



Survey of frontline workers – 2020

Summary of key findings



Purpose

We surveyed **761** government and non-government frontline workers in the child protection and family support sector in Queensland. Similar surveys were conducted in 2018 and 2019.

This document summarises the key findings from the 2020 workforce survey in terms of what's working well, what's improving and what could be further improved. Where possible, comparisons are made with results from the previous (2019) survey. Key sub-group differences are also described.

Findings are described in five groups of topics:

- Working with clients
- System performance and the impact of the reforms
- Information sharing and collaboration across the sector
- Cultural capability
- Learning and development.



Overall findings

Survey respondents' perceptions about their role and organisations were generally more positive than their perceptions about the broader child protection and family support system.

We also found that respondents working for non-government organisations were often more positive than those from government agencies.

The 2020 survey shows some interesting improvements since 2019, including:

- Perceptions of work/caseloads
- Positive culture of organisations
- Perceived performance of the system
- Perceptions that reforms are improving outcomes
- Access to high quality learning and development opportunities.



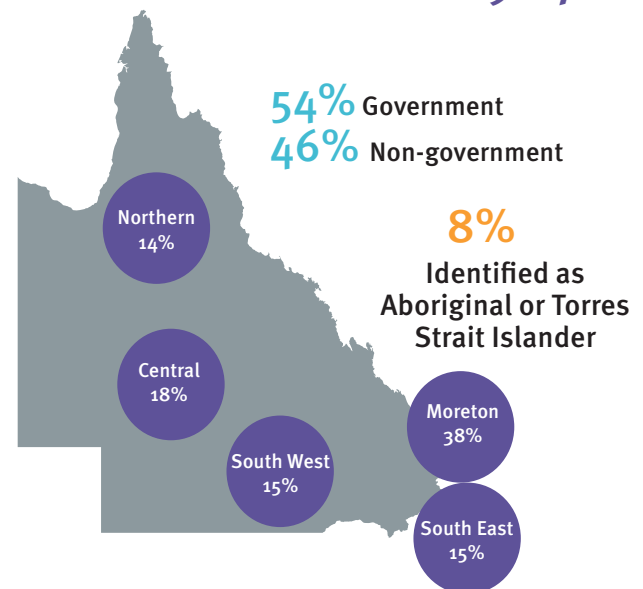
Method

The online survey link was sent to government agencies, non-government organisations and peak bodies in the child protection and family support sector who forwarded it on to their frontline staff. The survey was open between 30 April and 25 May 2020. We asked 88 questions with a mixture of rating style and free text responses.



Sample

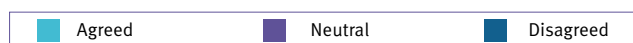
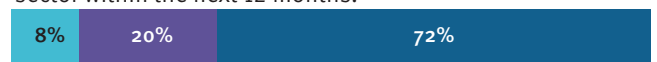
Responses were received from **761** frontline workers throughout Queensland who had, on average, worked in the child protection and family support sector for **9.67** years.



More than half (55%) of respondents agreed they would recommend working in the child protection and family support sector, which is similar to the 2019 result (54%).



Only 8% of respondents agreed they intended to leave the sector within the next 12 months.





Key findings

Working with clients

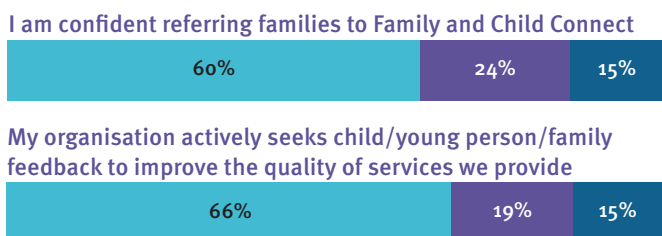
What's working well?

Survey items with the highest proportion of agreement were:



What could be further improved?

Items with the lowest rates of agreement were:



Between 2019 and 2020, agreement that workers were aware of other services working with their clients dropped from **76%** to **69%**.

What's improving?

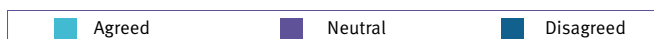
Results from this survey were compared with the survey conducted in 2019 to monitor trends in frontline worker perspectives. An increase in agreement was found for the following items:

2019		2020
47%	I consider my caseload/workload to be manageable	65%
36%	I am able to spend enough time with children, young people and families to do my job well	48%
36%	I have enough time in my role to build relationships with other organisations/service providers	50%
66%	My organisation has a positive workplace culture	75%
69%	My organisation tailors services to meet the needs of children, young people and families	78%
60%	Where possible children, young people and families are able to work with the same staff member	71%
20%	I have used oneplace community services directory to find services	27%
70%	My organisation regularly assesses its own performance	81%
60%	My organisation uses performance information when making service delivery decisions	76%

Key sub-group differences

Overall, respondents from non-government organisations were more likely than those from government agencies to agree that they had:

- Peer support for their work
- Manageable caseloads
- Enough time with children to do their job well
- Enough time to build relationships with other services
- An awareness of other services working with their clients
- A clear understanding of the information they can share.





Key findings

System performance and the impact of the reforms

What's working well?

Responses to items relating to system performance and the impact of the reform were less positive than other topics covered in the survey. However, there was some indication that the introduction of early intervention services had been having a positive impact.

Introducing Intensive Family Support (IFS) and Family Wellbeing (FWB) services has improved:

* Access to early intervention services



* Outcomes for children, young people and families



* The ability of families to care for their children



The introduction of Family and Child Connect has resulted in families being more appropriately referred to the secondary or tertiary system



What could be further improved?

Respondents were less likely to agree that the reforms had led to a reduction in demand or red tape. One in four agreed that introducing Intensive Family Support (IFS) and Family Wellbeing (FWB) services had led to a reduction in system demand.

The reforms have resulted in reductions in demand



The reforms have resulted in reductions in red tape



Introducing IFS and FWB services has resulted in reductions in demand



What's improving?

The proportion of agreement with the following items about the child protection system has increased since 2019:

2019	The system...	2020
33%	Is built on shared connections and commitment	42%
23%	Efficiently and effectively uses its resources to achieve outcomes	30%
19%	Meets the needs of children, young people and families	26%
13%	Achieves return on investment	21%
8%	Is viewed with confidence by the community	14%

Agreement that the reforms have resulted in improvements has also increased since 2019:

2019	The reforms have led to...	2020
26%	Improved outcomes for children, young people and families	41%
22%	Improved workforce culture	29%

While around 1 in 8 respondents felt that there had been no improved outcomes from the reforms or that improvements were still needed, respondents identified the following changes resulting from the reforms:

- A greater focus on early intervention
- Client-centred and strengths-based approaches
- Improved collaborations/partnerships/information sharing
- Improved workforce capacity and capability.

Suggestions for improvement

When asked what could be done to improve the child protection and family support system, the most common suggestions were to:

- Provide greater support for the workforce
- Improve service responses
- Have greater information sharing and collaboration.





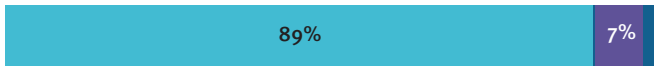
Key findings

Information sharing and collaboration

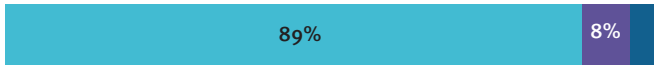
What's working well?

Items with the highest proportion of agreement were:

Information sharing between my organisation and others supports better responses for children, young people and families



My workplace has a culture that supports collaboration with other organisations to achieve client outcomes



Where appropriate, information sharing occurs regularly between my organisation and other organisations



Key sub-group differences

Non-government respondents were more likely than government respondents to agree that:

- Their workplace supports collaboration with other organisations
- Local Level Alliances promote effective information sharing
- Local Level Alliances promote effective cross-agency coordination.

More experienced respondents were more likely to report that information sharing occurs regularly.

What could be further improved?

Information sharing issues persist:

Information sharing barriers limit my organisation's ability to support children, young people and families



A significant proportion of respondents indicated that they did not know enough about Regional Child, Youth and Family Committees to respond to these questions. A further one-third provided a neutral response.

The Regional Child, Youth and Family Committee:

* Promotes local level cross-agency leadership



* Promotes local level information sharing



* Promotes local level cross-agency coordination



* Supports effective local level service delivery



* Has open and transparent decision making



While there was some agreement that local governance groups were having a positive impact, there is room for improvement.

Local Level Alliances:

* Promote effective information sharing



* Involve genuine partnerships



* Promote cross agency coordination



* Support effective service delivery





Key findings

Cultural capability

What's working well?

I am confident in my ability to engage Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families with my organisation's services

82%

13%

My organisation partners with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander organisations to support the delivery of services

75%

18%

7%

I feel competent to meet the needs of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children, young people and families

71%

22%

7%

Key sub-group differences

Apart from frontline Child Safety workers, overall non-government respondents were more likely than government respondents to agree that:

- They are confident in engaging Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children, young people and families
- Their organisation had provided cultural training
- Their organisation is partnering with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander organisations to support service delivery.

Government respondents had greater understanding of how the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Child Placement Principle applies to their role. More experienced respondents were more confident engaging Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

What could be further improved?

I understand how the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Child Placement Principle applies to my role

69%

16%

16%

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families and communities are empowered to participate in decision-making that affects their children

62%

25%

14%

Perceived barriers for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children, young people and families to access family support services included:

- Cultural capability of services and workers
- Limited capacity of services
- Access barriers such as lack of transport, eligibility criteria
- Gaps in services.

Agreed

Neutral

Disagreed



Key findings

Learning and development

What's working well?

3 out of 4 workers

agreed that they are provided with enough training and other learning opportunities to undertake their role well

Rates of agreement have increased for workers reporting that:

2019

My organisation...

2020

67%

Actively supports training and other learning opportunities for staff

77%

69%

Provides high quality training and other learning opportunities

76%

Key sub-group differences

Overall, non-government respondents were more likely than government respondents (including frontline Child Safety workers) to agree that:

- Their organisation actively supports training and other learning opportunities for staff
- They are provided with enough training and other learning opportunities to undertake their role well
- They are provided with high quality training and other learning opportunities.

More experienced respondents were more likely to report being provided with enough training and other learning opportunities to undertake their role well.

Learning and development priorities

Highest learning and development priorities were identified as:

- Specialist training such as domestic and family violence training etc.
- Working with other organisations
- Skills, practices and tools for engaging clients such as interpersonal skills.

About the survey

The Queensland Family and Child Commission (QFCC) collects data from a variety of sources to inform our programs of work.

The QFCC intends to conduct a workforce survey annually to gather evidence to contribute to our evaluation and oversight activities.