FIFO Partner and Family Survey

Creating Communities
FIFO Families



FIFO Families

Government of Western Australia
Department of Sport and Recreation

Creating Communities

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Background and Methodology

In 2014, Creating Communities Australia, FIFO Families and the Department of Sport and Recreation collaborated to conduct the FIFO Partner and Family Online Survey.

This research targets partners of individuals who commute long distance for their work. The objective of the study is to help inform government, companies and community stakeholders of the characteristics, behaviors, views and challenges that face partners and children of FIFO workers. This information may then be used to develop initiatives to help support this group.

METHOD:

- Online survey
- 1,216 participants
- Independent research
- Sample: partners of individuals who commute long distances for their work – largely derived from FIFO Families Database
- Conducted April-June 2014

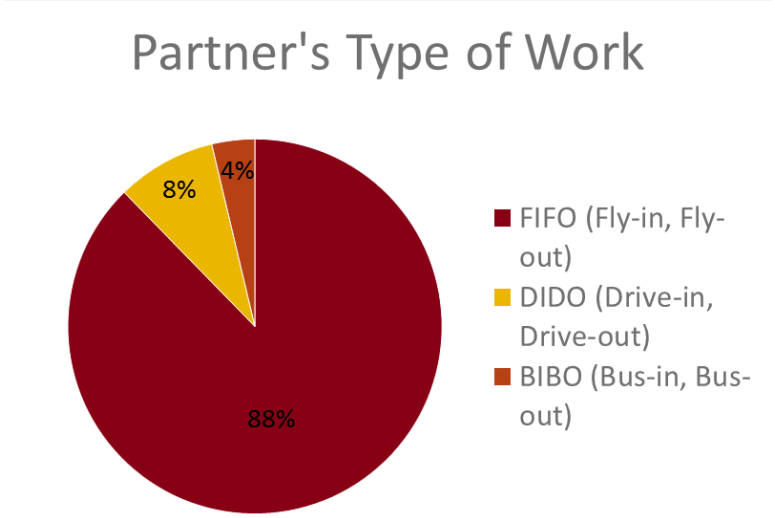
** Please note that in the questionnaire and through the remainder of the report the word "partner" is used to refer to the FIFO worker who is in a relationship with the respondent, and the word "respondent" is used to refer to the person completing the survey who is in a relationship with the FIFO worker.*

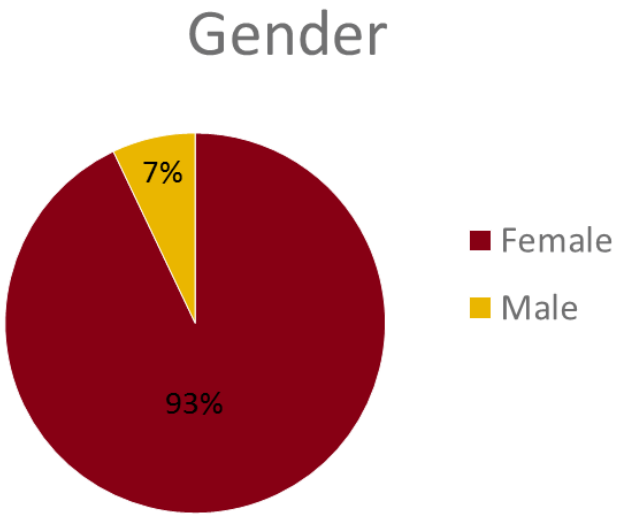
SURVEY THEMES:

- Demographics
- Partner's* Work
- Roster
- Employer
- Health and Wellbeing
- Life and Relationships
- Support
- Communication
- FIFO and Family Decision-Making
- Children
- General Comments

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Demographics

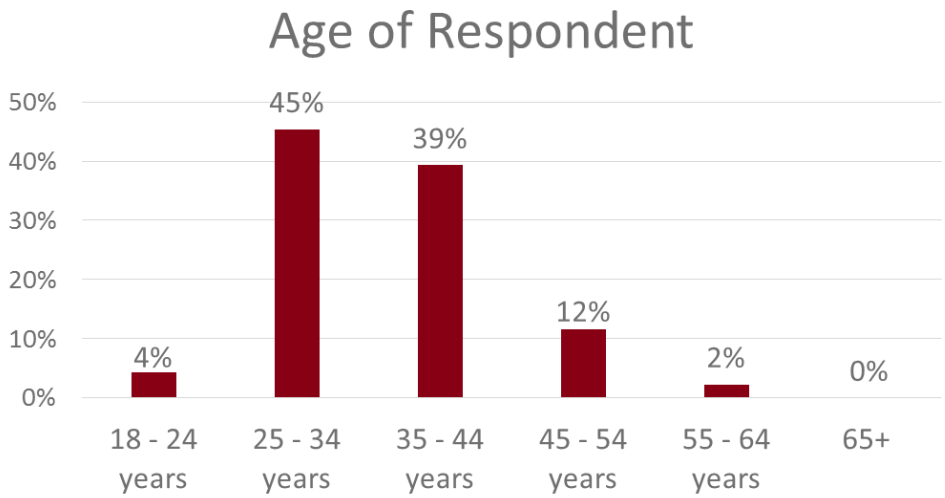


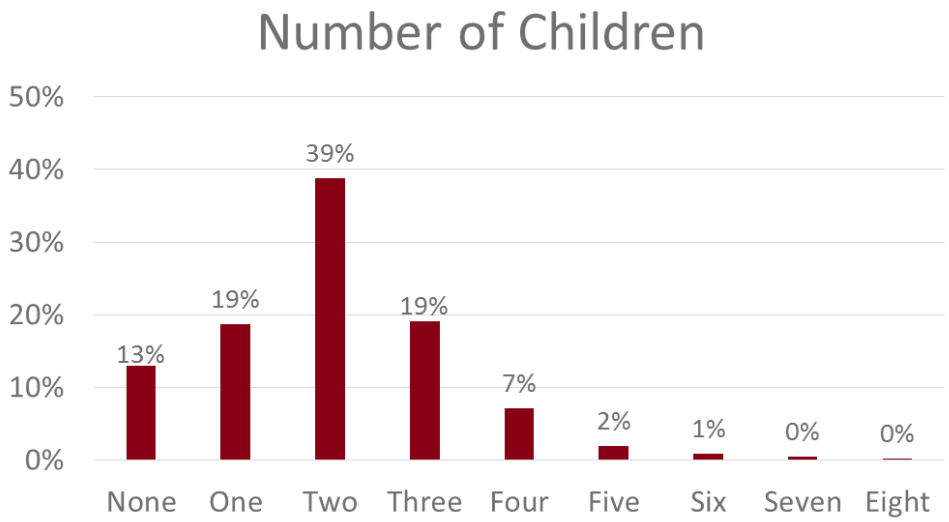


- The majority of respondents' (88%) partners work in FIFO (fly-in, fly-out) arrangements
- The remainder are in DIDO (drive-in, drive-out, 8%) or BIBO (bus-in, bus-out, 4%) arrangements
- The majority of respondents (93%) are female, with 7% being male

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Demographics



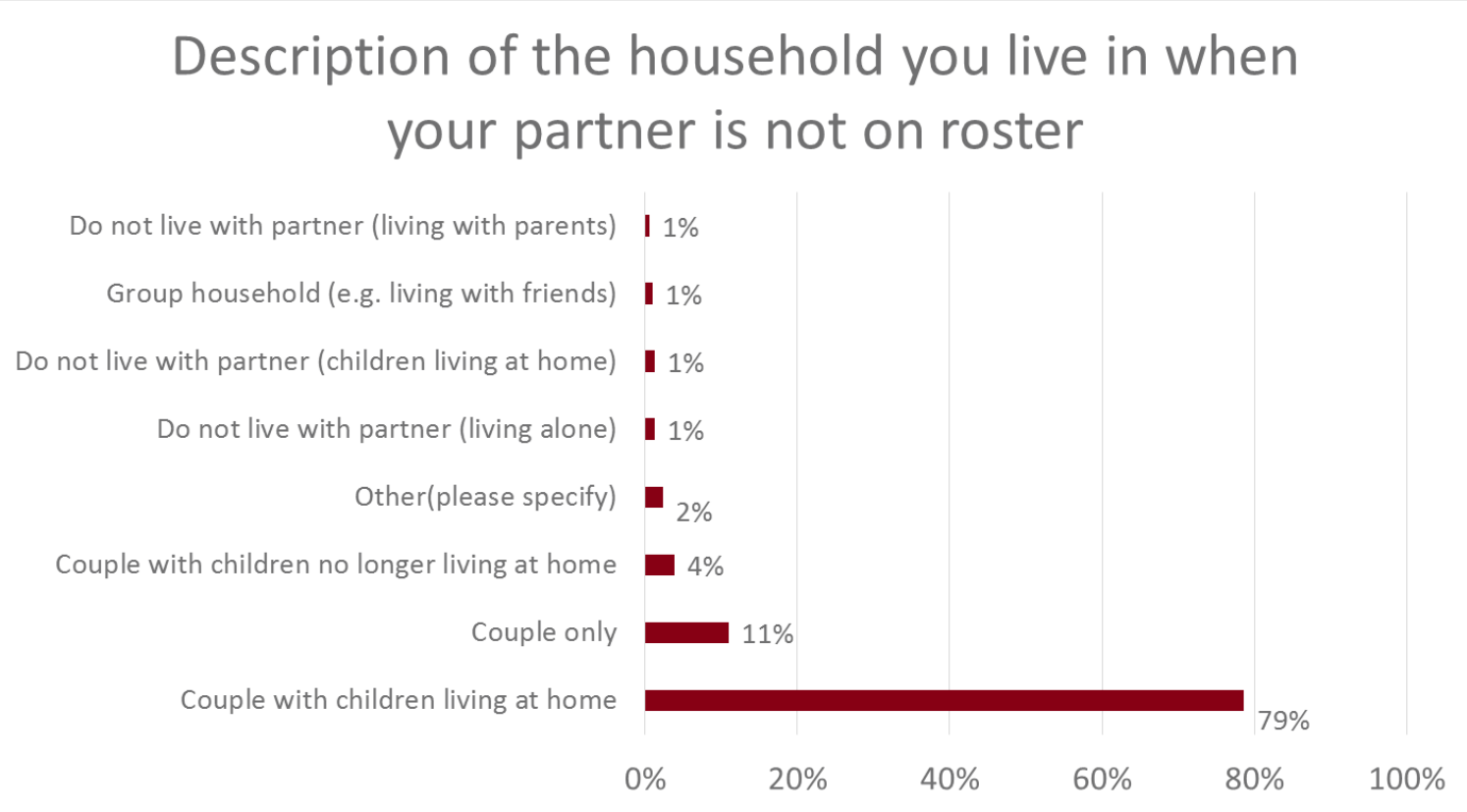


- The majority of respondents (84%) are between the ages of 25 and 44 years
- The majority of respondents (77%) have between 1 - 3 children, a smaller number (13%) have no children, and 10% have 4 or more children
- A third of the respondent's children (33%) are under 4 years old, just over a quarter (26%) are 5-9 years old, 18% are 10-14 years old, 12% are 15-19 years old, and 12% are 20 years old or above

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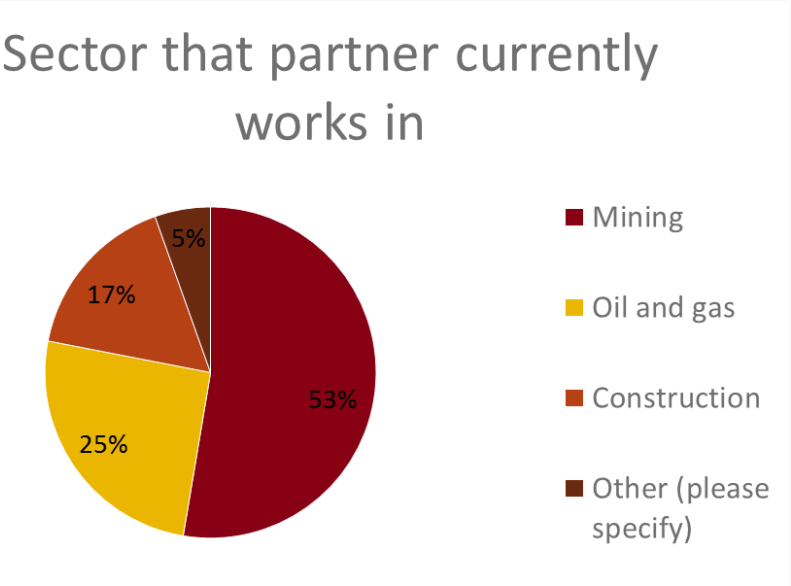
Demographics

- The majority of respondents (79%) describe their household living arrangement as “couple with children living at home”



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Partner's Work



- Over half of respondents' partners work in the Mining sector (53%), a quarter work in Oil and Gas (25%), and a smaller proportion (17%) work in Construction
- The majority of respondents (69%) partners have worked FIFO between 2-9 years. 16% have worked 1 year or less, and 15% have worked FIFO for 10 or more years

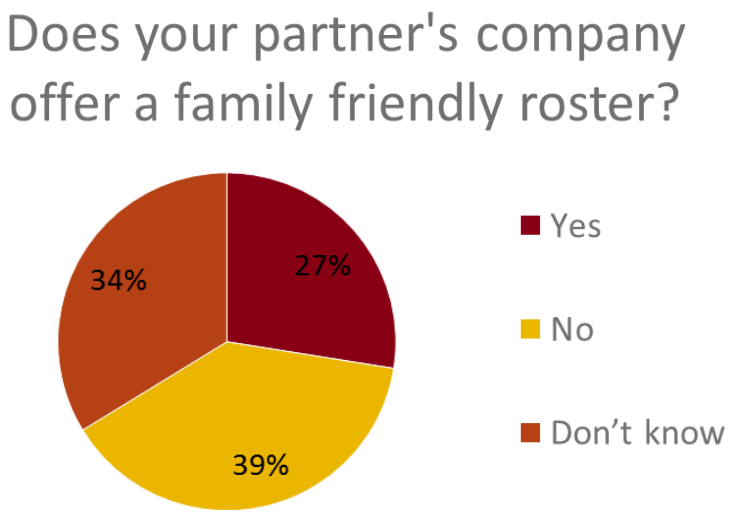
Length of time partner has worked FIFO

1-5 months	6-11 months	1 year	2-4 years	5-9 years	10-14 years	15-19 years	20+ years
2%	4%	10%	42%	27%	9%	4%	2%

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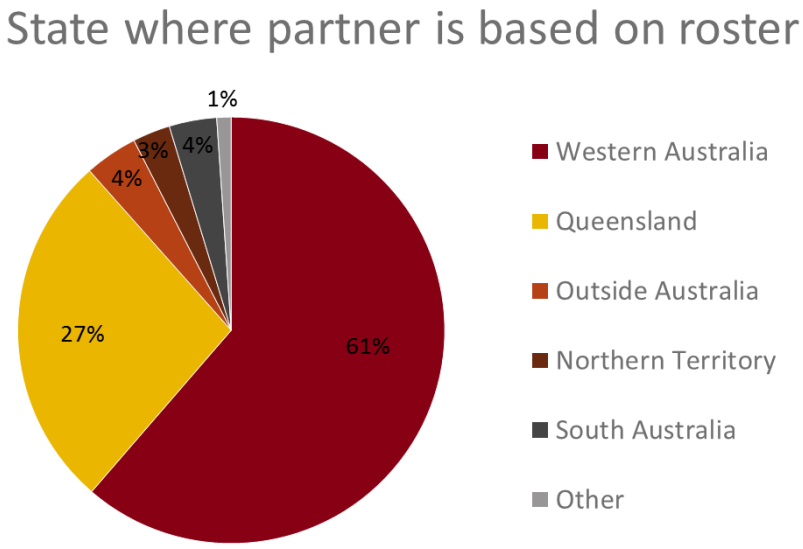
Roster

- The most common rosters that partners are currently working:
  - 14 Days on, 7 days off (23%)
  - 8 days on, 6 days off (14%)
  - 21 days on, 7 days off (11%)
  - 28 days on, 7 days off (11%)
- Most respondents (85%) said their partners' roster arrangements did not change regularly
- The largest group of respondents (39%) stated that their partner's company does not offer a family friendly roster
- The most common ideal roster arrangements identified by partners:
  - 7 days on, 7 days off (26%)
  - 14 days on, 14 days off (18%)
  - 14 days on, 7 days off (16%)
  - 8 days on, 6 days off (15%)
- The vast majority of respondents (87%) felt their partner was not given a choice in roster arrangements

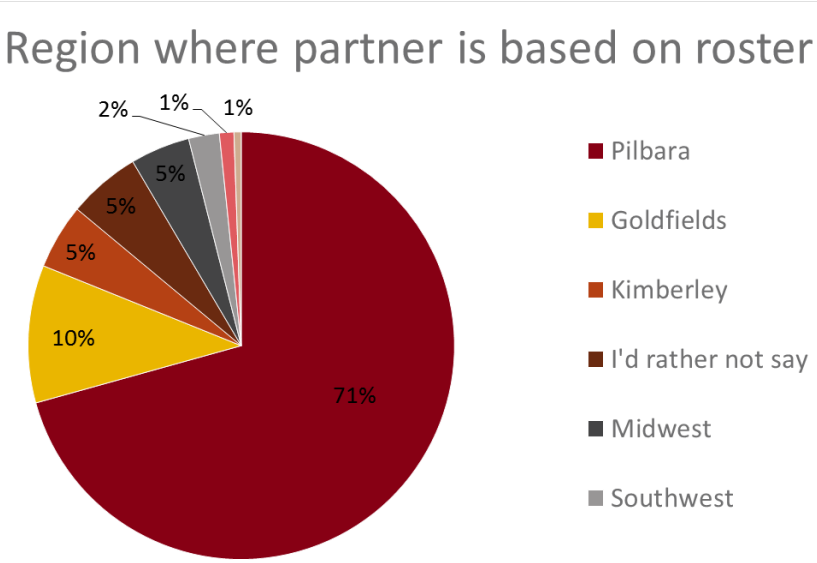


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Roster



- The majority of respondents' partners are based in Western Australia (61%)
- A large number of respondents partners are also based in Queensland (27%)



- Of those participants in WA, the most common regions where respondents' partners are based are:
  - Pilbara region (71%)
  - Goldfields region (10%)

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Employer

Partners were employed by a very broad range of companies. The 4 most commonly mentioned were:

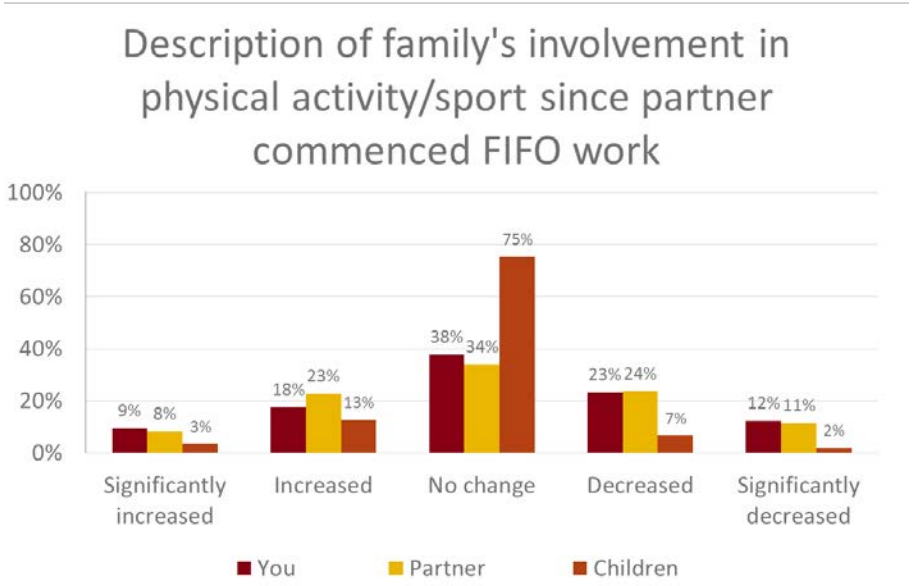
- BHP Billiton (7%)
- Rio Tinto (7%)
- Bechtel (4%)
- Leighton Contractors (4%)

BHP Billiton	7%
Rio Tinto	7%
Bechtel	4%
Leighton Contractors	4%
Monadelphous	3%
BGC	2%
Downer	2%
John Holland	2%
Laing O'Rourke	2%
Theiss	2%

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Health and Wellbeing

- The majority of respondents (59%) engage in exercise of 30 minutes or more between one and three times per week. A further 24% exercise four or five times per week
- Half (49%) of partners (FIFO workers) engage in exercise of 30 minutes or more between one and three times per week. A further 26% exercise four or five times per week
- The highest proportion of respondents' children (20%) engage in exercise of 30 minutes or more seven times per week, 18% of respondents' children engage in exercise 5 times per week, and 17% three times per week
- Involvement in physical activity or sport had increased for 27% of respondents and decreased for 35% of respondents, while for most partners (FIFO Workers) physical activity had reportedly increased for 31% and decreased for 35%
- No change in physical activity/sport had generally occurred for children since a parent had commenced FIFO (75%)

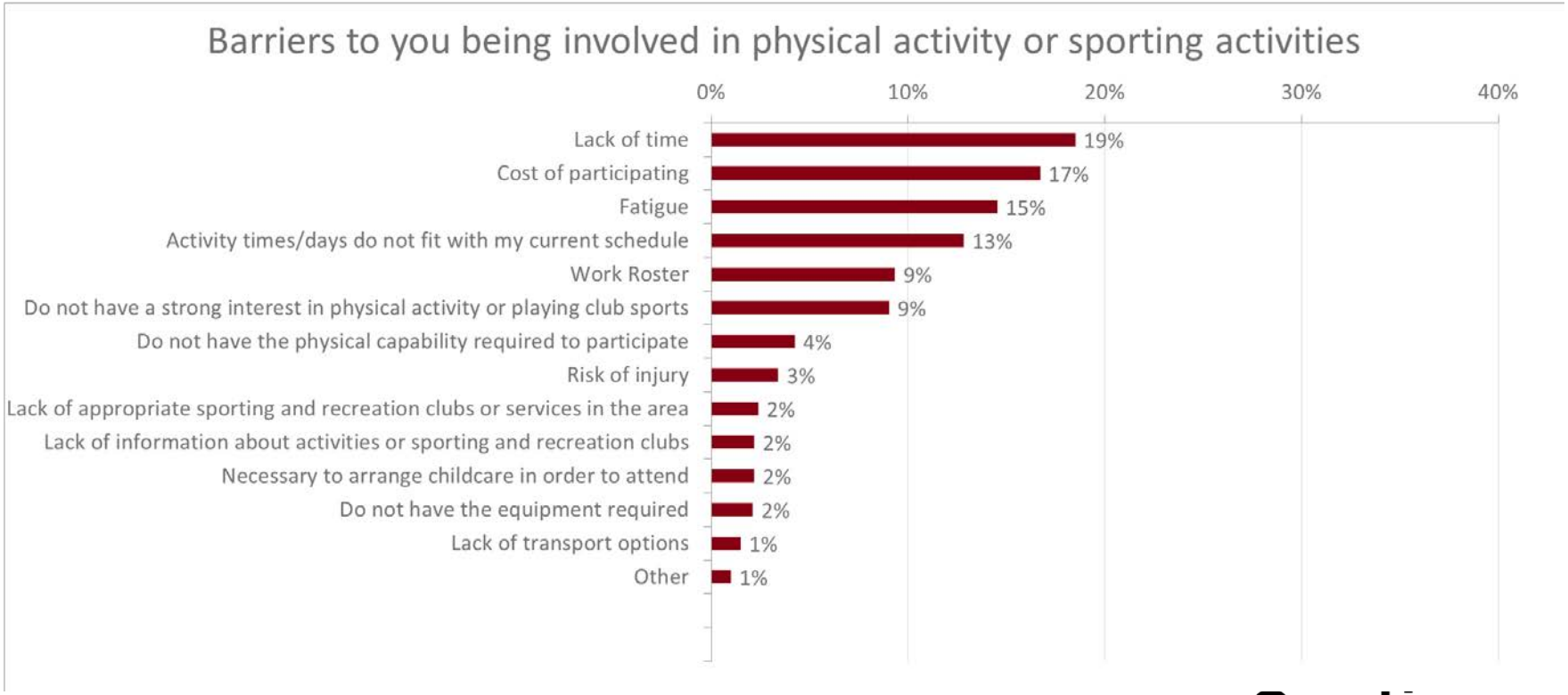


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Health and Wellbeing

The most common barriers to respondents being involved in physical activity or sporting activities for respondents:

- Lack of time (19%)
- Cost of participating (17%)



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Health and Wellbeing

The most common barriers to partners (FIFO workers) being involved in physical activity or sporting activities identified by respondents:

- Activity times/days do not fit with my current schedule (27%)
- Do not have the physical capability required to participate (17%)

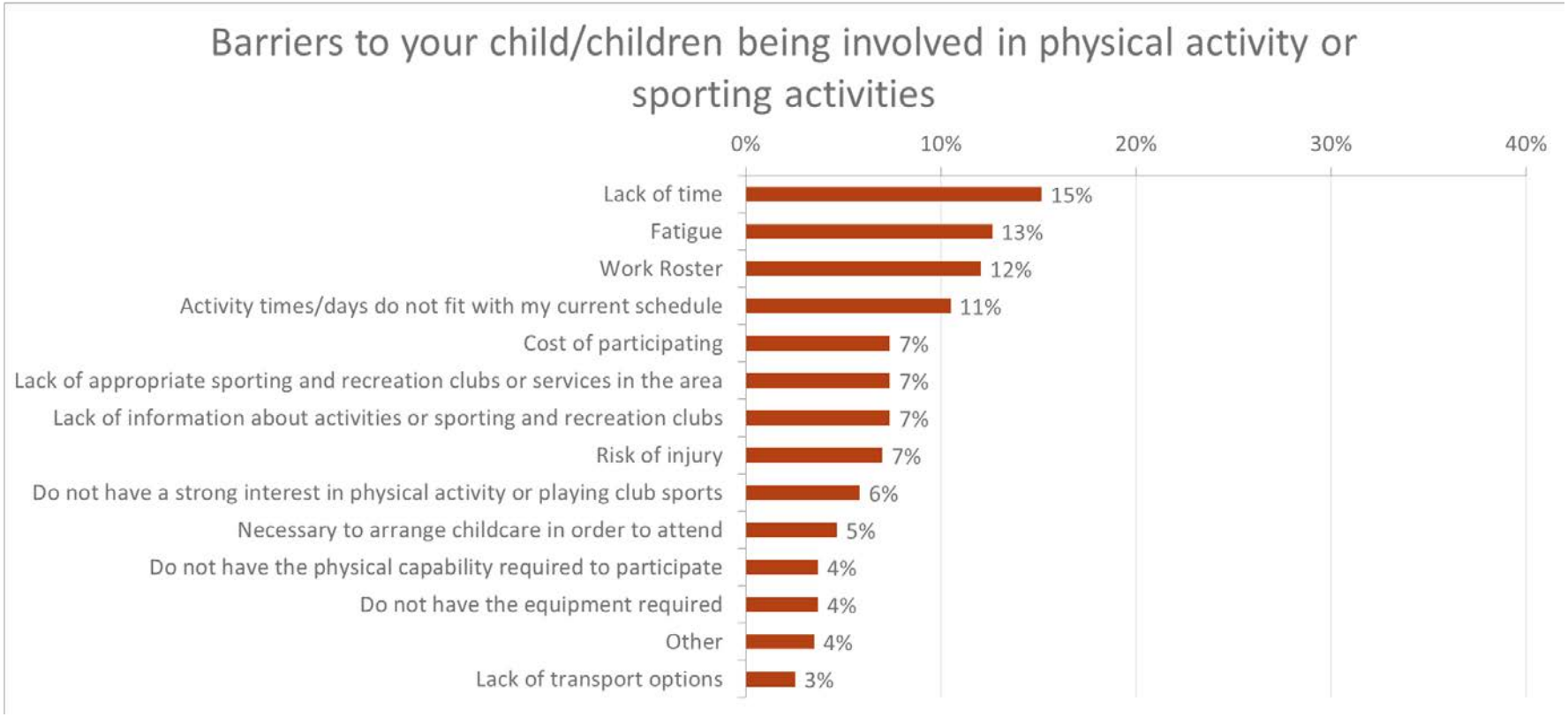


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Health and Wellbeing

The most common barriers to respondents child/children being involved in physical activity or sporting activities:

- Lack of time (15%)
- Fatigue (13%)

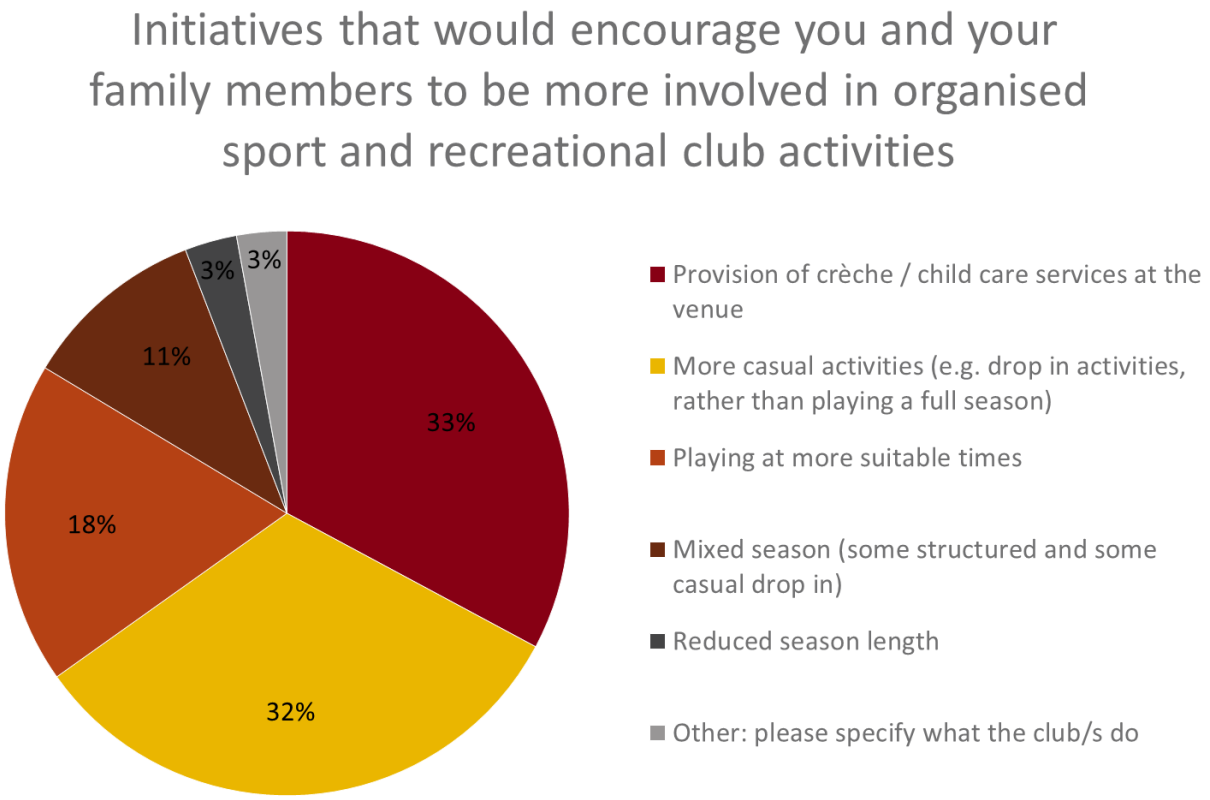


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Health and Wellbeing

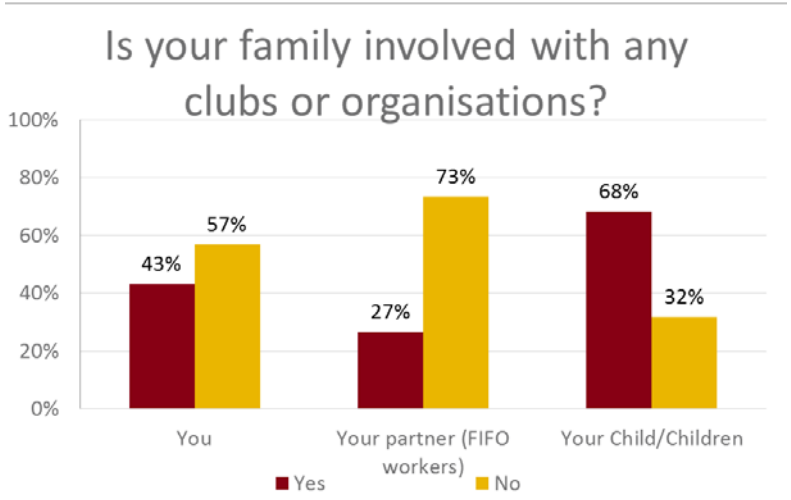
The most common initiatives that would encourage respondents and their family members to be more involved in organised sport and recreational club activities are:

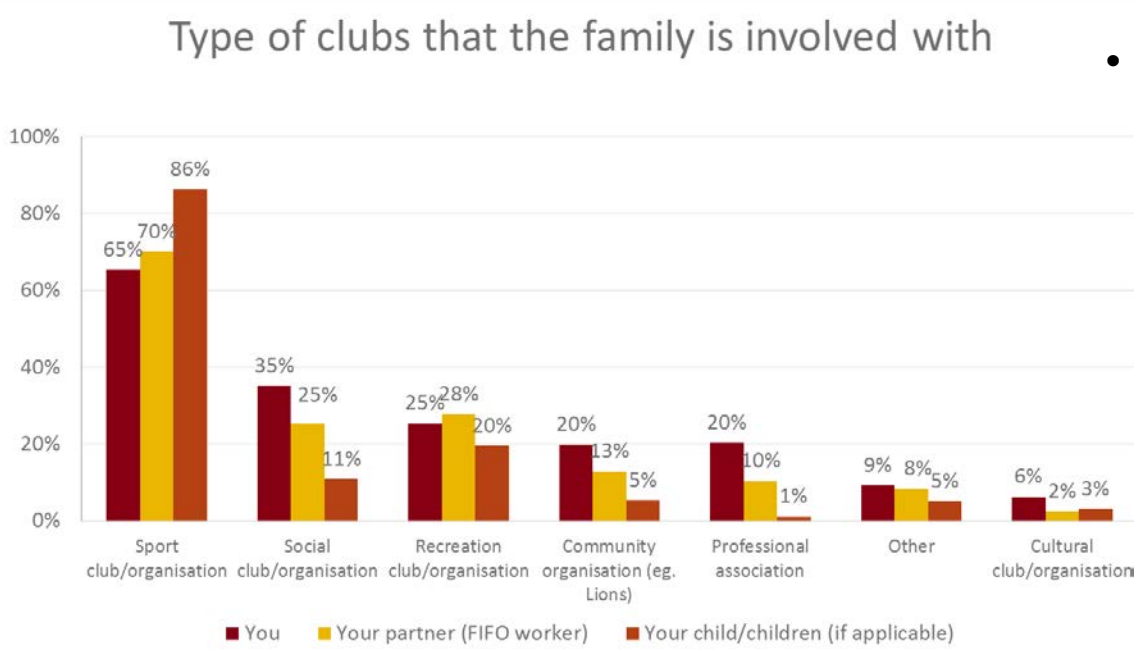
- Provision of crèche/child care services at the venue (33%)
- More casual activities (e.g. drop in activities, rather than playing a full season (32%)
- Playing at a more suitable time (18%)



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Health and Wellbeing





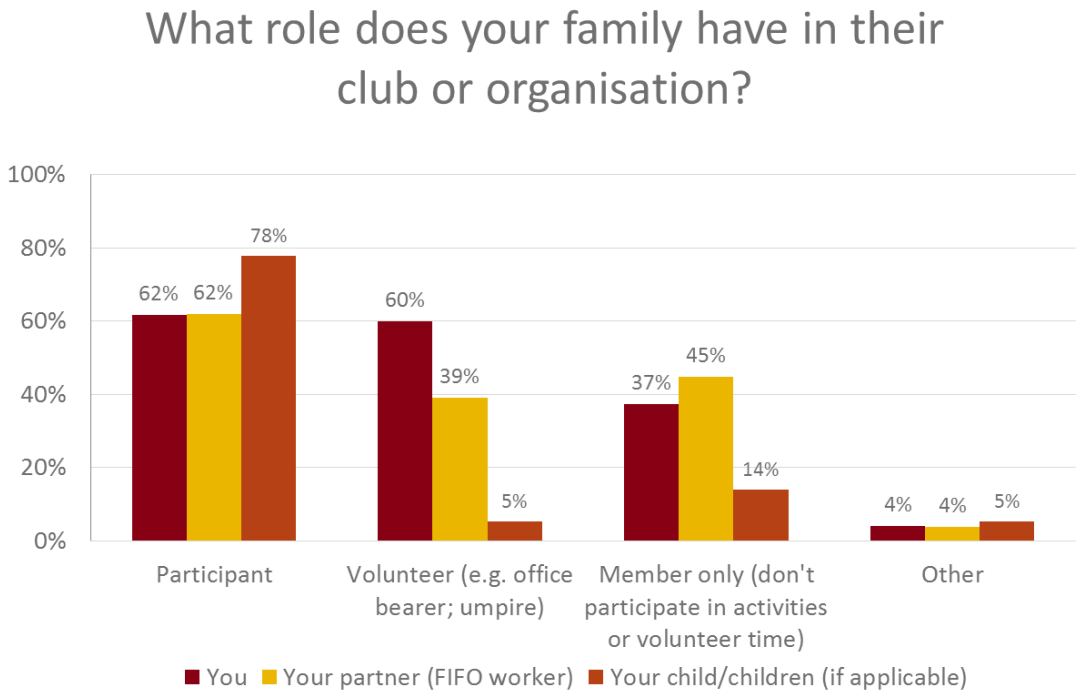
- The majority of respondents (57%) and their partners (73%) are not involved in any clubs or organisations
- In contrast, the majority of respondents' children (68%) are involved in a club or organisation
- Of those who were involved in a club or organisation, the most common type was a sport club/organisation:
  - Child/children (86%)
  - Worker/partner (70%)
  - Respondent (65%)

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Health and Wellbeing

The things respondents think would help encourage respondents and/or their family members to take on a role as a volunteer in an organisation or club are:

- Respondent:
  - More time (104 respondents)
  - Childcare (93 respondents)
  - Partner at home (19 respondents)
- Partner (FIFO Worker):
  - More time (67 respondents)
  - Different/better/consistent roster (35 respondents)
  - More time at home (34 respondents)
- Child/Children:
  - Age of child / child being older (17 respondents)
  - More time (12 respondents)



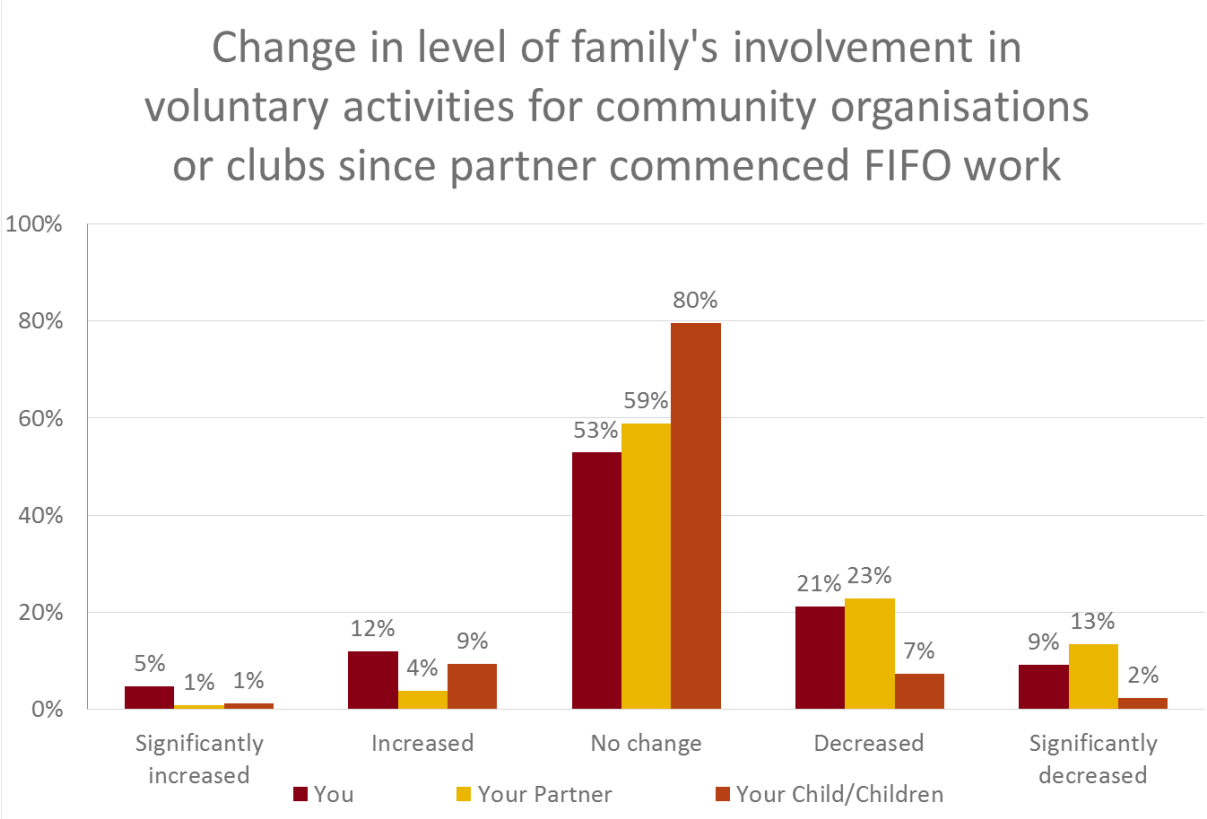
Of those involved in clubs/organisations, the most common role is a participant:

- Respondent - 62%
- Partner - 62%
- Child/Children - 78%

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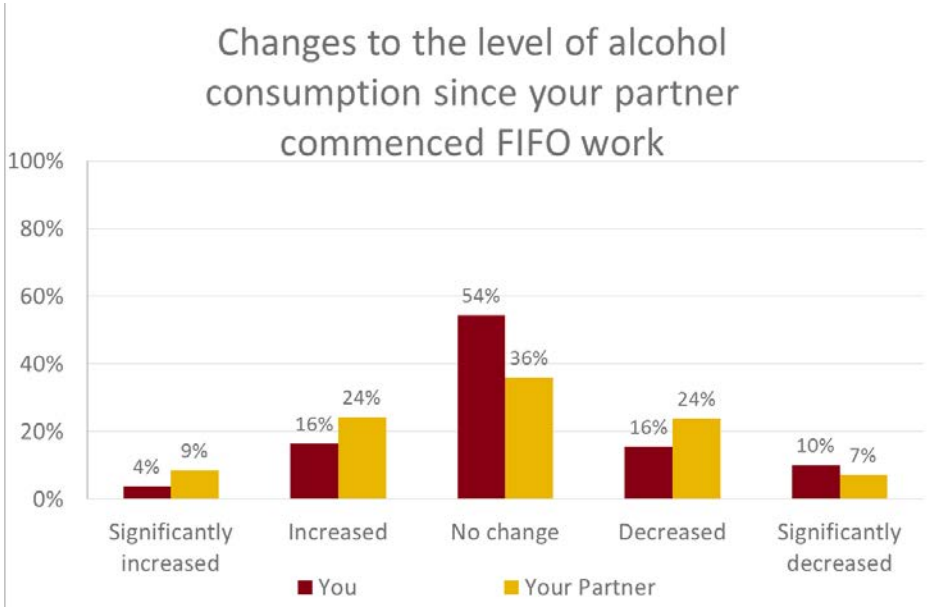
Health and Wellbeing

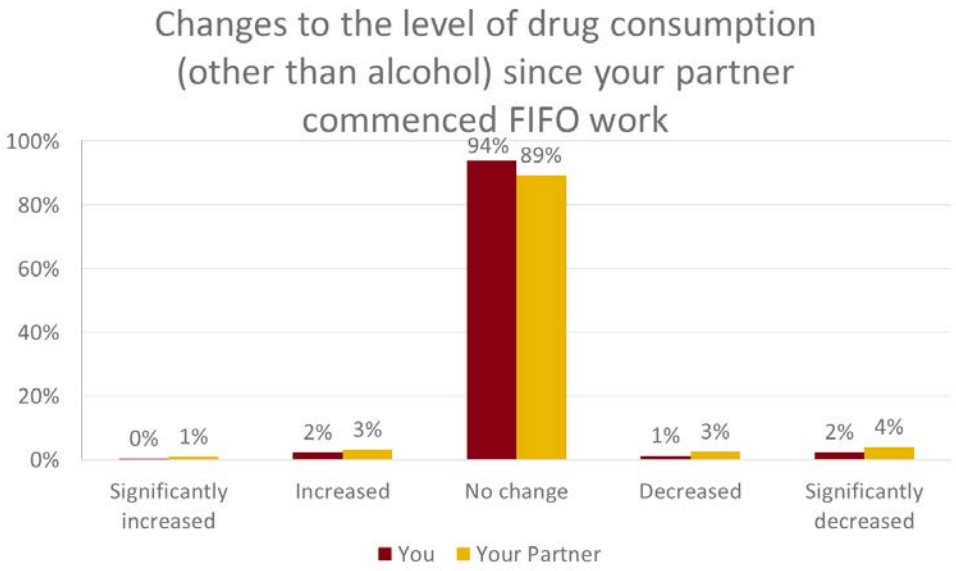
The majority of respondents state that there has been no change in the level of family involvement in voluntary activities for community organisations or clubs since their partner commenced FIFO work (53% respondent, 59% Partner (FIFO Worker) and 80% child/children). Around one-third of respondents and partners had decreased involvement in voluntary activities since the partner commenced FIFO work.



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Health and Wellbeing



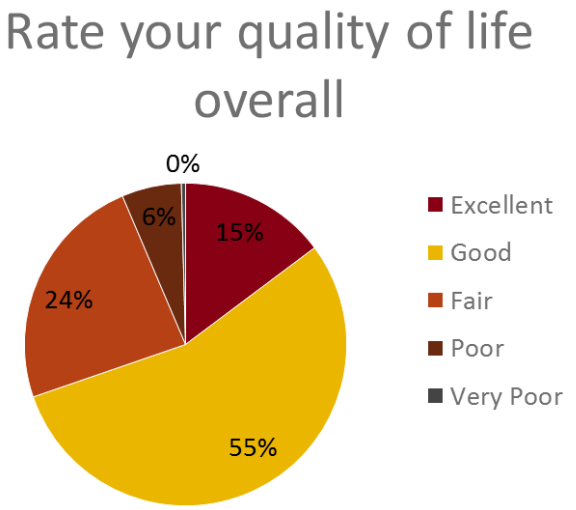


- Just over half of all respondents (54%) rate there being no change to their level of alcohol consumption since their partner commenced FIFO work
- The majority of respondents consider their partner's level of alcohol consumption to have changed since commencing FIFO work (33% increase and 31% decrease)
- Almost all respondents rate there being no change to their own (94%) or their partner's (89%) level of drug consumption since their partner commenced FIFO work

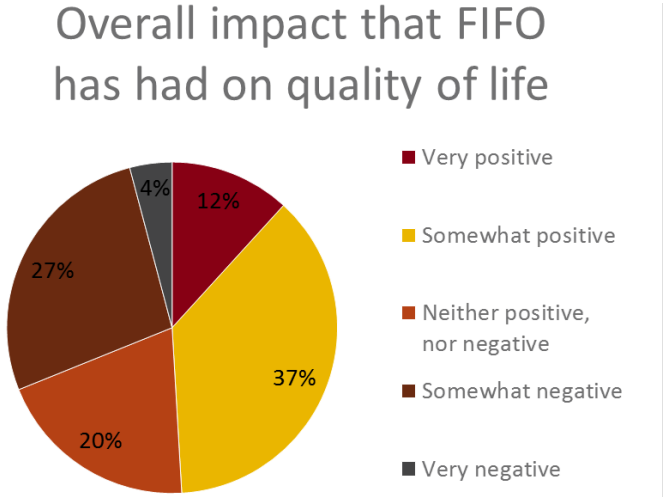
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Life and Relationships

- The majority of respondents rate their quality of life overall as good (55%) or excellent (15%)
- One-quarter of respondents rate their quality of life overall as fair (24%)



- Half of all respondents rate the overall impact that FIFO has had on their quality of life as being positive (somewhat positive 37%, very positive 12%)
- Around one-third of all respondents rate the overall impact that FIFO has had on their quality of life as being negative (somewhat negative 27%, very negative 4%)
- Only 20% of respondents consider that the overall impact that FIFO has had on their quality of life as being neither positive nor negative

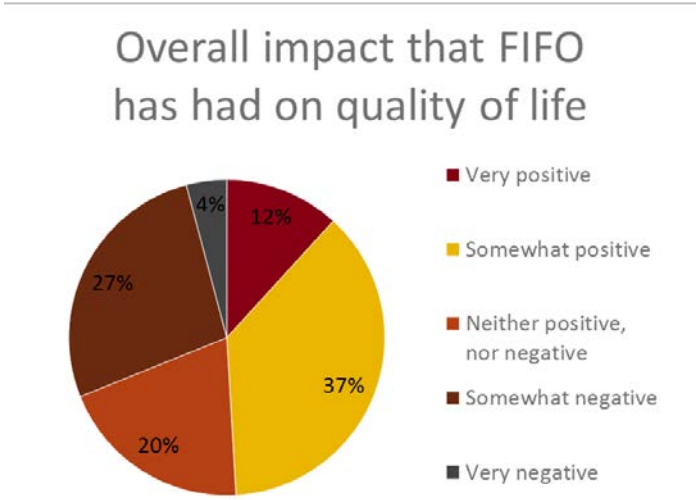


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Life and Relationships

The top three comments from respondents as to why they chose this rating for the impact on their quality of life are:

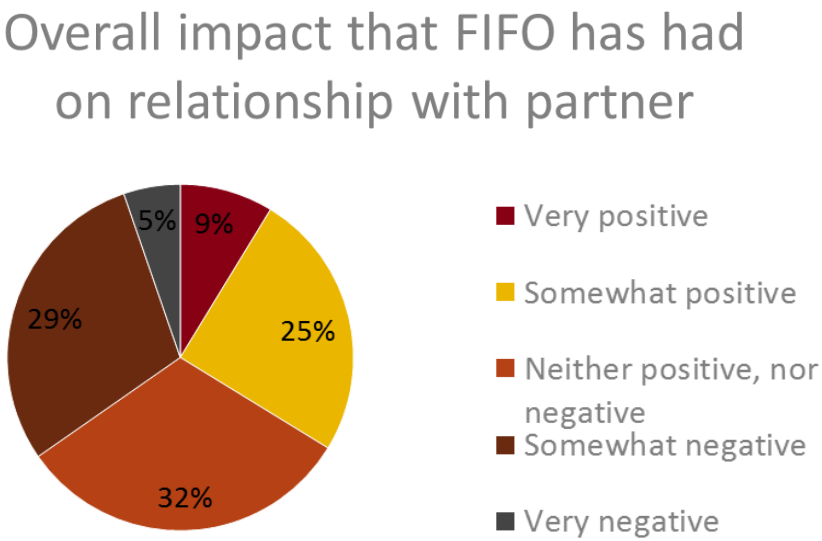
- Very Positive
  - Positive financially (44 respondents)
  - More quality time together (16 respondents)
  - Good lifestyle (14 respondents)
- Somewhat Positive
  - Positive financially (180 respondents)
  - More quality time together (33 respondents)
  - More/quality family time (25 respondents)
- Neither Positive nor Negative
  - Positive financially (51 respondents)
  - Both positive and negative aspects (14 respondents)
  - Partner misses out on special occasions/events (11 respondents)
- Somewhat Negative
  - Parenting alone/feel like a single parent (22 respondents)
  - Positive financially (26 respondents)
  - Strain on relationship (19 respondents)
- Very Negative
  - Partner misses out on special occasions/events (5 respondents)
  - Parenting alone/feel like a single parent (5 respondents)
  - Strain on relationship (5 respondents)



Creating Communities

Life and Relationships

- Most respondents (68%) consider that FIFO has had an impact on their relationship, with an even proportion considering this impact to be positive and negative.
- One-third of respondents rate the impact on their relationship with their partner as positive (9% very positive and 25% somewhat positive)
- Similarly, one-third of respondents rate the impact on their relationship with their partner as negative (5% very negative and 29% somewhat negative)

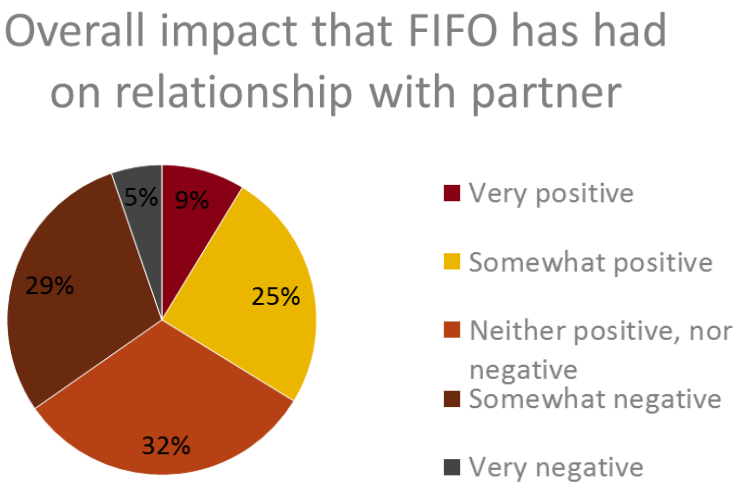


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Life and Relationships

The top three comments from respondents as to why they chose this rating of impact on their relationship with their partner are:

- Very Positive
  - More quality time together (13 respondents)
  - Appreciate the time we have together (9 respondents)
  - Relationship is stronger (7 respondents)
- Somewhat Positive
  - More quality time together (36 respondents)
  - Appreciate each other (23 respondents)
  - Communication is better (18 respondents)
- Neither Positive nor Negative
  - No change in relationship (32 respondents)
  - Strong relationship (19 respondents)
  - Partner has worked FIFO our whole relationship (18 respondents)
- Somewhat Negative
  - Not enough quality time together (27 respondents)
  - Lack of communication (27 respondents)
  - Loss of connection/intimacy (17 respondents)
- Very Negative
  - Relationship breakdown/separation (11 respondents)
  - Not enough quality time together (9 respondents)
  - Lack of communication (6 respondents)

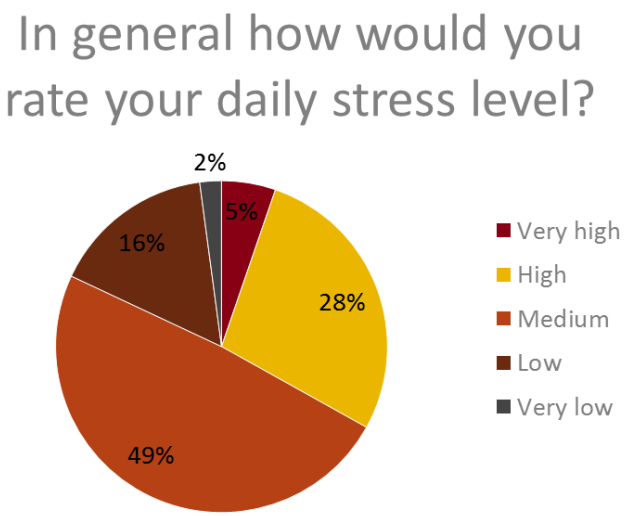


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Life and Relationships

- Half of respondents (49%) rate their daily stress level as medium, a large proportion (33%) rate it as high (5% very high and 28% high), and a smaller proportion (18%) rate it as low (16% low and 2% very low)

- The main causes of stress identified by respondents are:
  - Children (279 respondents)
  - Money (278 respondents)
  - Work (188 respondents)
  - Household duties (112 respondents)
  - Time (98 respondents)
  - Parenting alone (97 respondents)
  - Loneliness (91 respondents)
  - Fatigue/lack of sleep (81 respondents)
  - Not getting a break/time to myself (39 respondents)
  - Family (34 respondents)



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Life and Relationships

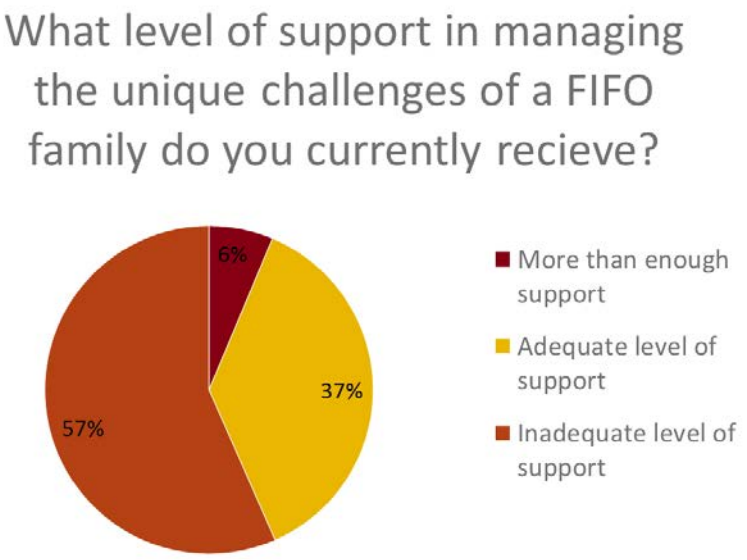
The main things respondents thought would improve their lifestyle as a partner of a FIFO worker are:

- Roster (228 respondents)
  - Better/different roster (109 respondents)
  - Shorter roster (46 respondents)
  - Equal time roster (32 respondents)
  - Family friendly roster (30 respondents)
  - Consistent roster (11 respondents)
- Partner home more often/for more time (41 respondents)
- Childcare (38 respondents)
  - Childcare (18 respondents)
  - Nanny (12 respondents)
  - Cheaper/subsidised childcare (8 respondents)
- Better communication channels (37 respondents)
- Support (37 respondents)
- FIFO social/support groups (33 respondents)
- Site visit opportunities (30 respondents)

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Support

- Over half of respondents (57%) state they currently receive an inadequate level of support in managing the unique challenges of a FIFO family
- Over a third (37%) feel they received an adequate level of support
- Only 6% rate their level of support as more than enough

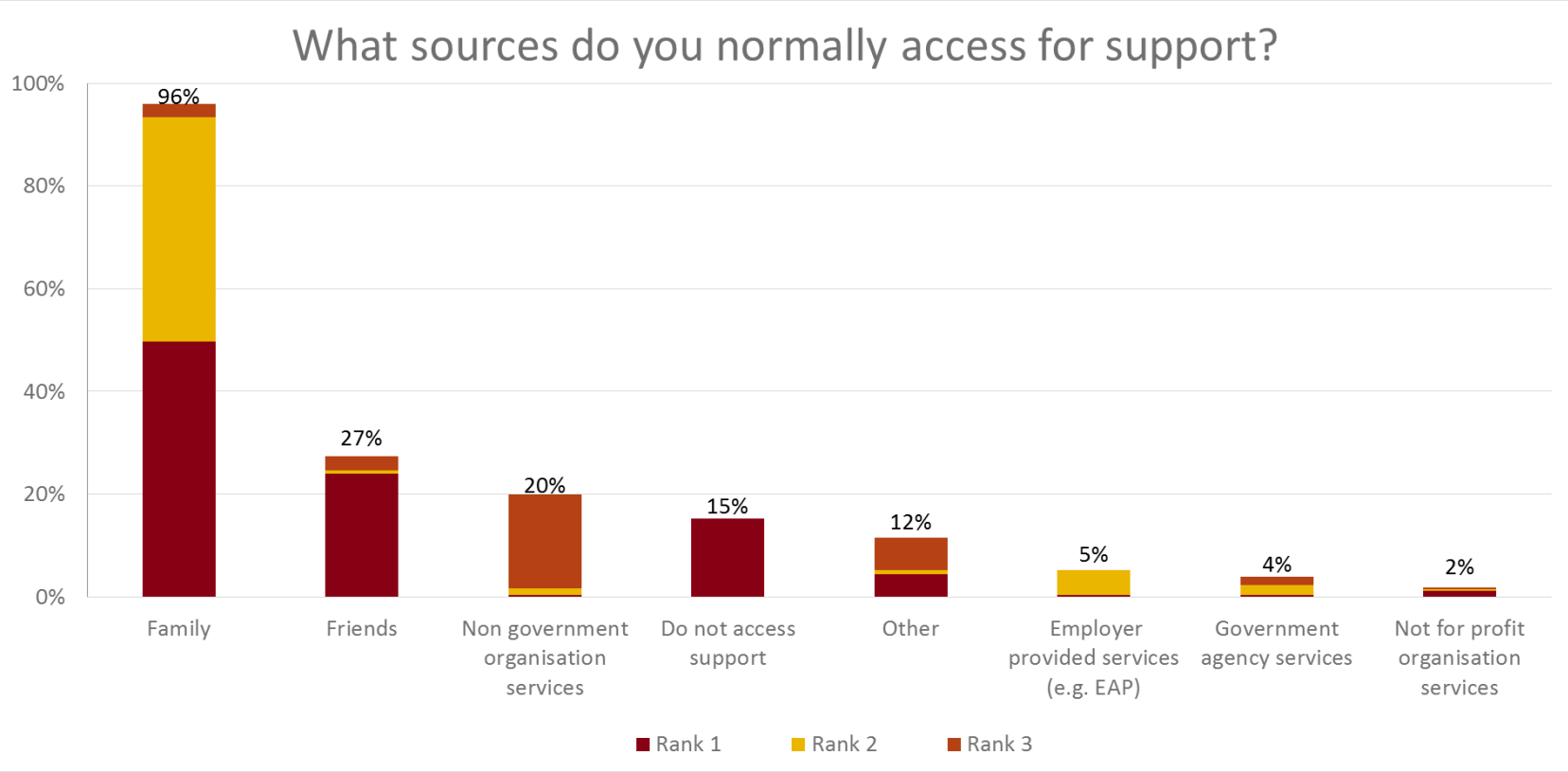


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Support

The most common sources of support normally accessed by respondents are:

- Family (96%)
- Friends (27%)
- Non-government organisation services (20%)

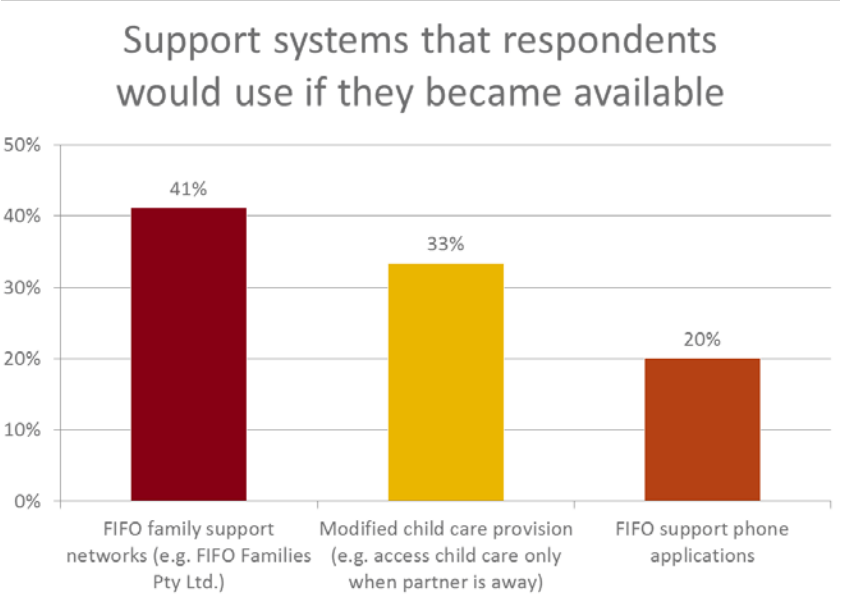


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Support

- The majority (93%) of respondents are not currently making use of any family or child support programs targeted at families with a member that works FIFO
- The most common support programs that respondents are currently making use of are:
  - FIFO families (29 respondents)
  - Facebook/online groups (11 respondents)
- The most common support system that respondents would use if they became available to them are FIFO family support networks (41%) and modified child care provision (33%)



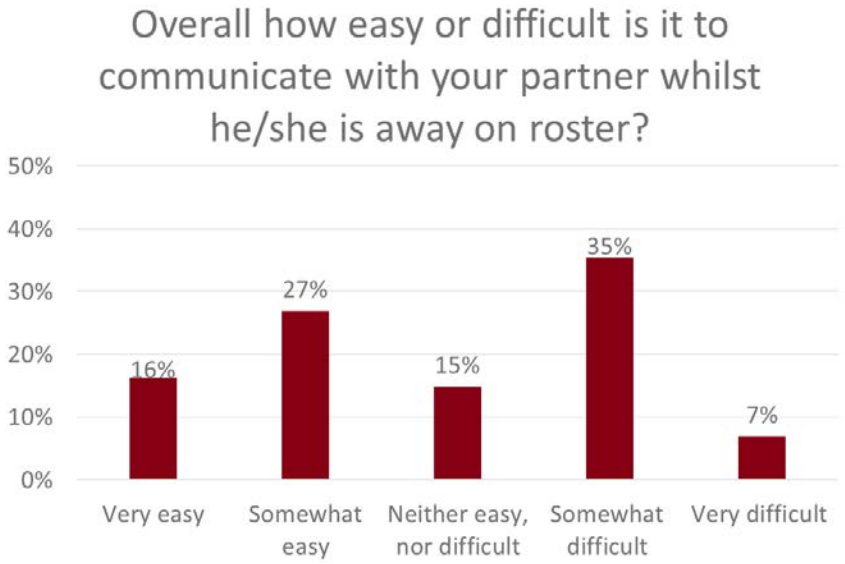


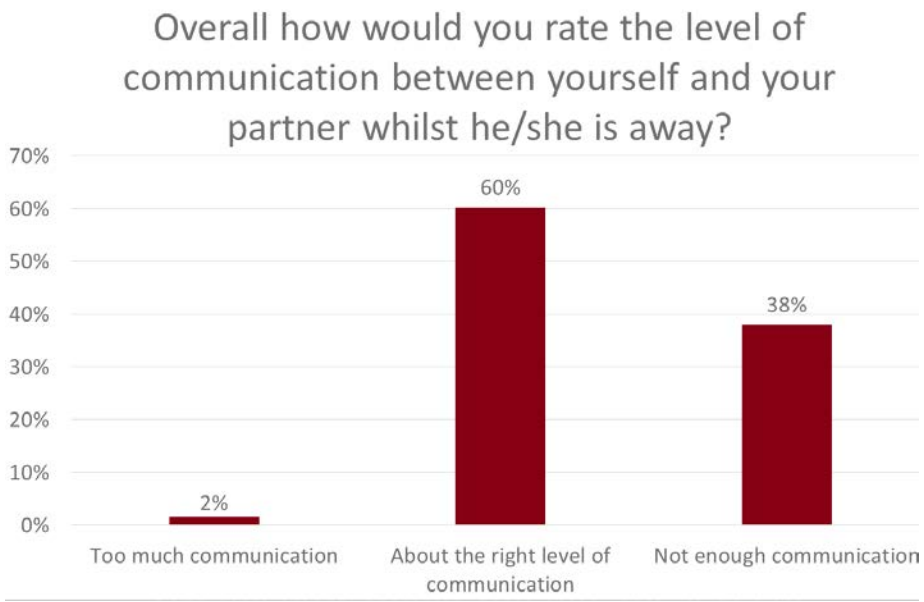
Support

The main services suggested to support families which have a member working FIFO are:

- Mental health support/counselling (30 respondents)
- Childcare (19 respondents)
- Better communication channels (19 respondents)
- FIFO mothers/family groups (17 respondents)
- FIFO social/support groups (16 respondents)

Communication





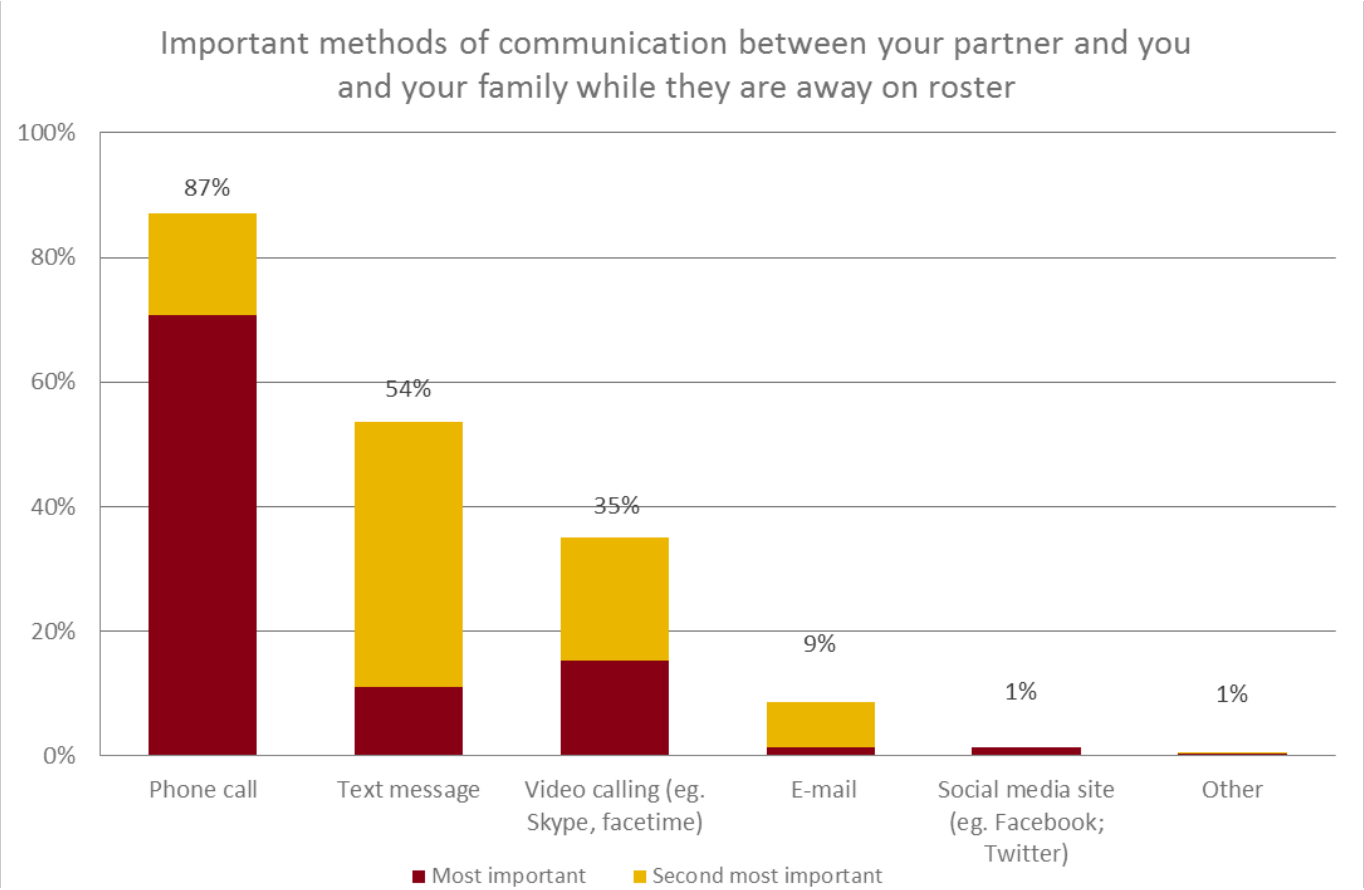
- The largest proportion (42%) of respondents rate their ability to communicate with partner while he/she is away on roster as difficult (35% somewhat difficult, 7% very difficult)

- Respondents rate the level of communication between themselves and their partner whist he/she is away:
  - About right (60%)
  - Not enough communications (38%)
  - Too much communication (2%)

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Communication

- The most important method of communication identified by the majority of respondents is phone calls (87% most or second most important)
- Other important methods of communication are text message (54% most or second most important) and video calling (35% most or second most important)

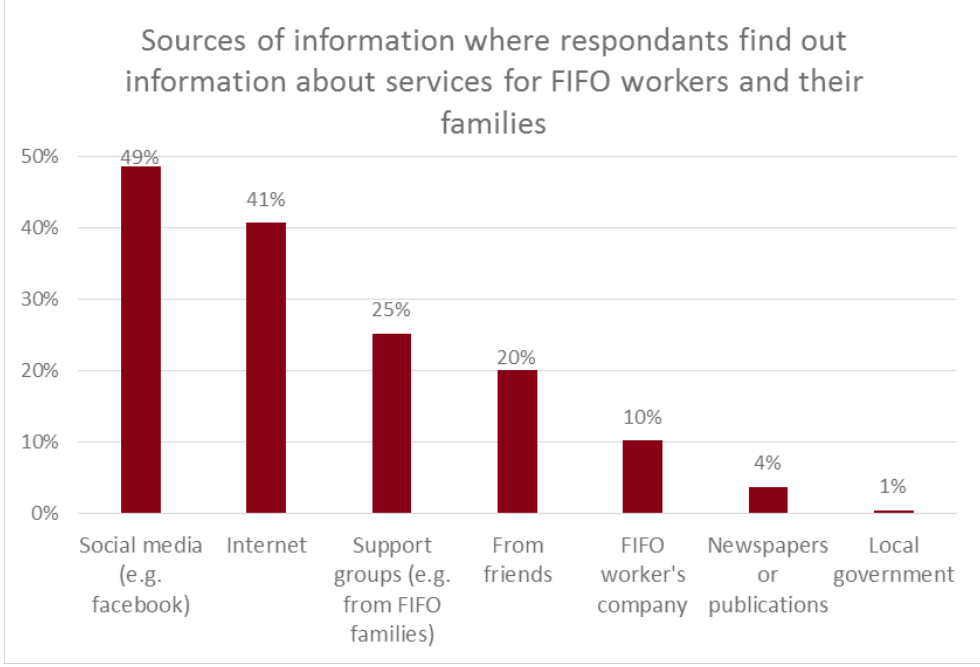


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Communication

- The most frequent suggestions for how communication could be improved are:
  - Better phone reception/coverage (118 respondents)
  - Better internet (86 respondents)
  - Ability to Skype/video call (73 respondents)
  - Communication is sufficient (41 respondents)
  - Phone access during the day/on site (40 respondents)

- The most frequent sources of information about services for FIFO workers and their families utilised by respondents are:
  - Social media (49%)
  - Internet (41%)
  - Support groups (25%)
  - From friends (20%)
  - FIFO worker's company (10%)



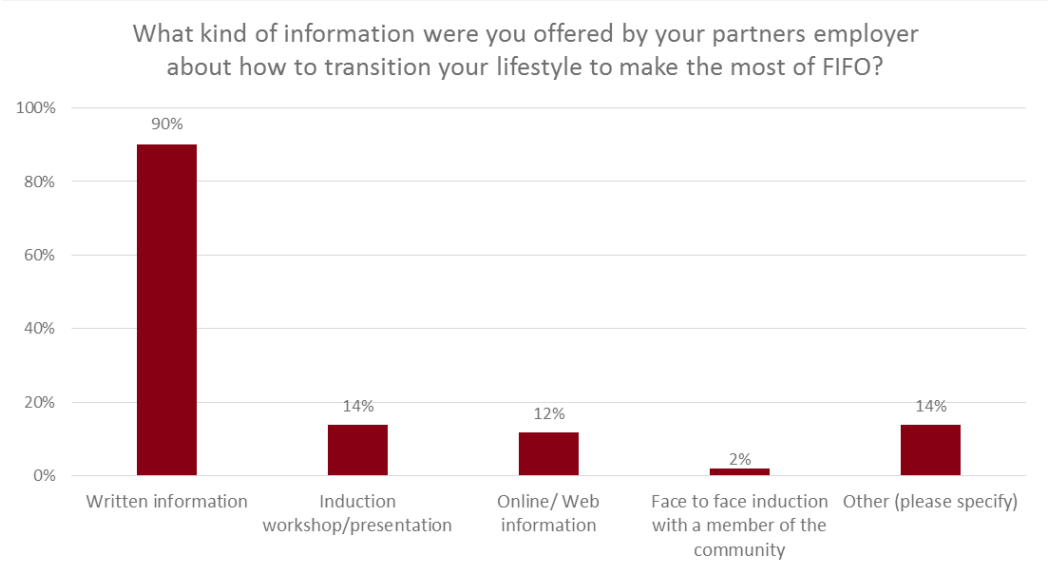
Creating Communities

Communication

- The majority of respondents (94%) were not offered any information about how to transition their lifestyle to make the most of FIFO when their partner started working FIFO



- Written information (90%) is the most common form for those who were offered information by their partners employer about how to make the most of FIFO



Creating Communities

Communication



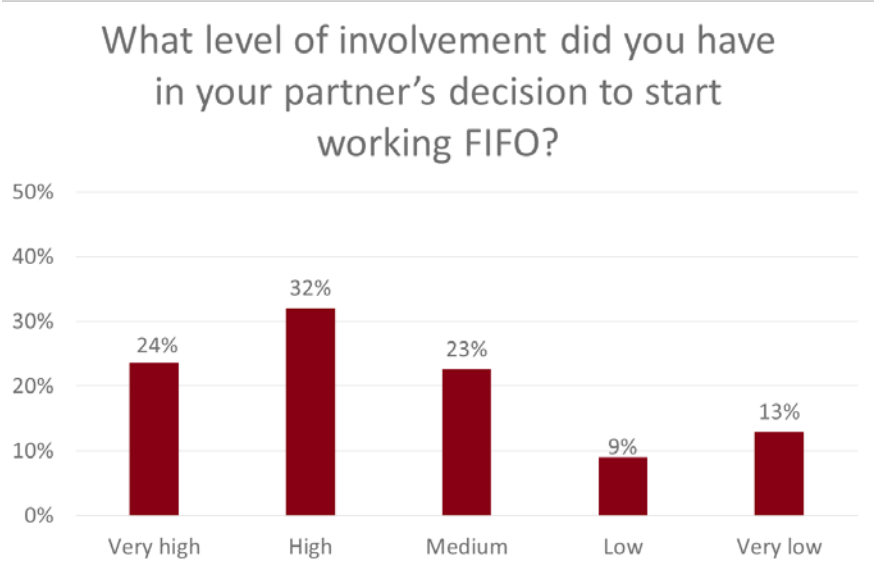
- The majority of respondents (80%) stated that they would've attended a FIFO lifestyle induction workshop or meeting if it had been offered when their partner was starting FIFO work



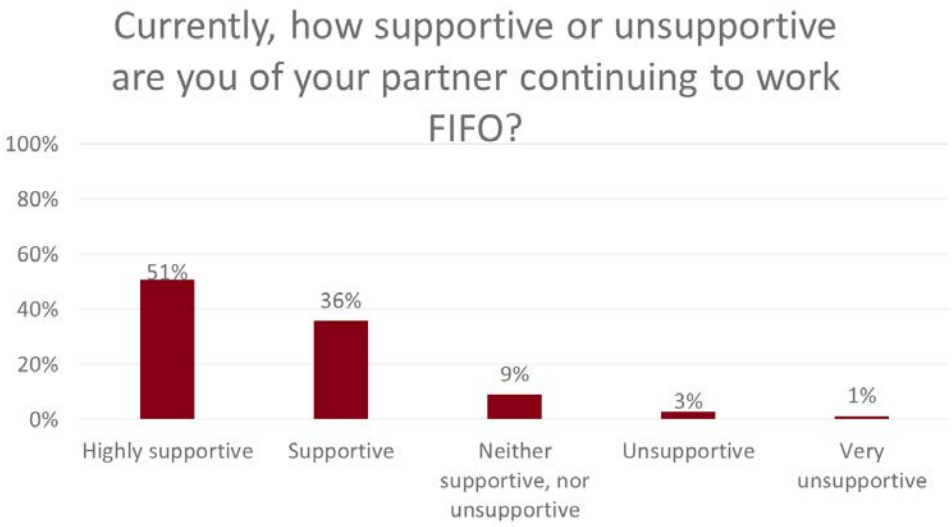
- The majority of respondents (72%) would be interested in a workshop into effective strategies to make FIFO work for themselves and their family

Creating Communities

FIFO and Family Decision-Making



- Over half of respondents (56%) had a high (32%) or very high (24%) level of involvement with their partner's decision to start working FIFO
- One fifth had a low (9%) or very low (13%) level of involvement

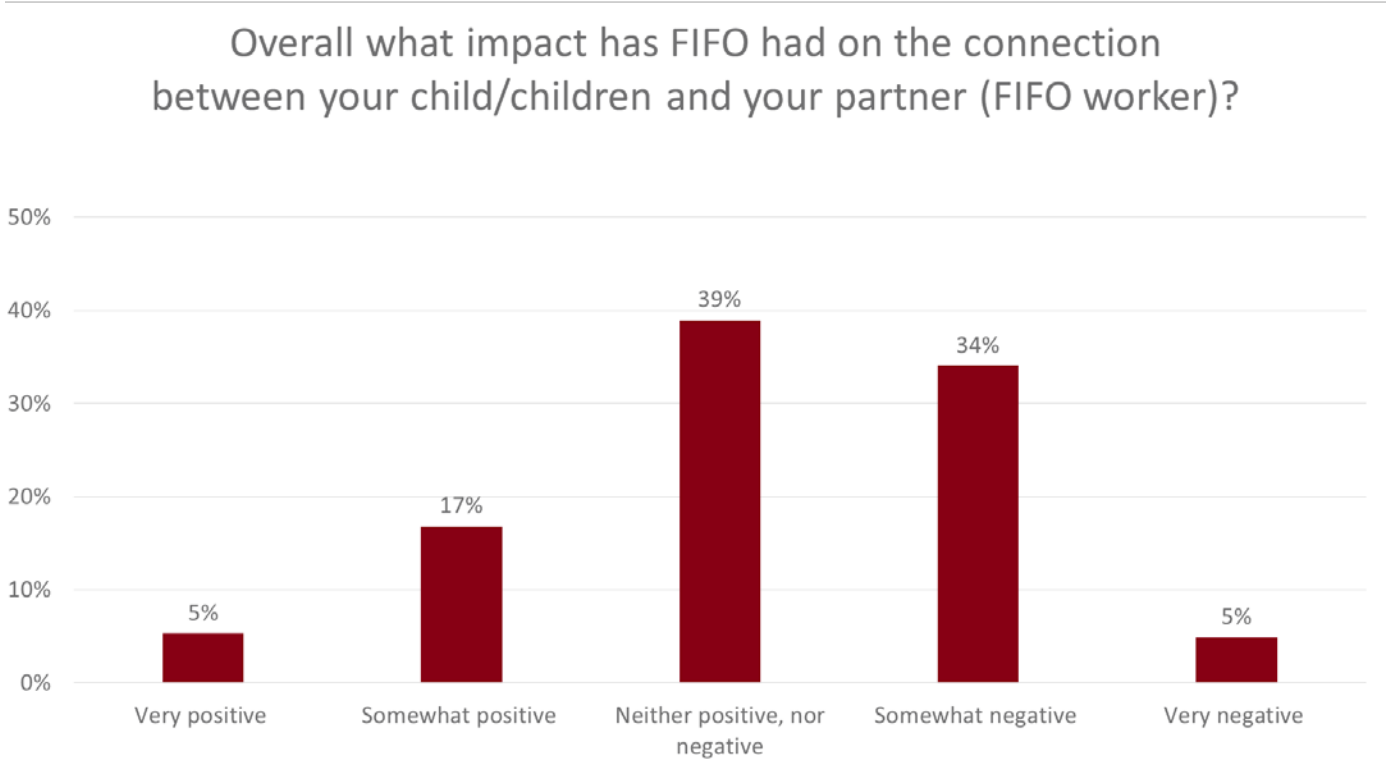


- The vast majority of respondents (87%) are currently supportive (36%) or highly supportive (51%) of their partner continuing to work FIFO
- Only 4% of respondents were unsupportive of their partner working FIFO

Creating Communities

Children

- 39% of respondents consider that FIFO has had a somewhat negative (34%) or very negative (5%) impact on the connection between their child/children and their partner.
- A further 39% of respondents consider that FIFO has had neither a positive, nor a negative impact on the connection between their child/children and their partner
- 22% of respondents rate the impact as being somewhat positive (17%) or very positive (5%)

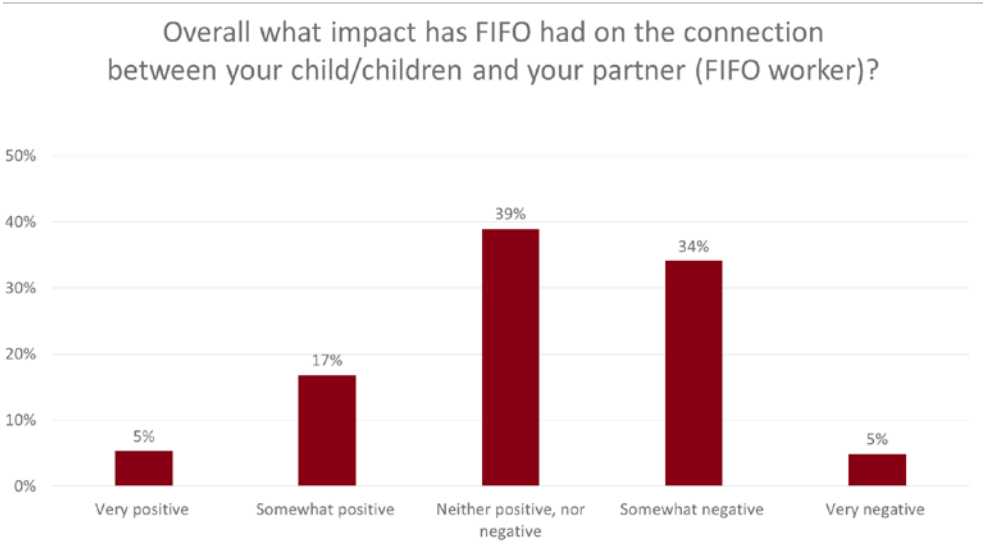


Creating Communities

Children

The most frequent explanations for the impact FIFO has had on the connection between their child/children and their partner are:

- Very Positive
  - Partner spends quality time with child/children when home (12 respondents)
- Somewhat Positive
  - Partner spends quality time with child/children when home (41 respondents)
- Neither Positive nor Negative
  - Child/children do not know any different (51 respondents)
  - Child/children miss partner (23 respondents)
  - Partner spends quality time with child/children when home (21 respondents)

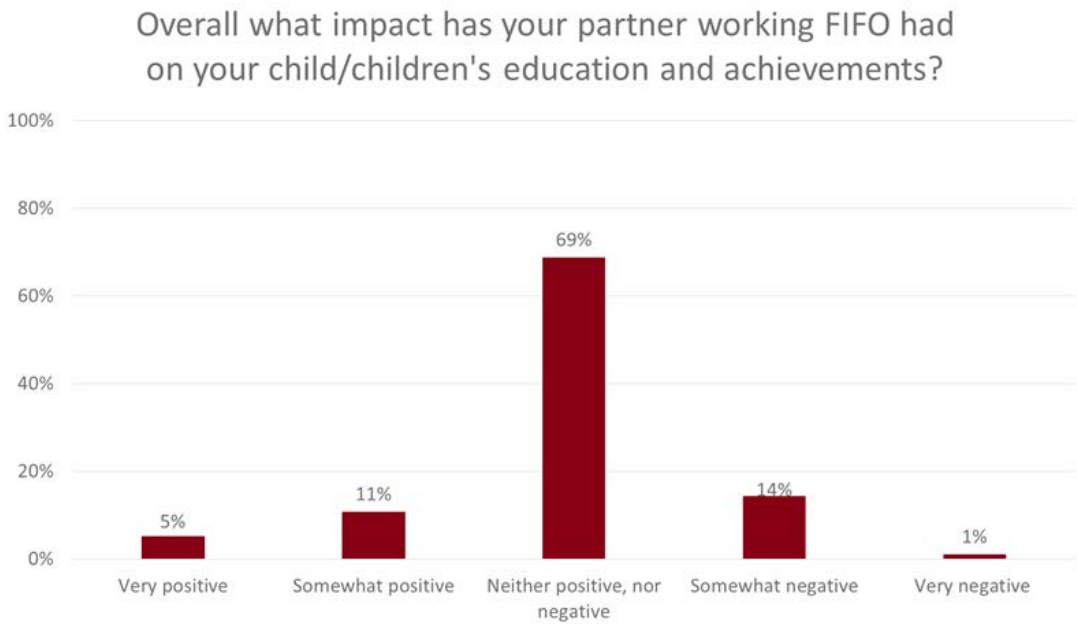


- Somewhat Negative
  - Child/children miss partner (49 respondents)
  - Partner misses out on a lot (17 respondents)
- Very Negative
  - Child/children miss partner (6 respondents)

Creating Communities

Children

The majority of respondents (69%) rate the impact of their partner working FIFO on their child/children's education and achievements as neither positive, nor negative



The main explanations provided by respondents for this rating were:

- Very positive
  - Afford private school (11 respondents)
  - Positive financially (9 respondents)
- Somewhat positive
  - Afford private school (17 respondents)
  - Partner is involved in child/children's education when home (12 respondents)
- Neither positive, nor negative
  - Child/children too young to tell (65 respondents)
  - No change/impact (51 respondents)
- Somewhat Negative
  - Difficult having one parent responsible for child/children's education (15 respondents)
  - Partner misses out on school activities/achievements (13 respondents)
- Very Negative
  - No identifiable themes

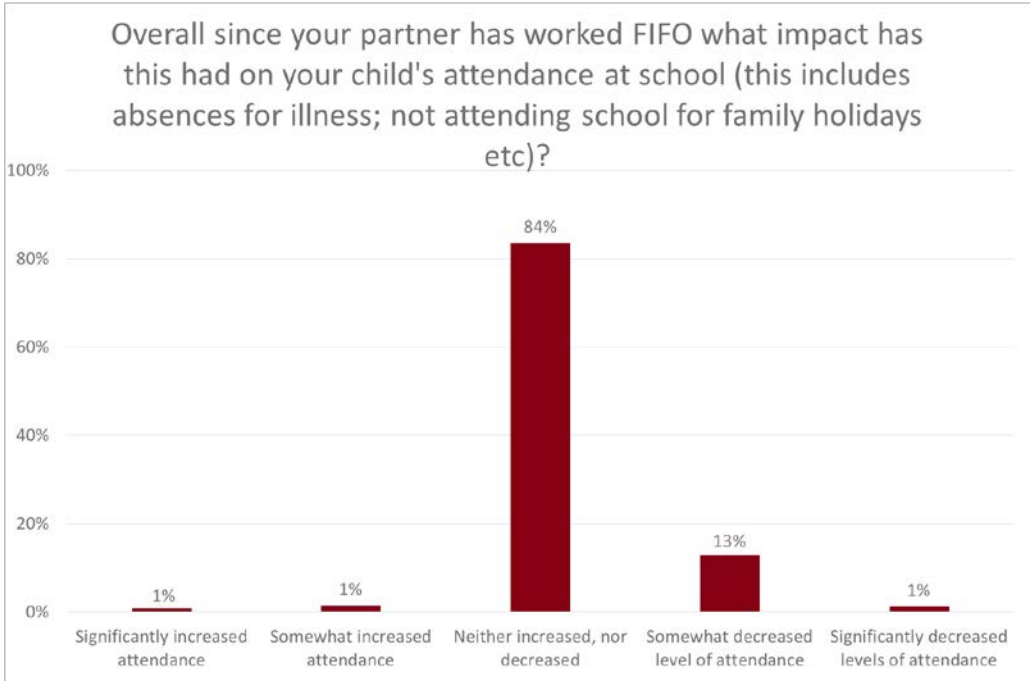
Creating Communities

Children

The majority of respondents (84%) rate the impact of their partner working FIFO on their children's attendance at school as having neither increased, nor decreased attendance.

14% of respondents rate the impact as somewhat decreased level of attendance or significantly decreased level of attendance

The main explanations provided by respondents for why they chose this rating are:



- Significantly decreased levels of attendance
  - No identifiable themes
- Somewhat decreased level of attendance
  - Child/children miss school to spend time with partner (25 respondents)
  - Take holidays during school time (21 respondents)
- Neither increased, nor decreased
  - No change/impact (52 respondents)
- Somewhat increased attendance
  - No identifiable themes
- Significantly increased attendance
  - No identifiable themes

Creating Communities

General

The most frequent suggestions for how FIFO workers and their families can be supported to have positive, healthy and active lifestyles provided are:

- Health (40 respondents)
  - FIFO friendly gym membership (14 respondents)
  - Exercise group (7 respondents)
  - Healthy food on site (6 respondents)
  - Physical activity encouraged on site (6 respondents)
  - Sporting groups on site (4 respondents)
  - Health and fitness information (3 respondents)
- Support (38 respondents)
  - FIFO support groups/networks (12 respondents)
  - Support from companies (11 respondents)
  - Support for partners/families (7 respondents)
  - Support on site for the worker (5 respondents)
  - Support in every state (3 respondents)
- Rosters (22 respondents)
  - Family friendly rosters (11 respondents)
  - Better rosters (9 respondents)
  - Even time rosters (9 respondents)
- Counselling/mental health support (14 respondents)
- Communication (14 respondents)
  - Ability to communicate (12 respondents)
  - Increased communication (2 respondents)
- Information (12 respondents)
  - More information (9 respondents)
  - Information from companies (3 respondents)
- Visits (11 respondents)
  - Family days on site (7 respondents)
  - Camp visits (4 respondents)
- Social activities (10 respondents)
  - FIFO social events/ groups (6 respondents)
  - Company organised social gatherings (4 respondents)

Creating Communities

General

The most common general comments made about FIFO are:

- FIFO works well (20 respondents)
- Support (18 respondents)
  - Support for families (6 respondents)
  - Mental health support for workers (6 respondents)
  - Support for partner at home (4 respondents)
  - Support for workers (2 respondents)
- Rosters (14 respondents)
  - Family friendly rosters (9 respondents)
  - Even time rosters (5 respondents)
- Difficult lifestyle (13 respondents)
- Companies need to be more family oriented (12 respondents)
- Positive financially (9 respondents)



Creating Communities