **if no week is 'typical' then please think about the last full week that you worked.**

ASK ALL STILL IN CAFSW (B1=1)

B14 **1) ...Working? Please exclude any time spent travelling to and from home from your answer.**

DS: ALLOW RANGE OF 0-168 HOURS

WRITE IN	
Not applicable e.g. self-employed, zero-hours contracts	1
Don't know / prefer not to say	2

IF DON'T KNOW AT B14 (B14=2)

B14a **Please could you estimate the number of hours you spend working in a typical week?**

READ OUT: **Please round to the nearest whole (if required)**

IF ONLINE DISPLAY / IF TELEPHONE ADD IF NECESSARY: **If no week is 'typical' then please think about the last full week that you worked.**

IF TELEPHONE: PROMPT AS NECESSARY. SINGLE CODE

1-15	1
16-20	2
21-30	3
31-35	4
36-40	5
41-45	6
46-50	7
51+	8
IF TELEPHONE DISPLAY: "(DO NOT READ OUT)": Don't know / prefer not to say	X
Not applicable e.g. self-employed, zero-hours contracts	V

ASK ALL STILL IN CAFSW (B1=1)

B15 2) Doing direct work with children and families/ carers?

WRITE IN	
Not applicable - I do not do any direct work with children and families	3
Not applicable - e.g. self-employed, zero-hours contracts	1
Don't know / prefer not to say	2

IF DON'T KNOW AT B15 (B15=2)

B15a **Please could you estimate the number of hours in a typical week you spend doing direct work with children and families / carers – by direct work we mean talking with them face-to-face, by video conference or by telephone?**

READ OUT: **Please round to the nearest whole (if required)**

IF ONLINE DISPLAY / IF TELEPHONE ADD IF NECESSARY: **If no week is 'typical' then please think about the last full week that you worked.**

IF TELEPHONE: PROMPT AS NECESSARY. SINGLE CODE

0-2 hours	1
3-5 hours	2
6-10 hours	3
11-15 hours	4
16-20 hours	5
More than 20 hours	6
Not applicable	7
IF TELEPHONE DISPLAY: "(DO NOT READ OUT)": Don't know / prefer not to say	8

ASK IF DO DIRECT WORK WITH FAMILIES AND HAS PROVIDED THE NUMBER OF HOURS
(B15=INTEGER PROVIDED OR B15a=1-6)

B15b And how much of this time is spent working with children and families/carers face to face versus working with them remotely or virtually?

Remote or virtual work could include contact by video call, Skype or over the telephone.

Please write in the number of hours below.

DS: ENSURE SUM OF THE TWO DOES NOT EXCEED ANSWER GIVEN AT B15/B15a

Face to face	__ hours
Remotely / virtually	__ hours
Don't know	1

ASK ALL STILL IN CAFSW (B1=1)

B17 During your time at your current employer have you made use of any of the following arrangements...?

IF ONLINE: PLEASE GIVE ONE ANSWER PER ROW.

IF TELEPHONE: READ OUT. CODE ONE PER ROW.

	Yes	No	Can't remember
Flexi-time	1	2	3
Job sharing (sharing a full-time job with someone)	1	2	3
Time off in lieu (TOIL)	1	2	3
Paid overtime	1	2	3

ASK ALL STILL IN CAFSW (B1=1)

B18 Have you been furloughed at all since the start of the COVID-19 pandemic?

SINGLECODE.

Yes	1	ASK B19
No	2	ASK E1
Don't know	3	ASK E1

ASK ALL WHO BEEN FURLOUGHED (B18=1)

B19 Are you currently on furlough?

SINGLECODE.

Yes	1
No	2
Don't know	3

C Entry Route to Social Work – removed after W1

D Career History – removed after W1

E Overall views of employer

ASK ALL STILL IN CAFSW (B1=1)

- E1 **To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements about working in child and family social work at your current employer?**

IF ONLINE: PLEASE GIVE ONE ANSWER PER ROW

IF TELEPHONE: READ OUT. CODE ONE PER ROW.

	Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	IF TELE DISPLAY: “(DO NOT READ OUT)”: Don’t know / prefer not to say
I feel loyal to my organisation	1	2	3	4	5	6
I feel valued by my employer	1	2	3	4	5	6
I am proud to tell people that I am a child and family social worker	1	2	3	4	5	6

ASK ALL STILL IN CAFSW (B1=1)

- E2 **Now thinking about the managers at your current employer, to what extent do you agree or disagree with each of the following?**

IF ONLINE: PLEASE GIVE ONE ANSWER PER ROW

IF TELEPHONE: READ OUT. CODE ONE PER ROW.

	Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	IF TELE DISPLAY “(DO NOT READ OUT)”: Don’t know / prefer not to say
My manager encourages me to develop my skills	1	2	3	4	5	6

My manager is considerate of my life outside work	1	2	3	4	5	6
I receive regular feedback on my performance	1	2	3	4	5	6
During the COVID-19 pandemic I have been well supported by my manager	1	2	3	4	5	6

ASK IF B5=1/2/3/4/6

E3 How frequently, if at all, have you received reflective supervision in the last 12 months?

Reflective supervision is a learning process that allows the practitioner to explore the factors influencing their practice, including emotions, assumptions and power relationships; develop an understanding of the knowledge base informing their practice and its limits; and, to identify next steps.

READ OUT: Please round to the nearest whole (if required)

IF TELEPHONE: PROMPT AS NECESSARY. SINGLE CODE.

At least once every two weeks	1	ASK E4
Once every three or four weeks	2	ASK E4
Once every five or six weeks	3	ASK E4
Less frequently than every six weeks	4	ASK E4
Have not received reflective supervision since joining current employer	5	ASK E4
Don't know / prefer not to say	6	ASK E6

ASK ALL ANSWERING E3 EXCEPT 'DON'T KNOW' (E3=1-5)

E4 **And in your view, is this...**

IF TELEPHONE: READ OUT. SINGLE CODE.

SHOW FOR ALL EXCEPT CODE 5 AT E3 'Have not received reflective supervision since joining current local authority: Too much	1
About right	2
Not enough	3
IF TELEPHONE DISPLAY "(DO NOT READ OUT)": Don't know / prefer not to say	4

ASK ALL WHO HAVE RECEIVED SUPERVISION (E3=1-4)

E5 **How would you rate the quality of the reflective supervision you have received in the last 12 months?**

IF TELEPHONE: READ OUT. SINGLE CODE.

Very good	1
Good	2
Poor	3
Very poor	4
IF TELEPHONE DISPLAY "(DO NOT READ OUT)": Don't know / prefer not to say	5

ASK ALL STILL IN CAFSW AND NOT ON ASYE (B1=1 AND B5≠1)

E7 **Are you currently responsible for directly supervising any of the qualified Child and Family Social Workers at your current employer?**

Yes (please specify how many):	1	ASK E8
No	2	ASK E9
Don't know / prefer not to say	3	ASK E9

ASK IF CURRENTLY A SUPERVISOR (E7=1)

E8 **How confident are you in your ability to provide adequate support and supervision during the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic?**

IF TELEPHONE: READ OUT. SINGLE CODE.

Very confident	1
Fairly confident	2
Not very confident	3
Not at all confident	4

IF TELEPHONE DISPLAY “(DO NOT READ OUT)”: Don’t know / prefer not to say

5

ASK ALL STILL IN CAFSW (B1=1)

E9 And to what extent do you agree or disagree that...

Please answer about your current circumstances.

IF ONLINE: PLEASE GIVE ONE ANSWER PER ROW.

IF TELEPHONE: READ OUT. CODE ONE PER ROW.

	Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	IF TELEPHONE DISPLAY“(DO NOT READ OUT)”: Don’t know / prefer not to say
I am able to access the right learning and development opportunities when I need to	1	2	3	4	5	6
I have the right tools (e.g. risk assessment tools, planning tools, etc.) to do my job effectively	1	2	3	4	5	6
I have the right resources (e.g. equipment, petty cash, etc.) to do my job effectively	1	2	3	4	5	6
The IT systems and software here support me to do my job	1	2	3	4	5	6
DELETED	1	2	3	4	5	6
DELETED	1	2	3	4	5	6

ASK ALL STILL IN CAFSW (B1=1)

E10 Have you undertaken any learning and development/ CPD supported by your employer over the past 12 months?

By ‘supported’ we mean learning and development that has been provided, facilitated or funded by your employer.

Yes	1
No	2
Don’t know / prefer not to say	3

ASK ALL STILL IN CAFSW (B1=1)

E11 Have you been assessed through the National Assessment and Accreditation System (NAAS)?

Yes – I have taken the assessment	1
No – I have been endorsed but have not yet taken the assessment	2
No – I have not been endorsed or assessed through NAAS	4
Don't know / prefer not to say	3

F Job outside CAFSW and short-term career plans

IF EMPLOYED BUT NOT IN SOCIAL WORK (B1=3)

F1a What is your current job role? Please make sure that your area of work, as well as level, is clear in your answer (e.g. secondary school teaching assistant)

WRITE IN	
DO NOT READ OUT: Don't know / prefer not to say	1

IF EMPLOYED BUT NOT IN LA CAFSW (B1=2 OR 3 OR 9 OR 10)

F1c How many hours are you contracted to work a week in your current role?

IF ONLINE DISPLAY / IF TELEPHONE READ OUT TO ALL: If no week is 'typical' then please think about the last full week that you worked.

DS: ALLOW RANGE OF 0-168 HOURS

WRITE IN	
Not applicable e.g. self-employed, zero-hours contracts	1
DO NOT READ OUT: Don't know / prefer not to say	2

IF DON'T KNOW AT F1C (F1C=2)

F1d Please could estimate which of the following hourly bands you are contracted to work per week?

READ OUT: **Please round to the nearest whole (if required).**

IF TELEPHONE: PROMPT AS NECESSARY. SINGLE CODE

1-15	1
16-20	2
21-30	3
31-35	4
36-40	5
41-45	6
46-50	7
51+	8
IF TELEPHONE DISPLAY: "(DO NOT READ OUT)": Don't know / prefer not to say	X
Not applicable e.g. self-employed, zero-hours contracts	V

IF EMPLOYED BUT NOT IN LA CAFSW (B1=2 OR 3 OR 9 OR 10)

F1e And how often would you say you work over and above your contracted hours in your current job?

IF ONLINE: PLEASE GIVE ONE ANSWER.

IF TELEPHONE: READ OUT. SINGLE CODE.

Never	1
Occasionally	2
Most weeks	3
All the time	4
Not applicable e.g. self-employed, zero-hours contract	5
IF TELEPHONE DISPLAY: "(DO NOT READ OUT)": Don't know / prefer not to say	6

ASK ALL

F1 **In terms of your career plans, which ONE of the following comes closest to where you see yourself in 12 months' time?**

IF ONLINE DISPLAY: PLEASE GIVE ONE ANSWER

IF TELEPHONE: READ OUT. SINGLE CODE.

DS: ROUTE B1=5-7 STRAIGHT TO i5 REGARDLESS OF F1 RESPONSE. ROUTE B1=8 STRAIGHT TO SECTION J.

Working in child and family social work for a local authority – directly	1
Working in child and family social work for a local authority – via an agency	2
Working in child and family social work – in the private or voluntary sector	3
Working in social work, but outside of child and family social work	4
Working outside of social work altogether (please specify)	5
Not working at all (please specify)	6
IF TELEPHONE DISPLAY: “(DO NOT READ OUT)”: Don't know/ prefer not to say	7

ASK ALL

F8 **And have these career plans been influenced by your experiences of the COVID-19 pandemic?**

SINGLECODE.

Yes	1
No	2
IF TELEPHONE DISPLAY: “(DO NOT READ OUT)”: Don't know/ prefer not to say	3

ASK ALL STILL IN CAFSW (B1=1)

F3 **Thinking more generally, how would you rate your career progression so far?**

IF ONLINE DISPLAY: PLEASE GIVE ONE ANSWER

IF TELEPHONE: READ OUT. SINGLE CODE

Above my expectations	1
In line with my expectations	2
Below my expectations	3
Too early to say	4
I don't have any expectations about career progression	5
IF TELEPHONE DISPLAY: “(DO NOT READ OUT)”: Don't know / prefer not to say	6

G Job satisfaction

ASK ALL IN EMPLOYMENT (B1=1-3, 9-10)

G1 **How satisfied are you with the following aspects of your current job?**

IF ONLINE: PLEASE GIVE ONE ANSWER PER ROW.

IF TELEPHONE: READ OUT. CODE ONE PER ROW.

	Very satisfied	Fairly satisfied	Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied	Fairly dissatisfied	Very dissatisfied	IF TELE DISPLAY: “(DO NOT READ OUT)”: Don't know / prefer not to say
The sense of achievement you get from your work	1	2	3	4	5	6
The opportunity to develop your skills in your job	1	2	3	4	5	6
The amount of pay you receive	1	2	3	4	5	6
Your job security	1	2	3	4	5	6
The work itself	1	2	3	4	5	6
(ONLY IF STILL IN SW B1=1, 2, 9, 10) Public respect for the sort of work you do	1	2	3	4	5	6

ASK ALL IN EMPLOYMENT (B1=1-3, 9-10)

G2 **And to what extent do you agree with the statement: “Overall, I find my current job satisfying”.**

IF TELEPHONE: READ OUT AND SINGLE CODE

Strongly agree	1
Agree	2
Neither agree nor disagree	3
Disagree	4
Strongly disagree	5
IF TELEPHONE DISPLAY: “(DO NOT READ OUT)”: Don't know / prefer not to say	6

H Workplace well-being

The next few questions are about wellbeing in the workplace. The research team will be analysing the data anonymously and so will not be following up individual responses.

ASK ALL STILL IN CAFSW (B1=1)

H1 How much do you agree or disagree with the following statements:

IF ONLINE: PLEASE GIVE ONE ANSWER PER ROW.

IF TELEPHONE: READ OUT. CODE ONE PER ROW.

	Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	IF TELE DISPLAY: “(DO NOT READ OUT)”: Don’t know / prefer not to say
My overall workload is too high	1	2	3	4	5	6
I feel I am being asked to fulfil too many different roles in my job	1	2	3	4	5	6
I feel stressed by my job	1	2	3	4	5	6

IF AGREE STRONGLY OR AGREE THAT FEEL STRESSED (H1_3=1 or 2)

H2 **What do you feel is causing this stress?**

IF ONLINE: PLEASE SELECT ALL THAT APPLY

IF TELEPHONE: DO NOT READ OUT.

ASK IF MULTICODE AT H2

H2a **And which of these do you feel is the ONE main thing that is causing this stress?**

IF ONLINE: PLEASE SELECT ONE ANSWER

IF TELEPHONE:

PROMPT WITH ANSWERS FROM H2 IF NEEDED. SINGLE CODE.

DS: Please only show options selected at H2.

	H2	H2a
I have too much paperwork	1	1
I have too many cases	2	2
Insufficient quality of management/ support	3	3
Working culture/ practices	4	4
Having to make emotional or difficult decisions	5	5
Insufficient time for direct work with children and families	6	6
High staff turnover in my team/ area of practice	7	7
Lack of administrative/ business support	11	11
Lack of resources to support families	12	12
Other (please specify)	8	8
Nothing in particular, it is simply a stressful job	9	9
IF TELEPHONE DISPLAY: "(DO NOT READ OUT)": Don't know / prefer not to say	10	10

ASK ALL CURRENTLY IN LA CAFSW (B1=1)

H4 To what extent have the following aspects of your job increased or decreased as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, if at all?

SINGLECODE FOR EACH ITERATION. DS: ROTATE STARTING POINT.

	Increased a lot	Increased a little	No impact	Decreased a little	Decreased a lot	IF TELE DISPLAY: “(DO NOT READ OUT)”: Don’t know / prefer not to say
Work related stress	1	2	3	4	5	6
Anxiety	1	2	3	4	5	6
Workload	1	2	3	4	5	6
Time for learning and development	1	2	3	4	5	6
Resources for supporting children and families	1	2	3	4	5	6
Opportunities for career progression or promotion	1	2	3	4	5	6
Flexible working arrangements	1	2	3	4	5	6
Complexity of cases	1	2	3	4	5	6

ASK ALL CURRENTLY IN LA CAFSW (B1=1)

H5 To what extent have the following aspects of your job improved or worsened as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, if at all?

SINGLECODE FOR EACH ITERATION. DS: ROTATE STARTING POINT.

	Improved a lot	Improved a little	No impact	Worsened a little	Worsened a lot	IF TELE DISPLAY: “(DO NOT READ OUT)”: Don’t know / prefer not to say
Support from management	1	2	3	4	5	X
Relationships with colleagues	1	2	3	4	5	X
Relationships with children and families/carers (service users)	1	2	3	4	5	X

ONLINE ONLY

H6 What do you think will be the single biggest challenge for child and family social workers over the next six months?

WRITE IN	
Don’t know / prefer not to say	1

I Reasons for leaving / coming back

IF ANSWERED F1=4-6: **You mentioned that in 12 months' time you think you'll be [INSERT F1 ANSWER].**

ASK ALL LEFT / CONSIDERING LEAVING CAFSW (B1=3/4/9/10 OR F1=4-6)

I1 **Why [B1=3/4/9/10: did you leave] [F1=4-6: are you considering leaving] child and family social work?**

IF ONLINE: PLEASE SELECT ALL THAT APPLY

IF TELEPHONE: DO NOT READ OUT. MULTICODE

ASK ALL MULTICODE AT I1

I1a **And what is your ONE main reason for [B1=3/4/9/10: leaving [F1=4-6: considering leaving] child and family social work?**

IF ONLINE: PLEASE SELECT ONE ANSWER ONLY

IF TELEPHONE PROMPT WITH ANSWERS FROM I1 IF NEEDED. SINGLE CODE.

DISPLAY ANSWERS FROM I1 (WITH DON'T KNOW)

	I1	I2
It is just not the right type of job for me	1	1
It is not compatible with family or relationship commitments	2	2
I have found one or more of my colleagues difficult to work with	3	3
I did not/am not making the best use of the skills or experience I have	4	4
I don't like the culture of local authority social work	5	5
My fixed term contract ended/ends soon	6	6
IF F1=6: I will be retiring / retired	7	7
The amount of paperwork	8	8
The high caseload	9	9
The pay / benefits package	10	10
The working hours in general	11	11
Redundancy	12	12
I am taking a career break	14	14
I am temporarily working outside of child and family social work but expecting to return	15	15
Due to impact of the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic	16	16
Other (please specify)	13	13
IF TELEPHONE DISPLAY: "(DO NOT READ OUT)": Don't know / prefer not to say	X	X

ASK ALL STAYING IN SOCIAL WORK BUT LEFT / CONSIDERING LEAVING LA B2=5, 6,7,9

I2 **Why did you leave/ are you considering leaving? [INSERT Local Authority FROM SAMPLE]?**

IF ONLINE: PLEASE SELECT ALL THAT APPLY

IF TELEPHONE: DO NOT READ OUT. MULTICODE

ASK ALL MULTICODE AT I2

I2a **And what is your ONE main reason for leaving [INSERT Local Authority FROM SAMPLE]?**

IF ONLINE: PLEASE SELECT ONE ANSWER ONLY

IF TELEPHONE PROMPT WITH ANSWERS FROM I2 IF NEEDED. SINGLE CODE.

DISPLAY ANSWERS FROM I2 (WITH DON'T KNOW)

	I2	I2a
I have found one or more of my colleagues difficult to work with	1	1
I feel I have learnt all that I can from working here	2	2
I would like to try working for a different local authority	3	3
I would like to try working for a different type of organisation altogether	4	4
I am not making the best use of the skills or experience here	5	5
I don't like the social work culture here	6	6
My fixed term contract ends soon	7	7
I am relocating	8	8
I am retired / retiring	9	9
The amount of paperwork I have to do	10	10
The high caseload	11	11
The pay / benefits package	12	12
The working hours in general	13	13
Due to impact of the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic (PLEASE SPECIFY – 'why do you say that?')	16	16
Other (please specify)	14	14
IF TELEPHONE DISPLAY: "(DO NOT READ OUT)" Don't know / prefer not to say	X	X

ASK IF MOVED/ CONSIDERING MOVING TO A NEW SECTOR ENTIRELY (B1=3 OR F1=5)

13 **To what extent [B1=3: do you] [F1=5: do think you will] use your social work skills in the sector you [B1=3: now work in] [F1=5: the sector you think you'll move to next]?**

IF ONLINE: *Please select one response*

IF TELEPHONE: *READ OUT AND SINGLE CODE*

To a great extent	1
To some extent	2
Not very much	3
Not at all	4
IF TELEPHONE DISPLAY "(DO NOT READ OUT)": Don't know / prefer not to say	5

ASK ALL LEFT / CONSIDERING LEAVING CAFSW (B1=3/4/9/10 OR F1=4-6)

- I4 **[IF LEFT B1=3/4/9/10: And is there anything that might encourage you to return to child and family social work in future?]** **[IF CONSIDERING LEAVING (F1=4-6): And is there anything that might encourage you to remain in child and family social work?]**
 PROMPT AS NECESSARY. MULTICODE.

ASK IF MULTICODE AT I4

- I4a **And which ONE of these would you say would be the main thing that might encourage you to [B1=3/4/9/10: return to] [F1=4-6: remain in] child and family social work in future?**

IF ONLINE: PLEASE SELECT ONE ANSWER ONLY

IF TELEPHONE PROMPT WITH ANSWERS FROM I4 IF NEEDED. SINGLE CODE.

	I4	I4a
Flexi-time	1	1
Job-sharing	2	2
The ability to take time off in lieu (TOIL)	3	3
The ability to work from home	4	4
A more manageable workload in terms of caseload	5	5
A more manageable workload in terms of administration / paperwork	6	6
Higher pay	7	7
Other financial incentives such as overtime pay	8	8
Subsidised childcare	9	9
Better/ more promotion/ career progression opportunities	10	10
Better/ more training opportunities	11	11
Better physical working environment	12	12
Better working culture	13	13
Better IT systems and software	14	14
Other (please specify)	15	15
DS EXCLUSIVE CODE: No, nothing would encourage me to return to/ stay in social work	16	16
Don't know / prefer not to say	17	17

ASK ALL WHO HAVE LEFT CAFSW (B1=3-7, 9)

15 How likely would you say you are to return to child and family social work in the next five years?

IF ONLINE: *PLEASE SELECT ONE RESPONSE*

IF TELEPHONE: *READ OUT AND SINGLE CODE*

Very likely	1
Fairy likely	2
Not very likely	3
Not at all likely	4
IF TELEPHONE DISPLAY "(DO NOT READ OUT)": Don't know / prefer not to say	5

J Demographics

IF TELEPHONE READ OUT TO ALL, IF ONLINE DISPLAY TO ALL: **We'd like to end by asking you a few questions about yourself, to help us in our analysis.**

ASK ALL

J1 **What is your age?**

READ OUT: **Please round to the nearest whole (if required)**

Under 25 years	1
25 – 34 years	2
35 – 44 years	3
45 – 54 years	4
55 – 64 years	5
65 years and over	6
Prefer not to say	7

ASK ALL

J2 **Outside of work, do you have any care or childcare responsibilities?**

IF TELEPHONE: IF 'YES' PROMPT FOR CATEGORIES. MULTICODE OK

Yes: for school-aged child/children	1
Yes: for pre-school aged child/children	2
Yes: for child/ children with disabilities	3
Yes: caring for other family member or friends	4
No	5
Don't know / prefer not to say	6

ASK ALL

J4 **Do you have any physical or mental health conditions or illnesses lasting or expecting to last 12 months or more?**

Yes	1
No	2
Don't know / prefer not to say	3

K Recontact

ASK ALL

- K1 **Would you be willing to be contacted about taking part in a follow-up survey in around one year's time? This will involve doing a similar survey to find out what you are doing then and whether your circumstances or views have changed.**

ADD AS NECESSARY: Following up will help us to build a picture of what influences social worker's career experiences and decisions over time. We would still like people to take part next year even if they have left or are thinking of leaving the profession.

Yes (am willing to be re-contacted for the follow-up survey)	1
No (am not willing to be re-contacted for the follow-up survey)	2

ASK IF NOT WILLING TO BE RECONTACTED FOR FOLLOW UP (K1=2)

- K1a **Thank you for confirming. We will not contact you about the next wave of the survey. Would you be happy for us to contact you in around two years' time to invite you to take part in the fifth and final wave of the research?**

SINGLECODE.

Yes (I am willing to be re-contacted in two years' time)	1
No (I am not willing to be re-contacted in two years' time)	2

ASK ALL

- K2 **We will also be conducting some follow-up telephone interviews in the next couple of months which will cover these issues in more depth. The interviews will last around 45 minutes and you will be given £20 voucher as a thank you. Would you be willing to help us with this?**

Yes (can re-contact me for the qualitative research)	1
No (cannot re-contact me for the qualitative research)	2

- K3 **THERE IS NO K3**

ASK IF AGREE TO RECONTACT AT K1 or K2 OR K3

K4 **Thank you very much. Could we just take your name and home contact details? This will only be used to recontact you about this research and is just in case your work details change.**

WRITE IN FIRST NAME AND SURNAME	
WRITE IN HOME EMAIL ADDRESS	
Refused	X
WRITE IN HOME TELEPHONE NUMBER (LANDLINE OR MOBILE)	
Refused	X

Thanks for taking part and supporting this research, we really appreciate your time.

Appendix 3: ASYE questionnaire

Telephone screener

ASK PERSON WHO ANSWERS PHONE

S1 **Good morning / afternoon / evening. My name is NAME and I'm calling from IFF Research. Please can I speak to [NAME]?**

Respondent answers phone	1	CONTINUE
Transferred to respondent	2	CONTINUE
Hard appointment	3	MAKE APPOINTMENT
Soft Appointment	4	MAKE APPOINTMENT
Engaged	5	CALL BACK
No reply / Answer phone	16	CALL BACK
Call back during Consumer hours	17	CALL BACK
Call back during B2B hours	15	CALL BACK
Refusal	6	CLOSE
Not available in deadline	7	CLOSE
Fax Line	8	CLOSE
Business Number	10	CLOSE
Dead line	11	CLOSE
Wrong telephone number	15	CLOSE
Person no longer works here	14	CLOSE
Request reassurances	12	GO TO REASSURANCES
Request reassurance email	13	COLLECT EMAIL ADDRESS THEN CONTINUE OR MAKE APPOINTMENT (SEE APPENDIX FOR EMAIL TEXT)

ASK CORRECT RESPONDENT (S1 = 1 OR 2)

S2 **Good morning / afternoon, my name is NAME, calling from IFF Research, an independent market research company, on behalf of the Department for Education (DFE).**

We have been commissioned by DFE to carry out a landmark new research study into the career experiences of child and family social workers.

The interview should last around 20 minutes. Would you have some time to go through the questions now?

ADD IF NECESSARY:

The research will improve understanding about what motivates people to enter child and family social work, why they stay or leave, and what impacts on their job satisfaction and career development. It will also help us to understand the impact the COVID-19 pandemic has had on these factors. We are interested in your experiences, even if you are thinking of changing your job or of leaving the profession.

We understand that your employment situation may have been affected by the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic. If this is the case, we would still like to hear about what you are doing at the moment, whether or not you are working in child and family social work.

This is the third of five years that the survey will be running. We have invited child and family social workers who started their ASYE in July 2019 or later to take part this year in order to ensure we capture the views of the new entrants to the sector.

All responses will be anonymous and analysed in aggregate form. No individual staff or local authorities will be identified in the reporting.

For further information you can email SWResearch@iffresearch.com

**PROVIDE LINK TO THE PRIVACY NOTICE ON REQUEST:PRIVACY STATEMENT:
www.iffresearch.com/longitudinal-study-of-child-and-family-social-workers-privacystatements**

INTERVIEWER NOTE: YOU MUST GET A CLEAR 'YES', OR SIMILAR RESPONSE, TO INDICATE CONSENT TO TAKING PART

Continue	1	CONTINUE
Hard appointment	2	MAKE APPOINTMENT
Soft appointment	3	MAKE APPOINTMENT
Call back during Consumer hours	10	Call back
Call back during B2B hours	11	Call back
Refusal	4	GO TO S3
Refusal – company policy	5	GO TO S3
Refusal – taken part in recent survey	6	GO TO S3
Not available in deadline	7	THANK AND CLOSE

Request reassurances	8	GO TO REASSURANCES
Request reassurance email	9	COLLECT EMAIL ADDRESS THEN CONTINUE OR MAKE APPOINTMENT (SEE APPENDIX FOR EMAIL TEXT)

ASK IF NAMED RESPONDENT NOT ON SITE (S1=14)

S2a Do you have an alternative number we could reach NAME on?

Yes (please type in number)	1	THANK AND CLOSE (THIS BECOMES THE 'REFERRAL NUMBER')
No / Don't know	2	THANK AND CLOSE (GOES INTO UNUSABLE)

IF REFUSED (S2=4-6)

S3 Would you be willing to take part online instead?

Yes	3	CHECK EMAIL ADDRESS, CORRECT IF NEEDED, AND THANK AND CLOSE
No	4	THANK AND CLOSE

IF AGREED TO TAKE PART (S2 =1)

S4 Before we begin, I just need to read out a quick statement based on GDPR legislation: Firstly, I want to reassure you that all of the information you provide will be treated in the strictest confidence, and that you have the right to the following:

- 4) **A copy of your data**
- 5) **Amending your data**
- 6) **Withdrawing from the research at any point**

To guarantee this, and as part of our quality control procedures, all interviews are recorded automatically.

Based on this information, are you willing to take part?

Yes	1	
No	2	THANK AND CLOSE

REASSURANCES TO USE IF NECESSARY

Your details were given to us by [INSERT LA ON SAMPLE].

If respondent wishes to confirm validity of survey or get more information about aims and objectives, they can contact:

- **MRS: Market Research Society on 0800 975 9596**
- **IFF: Shannon Earl, Jonnie Felton or Alfie Sanders-Earley on 0207 250 3035**

Online landing page

Thank you for your interest in this landmark national study on the career experiences of child and family social workers. Your contribution will be invaluable to the research, even if you are thinking of changing job or of leaving the profession. The research is being conducted by IFF Research, Manchester Metropolitan University and the University of Salford on behalf of the Department for Education (DfE).

This is the third of five years that the survey will be running. We have invited child and family social workers who started their ASYE in July 2019 or later to take part this year in order to ensure we capture the views of the new entrants to the sector.

We understand that your employment situation may have been affected by the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic. If this is the case, we would still like to hear about what you are doing at the moment, whether or not you are working in child and family social work.

For further information about the study, or to find out what happens to the survey data and how it is stored, please [click here](#).

Taking part is voluntary and you may withdraw at any point. If at the end of the survey you'd like to request access to your data or have this deleted, please go to www.iffresearch.com/gdpr/ for more information. All information collected will be treated in the strictest confidence, in accordance with the Market Research Society Code of Conduct.

- If you are willing to take part please click 'Next'.
- IF INDIVIDUALISED LINK: Please note, **you can stop and start as many times as you like** and pick up where you left off. To do this you just need to use the link provided in your email invitation.
- When completing the survey, please only use the 'Next' button on the page rather than the 'Back' and 'Forward' buttons in your browser.

ASK IF ACCESSING SURVEY VIA OPEN LINK

Want to take a break or lost connection? Simply provide us with your email address below and we can send you a link to re-enter the survey at the last question you answered, so you won't have to start again from the beginning.

WRITE IN		
Prefer not to say	1	

B Current Employment Situation

IF ONLINE DISPLAY TO ALL / IF TELEPHONE READ OUT TO ALL: **Please note: throughout this survey, where we refer to 'local authority' we also include Children's Trusts delivering LA Children's Services.**

ASK ALL OPEN LINK RESPONDENTS

- B1b **Before we begin, could I just confirm which local authority you are currently working for? This is just to make sure we're speaking to the right people. To confirm, results will not be analysed by individual local authority.**

IF ONLINE DISPLAY: PLEASE SELECT FROM THE DROP-DOWN LIST.

DS: DROP DOWN LIST TO INCLUDE 'NONE OF THE ABOVE' CODE. IF 'NONE OF THE ABOVE' IS SELECTED, PLEASE THANK AND CLOSE.		
DO NOT READ OUT: Don't know / prefer not to say	1	THANK AND CLOSE

ASK ALL

- B1 **Are you currently working in child and family social work? By this we mean any role in child and family social work, including more senior roles which do not have a direct caseload.**

ADD IF NECESSARY: If you are on extended leave – such as maternity leave, or sick leave – but still on the payroll of your employer, then please count this as employed.

IF ONLINE DISPLAY: PLEASE GIVE ONE ANSWER

IF TELEPHONE: DO NOT READ OUT. IF NO, PROMPT AS NECESSARY. SINGLE CODE.

Yes	1	CONTINUE
No – but I'm still in social work	2	GO B2 & B3 & B4 THEN ASK SECTION C
No – I am employed, but have left social work altogether	3	GO TO SECTION C
No – I am unemployed and looking for work	4	GO TO SECTION C
No – I am undertaking full-time further study. <i>Please note: if you were studying part-time alongside work, then please select from the relevant work option (either option 1, 2 or 3)</i>	5	THANK AND CLOSE
No – I am on a career break (for example, travelling, caring responsibilities etc.)	6	
No – I am doing something else (for example retired, ill-health etc.)	7	
IF TELEPHONE DISPLAY: "(DO NOT READ OUT)": Don't know / prefer not to say	8	

ASK ALL STILL IN CAFSW (B1=1)

B5 **Are you currently on your Assessed and Supported Year in Employment (ASYE)?**

IF ONLINE DISPLAY: PLEASE GIVE ONE ANSWER

IF TELEPHONE: READ OUT. SINGLE CODE.

Yes	1	CONTINUE
No – but completed my ASYE within the last 6 months (since June 2020)	4	CONTINUE
No – completed my ASYE longer than six months ago (before June 2020)	2	THANK AND CLOSE
IF TELEPHONE DISPLAY: “(DO NOT READ OUT)”: Don’t know / prefer not to say	3	THANK AND CLOSE

ASK ALL STILL IN CAFSW (B1=1)

B1A **And are you registered as a social worker with the Health and Care Professions Council or Social Work England?**

Yes	1	CONTINUE
No	2	THANK AND CLOSE
Don’t know / prefer not to say	3	THANK AND CLOSE

ASK ALL STILL IN CAFSW (B1=1) OR B1=2

B2 **Which ONE of the following best applies to you?**

IF ONLINE DISPLAY: PLEASE GIVE ONE ANSWER

IF TELEPHONE: READ OUT, CODE FIRST THAT APPLIES. SINGLE CODE.

I am employed by [INSERT LA FROM SAMPLE IF CLOSED LINK AND FROM B1b IF OPEN LINK] and I am based in the local authority / Children’s Trust	1
I work at [INSERT LA FROM SAMPLE IF CLOSED LINK AND FROM B1b IF OPEN LINK] but I am technically employed by an agency	2
I am employed by [INSERT LA FROM SAMPLE IF CLOSED LINK AND FROM B1b IF OPEN LINK] but am on secondment to or based in another organisation e.g. CAHMS, NHS Trust, Social Work England or a Regional Adoption Agency	3
I am working at [INSERT LA FROM SAMPLE IF CLOSED LINK AND FROM B1b IF OPEN LINK] on an independent / self-employed basis	4
I am employed by an organisation/company, but not/no longer by [INSERT LA FROM SAMPLE IF CLOSED LINK AND FROM B1b IF OPEN LINK]	5
I am employed by an agency but not/ no longer work at [INSERT LA FROM SAMPLE IF CLOSED LINK AND FROM B1b (W1) IF OPEN LINK]	6
I am independent / self-employed but no longer work at [INSERT LA FROM SAMPLE]	9
Or are you employed on some other basis (please specify)	7
IF TELEPHONE DISPLAY: “(DO NOT READ OUT)”: Don’t know / prefer not to say	8

IF EMPLOYED BY AGENCY OR INDEPENDENT/ SELF-EMPLOYED (B2=2/4/6/9)

B3 **Why are you working [IF B2 = 2 OR 6: for an agency] [IF B2 = 4 OR 9: on an independent/ self-employed basis] instead of directly with a local authority?**

IF ONLINE DISPLAY: PLEASE GIVE AS MANY ANSWERS AS APPLY.

IF TELEPHONE: DO NOT READ OUT. MULTICODE.

ASK IF MULTICODE AT B3

B3a **And which ONE of these is the main reason you're working [IF B2 = 2 OR 6: for an agency] [IF B2 = 4 OR 9: on an independent/ self-employed basis] instead of directly with a local authority?**

IF ONLINE: PLEASE SELECT ONE ANSWER ONLY

IF TELEPHONE PROMPT WITH ANSWERS FROM B3 IF NEEDED. SINGLE CODE.

DS: Only show options selected at B3.

The pay is better	1
I have more flexibility about when I work	2
Better work-life balance	3
More opportunities to gain experience of different roles	4
I am less accountable/ have less responsibility	5
I have more professional autonomy	6
Lack of available local jobs	7
Dissatisfaction with permanent employment	8
Due to the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic	11
Other (please specify)	9
Don't know / prefer not to say	10

ASK IF EMPLOYED BUT NOT/ NO LONGER EMPLOYED BY LA ON SAMPLE (B2=5, 6, 7, 8 or 9)

B4 **Is the organisation you work for a local authority?**

IF ONLINE DISPLAY: PLEASE SELECT ONE ANSWER

IF TELEPHONE: PROMPT AS NECESSARY. SINGLE CODE.

Yes	1
No – but it is a public-sector organisation	2
No – it is a private or voluntary sector organisation	3
IF TELEPHONE DISPLAY: "(DO NOT READ OUT)": Don't know / prefer not to say	4

ASK ALL: **The next few questions are about your current role.**

B6 THERE IS NO B6.

ASK ALL STILL IN CAFSW (B1=1)

B7a **Do you mainly work with children only, with families/ carers only, or with both?**

IF ONLINE DISPLAY: PLEASE GIVE ONE ANSWER

IF TELEPHONE: DO NOT READ OUT. SINGLE CODE.

Children only	1
Families/carers only	2
Both	3
Other (please specify)	4
IF TELEPHONE DISPLAY: "(DO NOT READ OUT)": Don't know / prefer not to say	5

ASK ALL STILL IN CAFSW (B1=1)

B7 **What is the main focus of your work? For example, Children in Need; Adoption; Early help.**

If you work in a support or supervisory role, please select the areas in which those you support or supervise work.

IF ONLINE DISPLAY: PLEASE GIVE AS MANY ANSWERS AS APPLY.

IF TELEPHONE: DO NOT READ OUT. MULTICODE.

Adoption	1
Fostering	2
Children with disabilities	3
Placements/ permanence	4
Leaving care	5
Youth offending	6
Duty/ first response / front door / MASH	7
Health	8
Education	9
Assessment	10
Child in Need/ Child Protection	11
Looked after children	14
Prevention / early help services	15
Kinship care	16
COVID-19 recovery	17
Other (please specify)	12
IF TELEPHONE DISPLAY: "(DO NOT READ OUT)": Don't know / prefer not to say	13

ASK ALL STILL IN CAFSW (B1=1)

B8 **And how long have you worked....?**

READ OUT: Please round to the nearest whole (if required)

IF ONLINE DISPLAY: PLEASE GIVE ONE ANSWER IN EACH ROW

IF TELEPHONE: PROMPT AS NECESSARY. CODE ONE PER ROW.

	Less than 6 months	6 months to 1 year	1 year	2 to 3 years	4 to 5 years	6 to 10 years	More than 10 years	IF TELEPHONE DISPLAY: "(DO NOT READ OUT)" Don't know / prefer not to say
As a qualified Social Worker	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
At your current employer	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
In your current role, with your current employer	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8

ASK ALL STILL IN CAFSW (B1=1)

B10 **How many cases are allocated to you currently?**

Please note, by 'case' we mean either:

- **An individual allocated to a social worker (for example a family of three siblings would be three individual cases); and/or**
- **A carer or carers allocated to a social worker for the purposes of fostering or adoption**

WRITE IN	
Not applicable: non-case-holding role	1
DO NOT READ OUT: Don't know / prefer not to say	2

IF DON'T KNOW AT B10 (B10=2)
 B10a **Please could you estimate the number of cases allocated to you currently, using the bands below?**
READ OUT: Please round to the nearest whole (if required)

IF TELEPHONE: PROMPT AS NECESSARY. SINGLE CODE

1-5	1
6-10	2
11-15	3
16-20	4
21-25	5
26-29	6
30+	7
IF TELEPHONE DISPLAY: "(DO NOT READ OUT)": Don't know / prefer not to say	8

ASK ALL STILL IN CAFSW (B1=1)
 B11 **How many hours are you contracted to work per week?**

IF ONLINE DISPLAY / IF TELEPHONE READ OUT TO ALL: **If no week is 'typical' then please think about the last full week that you worked.**

DS: ALLOW RANGE OF 0-168 HOURS

WRITE IN	
Not applicable e.g. self-employed, zero-hours contracts	1
DO NOT READ OUT: Don't know / prefer not to say	2

IF DK AT B11 (B11=2)
 B11a **Please could estimate which of the following hourly bands you are contracted to work per week?**

READ OUT: **Please round to the nearest whole (if required).**

IF TELEPHONE: PROMPT AS NECESSARY. SINGLE CODE

1-15	1
16-20	2
21-30	3
31-35	4
36-40	5
41-45	6
46-50	7
51+	8
IF TELEPHONE DISPLAY: "(DO NOT READ OUT)": Don't know / prefer not to say	X
Not applicable e.g. self-employed, zero-hours contracts	V

ASK ALL STILL IN CAFSW (B1=1)

B12 **And how often would you say you work over and above your contracted hours to keep up with your workload?**

IF ONLINE: PLEASE GIVE ONE ANSWER.

IF TELEPHONE: READ OUT. SINGLE CODE.

Never	1
Occasionally	2
Most weeks	3
All the time	4
Not applicable e.g. self-employed, zero-hours contract	5
IF TELEPHONE DISPLAY: "(DO NOT READ OUT)": Don't know / prefer not to say	6

DS: B14 AND B15 TO BE DISPLAYED ON ONE PAGE.

IF ONLINE DISPLAY / IF TELEPHONE READ OUT TO ALL: **How many hours in a typical week do you spend doing the following...**

IF ONLINE DISPLAY / IF TELEPHONE READ OUT TO ALL: **if no week is 'typical' then please think about the last full week that you worked.**

ASK ALL STILL IN CAFSW (B1=1)

B14 **1) ...Working? Please exclude any time spent travelling from your answer.**

DS: ALLOW RANGE OF 0-168 HOURS

WRITE IN	
Not applicable e.g. self-employed, zero-hours contracts	1
Don't know / prefer not to say	2

IF DON'T KNOW AT B14 (B14=2)

B14a **Please could you estimate the number of hours you spend working in a typical week?**

READ OUT: **Please round to the nearest whole (if required)**

IF ONLINE DISPLAY / IF TELEPHONE ADD IF NECESSARY: **If no week is 'typical' then please think about the last full week that you worked.**

IF TELEPHONE: PROMPT AS NECESSARY. SINGLE CODE

1-15	1
16-20	2
21-30	3
31-35	4
36-40	5
41-45	6
46-50	7
51+	8
IF TELEPHONE DISPLAY: "(DO NOT READ OUT)": Don't know / prefer not to say	X
Not applicable e.g. self-employed, zero-hours contracts	V

ASK ALL WHO WORK WITH CHILDREN AND/OR FAMILIES (IF (B7A = 1, 2 OR 3)

B15 2) Doing direct work with children and families/ carers?

WRITE IN	
Not applicable e.g. self-employed, zero-hours contracts	1
Don't know / prefer not to say	2

IF DON'T KNOW AT B15 (B15=2)

B15a Please could you estimate the number of hours in a typical week you spend doing direct work with children and families / carers?

READ OUT: **Please round to the nearest whole (if required)**

IF ONLINE DISPLAY / IF TELEPHONE ADD IF NECESSARY: **If no week is 'typical' then please think about the last full week that you worked.**

IF TELEPHONE: PROMPT AS NECESSARY. SINGLE CODE

0-2 hours	1
3-5 hours	2
6-10 hours	3
11-15 hours	4
16-20 hours	5
More than 20 hours	6
Not applicable	7
IF TELEPHONE DISPLAY: "(DO NOT READ OUT)": Don't know / prefer not to say	8

C Entry Route to Social Work

IF ONLINE DISPLAY TO ALL / IF TELEPHONE READ OUT TO ALL: **We'd now like to understand a bit more about how you got into social work.**

ASK ALL STILL IN CAFSW (B1=1) OR RECENTLY LEFT BUT STILL ACTIVE IN LABOUR MARKET (B1 =2,3,4)

C1 **So just to start, why did you decide you wanted to embark upon a career in social work?**

IF ONLINE: PLEASE GIVE AS MANY ANSWERS AS APPLY

IF TELEPHONE: DO NOT READ OUT, PROMPT AS NECESSARY. MULTICODE.

I wanted to help people / make a difference	1
I wanted to work with children and families	2
I wanted a stable job	3
I saw it as a springboard to another career	4
I was working in a related area (e.g. a youth worker or family support worker)	5
It aligns with my political or ideological beliefs	6
I had a <u>positive</u> personal experience of social work	7
I had a <u>negative</u> personal experience of social work	8
Funding/ bursary was available for the course	9
I have a long-term commitment to social work as a career	10
I wanted a decent salary	11
Other (please specify)	12
IF TELEPHONE DISPLAY: "(DO NOT READ OUT)": know / prefer not to say	13

ASK ALL STILL IN CAFSW (B1=1) OR RECENTLY LEFT BUT STILL ACTIVE IN LABOUR MARKET (B1 =2,3,4)

C2 What entry route did you take into social work ...?

IF ONLINE: PLEASE GIVE AS MANY ANSWERS AS APPLY

IF TELEPHONE: PROMPT AS NECESSARY. MULTICODE

An undergraduate degree in social work (e.g. BSc or BA)	1
A postgraduate degree in social work (e.g. PGDip/MSc/MA)	2
The 'Step Up to Social Work' programme	3
The 'Frontline' programme	4
Certificate of Qualification in Social Work (CQSW)	5
Diploma in Social Work (DipSW)	6
Other (please specify)	7
Don't know / can't remember	8

ASK ALL STILL IN CAFSW (B1=1) OR RECENTLY LEFT BUT STILL ACTIVE IN LABOUR MARKET (B1 =2,3,4)

C3 What is the name of the institution or organisation at which you were registered for your first completed social work qualification? By this we meant the qualification which allowed you to register as a qualified social worker.

TIP: Please type the name of the institution below and select from the list. If it does not appear, please type it out in full.

DS: DROP DOWN LIST TO INCLUDE CODES AT THE END FOR 'OVERSEAS INSTITUTION'	
DO NOT READ OUT: Don't know / prefer not to say	1

ASK ALL STILL IN CAFSW (B1=1) OR RECENTLY LEFT BUT STILL ACTIVE IN LABOUR MARKET (B1 =2,3,4)

C4 **What classification or grade did you achieve for your first completed social work qualification?**

PROMPT AS NECESSARY. SINGLE CODE

First class	1
2:1	2
2:2	3
3rd class	4
Unclassified	5
Distinction	6
Merit	7
Pass	8
Other (specify)	9
Don't know/ prefer not to say	10

ASK IF DID NOT DO AN UNDERGRADUATE QUALIFICATION IN SOCIAL WORK (IF CODES 2-7 AT C2 **AND NOT** CODE 1 AT C2)

C4A **What if any undergraduate subject area were you studying before you trained in social work?**

TIP: Please type your course below and select from the list. If it does not appear, or you studied multiple subjects, please type it out in full.

DS: ADD JACS CODES AS FOR DHLE	
DO NOT READ OUT: DON'T KNOW / PREFER NOT TO SAY	1
I DO NOT HAVE AN UNDERGRADUATE DEGREE	2

ASK ALL STILL IN CAFSW (B1=1) OR RECENTLY LEFT BUT STILL ACTIVE IN LABOUR MARKET (B1 =2,3,4)

C5 **And was your first job in social work in the area of child and family social work?**

Yes	1
No	2
Don't know/prefer not to say	3

ASK ALL (B1 =2,3,4) UNLESS C2 = 8

C8 **And thinking about your career in social work to date, how well do you think your entry route into social work prepared you for...?**

IF ONLINE DISPLAY: PLEASE GIVE ONE ANSWER PER ROW.

IF TELEPHONE: READ OUT. CODE ONE PER ROW.

	Very well	Quite well	Not very well	Not at all well	IF TELEPHONE DISPLAY: "(DO NOT READ OUT)": Don't know / prefer not to say
Working in social work	1	2	3	4	5
Working in child and family social work	1	2	3	4	5

D Career History

ASK ALL STILL IN CAFSW (B1=1) OR RECENTLY LEFT BUT STILL ACTIVE IN LABOUR MARKET (B1 =2,3,4)

D3 **How long have you....**

IF TELEPHONE: PROMPT AS NECESSARY. MULTICODE.

	Less than 6 months	6 months to 1 year	1 year	2 to 3 years	4 to 5 years	6 to 10 years	More than 10 years	IF TELEPHONE DISPLAY: "(DO NOT READ OUT)" Don't know / prefer not to say
ASK ALL STILL IN CAFSW (B1=1) OR RECENTLY LEFT BUT STILL ACTIVE IN LABOUR MARKET (B1 =2,3,4) Worked in child and family social work	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8

Overall views of employer

ASK ALL STILL IN CAFSW (B1=1)

- E1 **To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements about working in child and family social work at your current employer?**

IF ONLINE: PLEASE GIVE ONE ANSWER PER ROW

IF TELEPHONE: READ OUT. CODE ONE PER ROW.

	Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	IF TELEPHONE DISPLAY: "DO NOT READ OUT": Don't know / prefer not to say
I feel loyal to my organisation	1	2	3	4	5	6
I feel valued by my employer	1	2	3	4	5	6
I am proud to tell people that I am a child and family social worker	1	2	3	4	5	6

ASK ALL STILL IN CAFSW (B1=1)

- E2 **Now thinking about the managers at your current employer, to what extent do you agree or disagree with each of the following?**

IF ONLINE: PLEASE GIVE ONE ANSWER PER ROW

IF TELEPHONE: READ OUT. CODE ONE PER ROW.

	Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	IF TELEPHONE DISPLAY "DO NOT READ OUT": Don't know / prefer not to say
My manager encourages me to develop my skills	1	2	3	4	5	6
My manager motivates me to be more effective in my job	1	2	3	4	5	6

My manager is considerate of my life outside work	1	2	3	4	5	6
My manager is open to my ideas	1	2	3	4	5	6
Overall, I have confidence in the decisions made by my manager	1	2	3	4	5	6
My manager recognises when I have done my job well	1	2	3	4	5	6
I receive regular feedback on my performance	1	2	3	4	5	6
The feedback I receive helps me to improve my performance	1	2	3	4	5	6
During the COVID-19 pandemic I have been well supported by my manager	1	2	3	4	5	6

ASK ALL STILL IN CAFSW (B1=1)

E3 **How frequently, if at all, have you received reflective supervision since you joined your current employer?**

READ OUT: **Please round to the nearest whole (if required)**

IF TELEPHONE: PROMPT AS NECESSARY. SINGLE CODE.

At least once every two weeks	1	ASK E4
Once every three or four weeks	2	ASK E4
Once every five or six weeks	3	ASK E4
Less frequently than every six weeks	4	ASK E4
Have not received reflective supervision since joining current employer	5	ASK E4
Don't know / prefer not to say	6	ASK E6

ASK ALL ANSWERING E3 EXCEPT 'DON'T KNOW' (E3=1-5)

E4 **And in your view, is this...**

IF TELEPHONE: READ OUT. SINGLE CODE.

SHOW FOR ALL EXCEPT CODE 5 AT E3 'Have not received reflective supervision since joining current local authority: Too much	1
About right	2

Not enough	3
IF TELEPHONE DISPLAY “(DO NOT READ OUT)”: Don’t know / prefer not to say	4

ASK ALL WHO HAVE RECEIVED SUPERVISION (E3=1-4)

E5 **How would you rate the quality of the reflective supervision you have received at your current employer since you joined?**

IF TELEPHONE: READ OUT. SINGLE CODE.

Very good	1
Good	2
Poor	3
Very poor	4
IF TELEPHONE DISPLAY “(DO NOT READ OUT)”: Don’t know / prefer not to say	5

ASK ALL STILL IN CAFSW (B1=1)

E9 And to what extent do you agree or disagree that...

Please answer about your current circumstances.

IF ONLINE: PLEASE GIVE ONE ANSWER PER ROW.

IF TELEPHONE: READ OUT. CODE ONE PER ROW.

	Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	IF TELE DISPLAY"(D O NOT READ OUT)": Don't know / prefer not to say
I am able to access the right learning and development opportunities when I need to	1	2	3	4	5	6
I have the right tools (e.g. risk assessment tools, planning tools, etc.) to do my job effectively	1	2	3	4	5	6
I have the right resources (e.g. equipment, petty cash, etc.) to do my job effectively	1	2	3	4	5	6
The IT systems and software here support me to do my job	1	2	3	4	5	6

F Short-term career plans, barriers and enablers

ASK ALL STILL IN CAFSW (B1=1)

- F1 **In terms of your career plans, which ONE of the following comes closest to where you see yourself in 12 months' time?**

IF ONLINE DISPLAY: PLEASE GIVE ONE ANSWER

IF TELEPHONE: READ OUT. SINGLE CODE.

Working in child and family social work for a local authority – directly	1
Working in child and family social work for a local authority – via an agency	2
Working in child and family social work – in the private or voluntary sector	3
Working in social work, but outside of child and family social work	4
Working outside of social work altogether (please specify)	5
Not working at all (please specify)	6
IF TELEPHONE DISPLAY: “(DO NOT READ OUT)”: Don't know/ prefer not to say	7

ASK ALL

- F8 **And have these career plans been influenced by your experiences of the COVID-19 pandemic...READ OUT?**

SINGLECODE.

To a great extent	1
To some extent	2
Not very much	3
Not at all	4
IF TELEPHONE DISPLAY: “(DO NOT READ OUT)”: Don't know/ prefer not to say	5

ASK ALL STILL IN CAFSW (B1=1)

F3 **Thinking more generally, how would you rate your career progression so far?**

IF ONLINE DISPLAY: PLEASE GIVE ONE ANSWER

IF TELEPHONE: READ OUT. SINGLE CODE

Above my expectations	1
In line with my expectations	2
Below my expectations	3
Too early to say	4
I don't have any expectations about career progression	5
IF TELEPHONE DISPLAY: "(DO NOT READ OUT)": Don't know / prefer not to say	6

G Job satisfaction

ASK ALL STILL IN CAFSW (B1=1)

G1 **How satisfied are you with the following aspects of your current job?**

IF ONLINE: PLEASE GIVE ONE ANSWER PER ROW.

IF TELEPHONE: READ OUT. CODE ONE PER ROW.

	Very satisfied	Fairly satisfied	Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied	Fairly dissatisfied	Very dissatisfied	IF TELE DISPLAY: “(DO NOT READ OUT)”: Don’t know / prefer not to say
The sense of achievement you get from your work	1	2	3	4	5	6
The scope for using your own initiative	1	2	3	4	5	6
The amount of influence you have over your job	1	2	3	4	5	6
The extent to which you feel challenged	1	2	3	4	5	6
The opportunity to develop your skills in your job	1	2	3	4	5	6
The amount of pay you receive	1	2	3	4	5	6
Your job security	1	2	3	4	5	6
The work itself	1	2	3	4	5	6
Public respect for the sort of work you do	1	2	3	4	5	6

ASK ALL STILL IN CAFSW (B1=1)

G2 **And to what extent do you agree with the statement: “Overall, I find my current job satisfying”**

IF TELEPHONE: READ OUT AND SINGLE CODE

Strongly agree	1
Agree	2
Neither agree nor disagree	3
Disagree	4
Strongly disagree	5
IF TELEPHONE DISPLAY: “(DO NOT READ OUT)”: Don’t know / prefer not to say	6

H Workplace well-being

The next few questions are about wellbeing in the workplace. The research team will be analysing the data anonymously and so will not be following up individual responses.

ASK ALL STILL IN CAFSW (B1=1)

H1 How much do you agree or disagree with the following statements:

IF ONLINE: PLEASE GIVE ONE ANSWER PER ROW.

IF TELEPHONE: READ OUT. CODE ONE PER ROW.

	Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	IF TELE DISPLAY: “(DO NOT READ OUT)”: Don’t know / prefer not to say
My overall workload is too high	1	2	3	4	5	6
I feel I am being asked to fulfil too many different roles in my job	1	2	3	4	5	6
I feel stressed by my job	1	2	3	4	5	6

IF AGREE STRONGLY OR AGREE THAT FEEL STRESSED (H1_3=1 or 2)

H2 **What do you feel is causing this stress?**

IF ONLINE: PLEASE SELECT ALL THAT APPLY

IF TELEPHONE: DO NOT READ OUT.

ASK IF MULTICODE AT H2

H2a **And which of these do you feel is the ONE main thing that is causing this stress?**

IF ONLINE: PLEASE SELECT ONE ANSWER

IF TELEPHONE:

PROMPT WITH ANSWERS FROM H2 IF NEEDED. SINGLE CODE.

DS: Please only show options selected at H2.

	H2	H2a
I have too much paperwork	1	1
I have too many cases	2	2
Insufficient quality of management/ support	3	3
Working culture/ practices	4	4
Having to make emotional or difficult decisions	5	5
Insufficient time for direct work with children and families	6	6
High staff turnover in my team/ area of practice	7	7
Lack of administrative/ business support	11	11
Lack of resources to support families	12	12
Other (please specify)	8	8
Nothing in particular, it is simply a stressful job	9	9
IF TELEPHONE DISPLAY: "(DO NOT READ OUT)": Don't know / prefer not to say	10	10

ASK ALL STILL IN CAFSW (B1=1)

H4 To what extent have the following aspects of your job increased or decreased as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, if at all?

SINGLECODE FOR EACH ITERATION. DS: ROTATE STARTING POINT.

	Increased a lot	Increased a little	No impact	Decreased a little	Decreased a lot	IF TELE DISPLAY: "(DO NOT READ OUT)": Don't know / prefer not to say
Work related stress	1	2	3	4	5	6
Anxiety	1	2	3	4	5	6
Workload	1	2	3	4	5	6
Time for learning and development	1	2	3	4	5	6
Resources for supporting children and families	1	2	3	4	5	6
Opportunities for career progression or promotion	1	2	3	4	5	6
Flexible working arrangements	1	2	3	4	5	6
Complexity of cases	1	2	3	4	5	6

ASK ALL CURRENTLY IN CAFSW (B1=1)

H5 To what extent have the following aspects of your job improved or worsened as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, if at all?

SINGLECODE FOR EACH ITERATION. DS: ROTATE STARTING POINT.

	Improved a lot	Improved a little	No impact	Worsened a little	Worsened a lot	IF TELE DISPLAY: "(DO NOT READ OUT)": Don't know / prefer not to say
Support from management	1	2	3	4	5	X

Relationships with colleagues	1	2	3	4	5	X
Relationships with children and families/carers (service users)	1	2	3	4	5	X

ONLINE ONLY

H6 What do you think will be the single biggest challenge for child and family social workers over the next six months?

WRITE IN	
Don't know / prefer not to say	1

I Reasons for leaving / coming back

IF ANSWERED F1=4-6: **You mentioned that in 12 months' time you think you'll be [INSERT F1 ANSWER].**

ASK ALL LEFT / CONSIDERING LEAVING CAFSW (B1=2/3/4 OR F1=4-6)

I1 **Why [B1=2-4: did you leave] [F1=4-6: are you considering leaving] child and family social work?**

IF ONLINE: PLEASE SELECT ALL THAT APPLY

IF TELEPHONE: DO NOT READ OUT. MULTICODE

ASK ALL MULTICODE AT I1

I1a **And what is your ONE main reason for [B1=2-4: leaving [F1=4-6: considering leaving] child and family social work?**

IF ONLINE: PLEASE SELECT ONE ANSWER ONLY

IF TELEPHONE PROMPT WITH ANSWERS FROM I1 IF NEEDED. SINGLE CODE.

DISPLAY ANSWERS FROM I1 (WITH DON'T KNOW)

	I1	I2
It is just not the right type of job for me	1	1
It is not compatible with family or relationship commitments	2	2
I have found one or more of my colleagues difficult to work with	3	3
I did not/am not making the best use of the skills or experience I have	4	4
I don't like the culture of local authority social work	5	5
My fixed term contract ended/ends soon	6	6
IF F1=6: I will be retiring / retired	7	7
The amount of paperwork	8	8
The high caseload	9	9
The pay / benefits package	10	10
The working hours in general	11	11
Redundancy	12	12
Due to impact of the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic	14	14
Other (please specify)	13	13
IF TELEPHONE DISPLAY: "(DO NOT READ OUT)": Don't know / prefer not to say	X	X

ASK ALL STAYING IN SOCIAL WORK BUT LEFT / CONSIDERING LEAVING LA B2=5, 6, 7, 9

I2 **Why did you leave [INSERT LA FROM SAMPLE]?**

IF ONLINE: PLEASE SELECT ALL THAT APPLY

IF TELEPHONE: DO NOT READ OUT. MULTICODE

ASK ALL MULTICODE AT I2

I2a **And what is your ONE main reason for leaving [INSERT LA FROM SAMPLE]?**

IF ONLINE: PLEASE SELECT ONE ANSWER ONLY

IF TELEPHONE PROMPT WITH ANSWERS FROM I2 IF NEEDED. SINGLE CODE.

DISPLAY ANSWERS FROM I2 (WITH DON'T KNOW)

	I2	I2a
I have found one or more of my colleagues difficult to work with	1	1
I feel I have learnt all that I can from working here	2	2
I would like to try working for a different local authority	3	3
I would like to try working for a different type of organisation altogether	4	4
I am not making the best use of the skills or experience here	5	5
I don't like the social work culture here	6	6
My fixed term contract ends soon	7	7
I am relocating	8	8
I am retired / retiring	9	9
The amount of paperwork I have to do	10	10
The high caseload	11	11
The pay / benefits package	12	12
The working hours in general	13	13
Due to impact of the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic (please specify)	15	15
Other (please specify)	14	14
IF TELEPHONE DISPLAY: "(DO NOT READ OUT)" Don't know / prefer not to say	X	X

ASK IF MOVED/ CONSIDERING MOVING TO A NEW SECTOR ENTIRELY (B1=3 OR F1=5)

I3 **To what extent [B1=3: do you][F1=5: do think you will] use your social work skills in the sector you [B1=3: now work in] [F1=5: the sector you think you'll move to next]?**

IF ONLINE: Please select one response

IF TELEPHONE: READ OUT AND SINGLE CODE

To a great extent	1
To some extent	2
Not very much	3
Not at all	4
IF TELEPHONE DISPLAY "(DO NOT READ OUT)": Don't know / prefer not to say	5

ASK ALL LEFT / CONSIDERING LEAVING CAFSW (B1=2/3/4 OR F1=4-6)

- I4 **[IF LEFT B1=2/3/4: And is there anything that might encourage you to return to child and family social work in future?]** **[IF CONSIDERING LEAVING (F1=4-6): And is there anything that might encourage you to remain in child and family social work?]**
 PROMPT AS NECESSARY. MULTICODE.

ASK IF MULTICODE AT I4

- I4a **And which ONE of these would you say would be the main thing that might encourage you to [B1=2-4: return to] [F1=4-6: remain in] child and family social work in future?**

IF ONLINE: PLEASE SELECT ONE ANSWER ONLY

IF TELEPHONE PROMPT WITH ANSWERS FROM I4 IF NEEDED. SINGLE CODE.

	I4	I4A
Flexi-time	1	1
Job-sharing	2	2
The ability to take time off in lieu (TOIL)	3	3
The ability to work from home	4	4
A more manageable workload in terms of caseload	5	5
A more manageable workload in terms of administration / paperwork	6	6
Higher pay	7	7
Other financial incentives such as overtime pay	8	8
Subsidised childcare	9	9
Better/ more promotion/ career progression opportunities	10	10
Better/ more training opportunities	11	11
Better physical working environment	12	12
Better working culture	13	13
Better IT systems and software	14	14
Other (please specify)	15	15
DS EXCLUSIVE CODE: No, nothing would encourage me to return to/ stay in social work	16	16
Don't know / prefer not to say	17	17

J Demographics

IF TELEPHONE READ OUT TO ALL, IF ONLINE DISPLAY TO ALL: **We'd like to end by asking you a few questions about yourself, to help us in our analysis.**

ASK ALL

J1 **What is your age?**

READ OUT: **Please round to the nearest whole (if required)**

Under 25 years	1
25 – 34 years	2
35 – 44 years	3
45 – 54 years	4
55 – 64 years	5
65 years and over	6
Prefer not to say	7

ASK ALL

J2 **Outside of work, do you have any care or childcare responsibilities?**

IF TELEPHONE: IF 'YES' PROMPT FOR CATEGORIES. MULTICODE OK

Yes: for school-aged child/children	1
Yes: for pre-school aged child/children	2
Yes: for child/ children with disabilities	3
Yes: caring for other family member or friends	4
No	5
Don't know / prefer not to say	6

IF ONLINE DISPLAY / IF TELEPHONE READ OUT: **The next few questions are about your gender, ethnicity and whether you have a disability or long-term health condition. You can refuse to answer any or all of these questions.**

ASK ALL

J3 **What is your gender?**

Male	1
Female	2
Other (please specify)	3
Prefer not to say	4

ASK ALL

- J4 **Do you have any physical or mental health conditions or illnesses lasting or expecting to last 12 months or more?**

Yes	1
No	2
Don't know / prefer not to say	3

ASK ALL

- J5 **What is your ethnic group?**

IF ONLINE: PLEASE GIVE ONE ANSWER.

IF TELEPHONE SINGLE CODE. PROMPT AS NECESSARY.

WHITE English/Welsh/Scottish/Northern Irish/British	1
WHITE Irish	2
WHITE Gypsy or Irish Traveller	3
WHITE Any other White background (please specify)	4
MIXED/MULTIPLE ETHNIC GROUPS White and Black Caribbean	5
MIXED/MULTIPLE ETHNIC GROUPS White and Black African	6
MIXED/MULTIPLE ETHNIC GROUPS White and Asian	7
MIXED/MULTIPLE ETHNIC GROUPS Any other Mixed/Multiple ethnic background (please specify)	8
ASIAN OR ASIAN BRITISH Indian	10
ASIAN OR ASIAN BRITISH Pakistani	11
ASIAN OR ASIAN BRITISH Bangladeshi	12
ASIAN OR ASIAN BRITISH Chinese	13
Any other Asian background (please specify)	14
BLACK / AFRICAN / CARIBBEAN / BLACK BRITISH African	15
BLACK / AFRICAN / CARIBBEAN / BLACK BRITISH Caribbean	16
BLACK / AFRICAN / CARIBBEAN / BLACK BRITISH Any other Black / African / Caribbean background (please specify)	17
OTHER ETHNIC GROUP Arab	18
OTHER ETHNIC GROUP Any other ethnic group (please specify)	19
IF TELEPHONE DISPLAY: "(DO NOT READ OUT)": Don't know / Prefer not to say	20

J1

K Recontact

ASK ALL

- K1 **Would you be willing to take part in a follow-up survey in one year's time? This will involve doing a similar – but much shorter – survey to find out what you are doing then and whether your circumstances and views have changed.**

ADD AS NECESSARY: Following up will help us to build a picture of what influences social worker's career experiences and decisions over time. We would still like people to take part next year even if they have left or are thinking of leaving the profession.

Yes (am willing to be re-contacted for the follow-up survey)	1
No (am not willing to be re-contacted for the follow-up survey)	2

ASK IF NOT WILLING TO BE RECONTACTED FOR FOLLOW UP (K1=2)

K1a

Thank you for confirming. We will not contact you about the next wave of the survey. Would you be happy for us to contact you in around two years' time to invite you to take part in the fifth and final wave of the research?

SINGLECODE.

Yes (I am willing to be re-contacted in two years' time)	1
No (I am not willing to be re-contacted in two years' time)	2

ASK ALL

- K2 **We will also be conducting some follow-up telephone interviews in the next couple of months which will cover these issues in more depth. The interviews will last around 45 minutes and you will be given £20 voucher as a thank you. Would you be willing to help us with this?**

Yes (can re-contact me for the qualitative research)	1
No (cannot re-contact me for the qualitative research)	2

ASK IF AGREE TO RECONTACT AT K1 or K2 OR K3

K3 **Thank you very much. Could we just take your name and home contact details? This will only be used to recontact you about this research and is just in case your work details change.**

WRITE IN FIRST NAME AND SURNAME	
WRITE IN HOME EMAIL ADDRESS	
Refused	X
WRITE IN HOME TELEPHONE NUMBER (LANDLINE OR MOBILE)	
Refused	X

Thanks for taking part and supporting this research, we really appreciate your time.

Appendix 4: Guide for qualitative follow-up interviews

DfE Longitudinal Survey of Child and Family Social Workers: qualitative follow-up topic guide, Wave 3.

A Researcher notes

This topic guide is intended to be used in telephone/video-conferencing interviews lasting up to 45 minutes with a range of practitioners:

15 social workers who expect to stay in the profession in 12 months' time
15 social workers that expect to leave the profession in 12 months' time
10 agency workers (with varying expectations about their future in the profession)

The aims of the interviews are to: 1) explore in more detail the factors influencing social workers' stress levels, job satisfaction (including the long term impacts of COVID-19) and how this impacts their likelihood of remaining in the profession, 2) explore in more detail how leadership and LA culture affect how social workers view their role and the profession more widely, and 3) take a look what flexibility means in relation to the social workers' job roles.

Questioning and probing will be framed to ensure we understand participants' situations as they view them. Researchers will adapt the approach, as much as possible, to suit the needs of each participant. The prompts provided are not exhaustive, but rather indicate the types of content we would expect to be covered – this may vary across participants with different characteristics or experiences. Refinements may be made to the guide content, iteratively, as we conduct interviews.

Researchers will review their participant's survey responses in advance of the interview, and tailor prompts and probes in relation to those findings.

B Participant introduction – 2-3 mins

- **Interviewer and IFF introduction / Academic institution and background:** Good morning / afternoon. My name is <NAME> and I work at IFF Research / Man Met / Salford. We have been commissioned by the Department for Education, to better understand the experiences of local authority child and family social workers in order to explore recruitment, retention and progression issues in the sector.
- As you are already aware, the interview will take around 45 minutes and we would like to thank you for taking part by offering you a £20 Amazon.

Before we begin, I just need to read out a few quick statements and gain your explicit permission to take part based on GDPR legislation.

- Firstly, you don't have to answer any of the questions. You are welcome to skip any questions or stop the interview at any point.

- **MUST READ:**

Please be assured that anything you say during the interview will be treated in the strictest confidence and results will be anonymised in any reporting so that they cannot be linked back to you.

- **MUST READ MRS Code of Conduct:**

IFF Research operates under the strict guidelines of the Market Research Society's Code of Conduct. Only the core members of the research team will have access to any of your details. We will not pass any of your personal details on to the Department for Education or any other companies and all the information we collect will be kept in the strictest confidence and used for research purposes only.

- **MUST READ:**

You have the right to have a copy of your data, change your data, or withdraw from the research at any point. You can find out more information about your rights under the new data protection regulations by going to iffresearch.com/GDPR. We can also email this to you if you'd like.

- **MUST READ:**

I would like to record our conversation. The recording will only be used for our analysis purposes and may be transcribed; all recordings and transcripts/notes will be stored securely and deleted after 12 months. Are you happy for me to record the conversation?

Yes	CONTINUE
No	CONTINUE Take detailed notes

Please can you confirm that you have understood the nature of the research and that you are happy to consent to taking part?

Is that OK?

Yes	CONTINUE
No	THANK AND CLOSE
Don't know	READ ASSURANCES

Do you have any questions before we begin?

C Discussion guide (40 minutes)

Section One: Current Position

We'd like to start by establishing if anything has changed in relation to your role since you took part in the wave 3 survey.

1. When you completed the W3 survey in Autumn 2020, you told us that you were <W3 SURVEY B1 RESPONSE>. What, if anything, has changed since you completed the survey?
 - Details of current role – confirm job title, explore meaning of job title, responsibilities, case holding, staff supervision, permanent member of staff/agency etc.
 - If moved organisation/changed team or job - New job (probe for details of new post, role, remuneration, location)
 - Changes in current job (e.g. hours, reorganisation, increase/decrease in caseload, management/team changes)
 - Personal circumstances (e.g. moving house, sickness, caring responsibilities)

Section Two: Job satisfaction, morale and retention

1. How, if at all, has satisfaction with your job changed over the last 12 months? Please explain.
2. What factors have influenced this? e.g. personal efficacy, levels of stress, changed role, changed ways of working, hours etc? Other factors? Explain how?
3. In the Wave 3 survey, you stated that COVID-19 <SEE F8 SURVEY RESPONSE>. Please could explain what, if any, impact COVID-19 has had on your long-term professional/ career plans?
4. What, if any, actions have your local authority taken to support you during this time?
 - And how have these actions impacted your overall job satisfaction/ morale and/or stress?
 - Would you like to see any of these actions maintained? If so, which ones and why?
5. How positive do you feel about the ability of social work within your LA to make a difference to children's lives? Please explain (probe for whether more or less effective since Covid?)
6. Thinking about your plans to remain in or leave children and families social work, what are your intentions for the next 12 months?
 - If you are intending to stay in your current post, what are the reasons for this?
 - If considering leaving current LA what are your reasons? What would encourage you to remain?
 - If agency worker – why have you chosen agency work rather than a permanent LA post? What would encourage you to move from agency to a permanent post in a LA?
 - If you are considering leaving CF social work altogether, what are your reasons? What would encourage you to remain?

Section Three: Leadership

1. Generally speaking, how satisfied are you with the leadership in your current LA? To reiterate, all your responses will remain completely anonymous, so please be open and honest in your responses.
 - Councillors
 - Senior management – Directorate Level and ADs
 - Middle management – Head of Service and Service Manager
 - Team manager
2. Which layer of management has the biggest influence on your work and why?
3. In your view, what does good leadership/management look like?
4. What has been the impact of COVID-19 on leadership and your view of leadership in your LA?
 - Can you give some examples?
5. How could leadership in your organisation be improved?

Section Four: Culture

Leadership is related to the culture experienced in an organisation:

1. What do you understand by the term 'culture'? (prompts if asked – e.g. top-down/bottom-up, collegiate, learning organisation, diverse workforce, blame culture, values and feeling valued, particular practice models)
2. How would you describe the culture in your LA?
 - Can you give some examples?
3. How valued do you feel by your organisation? How does your organisation demonstrate this to you?
 - What would you like being valued to look like?
4. Can you think of ways that your organisation could improve how it makes you feel valued, or examples of where it works well?
5. How important is LA culture for you in terms of remaining in your current organisation/a permanent role?
6. (For agency workers only) Would the culture in this organisation encourage/discourage you to apply for a permanent post here, and why? How does it feel to be an agency worker here?

Section Five: Flexibility

1. What does flexibility mean to you in the context of your role?
 - To what extent are you able to work flexibly in your current position/ LA?
 - Is flexibility in the role something that's important to you?
 - How does being able to work flexibly help you in your role?
2. Do you feel that the changes to working practices during COVID-19 have allowed you more or less flexibility in managing your work-life balance?
 - Can you give us some examples?

Prompt if necessary:

 - Changes to working hours and/or conditions
 - Ways of managing family responsibilities

3. What aspects of flexibility would you like to see in your organisation; what would you like to change? Please explain.
 - For agency workers only: How does flexibility in agency work differ from working for an LA directly?
 - If this flexibility was available, would this make you more likely to apply for a permanent position here, or in a local authority where similarly increased flexibility was available?

Section Six: Workload

Moving on to how this relates to your day to day work, we would like to ask you about your workload.

1. What kind of work do you currently do? What kind of work would you like to do more/less of?
2. And how manageable is your workload at the moment?
 - What is contributing to it being manageable / unmanageable?
 - Size and severity of caseload?
3. How has COVID-19 affected your workload?
 - How do you think it has affected the workload of your team/other colleagues?
4. How has the pandemic impacted on your practice (e.g. virtual meetings, contact with service users etc?)
 - What has worked well? What were the challenges?
 - Are there any aspects of this way of working that you would like to keep? Any that you are concerned about and would like to change?

D Wrap-up – 2-3 mins

We would like to send you a £20 Amazon E-voucher to say thank you for taking part.

- Explain that the processing of incentives is done through the IFF accounts team and it can take a few weeks for their vouchers to arrive.

Amazon E Voucher (note this comes more quickly)	Email Address:
---	----------------

Thank you very much for taking the time to speak with me today. Would you be willing for us to call you back if we need to clarify any information?

Yes	
No	

IF CONSENT TO RECONTACT

And could I just check, is the number that I called you on today the best number to reach you?

Yes	
No – write in number	

And what is the best email address to reach you on?

Write in email address:	
No- refused to answer	

IF NEEDED: You also have a right to lodge a complaint with the Information Commissioners Office (ICO) and you can do so by calling their helpline on 0303 123 1113.

Finally, I would just like to confirm that this interview has been carried out under IFF instructions and within the rules of the MRS Code of Conduct. Thank you very much for your help today.

THANK RESPONDENT AND CLOSE INTERVIEW

I declare that this survey has been carried out under IFF instructions and within the rules of the MRS Code of Conduct.

Interviewer signature:	Date:	
Finish time:	Interview Length	Mins



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