

Children, Young People and Family Services staff survey 2015 – full report

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Summary of key messages for action

Supervision

A need to clarify expectations and improve consistency – supervision is good for most, most of the time, but consistency needed -

Frequency

Clarify expectation for all staff including admin and part time – no less than monthly?

Challenge and clarity

Clarify supervision should challenge and provide clarity of expectations for all staff most or all of the time

Focus

Clarify supervision should focus on lived experience of CYP/families (carers/victims of crime – service users) for all staff in practitioner roles – and all staff including admin and managers should have a focus in supervision on the impact of their work on service users

Continue to improve reflectiveness of supervision for all those in practice and supervisory roles.

Staff support, development and training

All staff should experience support for their emotional wellbeing and development from their manager (most do, but not all)

Improve consistency of the 'golden thread' from PDR - training and development plans - commitment to supporting and prioritising attendance at training – follow through in applying training in practice

Improve coherence of training offer and processes

Ensure training for all staff at all stages of professional development (some more experienced staff feel there is little for them)

Processes, systems, direct work time

Implement liquid logic including early help, EHC and look for effective interfaces with non-social care systems and teams

Review and ensure effective IT/systems for all functions across the division

Improve information sharing and communication – reducing/minimising paperwork and duplication

Continue to improve interfaces between teams and services – step up/down etc.

Focus on maximising time for direct work with CYP/families/other service users across the division

Management and how to improve

There is a need for a clear shared vision across division

Managers to communicate vision, expectations and priorities clearly and consistently to all staff – don not assume staff know what is expected

Managers to make timely decisions to prevent this being a barrier to work flow

Managers to spend time alongside staff – ‘spend a day in our shoes’

Listening to staff and acting on what we hear

Making sure we all listen to children, young people, families, all service users

Reporting concerns

Continually/frequently remind all staff how to report concerns

Show staff concerns are dealt with.

About the survey

This was the first survey of all staff across the whole children's service provider division in B&NES. This followed a similar survey carried out in January 2014 of Children's Social Care staff.

The questions used in this staff survey were broadly identical to those used in the previous survey, focusing on experience of supervision, training and development, management, time and processes and how we can improve. This year's survey included a new set of questions about whistleblowing.

The survey was conducted over 3 weeks in May 2015 as the two divisions, specialist and targeted, came together as a single division of the Council.

Responses and roles

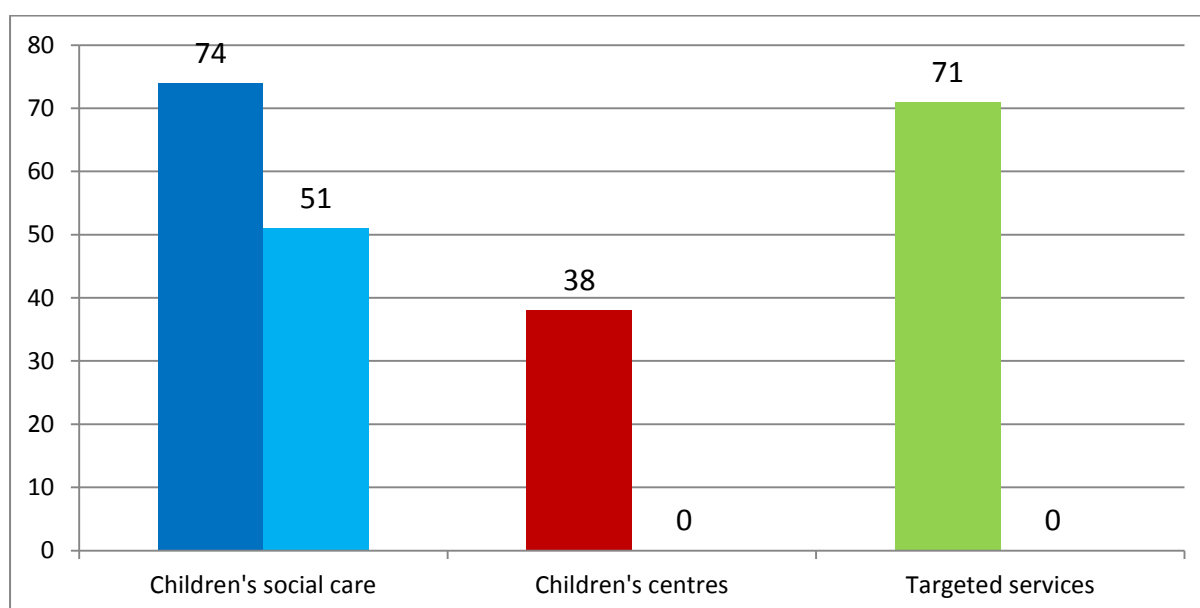
There were 183 responses reflecting all roles and sections within the service.

The survey was carried out in three sections, large enough to assure staff of anonymity while enabling us to distinguish between staff views within Children's Social Care, the Children's Centre Service (the specialist division), and the rest of the Targeted Division, with the addition of the Special Educational Needs Team which has joined the division as part of the Vulnerable Learners Service.

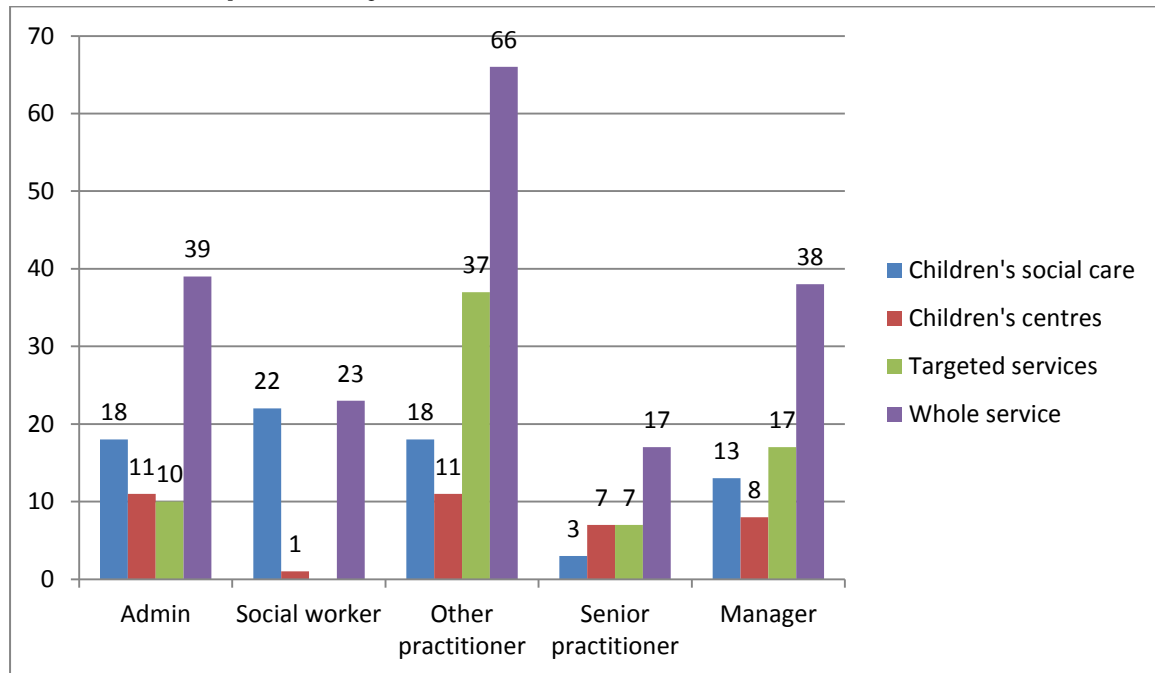
It is not possible to determine the rate of response by team; however the overall response rate and range of detailed comments made both suggest a broad cross-service response.

Number of responses by section

For Social Care this was an increase on the 51 responses received last year.



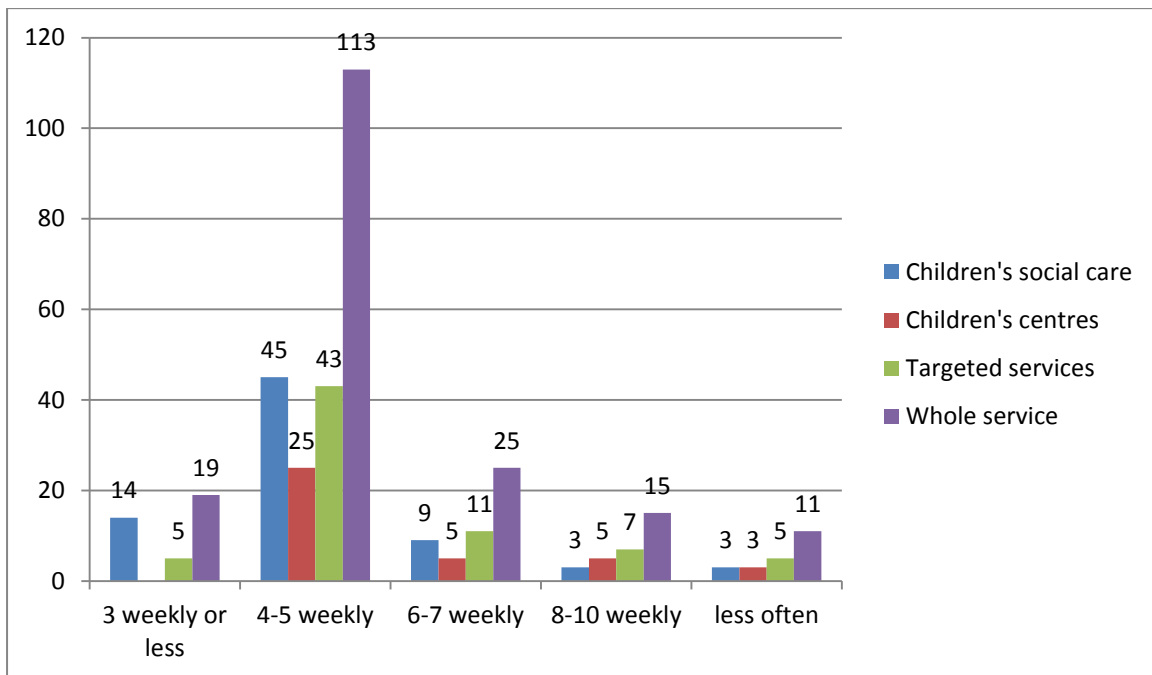
Number of responses by role and section



The increase in Social Care responses was mostly because more admin and other practitioners responding than last year – the numbers of social workers, senior practitioners and managers were similar to last year.

Supervision

Frequency of supervision

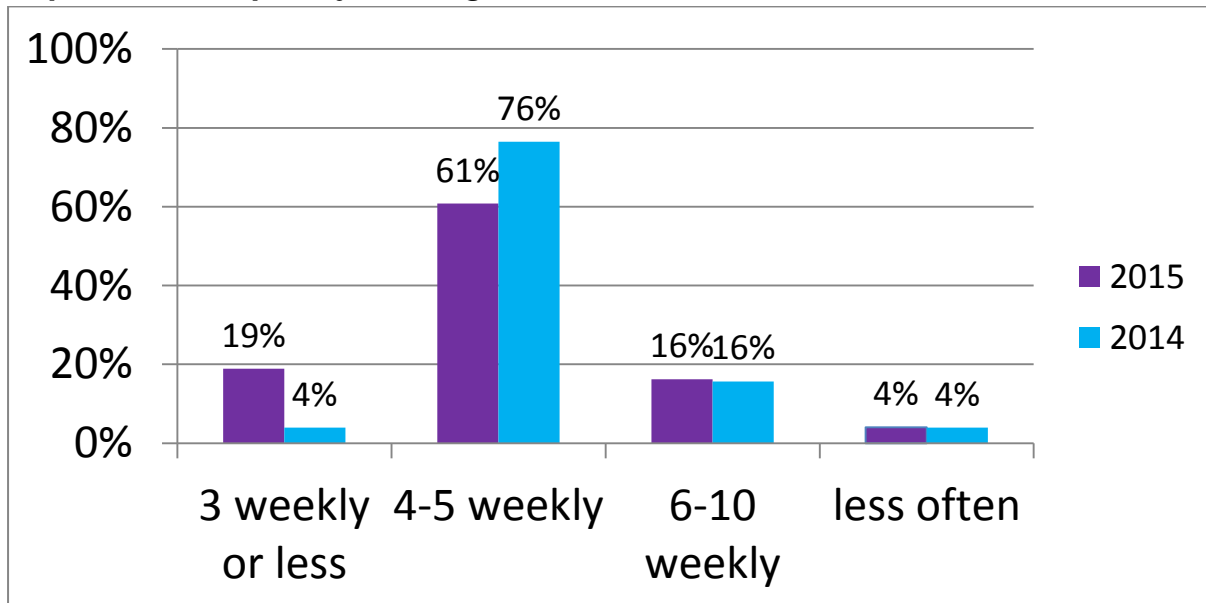


Most staff across the service receive supervision 4-5 weekly or more often.

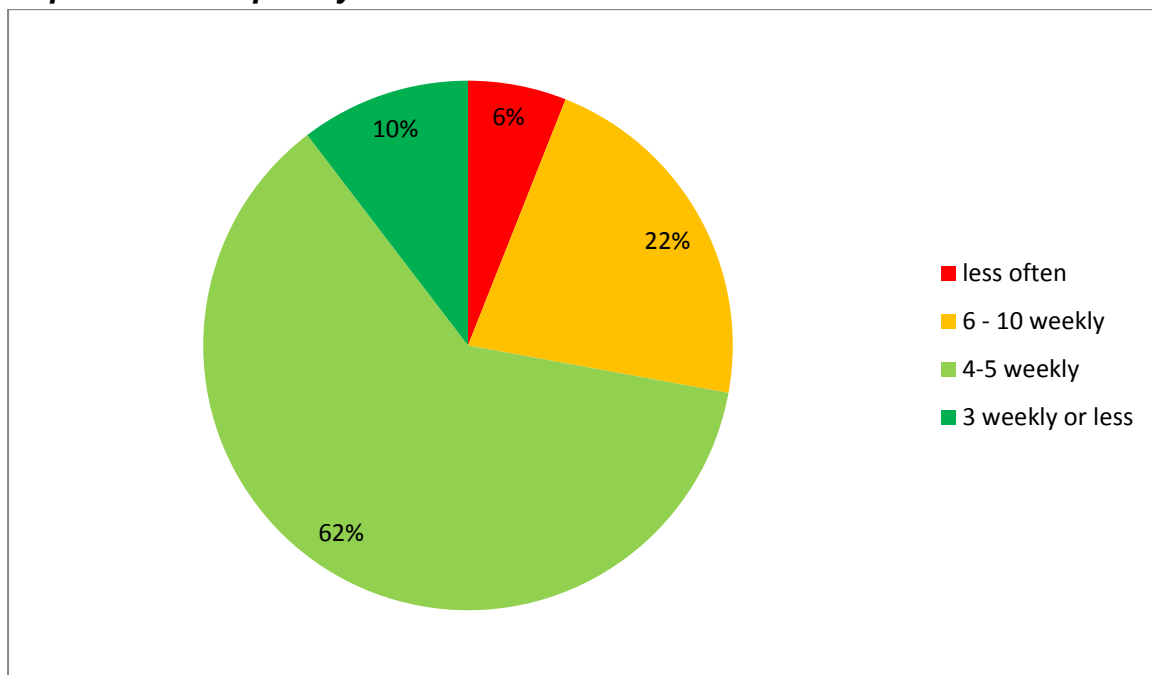
Analysis of the data shows that there is no significant variation in the frequency of supervision by hours worked – part time staff seem to be supervised as frequently as full time. However there is variation by role - administrative staff are more likely to experience less frequent supervision than other roles.

Comparison with last year for Social Care shows a significant increase from 2 to 14 in the number of staff reporting supervision 3 weekly, made up of social workers and other practitioners. This is encouraging; however we would like to see more staff in practice roles across the service receiving more frequent supervision in line with the supervision policy.

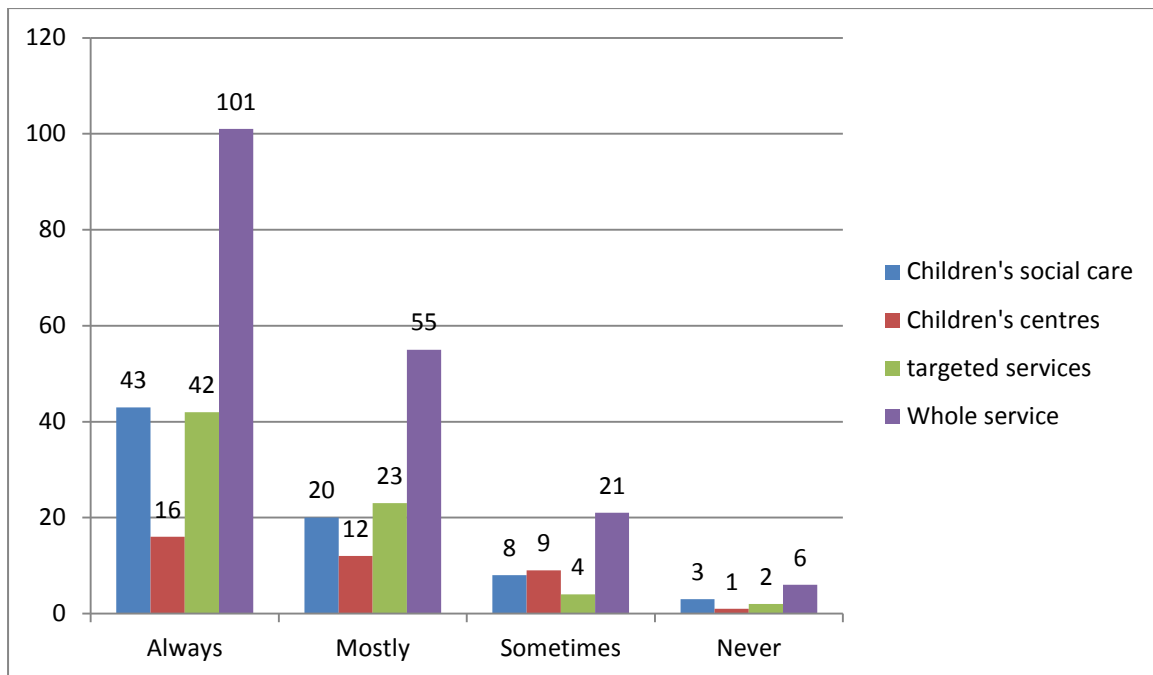
Supervision frequency – change in social care from 2014



Supervision frequency 2015 - whole division

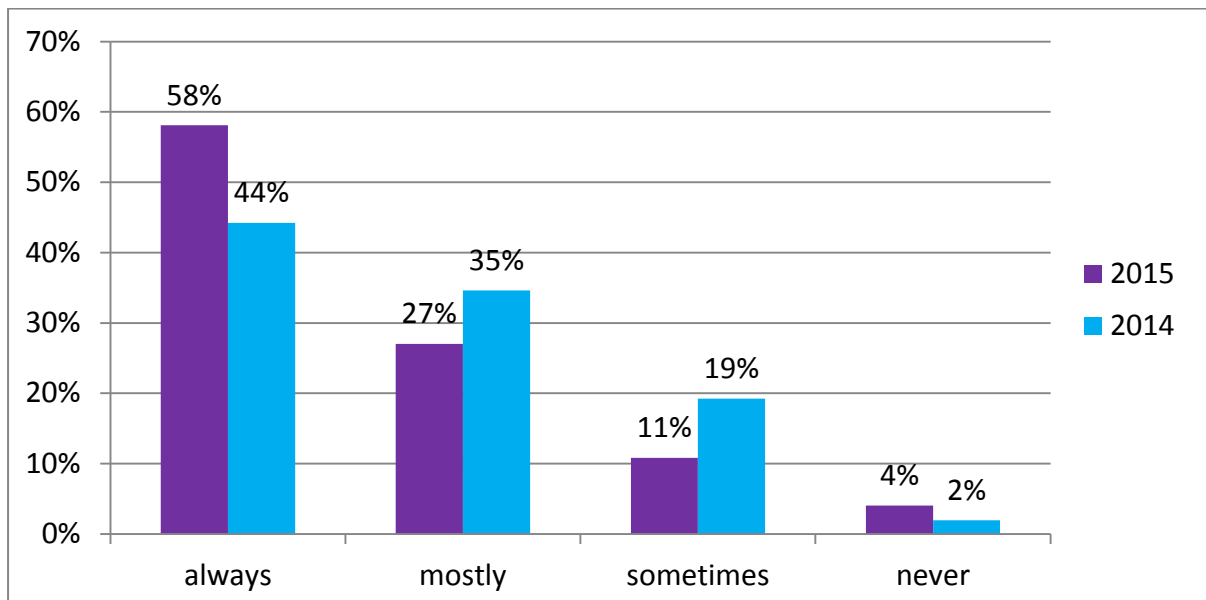


Supervision makes clear roles and responsibilities

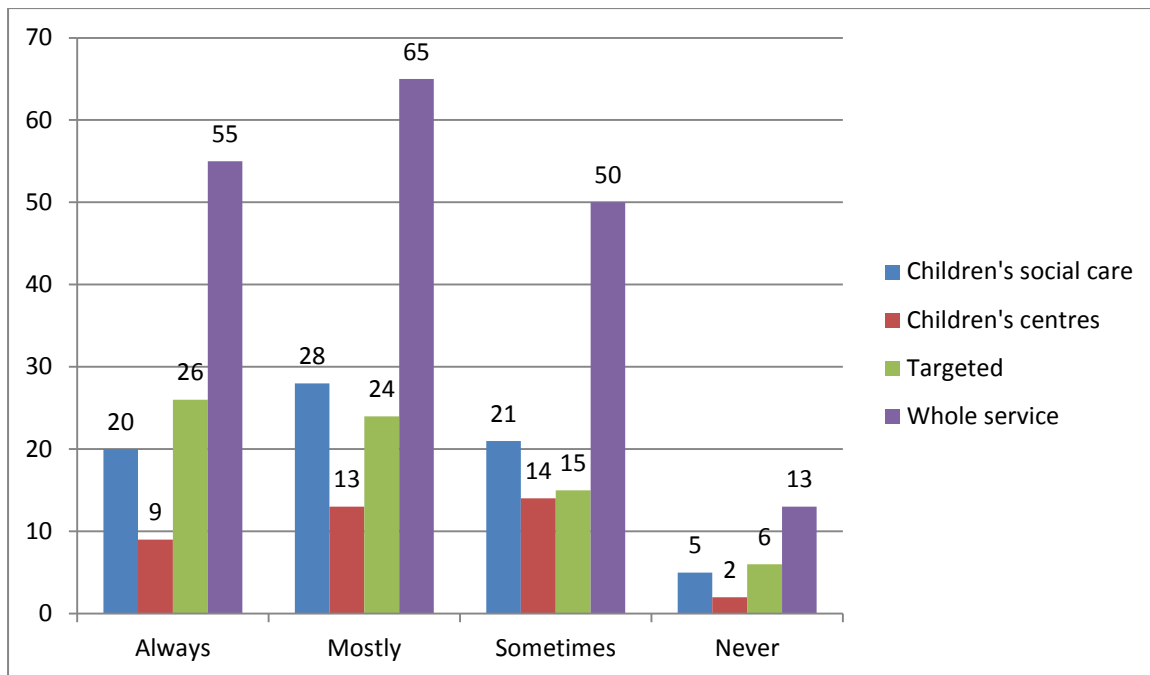


This is fairly consistent across Social Care and Targeted with the majority saying this always happens. The picture in Children's Centres is more mixed, with a higher proportion of staff saying this happens only sometimes.

A higher proportion of staff in Social Care say this always happens than in last year's survey.

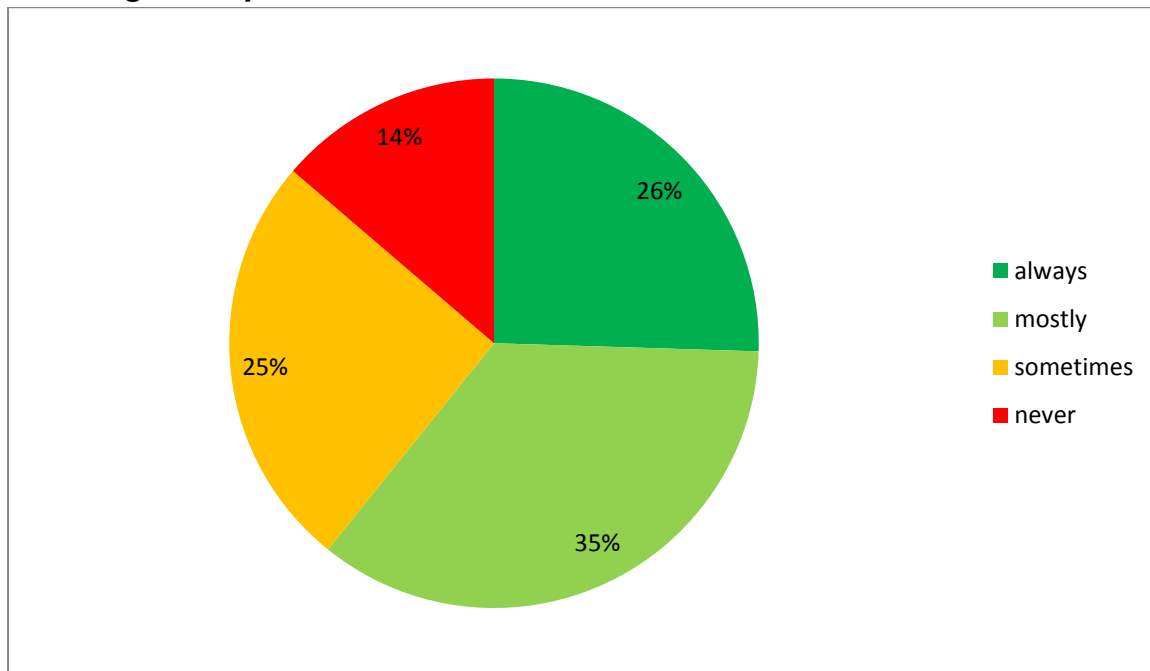


Supervision provides challenge (appropriate to role)

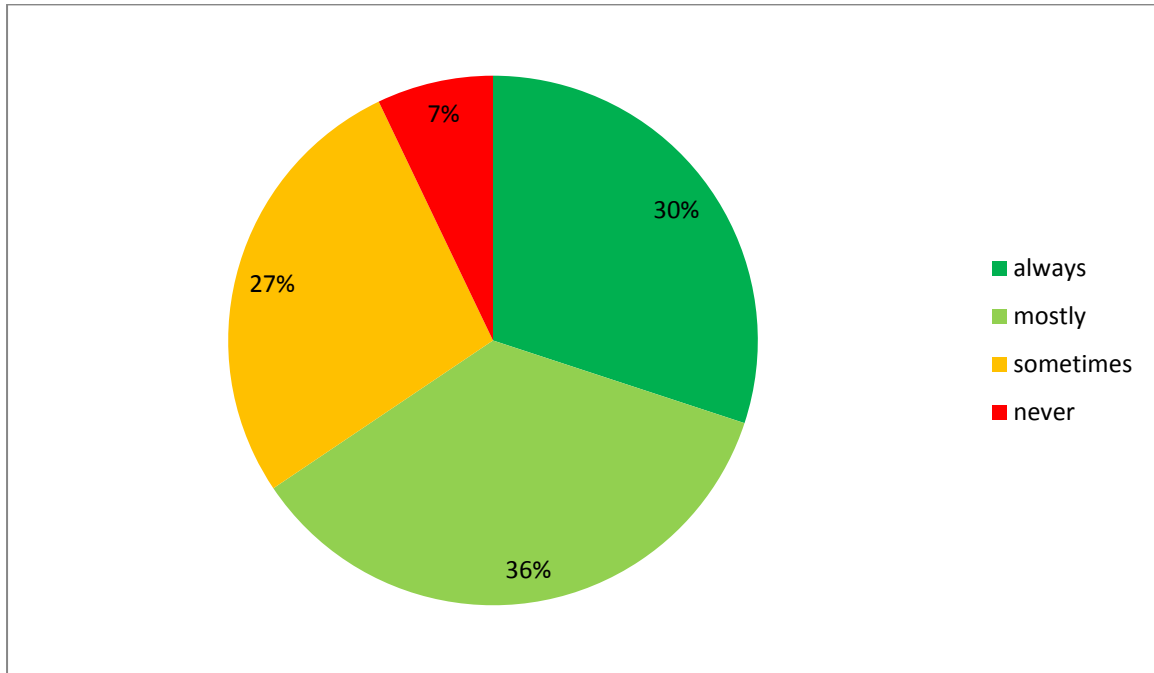


The picture here is more mixed across the whole service. For social care there is a reduction from last year in the number and proportion of staff saying there is never challenge; however the increase in responses is fairly evenly spread between always, mostly and sometimes. It is of concern that 13 respondents across the service report never being challenged in supervision.

Challenge in supervision 2014 – social care

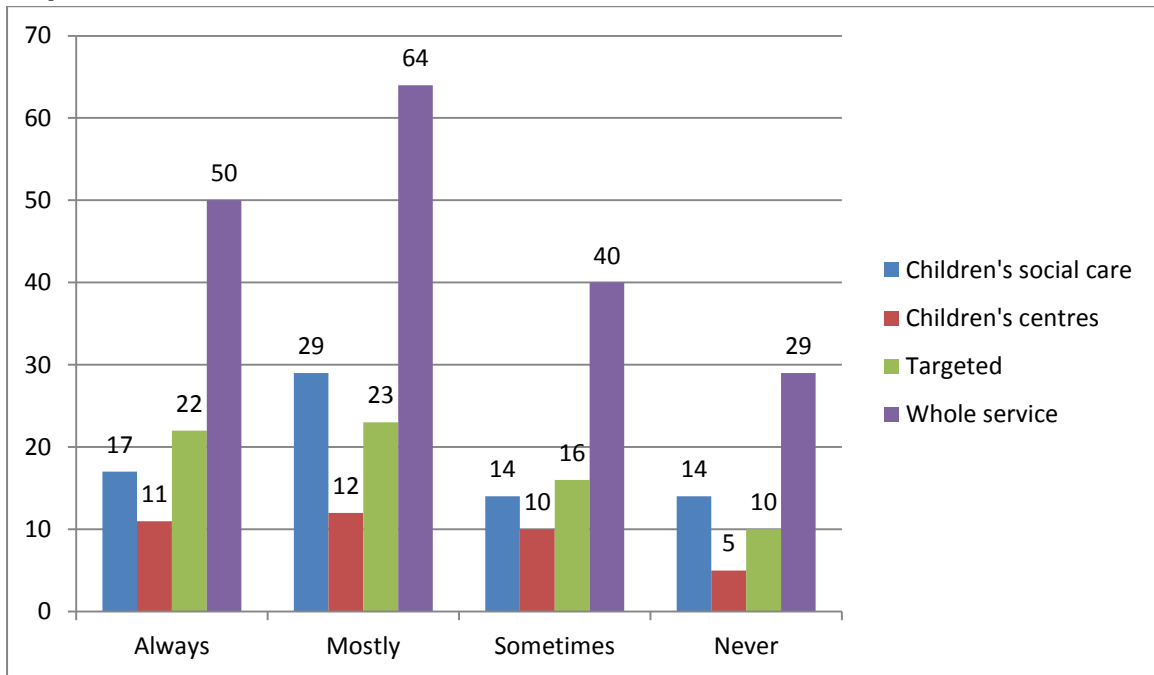


Challenge in supervision 2015 – whole division



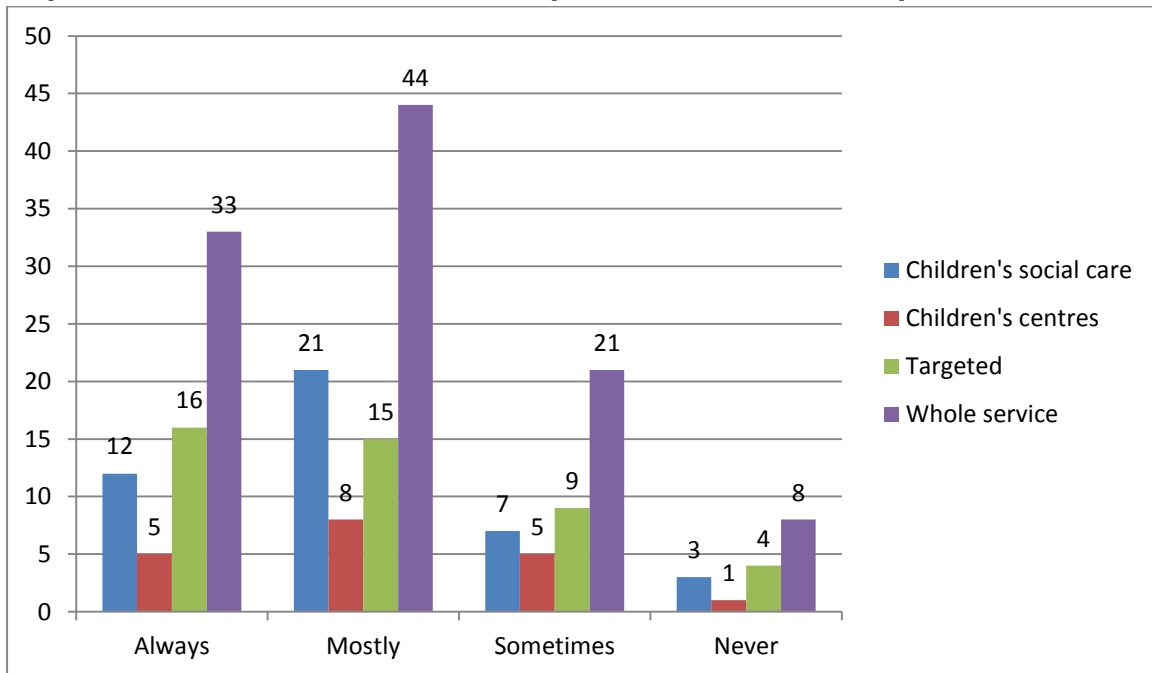
Supervision focuses on the lived experience of the child

Supervision focus – all staff



This chart presents a mixed picture. However, when this is restricted to practice roles the following picture emerges -

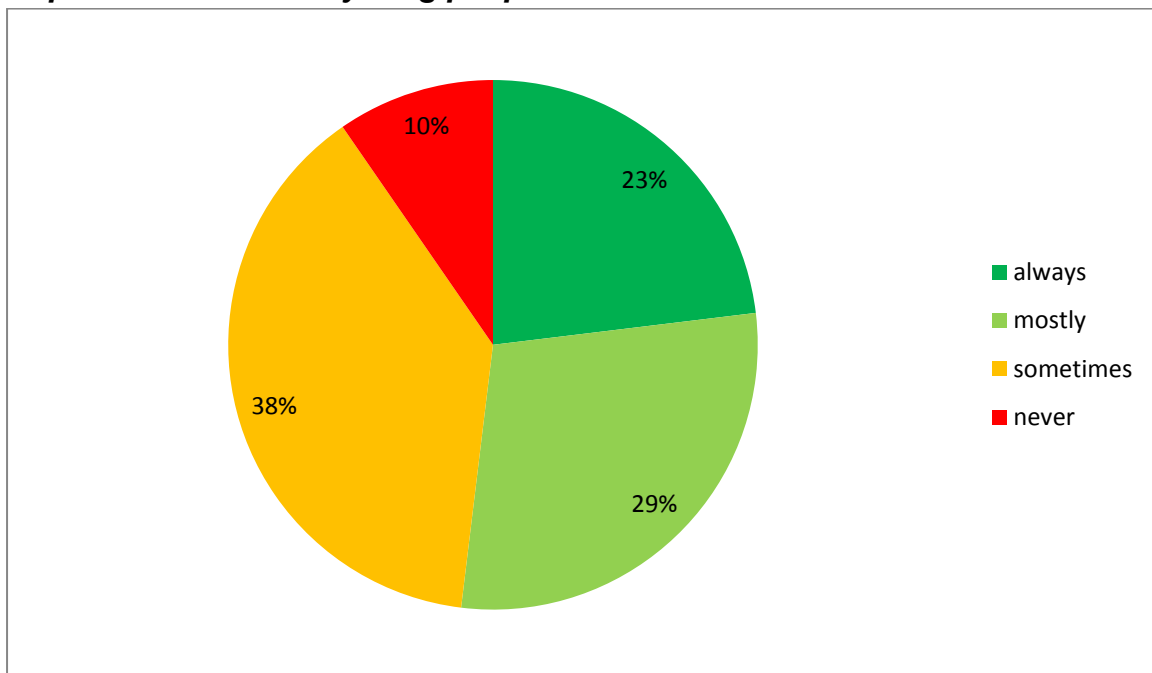
Supervision focuses on the lived experience of the child – practice roles



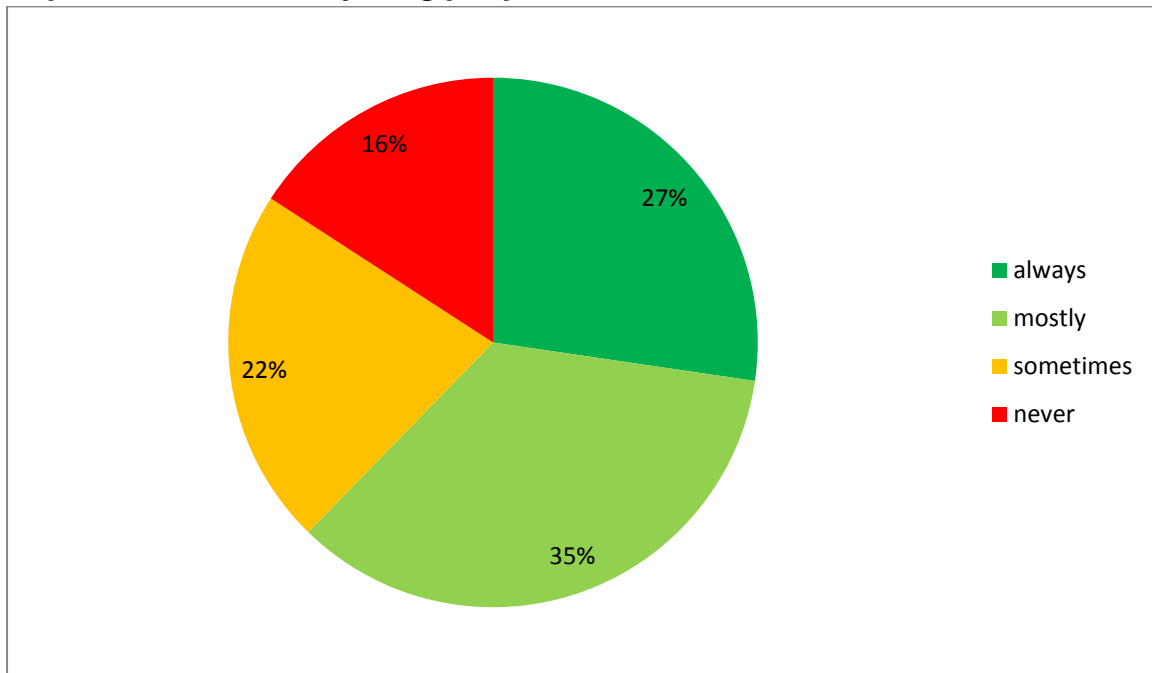
The fact that 8 staff in practice roles say their supervision never focuses on the lived experience of children and the effectiveness of their intervention is concerning, however the majority report this happens always or mostly.

The profile of responses in social care on this question shows a big improvement on last year, with a significant shift from sometimes or never to always or mostly, however the fact that 3 practitioners in social care say never is still of concern.

Supervision focus on young people and effectiveness 2014 – social care



Supervision focus on young people and effectiveness 2015 – whole division



What is good about supervision?

On the whole, the comments about supervision were positive about the content, regularity and purpose of monitoring progress. For staff that are in children's social care, the comments confirmed the aims of the Supervision Policy that has been in place since 2014 and include references to reflection and getting support around the emotional impact of the work. For non-frontline staff, whilst mainly positive there were more negative comments, including how supervision wasn't happening at all or was not relevant for their role.

Concerns were raised by one group of staff that they were currently being supervised by appropriate professionals, however that this was possibly going to change and it was clear that this was a very real concern for them.

Comments included:-

- Regular, positive, reflective, challenging
- It is an opportunity to reflect on practise and what needs to happen to improve the child's experience. Also, to explore concerns and agree what intervention may be needed to address concerns
- Good supervision must show a recognition of the role of the person being supervised and that person must feel that the supervisor has the skills and knowledge to perform the task or it will be ineffective
- I've never had it, it was pencilled in my calendar four times and my supervisor always found other things to do and has casually dismissed it
- Supervision gives me a chance to off load and to keep focused on the piece of work that I am doing with the family. It also helps me to explore the other

areas that I might have missed or need to be explored to support the young person or family

How could supervision be improved?

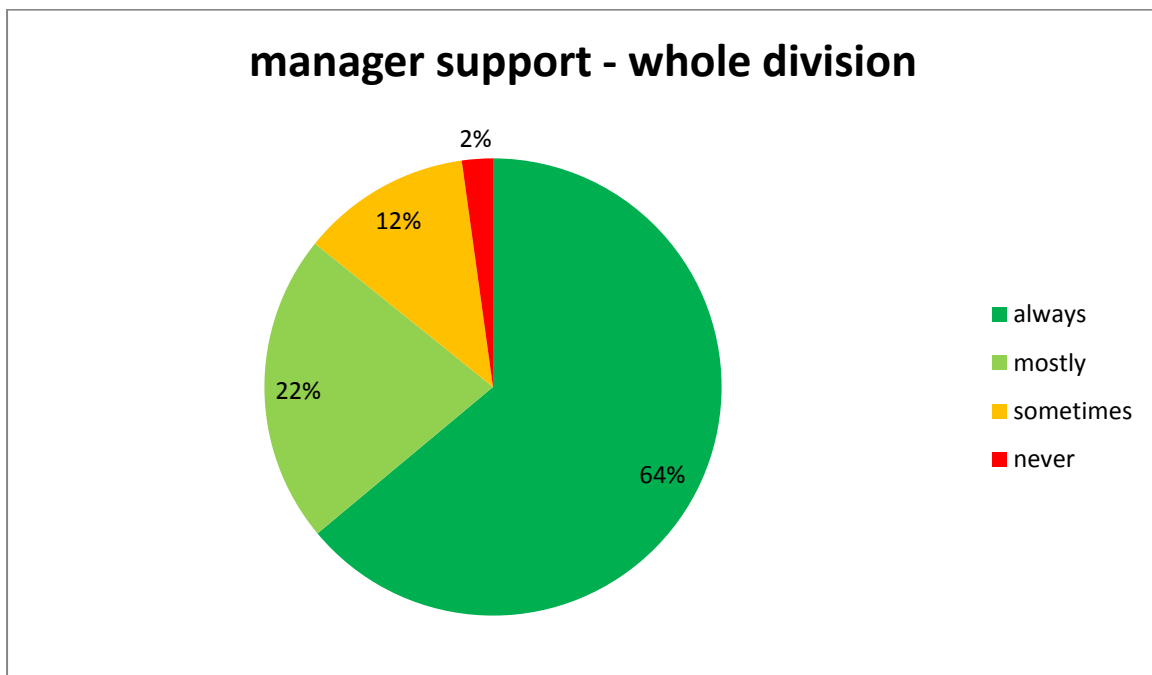
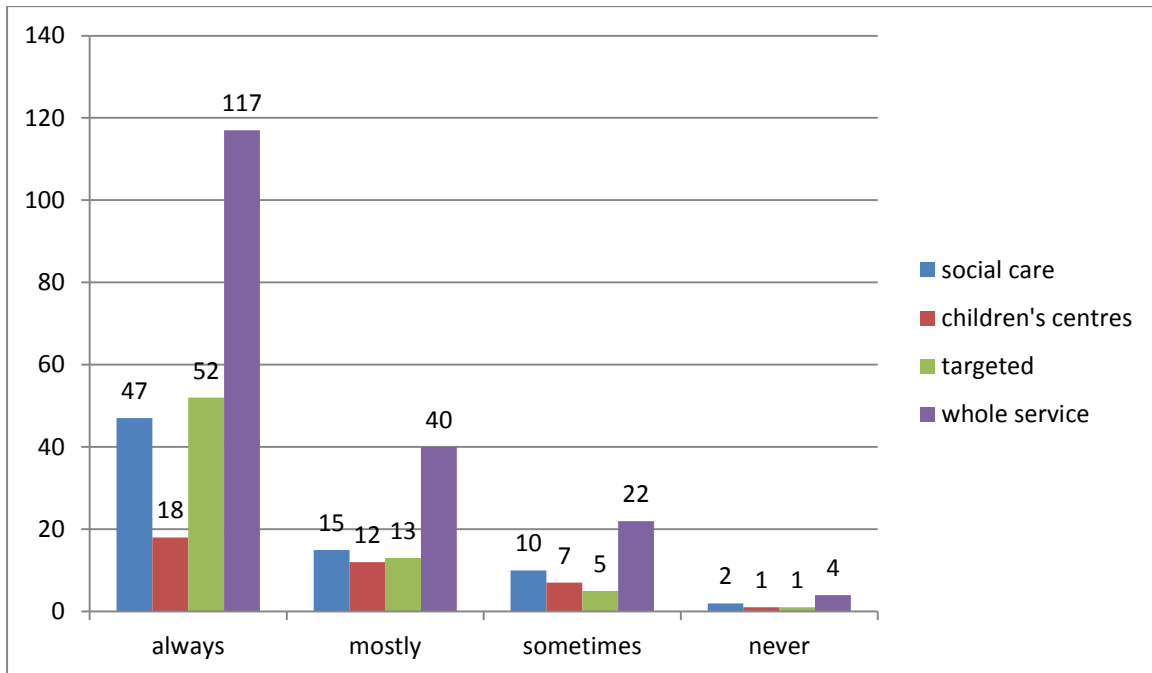
It was very gratifying to read the number of comments that stated that supervision could not be improved. The themes arising from the positive comments included that managers were properly prepared for supervision and had an understanding of the roles of the supervisees. The recommendations for improving supervision included having longer in supervision, whether a longer time in each supervision or that supervision happens more frequently; the introduction of peer supervision or including other staff involved in a case so that planning is done jointly; and more active challenge by the managers. One member of staff reported not having supervision at all and others having it cancelled and not re-booked swiftly so there are still improvements that can be made in the supervision provided to staff.

Comments included:-

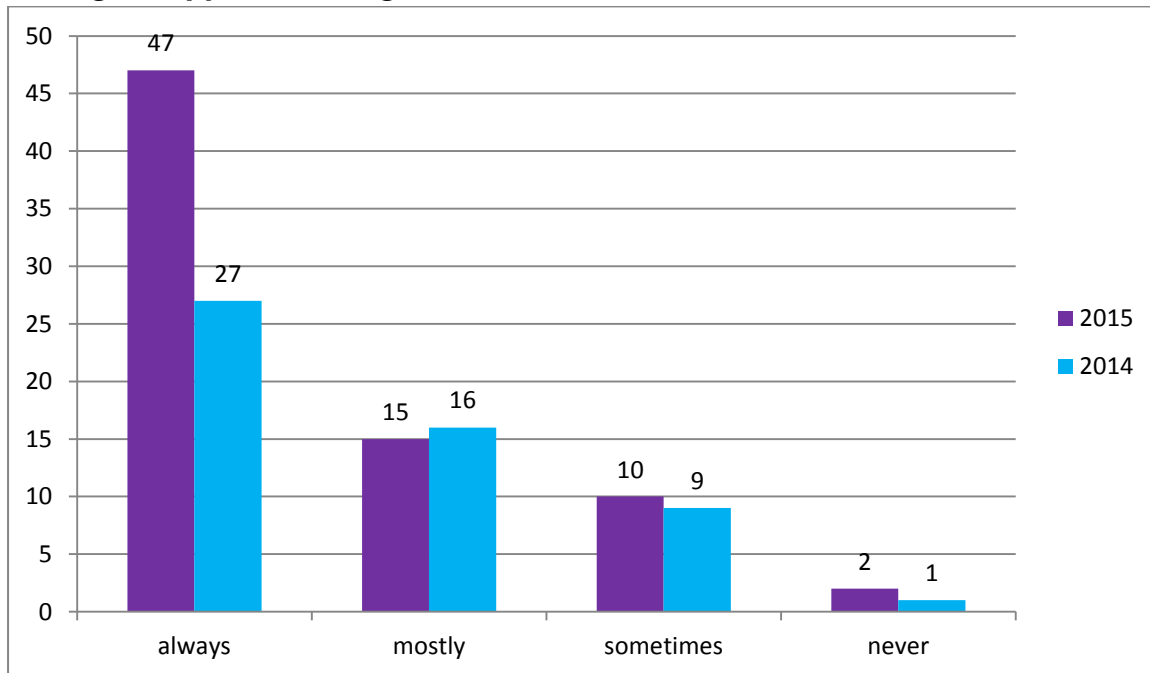
- I sometimes feel that I am not used to my full potential. I would like to be challenged more
- My manager is always very well prepared for my supervision sessions. They are the best I have ever received
- Dedicated time – punctual start rather than feeling rushed because it has started late or another commitment means that time is very tight
- I find there is flexibility to make it suited to my style and what I find most helpful – as opposed to a one size fits all process

Staff support, development and training

Manager takes account of wellbeing and offers support

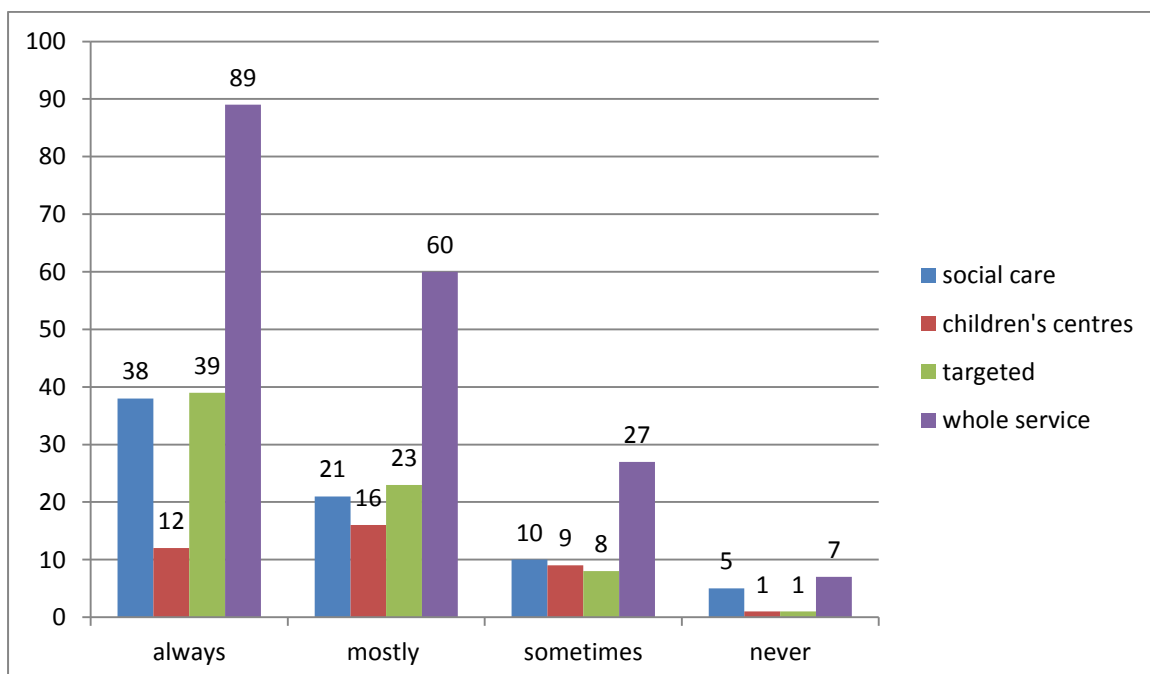


Manager support – change in social care

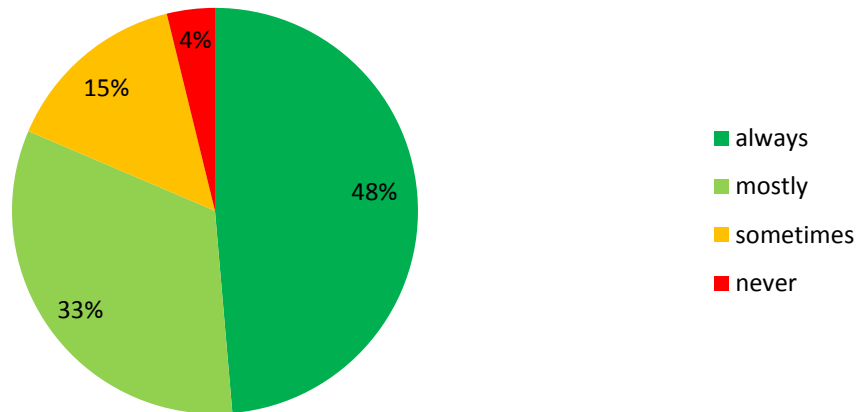


Most staff across the division feel supported always or mostly by their manager. There is little variation between services in this. There is a significant increase in the proportion of social care staff who report they always feel supported. However a few staff across the division feel this never happens.

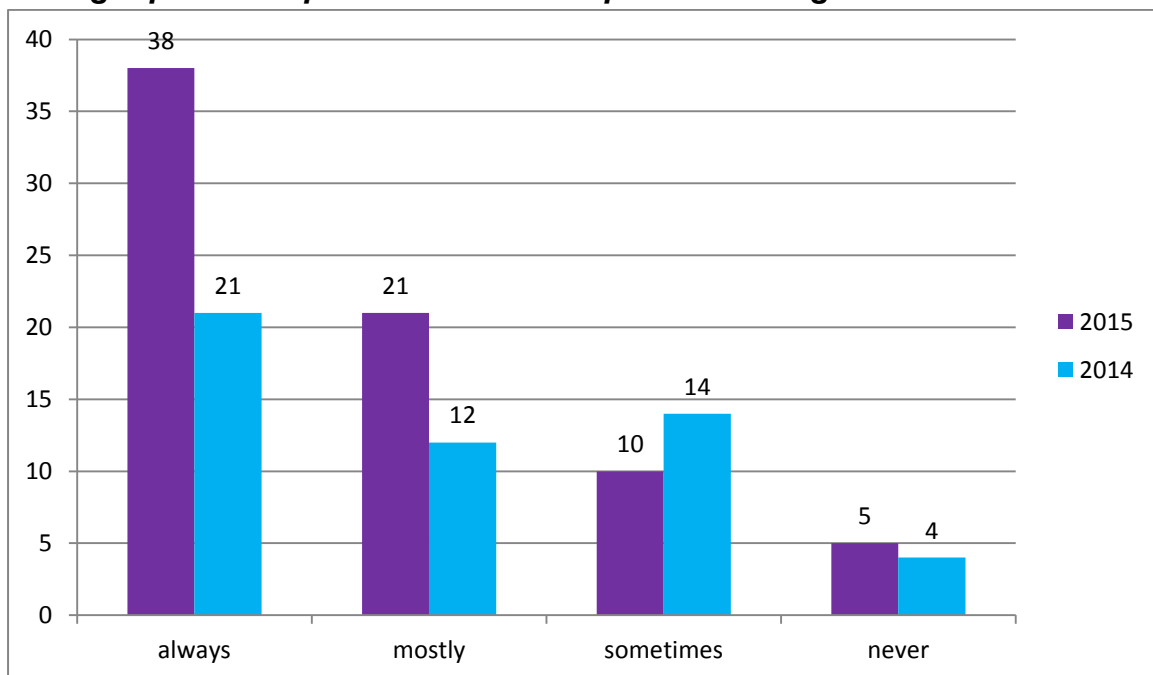
Manager promotes professional development



manager promotes professional development - whole division

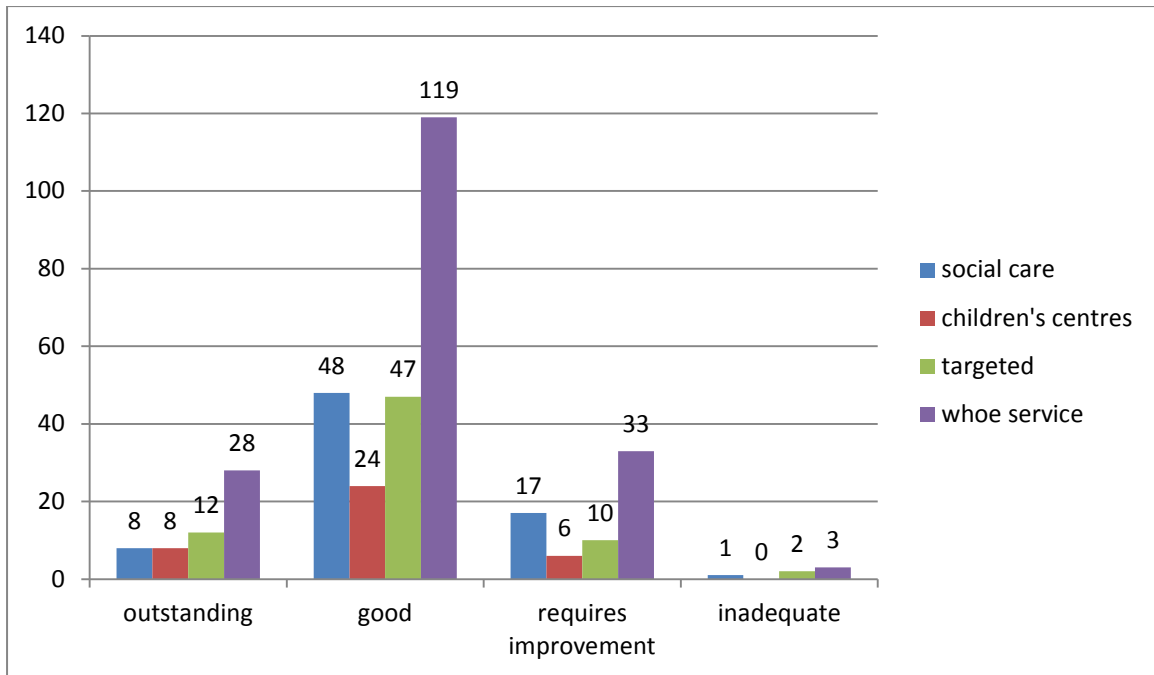


Manager promotes professional development – change in social care

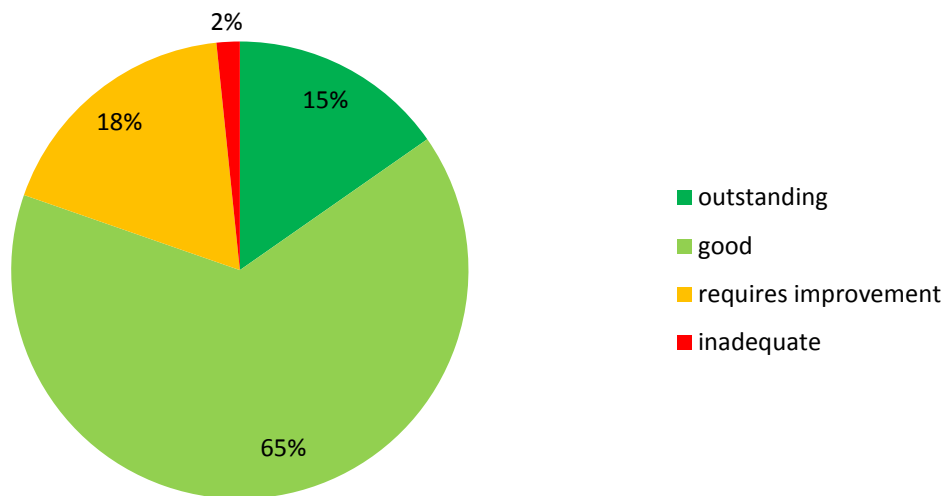


Most staff across the division feel their manager promotes their professional development always or mostly. This is similar across all services, although a higher proportion of children's centre staff feel this happens mostly than always. There is a significant improvement in the proportion of social care staff who feel this happens always or mostly. However a few staff across the division feel it never happens.

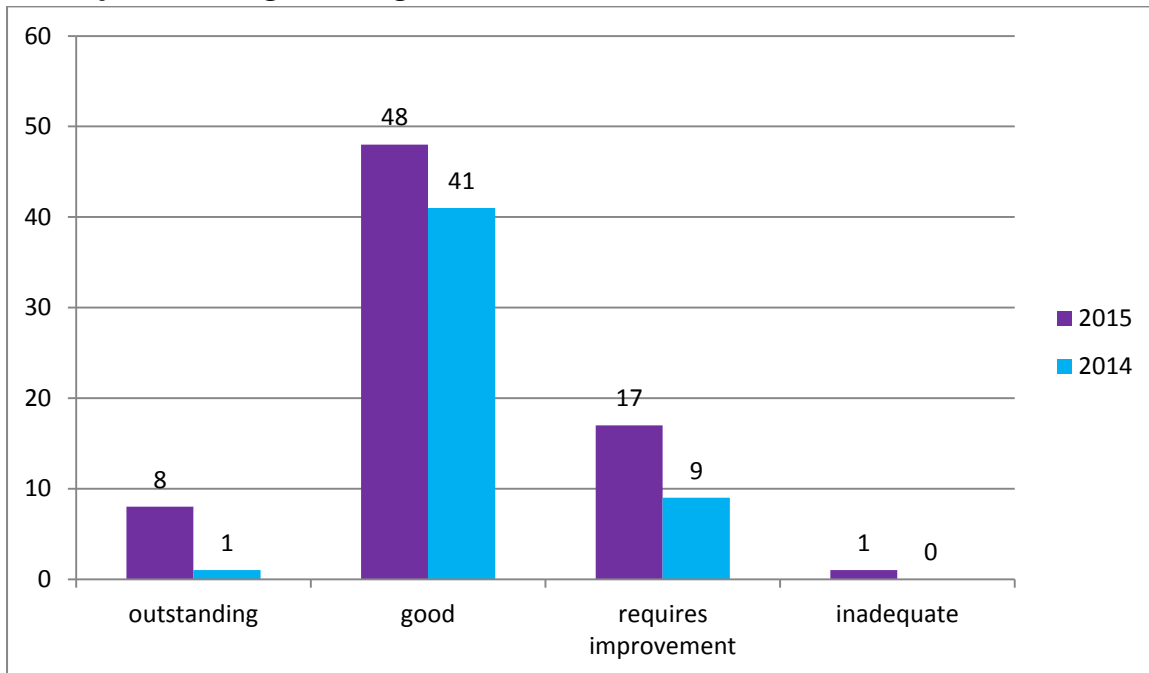
How would you rate the quality of training given?



quality of training - whole division



Quality of training – change in social care



Most staff across the division feel the training provided is good, with a substantial minority rating it outstanding. However quite a few staff believe it requires improvement and a small number find it inadequate. The profile is broadly similar across services, although a higher proportion of children’s centre staff find it outstanding. There has not been a huge change in the overall profile of social care staff views of training although quite a few more staff now find it outstanding.

Support and training provided for career and skills development – what is good and what could be improved?

The responses in relation to training were on the whole positive across the whole service about the range of training offered and that it was usually of a good standard. The comments around support have also been mainly positive and included reference to managers and colleagues alike. The PDR system was referred to for planning training in the year ahead and reviewing what has already occurred, although concerns were raised that this is not well linked into supervision.

The suggestions for improvement included running the courses on different days of the week for part-time staff, support from managers to undertake training by finding replacement cover, etc. and finally not knowing who to tell about their training needs. A repeat from last year is more training needs to be provided for staff that are more experienced and want to further develop their practical skills, although the overall sense was that this was improving.

Comments included:-

- It’s very impressive that so many courses are available to workers @ BANES, and the fact that they’re all free of charge to all employees. It makes the

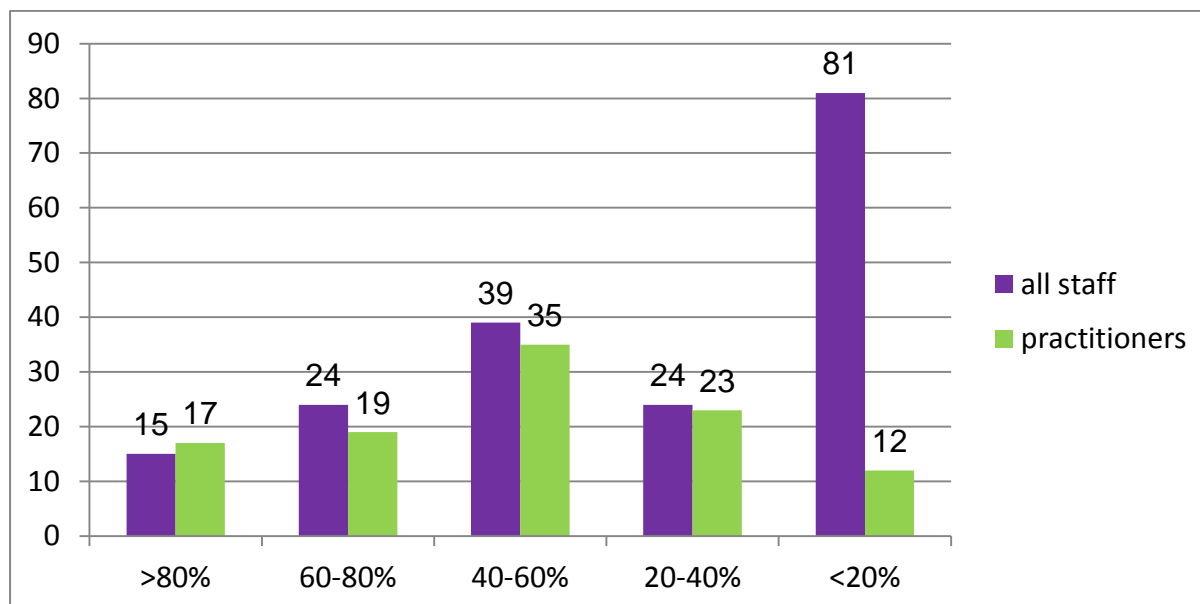
employee feel valued, like the company is trying to actively develop the staff and help them learn new things.

- I find that the recent training from the LSCB has been of a very good quality and provides evidence that can be easily used within assessments
- Have done most of the training on offer for my role. Need something more challenging with consideration to length of my post qualifying experience
- There is a vast amount of training offered but it is not clearly linked to career development
- All training booking to be at one place as near as possible anyway, sometime you need agresso codes other times you don't, sometimes it's through the Learning Zone, others it's just sending an email, Consistency is the word.

Systems, processes, time available for direct work

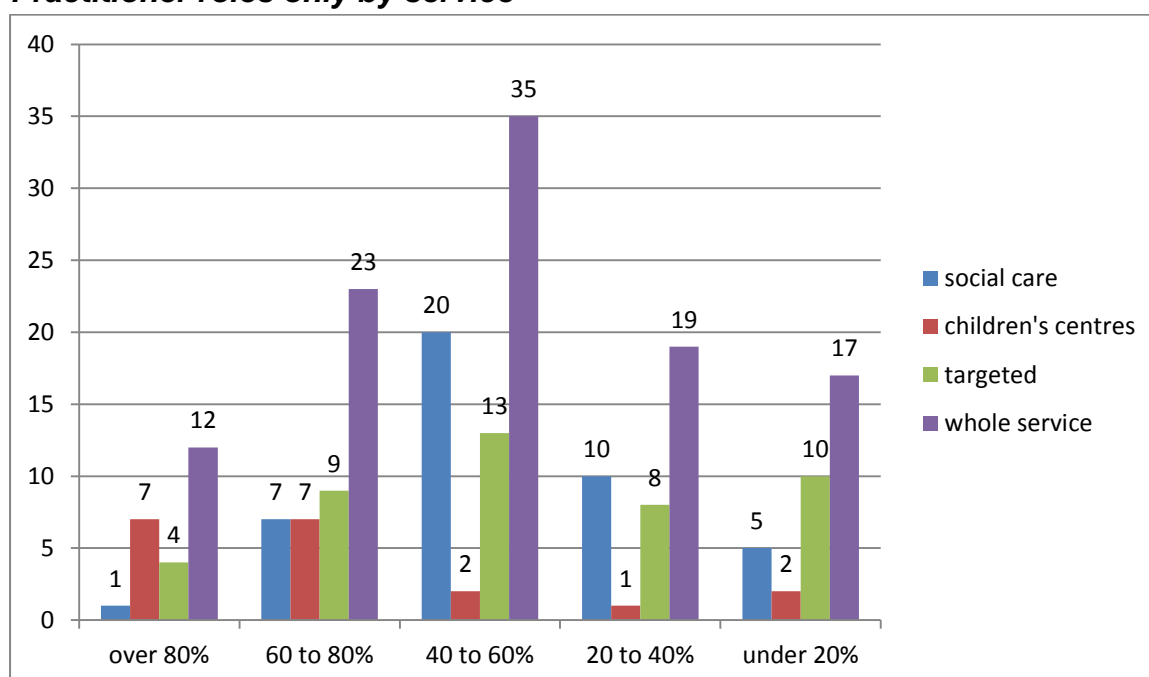
What proportion of a working week do you spend with children, young people, families, carers, victims of crime?

Whole division



As would be expected a high proportion of staff in management and administrative roles spend less than 20% of their time working directly with service users. The profile for practitioner roles shows that the majority of practitioners across the division spend more than 40% of their time working directly.

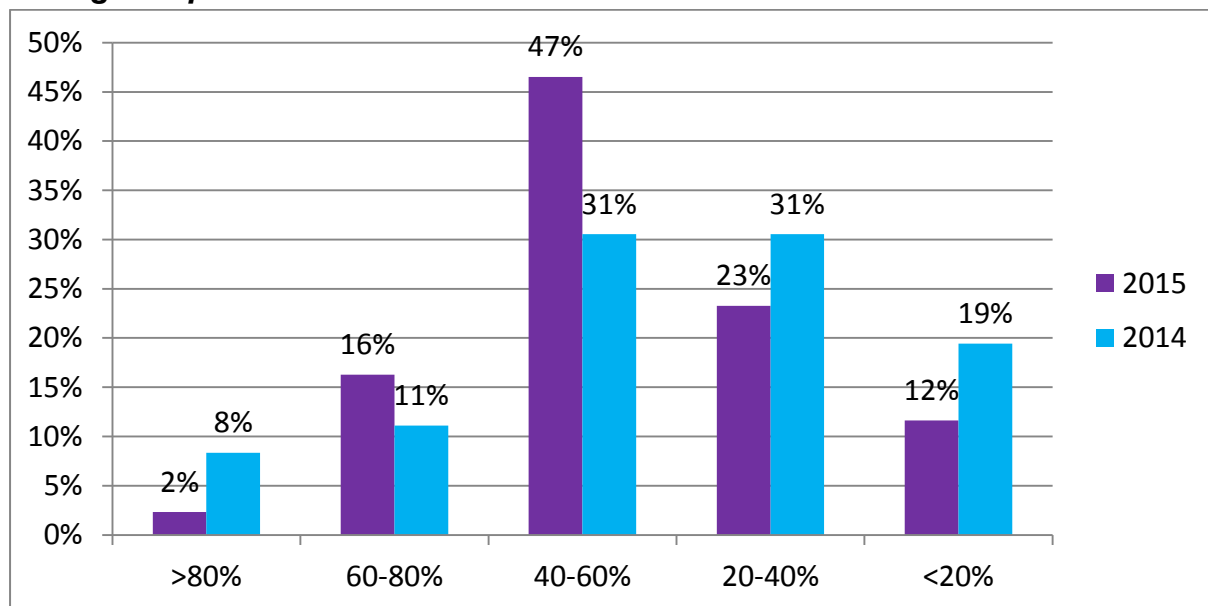
Practitioner roles only by service



The amount of time spent on direct work varies between different sections of the division. The highest proportion of staff doing direct work for over 80% of their time is in children’s centres. Variations between services are likely to reflect differences in functions, and there are probably significant differences between teams and services within sections of the division that we have been unable to capture given the structure of the survey.

However in light of the change since last year in social care (see below) it would appear worthwhile to review the focus of practitioner time across all functions alongside work to improve systems and processes.

Change for practitioner roles in social care



There have been significant changes in the profile of practitioner time spent on direct work in social care since last year. There is a reduction in the proportion of staff reporting they spend more than 80% of their time in direct work.

Of greater significance however is the shift towards a clear majority of staff spending more than 40% of their time in direct work – with a big overall increase in those reporting between 40-80% and a corresponding reduction in those reporting less than 40%.

While the reduction in those reporting over 80% may be seen as disappointing, the overall shift towards a majority over 40% has happened in the context of conscious efforts to streamline our processes on carefirst and promote direct work. This suggests these efforts have been worthwhile, and that they need to continue as we move over to liquid logic.

Can you describe any inefficient or unnecessary processes that get in the way of effective working with children and families?

Not surprisingly with the increase in the range of staff that were asked to take part in the survey, a number of staff mentioned issues around poor communication between professionals and that drift can occur – especially when a step-down process is supposed to be happening. There is also a feeling across all roles that there is still too much paperwork and some of this is repetitive. One logical suggestion is that the either the Single Assessment or the Common Assessment become the basis of referrals to other services – rather than individual services all having their own referral forms.

There were also a number of comments that we have moved away from focussing on the outcomes for children and are now more target driven than we were. This is a worrying view and something that will be highlighted to senior management.

Comments included:-

- Carefirst process forms etc. Repetition and lengthy. Glitches with the computer system and printers on a daily basis
- I believe B&NES has the balance about right with paperwork vs contact time
- Duplication of assessment, long protracted processes of transferring cases, changing expectation and goals moving, lack of effective collaborative working together across the department

What could be improved about our systems & processes and how they support our work?

A lot of the focus was around the Early Help and step-up/step-down process across all staff that were included in the survey and included requests for a clear procedure or flow chart for the processes of step-up and step-down between the services. In addition, a repetitive issue was around sharing information in a timely way both with families and professionals and also hope that the new database Liquid Logic will resolve some of these issues, such as duplication of data entry. A further practical suggestion included providing online facilities for children, young people and families to feedback electronically and potentially opening this up to staff.

Comments include:-

- Clear flow chart re expectations on step up and down and reporting from referrals so we can then work to improve without feeling that we are blaming each other
- A generic consent form to give permission for the above (information sharing consent) and only complete separate consent if activities are of higher risk
- Streamline process of transfer
- The change in the computer system would help with a more user friendly approach to our role and function

Service management and improvement

What do managers (team and senior managers) do that helps you do your job effectively?

The types of management behaviour that people have stated they find helpful include providing support when asked, frequent communication, being a good role-model and having regular team meetings. These views are echoed across the department. Another overarching theme was being given autonomy and trusted to get on with the work required.

A few comments were made about senior managers but not enough to class them as themes but the comments did say that senior managers had cut down on unnecessary procedures and usually were available to support around the more difficult decisions.

Comments include:-

- Approachable, listen, assist in thinking about action and threshold. Regularly check my welfare and provide support to ensure team functions
- My line manager is supportive, calm, educative (and has a good sense of humour!) and this really helps to ensure the work we undertake is in the best interests of the child and family
- It is nice to feel trusted and valued, and also to be given opportunities to follow personal goals as well as professional
- It is nice that senior managers are also available and are willing to listen...that although there is a hierarchy, I can still speak to more senior staff openly without worrying about it

What do managers (team managers and senior managers) do that gets in the way of you doing your job effectively?

In contrast to the previous question, the themes for what managers do that get in the way of doing the job include inefficient communication, taking too long to make decisions and not seeming to have a clear enough vision about where the service is going. The last point is also repeated about middle managers in a few of the quotes.

Comments include:-

- Communication between managers and the teams in which they work is sometimes lacking – it's sometimes assumed that the team will understand and get on with tasks rather than sitting down and explaining exactly what is wanted/needed
- Sometimes I think managers need to delegate a bit more to help their work load and be trusting of other members of staff this might aid things getting done on time when they are busy

- Be clear about the direction of travel of the service and allow managers to lead and make decisions

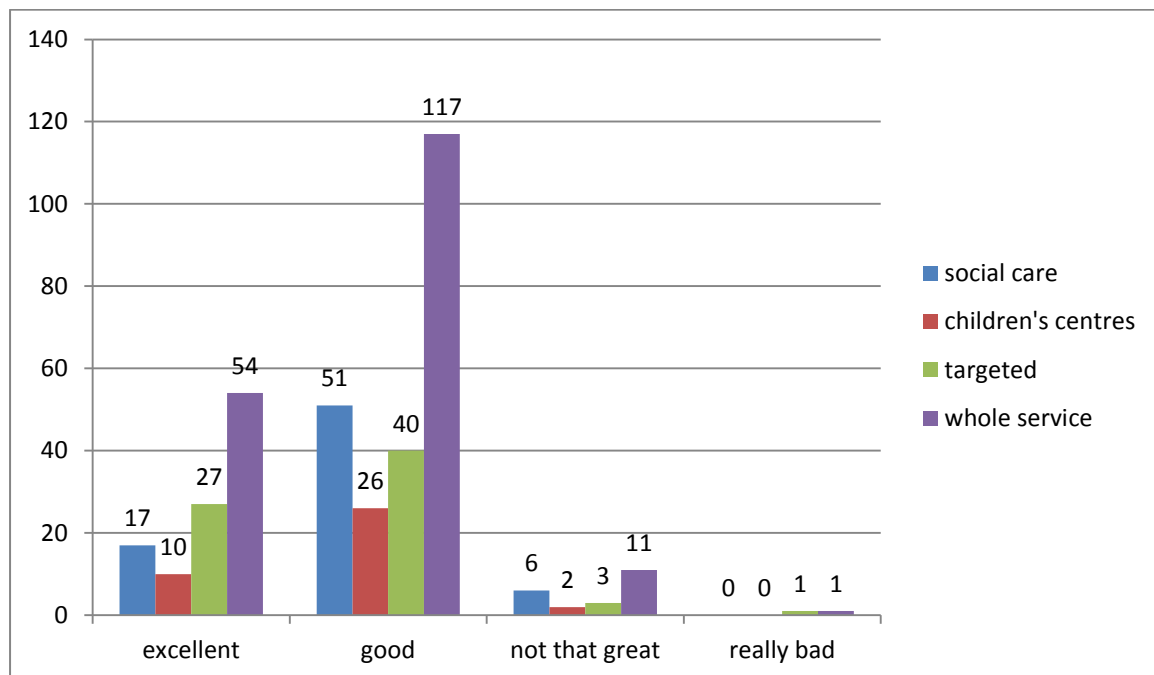
What could managers do differently to help you do your job more effectively?

Common themes across the workforce included having clearer expectations of priorities communicated well to the team, allowing time to complete paperwork or at least acknowledge the additional time it does take and providing someone to assist new staff when they are starting. There was also a pattern across the service for those staff not being based in the Civic Centre not feeling as included in communications. Not understanding the role of those they were managing was also mentioned across the service.

Comments include:-

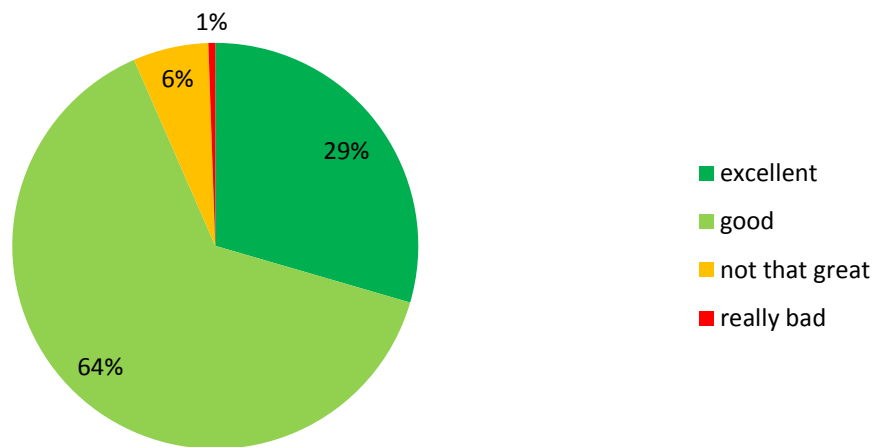
- Be clearer on the objectives that should be my focus when my time is limited due to staffing issues
- Have a better understanding of the issues that face the workforce in settings outside of the Civic Centre
- Spend a day in our shoes
- Allow us sufficient time to complete our paperwork. Paperwork time is currently being cut, but the paperwork load is the same. Therefore many staff are not up to date.

Is B&NES a good place to work?

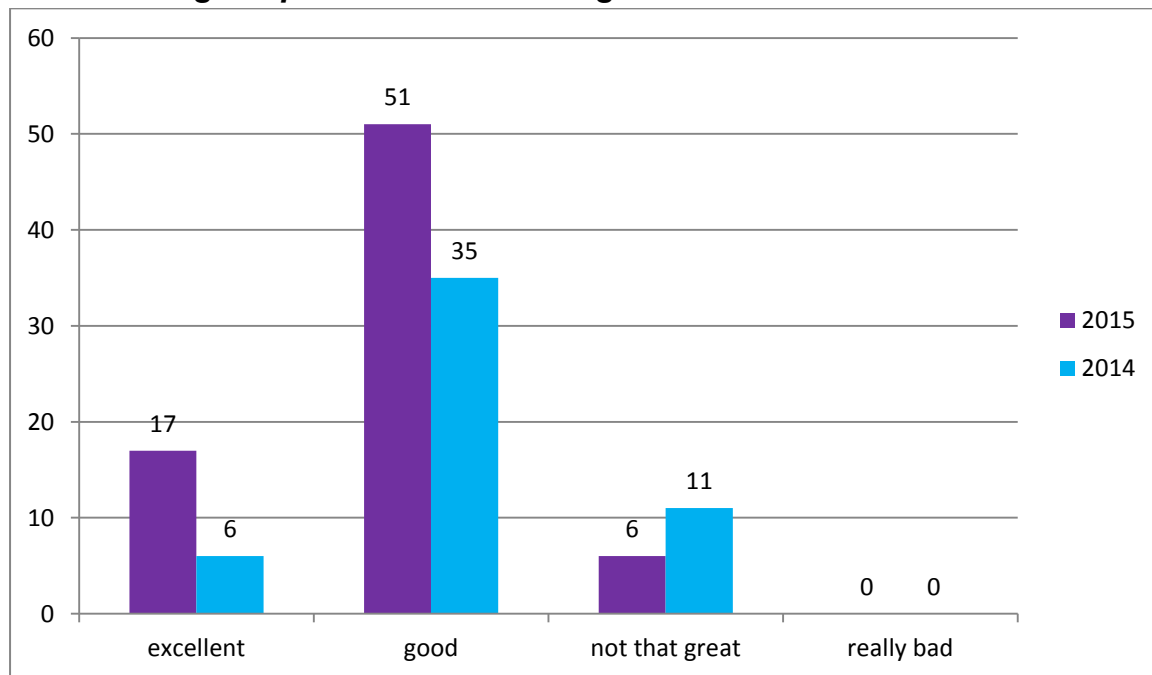


The overwhelming majority of staff across all sections of the division think that B&NES is an excellent or good place to work.

is B&NES a good place to work - whole division

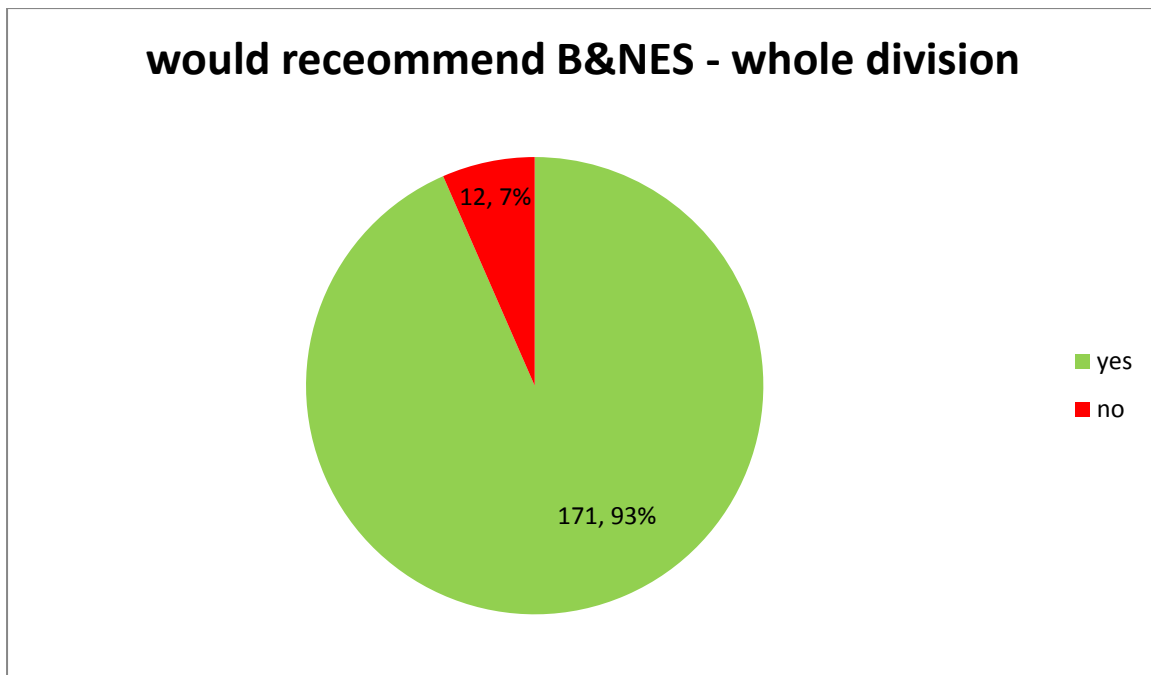


Is B&NES a good place to work – change in social care



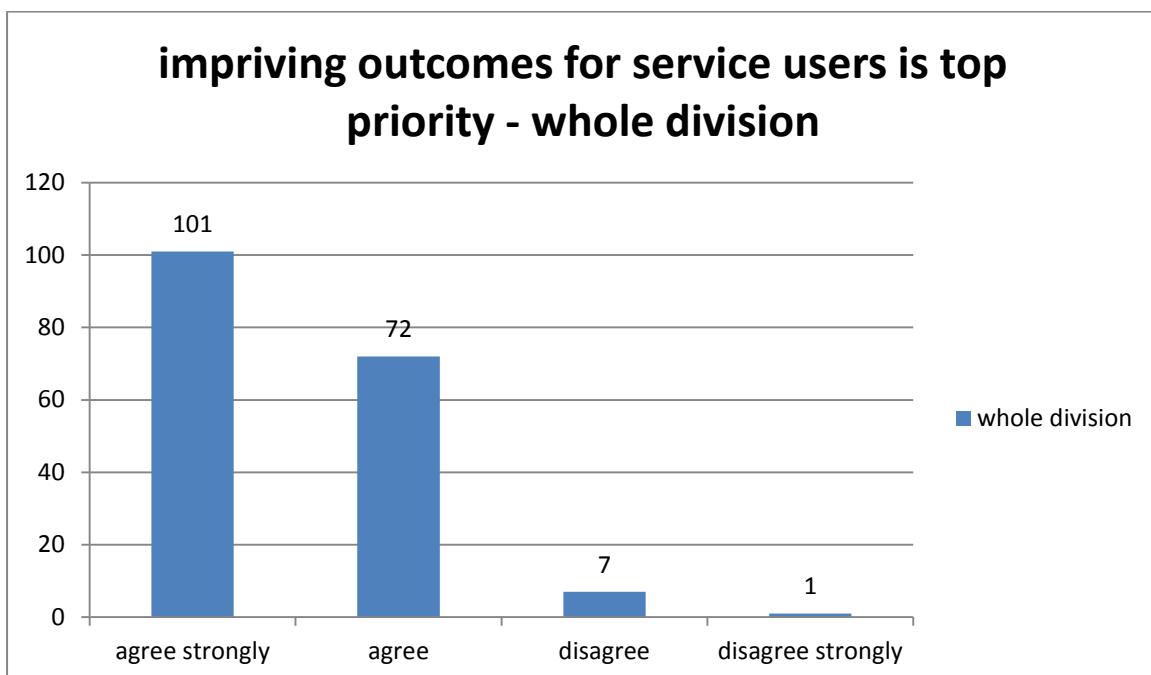
There are significant increases in the numbers of staff in social care reporting it is an excellent or good place to work, and a reduction in those saying it is not that great.

Would you recommend B&NES as a place to work?



This was a new question in the 2015 survey. An overwhelming majority of staff across the division said yes, and the small number saying no are spread across the sections of the division.

Do you agree that improving outcomes for service users for service users is the service's top priority?



Again this was a new question in 2015. The overwhelming majority agree, most agree strongly, and there is no significant difference between sections of the division.

How could we improve?

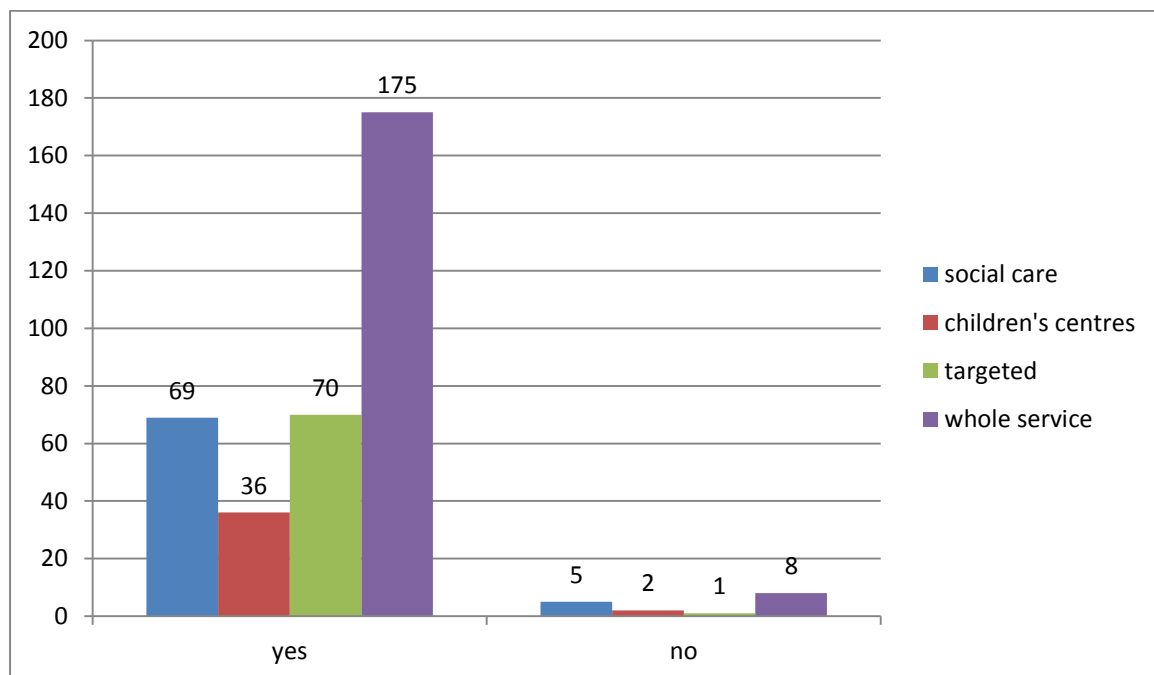
Issues around IT were raised again in this section, as well as lessening micro-managing and improving the bonds within teams and across teams. Further suggestions included making sure we stay focussed on the children and young people we work with and don't become too process focussed and that if people are performing poorly and aren't child focussed management challenge this and start the correct procedures. Fears of further cuts and the loss of preventative services is also repeatedly commented upon, as well as making sure we retain good quality staff.

Comments include:-

- IT systems are not good in this area. Spend too much time sorting out IT problems
- Team building, this could be for an hour or so whenever possible, and if staff are off work ill or have meetings, etc. to attend , the team building should go ahead as planned
- Be better at managing non effective staff and not afraid to discipline or dismiss staff
- Build a structure of embracing professional progression at the coal face, not just through a managerial route.

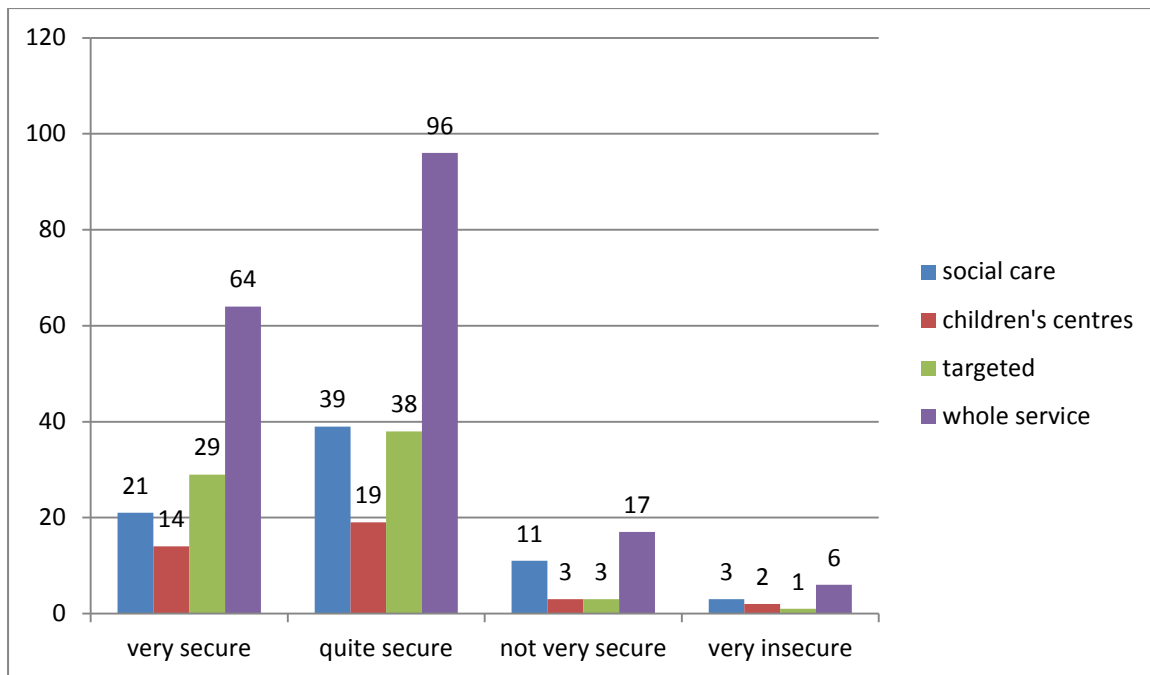
Raising concerns

Staff who know how to report concerns about poor practice



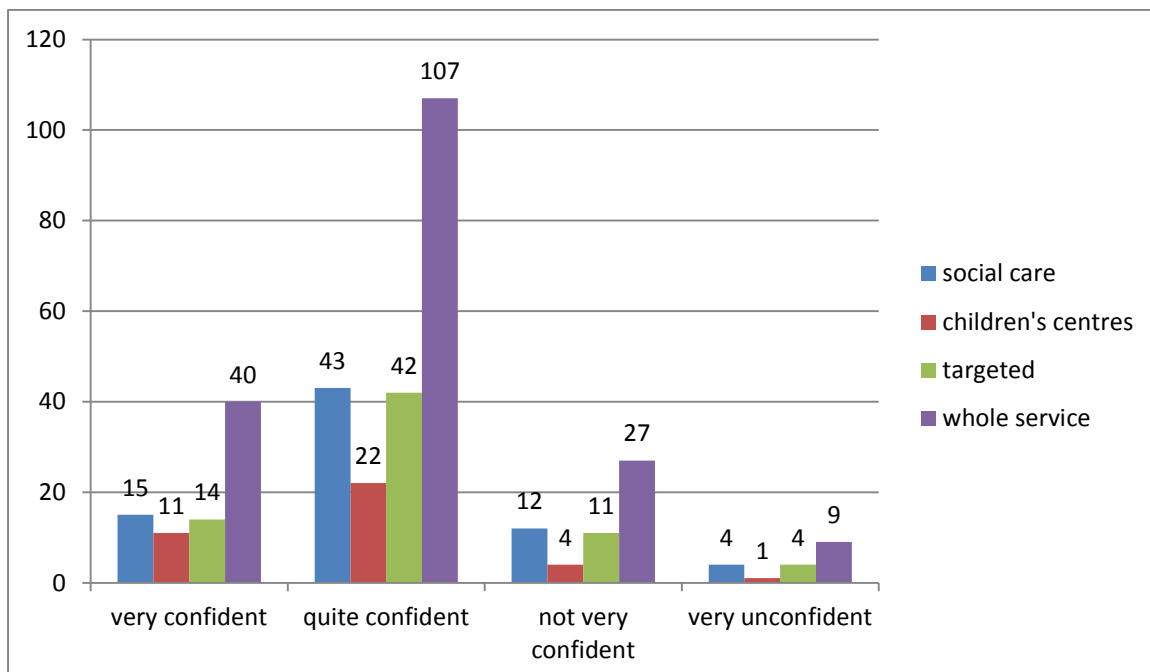
Most staff across the division know how to report concerns about poor practice, although not all.

Staff who feel secure to report poor practice



The overwhelming majority of staff across the division feel secure about reporting concerns, although the level of security is slightly lower in social care.

Staff who feel confident concerns would be addressed



Levels of confidence that concerns would be addressed are lower than levels of security across the division, although the majority feel at least quite confident that concerns would be addressed. A higher proportion of staff in the children's centres feel very confident about this than in social care or targeted.

What could the service do to improve its culture around raising concerns/whistle blowing and/or to give you greater confidence to raise an issue?

Some comments included feeling supported when they had raised concerns about the service being provided which was reassuring. There were also some helpful practical comments in this section including providing an independent person to raise concerns with, making sure whistleblowing is regularly communicated to remind staff and make it more commonplace and putting a specific header into the supervision document.

Comments included:-

- I have raised issues and although it has been uncomfortable, people have listened and taken it into account
- Support whistle blowers within the service and if necessary support a move to another area within the council if it becomes untenable for them to continue working in their original role
- Give examples of when it has worked and the difference it has made, it's the unknown that puts people off
- Periodic raising through email, team meetings, posters to ensure confidence this is the culture.

What we intend to do about the staff survey results

The results of the survey were shared with staff across the division at our staff event in June 2015.

All of the comments made by staff in the survey have been shared with the divisional management team and service managers will be taking all of the comments into account as they develop their services over the coming year.

The key messages from the survey for the whole division have been summarised (set out at the beginning of this report) and shared with the divisional management team to take action on them.

The key messages from the survey will be shared with the service development board and used in drawing up the service development plan 2015/16.

The full survey report is being published for all staff to read.

We are asking all teams and services to discuss the survey findings and agree priority issues from the survey for action in your team or service.

The following actions are already complete or underway -

- Attempt to co-ordinate all training through Learning Zone so that everyone knows there is just one place to go to see what training is currently available and how to book it. This should also assist managers as they will automatically be requested to approve training so they can make sure they have enough staff in on the day to do our main jobs
- The introduction of LiquidLogic for Children's social care and Early Help should hopefully reduce some of the issues of repetition and computer glitches
- A flowchart has been agreed between Social Care and Early Help to assist staff in following the step-up/step-down process
- Managers to be asked to spend time with their frontline staff out doing their jobs, plus senior managers getting "back to the floor"
- Need to regularly make sure that whistleblowing is on team meetings agenda's throughout the department, reminders will come down from the Divisional Management Team.

We will repeat the staff survey next year – spring or early summer 2016 – to see how we are doing.

Charlie Moat – Service Improvement Manager

Melanie Holt – Principal Social Worker.