

QFCC Statutory Systems Workforce Survey 2024

Summary of key findings

About the survey

This summary presents findings from the Queensland Family and Child Commission's (QFCC) 2024 survey of frontline workers in the child protection, family support and youth justice sectors in Queensland. Similar surveys have been undertaken annually since 2018.

Key findings are described in the following sections:

- Role and organisation
- Working with clients
- Cultural capability
- Working collaboratively
- Professional development
- Professional practice supervision
- Statutory systems
- Children's rights
- Policy issues
- Cost of living issues

The full survey report can be found [here](#)



Method

An online survey link was sent to government agencies, non-government organisations and peak bodies from the Queensland child protection, family support and youth justice sectors who forwarded it on to their frontline staff. We also sent the link to previous survey respondents who shared their email addresses with us.

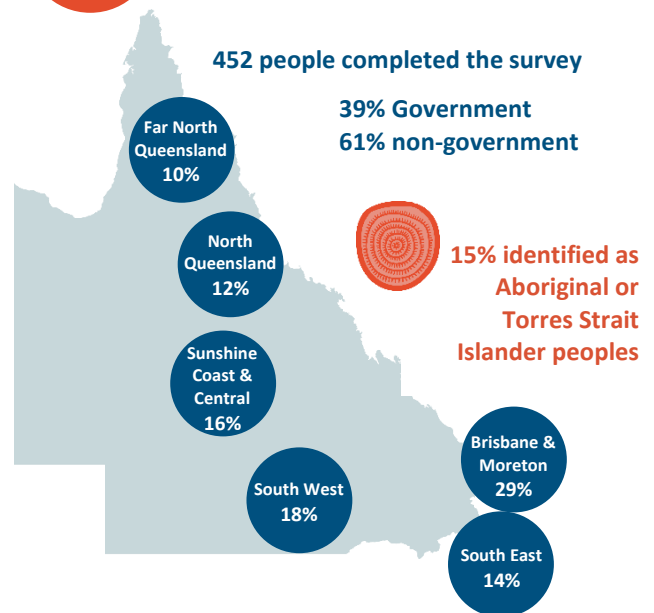
The survey was open between 9 April to 21 June 2024. We asked 110 questions with a mixture of rating style and free text responses.



Queensland
Family & Child
Commission



Respondents



The largest group of respondents (43%) had 10 years or more experience in statutory systems, with the remaining groups having 2 years or less experience (20%) 3-5 years' experience (19%) and 6-9 years' experience (18%) in the sector.

Child protection was the main service offered by most respondents (65%), with 9% having worked in the youth justice sector and 8% with children and young people in residential care. Due to the small proportions of respondents in youth justice and residential care, their responses should be interpreted with caution.

A third of respondents (37%) had a bachelor degree as their highest level of education. Another 20% held a postgraduate (Masters or PhD) qualification, while 18% had completed a graduate certificate/diploma, 17% had a diploma or advanced diploma and 5% held a certificate-level qualification.

Just over a third of respondents (39%) agreed they would recommend working in the child protection, family support and youth justice sectors.



Queensland
Government

Key findings

Overall findings

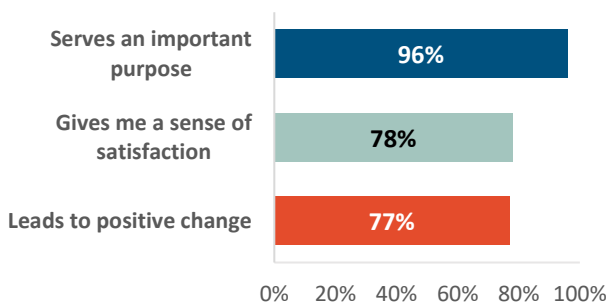
Consistent with trends observed in previous surveys, respondents were more positive when answering questions about their own roles and organisations than they were when answering questions about other systems.

Overall, there was a lower proportion of respondents working for government organisations (**51%** in 2023, **39%** in 2024) and more non-government respondents (**49%** in 2023, **61%** in 2024).

Respondents from non-government organisations were also generally more positive than respondents from government agencies.

Role and organisation

The majority of respondents agreed the work they do:



17% of child protection and **19%** of youth justice frontline workers agreed that they intend to leave the sector within the next 12 months, compared to an average of **16%** of respondents overall.

39% of respondents agreed they would recommend to others to work in the sector, a significant decrease from **49%** in 2022, but similar to 2023 results (**38%**).

Just over half of respondents (**52%**) agreed that their organisation supports staff to manage work stress, health and wellbeing. The remainder either disagreed (**27%**) or were neutral (**22%**). This is a significant increase from **43%** in 2023.

Less than half (**45%**) of respondents agreed that their caseload or workload to be manageable. Non-government

respondents were more likely to agree their caseload or workload was manageable.

83% of respondents agreed their organisation is child safe (that is, creates a culture, adopts strategies, and takes action to promote child wellbeing and prevent harm to children and young people). This is a statistically significant increase from **78%** in the 2023 survey and is more in line with results recorded in 2022 (**87%** in 2022).

Interestingly, non-government respondents were more likely to agree to this statement than government respondents.

Proportion of respondents that agreed their organisation is child safe



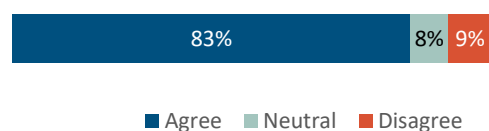
Almost half of respondents (**43%**) disagreed that risk assessment in holding higher than manageable caseload / workload is undertaken adequately.

The majority of respondents indicated they received adequate support from their colleagues/peers to do their job well (**75%**). Just over half agreed they had received the right amount of professional practice supervision to do their job well (**53%**).

Working with stakeholders, children and families

The majority of respondents (**83%**) agreed their workplace has a culture that supports collaboration.

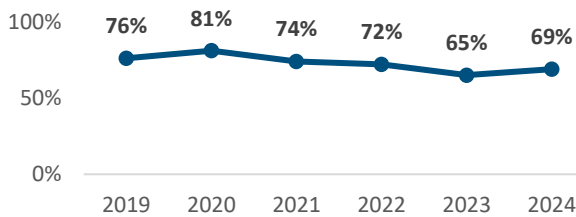
My workplace has a culture that supports collaboration with other organisations to achieve client outcomes



69% of respondents agreed that children and families have the opportunity to participate in decisions affecting their lives. Except for the slight uptick in 2024, agreement with this statement has decreased year on year since our 2020 findings, where **81%** of respondents agreed.

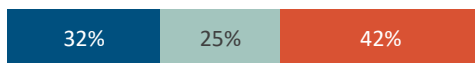
NB: Some results should be interpreted with caution due to the sample size and changes in sample characteristics. For further details refer to the Statutory Systems Workforce Survey full report.

Agree that children, young people and families have the opportunity to participate in decisions affecting their lives, 2019-24



Findings indicate a consistent decline in perceived role capacity for respondents since 2020. In 2024, less than one third (**32%**) of respondents felt able to spend enough time with children, young people and their families to do their job well. Agreement was higher among non-government respondents (**41%**) than government respondents (**18%**).

Agree they are able to spend enough time with children, young people and their families



■ Agree ■ Neutral ■ Disagree

Cultural capability

Over half of respondents (**58%**) agreed that **Delegated Authority** will result in better outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and young people.

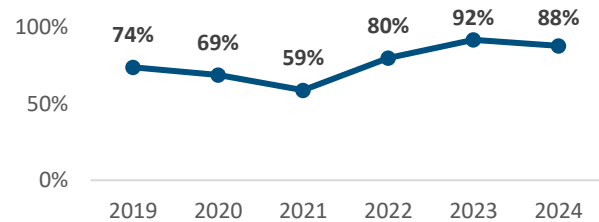
Delegated Authority enables the statutory functions and powers of the Chief Executive under the *Child Protection Act 1999* that apply to an Aboriginal and or Torres Strait Islander child to be delegated to a Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Community Controlled Organisation if the CEO is an Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander person.

The CEO (or similar named role) of an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Community-Controlled Organisation can now make some decisions about an Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander child currently in out-of-home care.

The majority (**88%**) of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that they understand how the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Placement Principle applies to their role (**44%** strongly agreed, **44%** agreed). In total, **6%** of respondents disagreed or strongly disagreed that they

understand how this applies to their role, while **6%** were neutral.

Percentage of respondents who agreed they understood how the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Child Placement Principle applied to their role, 2019-24



Respondents were asked about cultural support provided to children and young people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds. Approximately **60%** of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that culturally and linguistically diverse children and young people are supported to preserve their cultural and linguistic identity (**60%**) or that they are supported to stay connected with their communities (**61%**).

Working collaboratively

Less than half (**39%**) of respondents agreed that the child protection, family support and youth justice systems are built on shared connections and commitments. More than one third (**39%**) of respondents disagreed or strongly disagreed with this statement. The remainder were neutral (**25%**).

In 2024, **74%** of respondents agreed their organisation partners with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander organisations to support the delivery of services to First Nations children, young people, their families and communities. However, only **46%** of respondents agreed they have the time to build relationships with other organisations and service providers.

I have enough time in my role to build relationships with other organisations / service providers



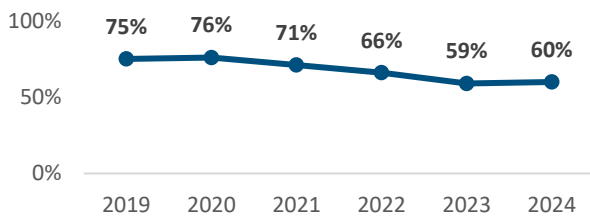
■ Agree ■ Neutral ■ Disagree

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Professional development

3 in 5 respondents (60%) agreed they have been provided with enough training and other learning opportunities to undertake their role well. A further 19% disagreed, while 21% were neutral. Findings indicate that agreement with this statement has steadily decreased since 2020.

Percentage of respondents who agreed they had been provided with enough training and other learning opportunities to undertake their role well, 2019-24



Professional practice supervision

In line with results from 2023, the majority of respondents (75%) agreed they receive support from their colleagues or peers to do their job well, down from 87% agreement in 2022. More than half (53%) of respondents agreed they receive the right amount of professional practice supervision to do their job well.

Participants were asked where they receive their professional practice supervision, and how they would prefer to receive professional practice supervision.

Approximately two thirds of respondents reported they currently receive professional practice supervision from their team leader or manager (67%). At a lower incidence, 25% indicated they receive professional practice supervision from another person within their organisation, 18% reported supervision via an external person they personally pay for, while 12% had supervision via an external person their organisation pays for.

When asked whom the respondent would prefer to receive professional practice from, respondent views were split, with 55% preferring a person external to their organisation paid for by their organisation and 49% nominating their team leader/manager.

Professional practice supervision (Current and preferred channel)

Receive supervision from	Current	Preferred
My Team Leader/Manager	67%	49%
Another person in my organisation	25%	24%
An external person my organisation pays for	18%	55%
An external person I pay for	12%	5%
Other	7%	4%

Statutory systems (child protection and youth justice)

Survey responses indicate significant concern about capacity to meet demand and an expectation that demand will increase over the next 12 months.

Less than 1 in 10 respondents agreed there is sufficient capacity within the secondary service system they work in (child protection or youth justice) to meet demand.

The majority of respondents (85%) agreed that family support referrals and child protection reports are likely to increase in the next 12 months, which saw a slight increase in overall agreement compared to 2023 findings (82% in 2023).

In 2024, only 7% of respondents agreed that there is sufficient capacity within the statutory service system (child protection or youth justice), which has remained consistent since 2022 (8%). Youth justice sector respondents were more likely to agree there is sufficient capacity within the secondary support system to meet demand (12% agreed or strongly agreed) than child protection respondents (6%).

Overall agreement that there is sufficient capacity within the statutory service system to meet demand



Secondary service system



Tertiary child protection system



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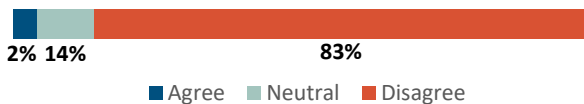
1 in 10 (10%) respondents agreed that the child protection and family support systems meet the needs of children, young people and families.

Less than 1 in 10 (8%) respondents working in either the child protection or youth justice sectors agreed that the youth justice system meets the needs of children, young people and families.

Only 2% of respondents agreed that the community has confidence in the child protection and family support system. This differs from our Community Perceptions survey results, where 58% of respondents agreed they had confidence and trust in the Queensland child protection system. This indicates the general population has a very different perception of the child protection system than those who work in the sector.



The community has confidence in the child protection and family support system



Respondents were asked what could be done to improve the child protection and family support system. Their responses are outlined below.

Suggested improvement	Percentage of responses
Greater information sharing and collaboration	26%
Increased / additional funding	23%
Be more child focused / look after the children	19%
Increased early intervention and prevention	17%
Employ more people / more trained staff	15%

Respondents who identified as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander were significantly more likely to recommend that increased cultural capability (37%) would improve the child protection and family support systems compared to other respondents (3%).

Family and Child Connect is a community-based referral service which helps vulnerable families access the information and support they need. Helping families manage issues which do not require a statutory response is intended to reduce demand on the tertiary child protection system.

43% of respondents agreed that the introduction of Family and Child Connect has resulted in families being more appropriately referred to the secondary or tertiary system. This is slightly higher than the 2023 result of 41%.

Intensive Family Support services respond to vulnerable families who are at risk of becoming involved with the statutory child protection system. Families must consent to engage with these services.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Family Wellbeing Services are provided by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community-controlled organisations. These services intend to help families reduce or avoid involvement with the statutory child protection system.

We asked survey respondents about their views on these services. Respondents agreed that the introduction of Intensive Family Support and Family Wellbeing Services has resulted in:

- improved access to early intervention services for children, young people and families (58%)
- improved ability of families to care for their children (47%)
- improved outcomes for children, young people and families (45%)
- a reduction in demand (that is, fewer children entering the child protection system) (20%).



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QFCC asked respondents about the broader community and the extent to which children and young people had appropriate access to safety, support and wellbeing mechanisms.

More than half of respondents (**58%**) agreed that children and young people can access early childhood education and care, such as kindergarten.

More than half (**56%**) agreed Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and young people are supported to connect with their culture.

Percentage of respondents who agreed with statements about supports, services and protections for children and young people, 2024

In my community, children, and young people...	2024 results
Can access early childhood education and care, such as kindergarten	62%
Are supported to connect with their culture (for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and young people)	56%
Can access sporting, recreational or community activities	55%
Can access the services they need to stay healthy, such as GPs and hospitals	48%
Have support to stay engaged in learning at school or TAFE	48%
Can access the services they need for healthy teeth, such as dentists	46%
Are supported to live safely at home with their families	43%
Can access disability services if needed	43%
Can access NDIS supports if needed	42%
Are protected from abuse and neglect	41%
Live in safe communities	35%
Can access mental health services if needed	35%

Children’s rights

83% of respondents agreed they have a good working understanding of the *United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child*. The majority of respondents agreed that within their organisation:

- children are supported to survive and develop in the best way possible (**80%**)
- decisions are made in children’s and young people’s best interests (**77%**)
- the views of children and young people are listened to and valued (**75%**).

Almost all respondents (**76%**) agreed that within their organisation, children and young people are not discriminated against.

In 2024, findings revealed that across all statements regarding children’s rights being upheld within their organisations, non-government workers were significantly more likely than government-based respondents to agree.

Cost of living

94% of respondents agreed that the increased cost of living is having a negative impact on children, young people and their families.

The level of concern about the impact of cost-of-living held consistent at **94%** total agreement (agreed or strongly agreed) for both 2023 and 2024 surveys.



Respondents working in the Far North Queensland region were less likely than those from other regions to agree that the increasing cost of living is having a negative impact on children, young people and their families (**83%** Far North Queensland, **94%** average).

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