

FOSTER & KINSHIP CARERS SURVEY 2022 REPORT

South West
Region






Queensland
Foster and
Kinship Care

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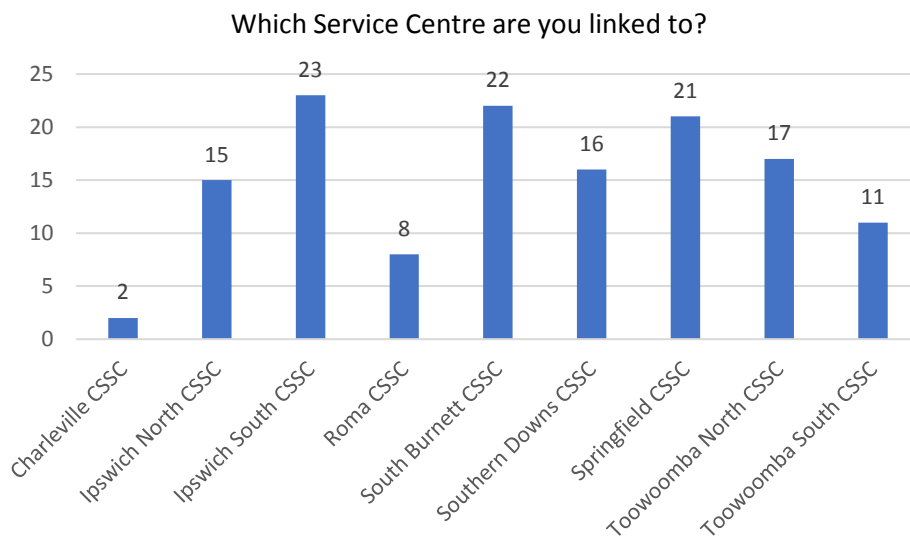
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About the Carer

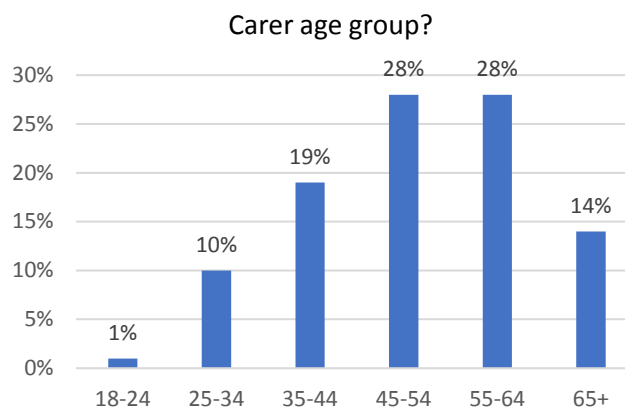
In South West region 141 foster and kinship carers completed the 2022 Carer Survey and were represented in the following Child Safety Service Centres, noting all of CSSCs were represented in the survey.



Of the carers in South West who responded, 91 identified as foster carers (78%), 35 identified as kinship carers (27%) and 3 carers identified as provisionally approved.

Carers were asked if they were supported by a fostering and kinship carer agency and 93% of carers who completed the survey stated they were.

Carers were asked to identify the age group they fitted into.

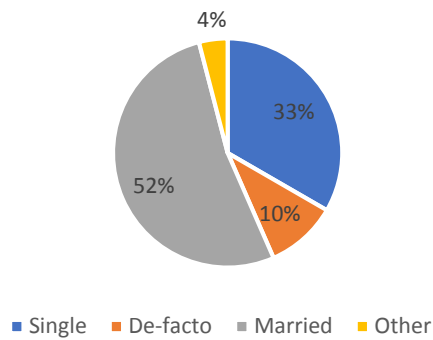


Aboriginal, Torres Strait Islander and CALD Carers

19 carers in South West who completed the survey identified as Aboriginal, 1 identified as Torres Strait Islander, 0 as Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander and 1 carer identified as CALD.

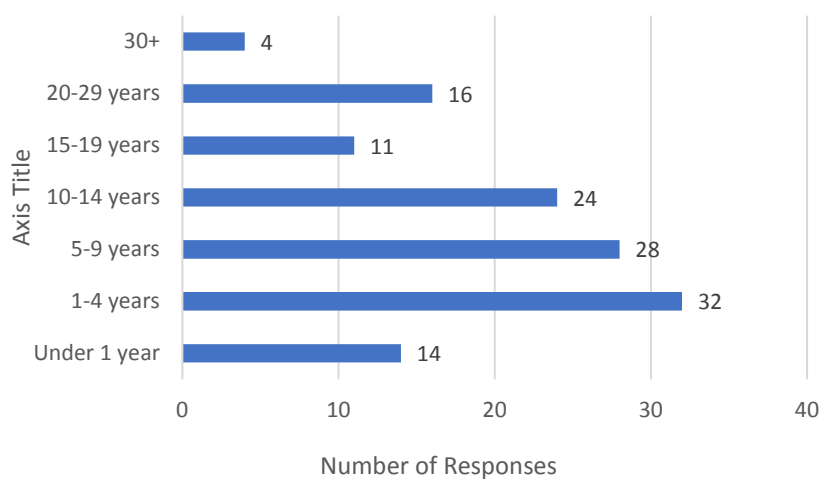
Relationship Status

What is your partnership status?



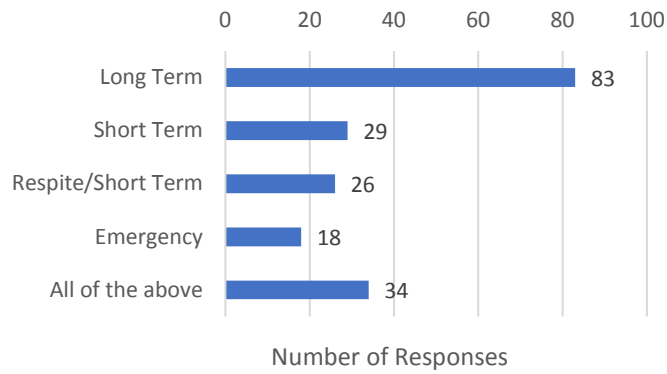
Carers were asked how many years they had been providing care for.

How long have you been a carer?



Carers were asked which type of care they provide, please note that carers were able to select more than one type of care.

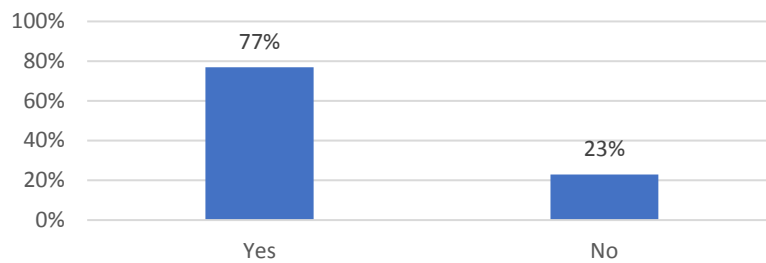
What type of care do you generally provide?



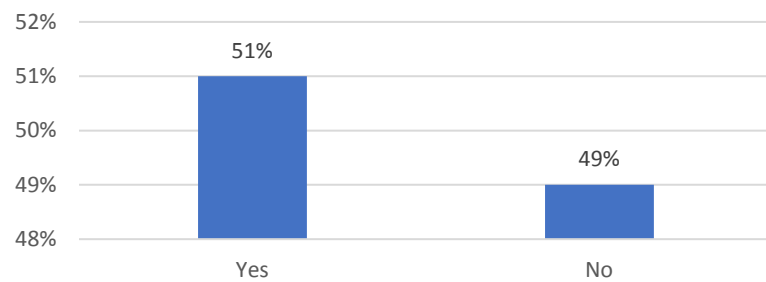
Carer Connect & Statement of Commitment

Carers were asked about their familiarity with the Carer Connect App and the Statement of Commitment. The following responses were provided.

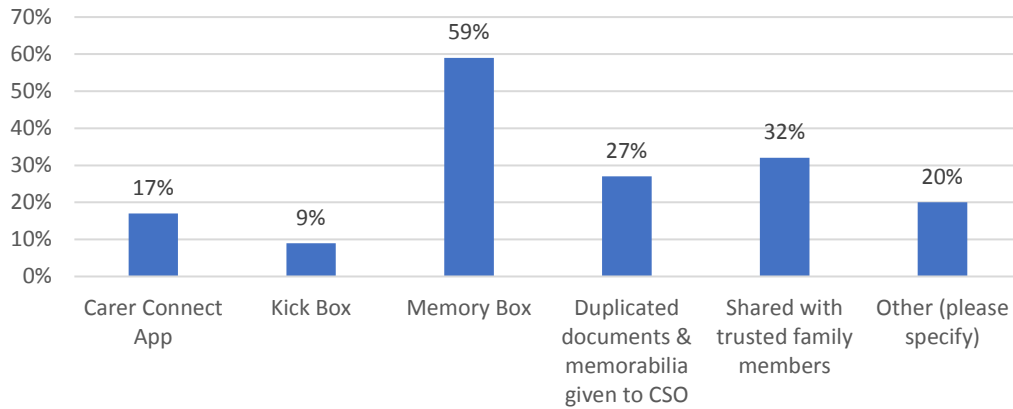
Are you aware of the Carer Connect App?



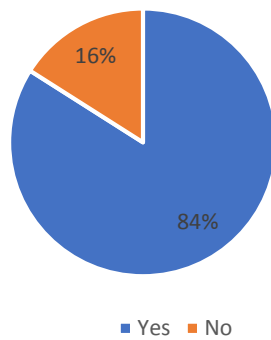
If you are aware of the Carer Connect App, do you use it?



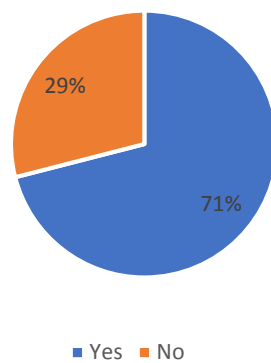
How do you store the child and young people's sentimental or treasured items?



Are you aware of the Statement of Commitment?

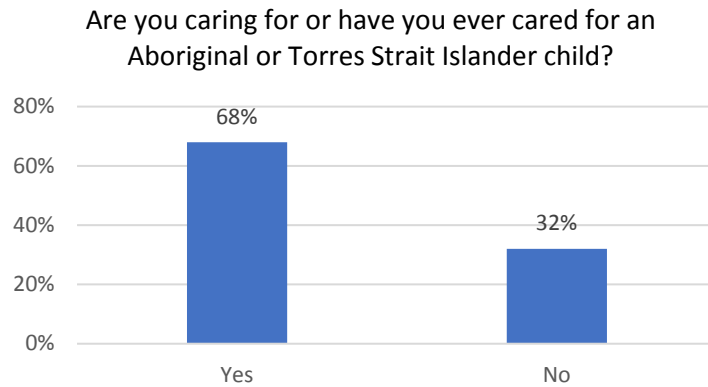


If you are aware of the Statement of Commitment, have you found it a useful document in your role as a carer?



Cultural Diversity

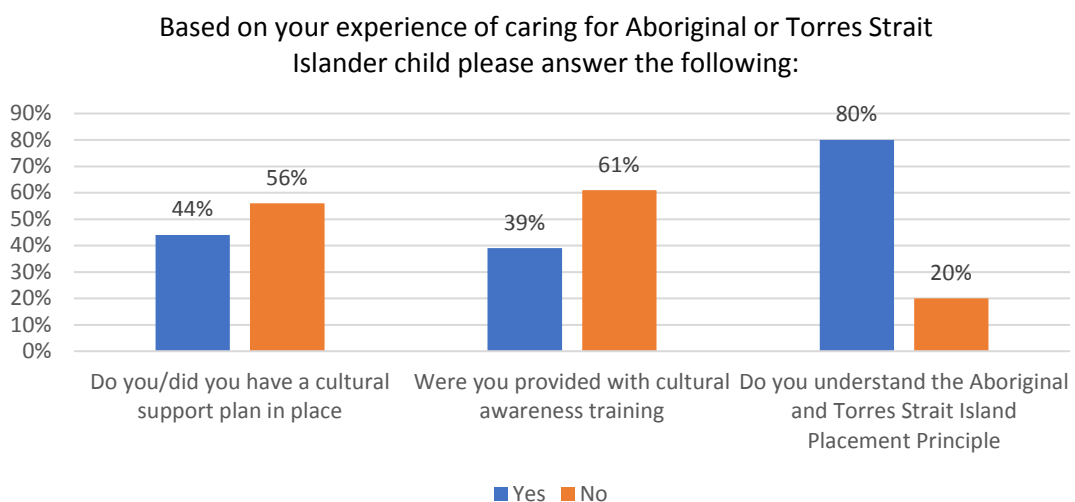
Carers were asked a range of questions relating to care of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children as follows.



Given that only 19 carers identified as Aboriginal, the majority of those carers who have responded yes to this question would not identify as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander.

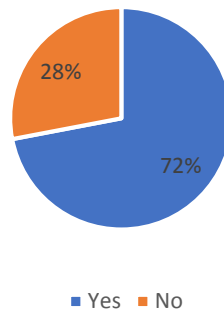
Carers who answered yes to the above question, were asked if they had a Cultural Support Plan in place, 44% answered yes, leaving 56% of children placed in care where they identified as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander without a Cultural Support Plan or where the carer had no knowledge of its existence.

Carers were also asked if they were provided with cultural awareness training to assist them to care for a child who identified as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander, and as evidenced below 61% of carers who responded advised they did not receive any training to assist them in building their cultural knowledge in their care of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Island children.

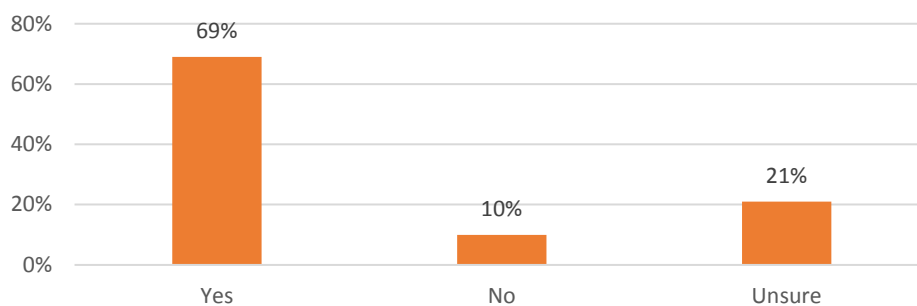


Carers were asked whether they understood the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Child Placement Principle. This principle is explored with foster carers in the Getting Ready to Start training (previously known as Quality Care Pre-Service Training) however, it must be noted that carers are inundated with information during this training and if this is not followed up with further education and information, it is likely it won't be retained by carers. The majority of carers reported understanding the principle with 72% confirming their understanding and 28% identifying not understanding the principle. 69% also advised they were aware of additional principles for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children contained in the Child Protection Act 1999 (Section 5C) that were introduced into legislation in 2018.

Are you aware of additional principles for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children contained in the Child Protection Act 1999 Section 5C?

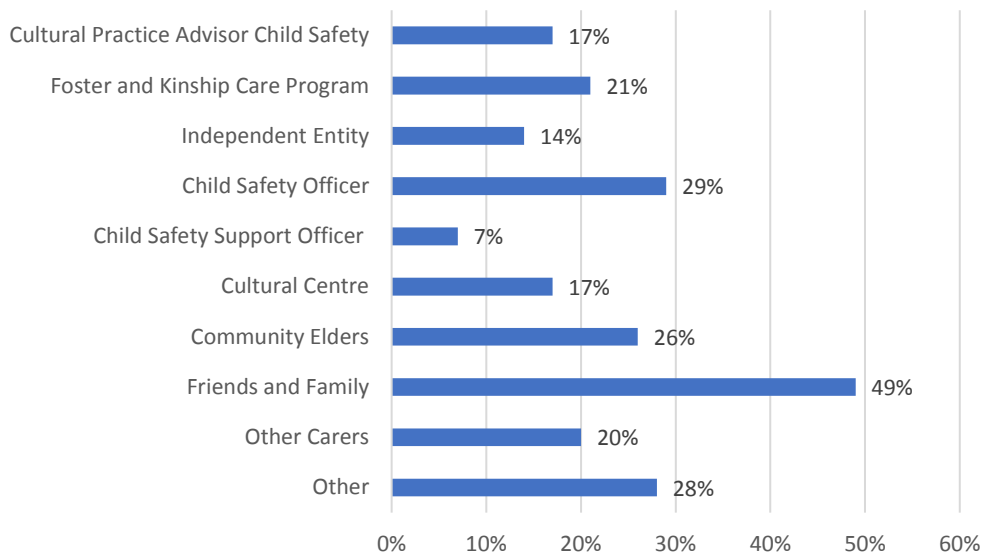


Are you confident in the application of the additional Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Principles in your day to day care of children and young people?



Carers were then asked where they accessed their cultural information from. Please note that carers were able to select multiple boxes as sources of information for this section.

As carers where do you access your cultural information from?



Carers have provided many comments which support their genuine desire for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children to be connected to their culture. Carers in the South West region provided extremely positive comments relating to how they support children in their care to be connected to their culture as evidenced above. Every comment provided by carers from the region demonstrated a genuine effort and commitment to culture.

CALD (Culturally and Linguistically Diverse) Community

This is the fourth survey QFKC has sought to gather information from our carer community regarding the CALD community, specifically how many of our carers identify as being from a CALD community and whether carers have provided care for children and young people from a CALD community.

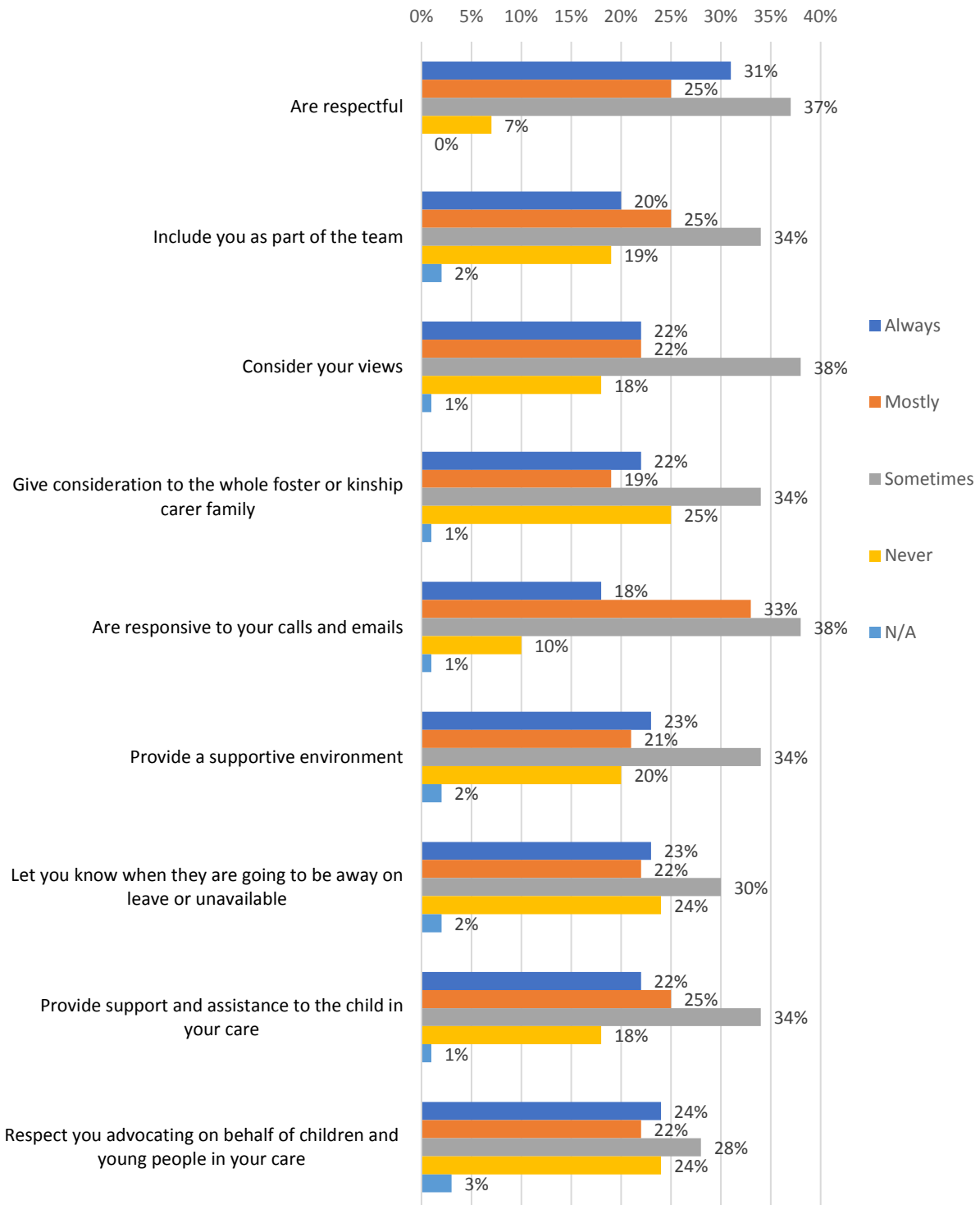
There was 1 carer who completed the survey in the South West Region who identified from a CALD community. 10% (12) of carers in South West who completed the survey reported they either were or had provided care to children who were from the CALD community.

Carers who had provided care to children from a CALD community were asked whether they were provided with appropriate training to assist them to provide culturally appropriate care and 42% of carers who responded advised that they had been provided with training.

Child Safety Services

Carers were asked a number of questions relating to their satisfaction with Child Safety Services.

How satisfied are you with relationships with staff at Child Safety Services. Are you satisfied that staff at your local office...



A total of 56% of carers reported feeling **respected** either always or mostly; that leaves 44% of carers who reported only feeling respected sometimes or never.

A total of 45% of carers reported feeling **like part of a team** either always or mostly which is an increase since the 2020 survey (40%). That leaves over half of the carers who completed the survey in the South West region **not feeling like part of a team** sometimes or never (53%). (2% reported this as being N/A).

44% of carers reported feeling that Child Safety **consider their views** either always or mostly, an increase since the 2020 survey (40%); that leaves 56% of carers who completed the survey in the South West region **feeling their views are not considered** either only sometimes or never (1 carer reported N/A).

34% of carers reported that they felt that **consideration was given to the whole foster or kinship carer family only sometimes**. However, 25% of carers responded that they feel Child Safety **never consider the whole foster or kinship carer family**. The responses reported in previous surveys were 21% in 2020 and 35% in 2018).

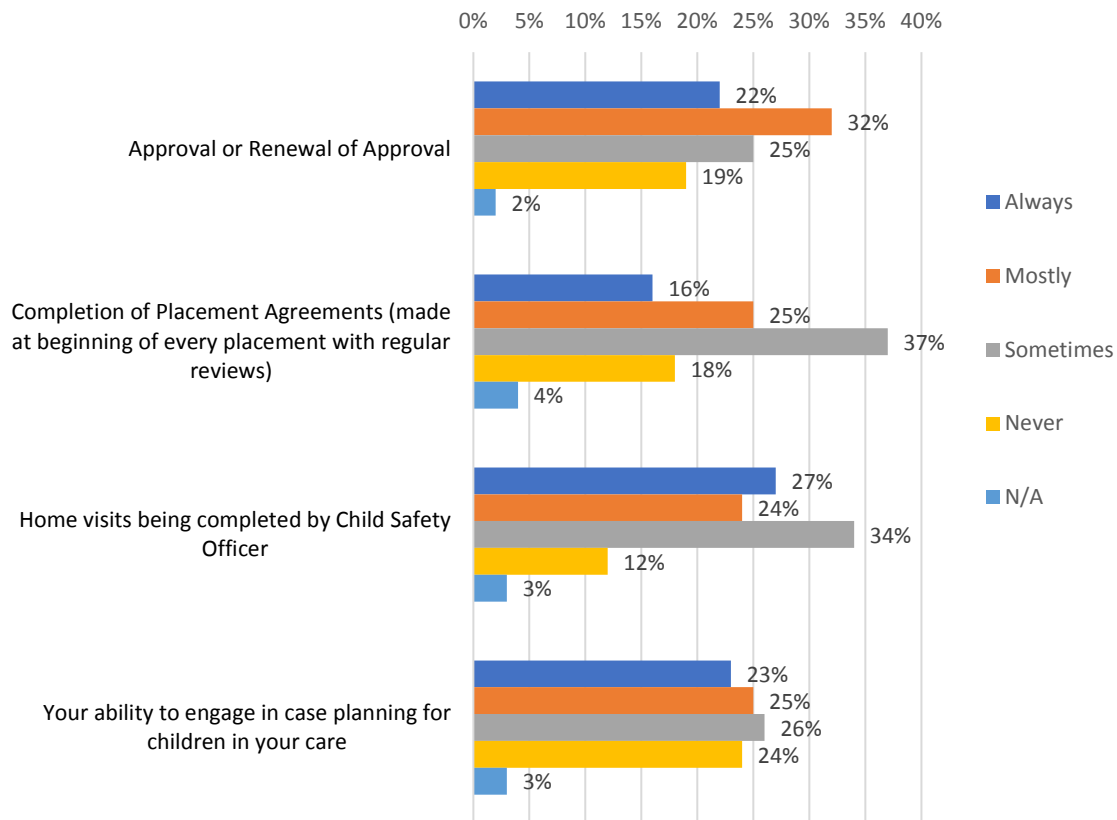
51% of carers reported that their CSSC was **responsive to calls and emails**, 48% reported only sometimes or never (only 1 carer answered N/A). With respect to carers feeling that Child Safety **provides a supportive environment** 54% of carers completing the survey in South West feel that this is sometimes or never the case.

Advising the care team when planned leave or unavailability is occurring is a basic communication requirement in order to build a respectful and supportive care team. Carers are expected to **let the care team know when they are going away or are going to be unavailable**, therefore it would be an expectation that this same courtesy is provided to carers. 45% of carers responded either always or mostly being advised, an increase to that reported in the 2020 survey (43%). This means 54% of carers who completed the survey in South West are left not knowing the child's CSO is on leave (2 carers reported N/A).

52% of carers reported that they **only sometimes or never are provided support and assistance to the child in their care**. 52% of carers reported that they only sometimes or never feel **respect to advocate on behalf of children and young people in their carer, for resources, goods and service**. Carers are assessed against their ability to be considered a suitable person to provide care through many criteria, one of these being their ability to appropriately advocate on behalf of children. Stakeholders can hold different views, however it is important that all members of a child's safety and support network feel empowered to advocate on behalf of a child. This leads to accountability, transparency and best practice overall.

Child Safety Processes

How satisfied are you with the following Child Safety processes



54% of carers in South West completing this survey reported feeling either always or mostly satisfied **with the approval and renewal process** and that overall only 19% of carers reported never feeling satisfied in this area.

Carers were asked if they were satisfied with the **completion of Placement Agreements**. This area is explored in more detail further in this report.

In relation to **home visits being completed by Child Safety Officer** 46% of carers reported feeling sometimes or never satisfied that this was occurring.

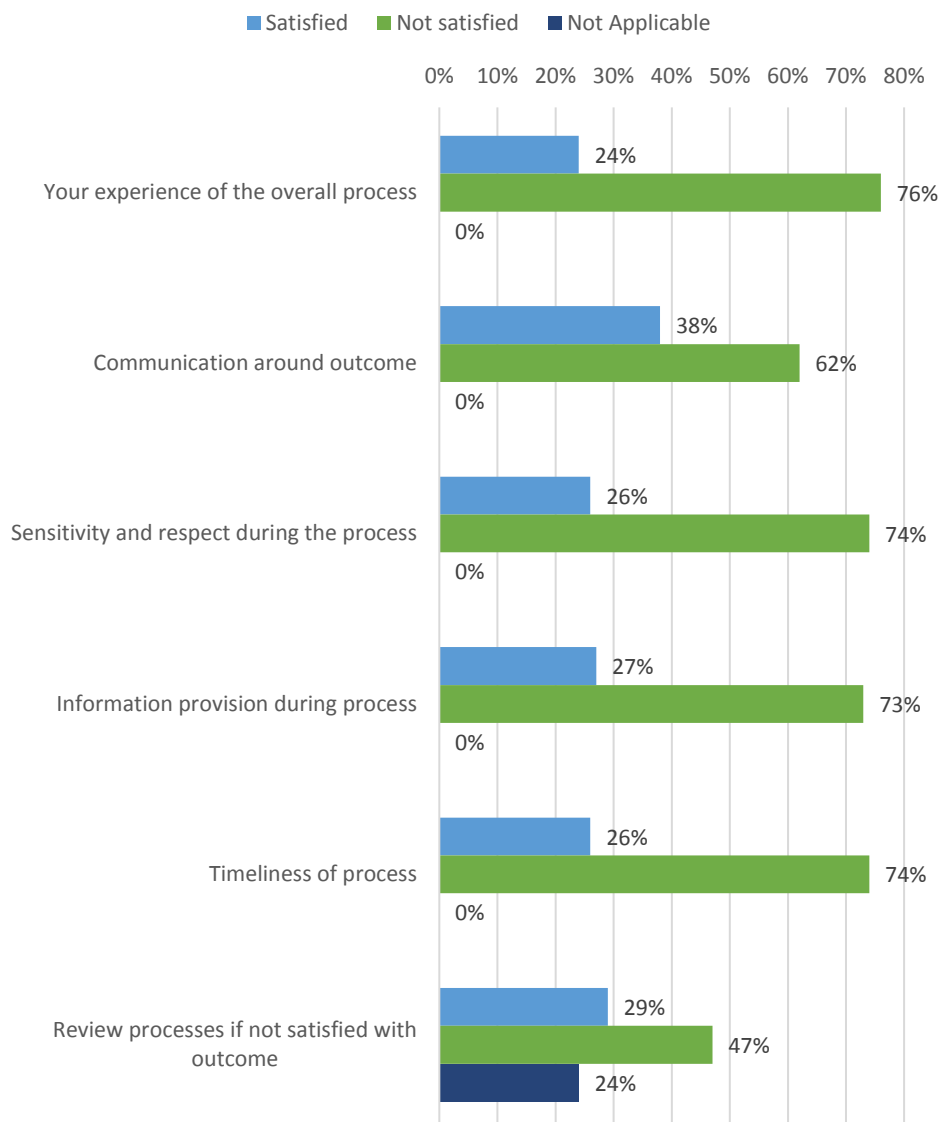
50% of carers reported feeling only satisfied sometimes or never **with their ability to engage in Case Plan meetings for children in their care**. Given statements within the Statement of Commitment that recognise a critical role in carers participating in decisions affecting children in their care, these figures should reflect a much higher percentage.

Standard of Care/Harm Report Process

Carers were asked if they had experienced a Standard of Care or Harm Report, and of those surveyed 30% (36) had been through the process; they further offered the following information relating to that experience.

Overall, of the carers from South West who responded that they had been through the SOC/Harm Report process, they were not satisfied with their experience.

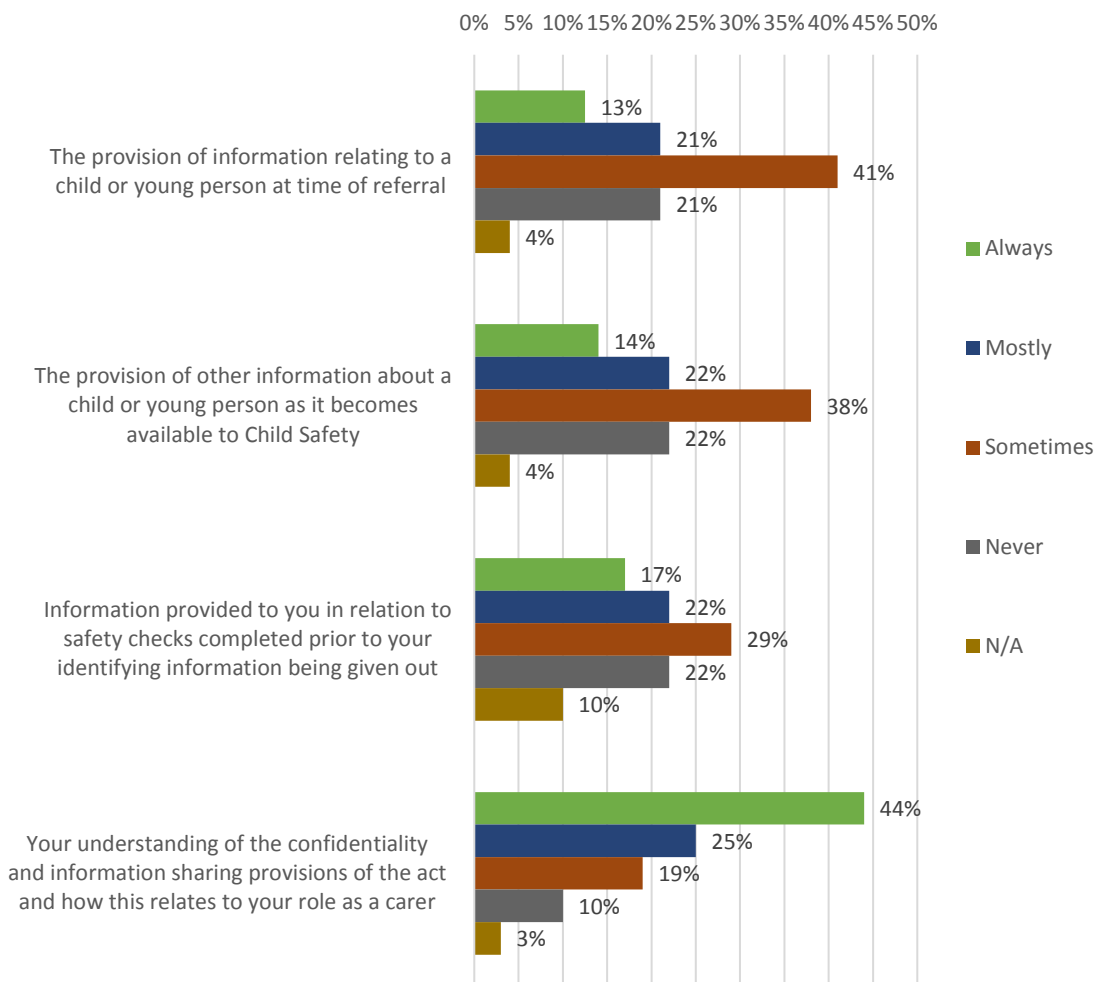
From your experience, please respond to the following:



Confidentiality

Carers were asked to provide their responses to a range of questions around confidentiality.

In respect to confidentiality, information sharing and your role as a carer, how satisfied are you with the following:

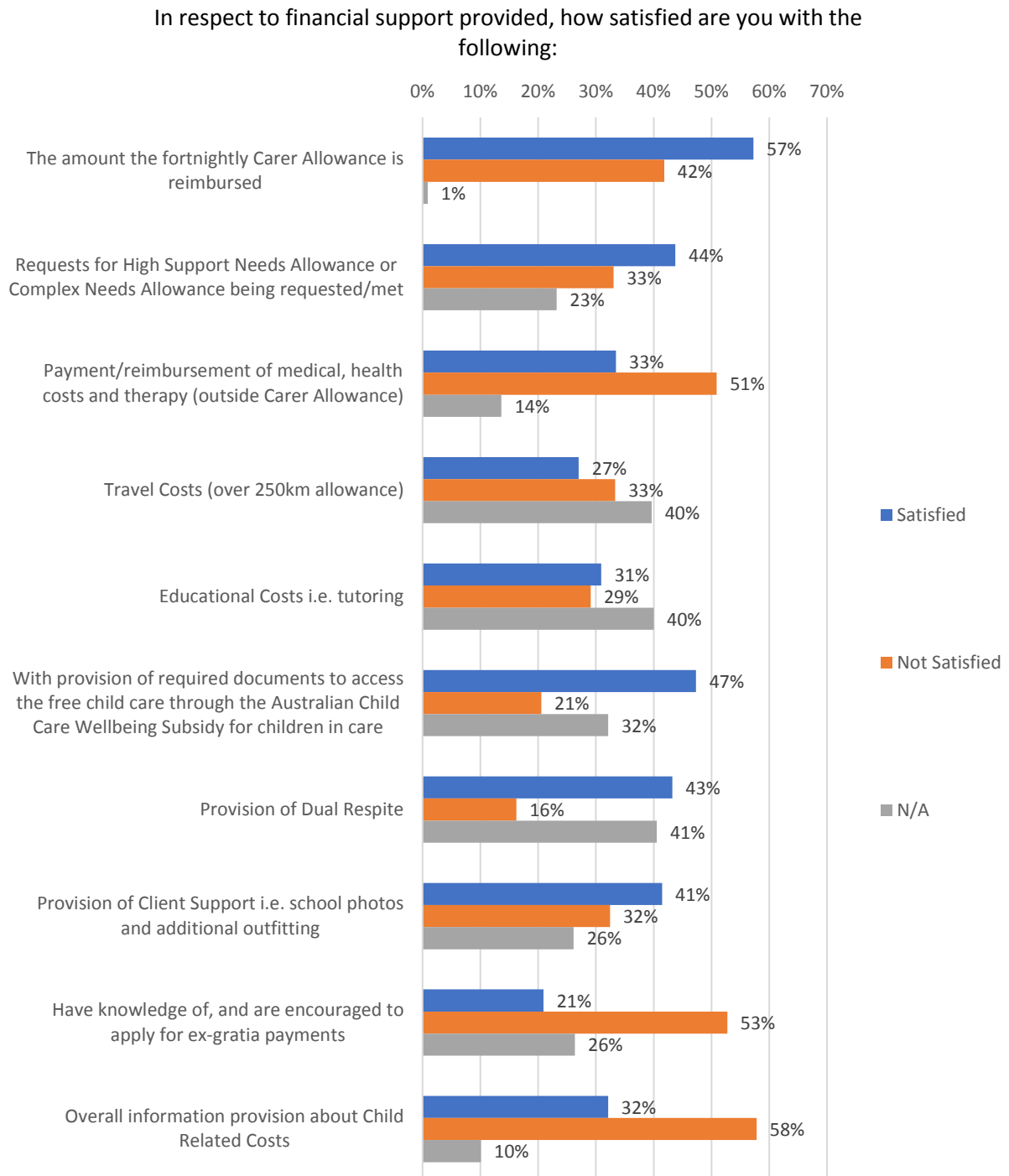


Whilst it is recognised Child Safety very rarely have all the information at time of placement, over time Child Safety gathers information which is vital to pass on to carers as this allows the carers to understand a child’s trauma better and provide appropriate care. Unfortunately 60% of carers reported that they feel **information provision about a child as it becomes available** is only shared with them sometimes or never.

51% of carers reported their satisfaction level at sometimes or never with **information provided in relation to safety checks prior to any identifying information being given out**. 69% shared that they were always or mostly satisfied with their understanding of the **confidentiality provisions of the act and how it related to their role as a carer**.

Financial

Carers were asked to report on their satisfaction level in relation to financial support, please see below graphs for detailed responses.



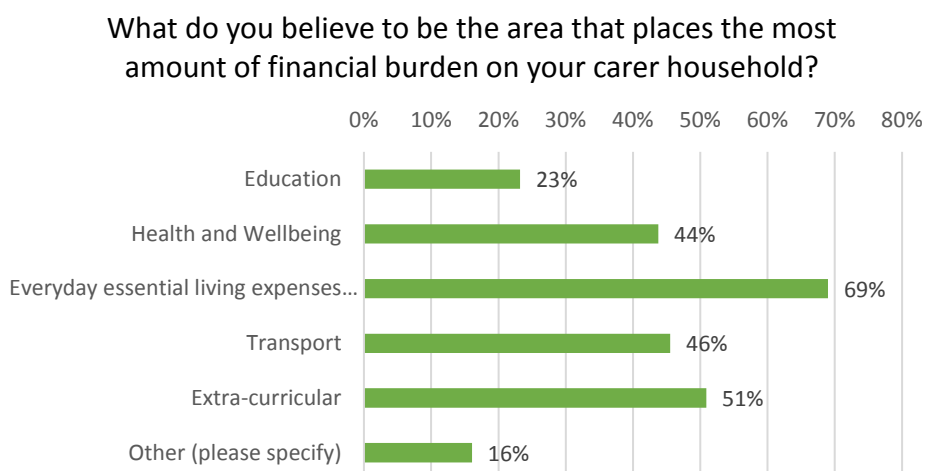
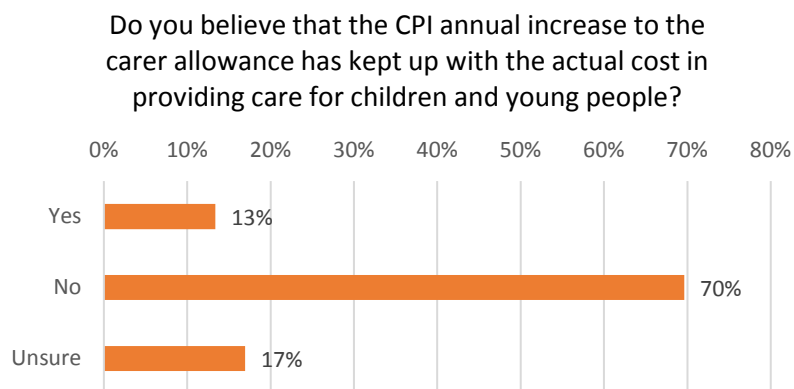
In summary, the dissatisfaction at the **amount of the fortnightly foster carer allowance** has remained static. In previous surveys it has been reported as high as 80% satisfaction, however in this 2022 survey it appears to be continuing its downward trend to a current level of 57% of carers who responded to this question feeling satisfied. This of course could be attributed to many factors, including the cost of

living not being compatible with the CPI index, particularly around household expenses of electricity, water, food and other essentials as outlined in the Executive Summary. Not least COVID-19 and current economic challenges that continued to place stress on many household budgets, foster and kinship carers included.

Of those carers who felt that the question relating to **requests for HSNA and CSNA** was applicable, 33% reported feeling not satisfied with their requests being met.

It is noted that the **provision of required documentation to access the free childcare subsidy for children in care only** had a 47% satisfaction rate with 21% not satisfied (25% in 2020) and 32% noting the questions didn't apply to them. QFKC collaborated with Child Safety in the development of a fact sheet that is now available to all care team members which clearly outlines roles and responsibilities of all key stakeholders in the application of the Australian Child Care Risk Subsidy. It is important that the existence and use of this resource is promoted through Child Safety and Foster and Kinship Care Services to ensure carers are not left with child care debt against their names.

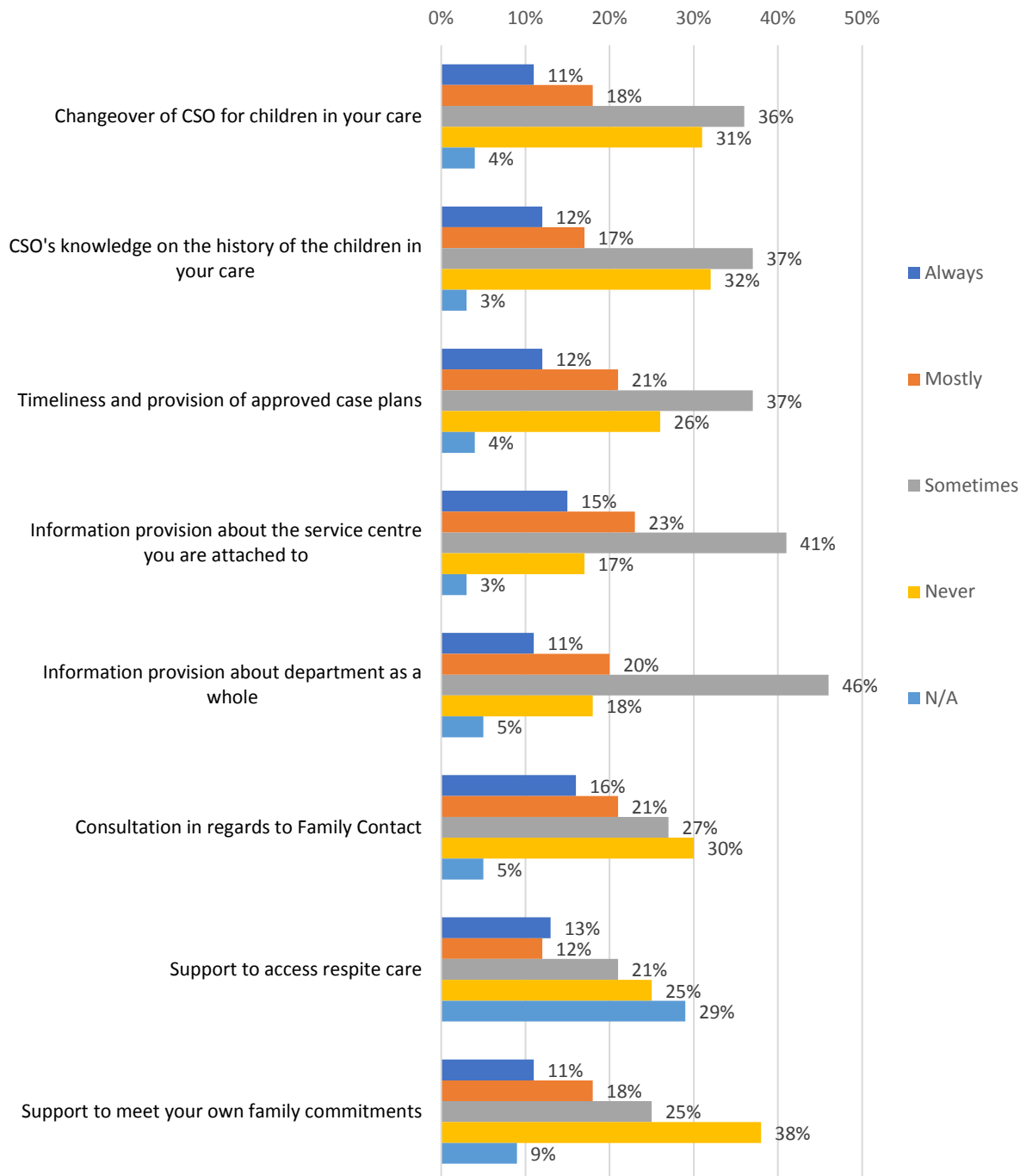
Finally, 58% of carers reported feeling not satisfied with the **overall information provision relating to Child Related Costs**.



Local Practice in CSSC

Carers were asked a range of questions around their satisfaction level across a few pertinent areas, this is their response.

How satisfied are you with local practice of departmental staff dealing with...



It is noted the dissatisfaction rate from carers remains high around **changeover of CSO for children in their care**. In this current survey there were 67% of carers completing the survey who reported feeling sometimes or never satisfied whilst this was reported at 62% during the 2020 Carer Survey.

69% of carers were either sometimes or never satisfied with the **CSOs knowledge on the history of the children in their care** (65% 2020). 63% of carers reported feeling either sometimes or never satisfied with the **timeliness and provision of approved Case Plans** (63% 2020).

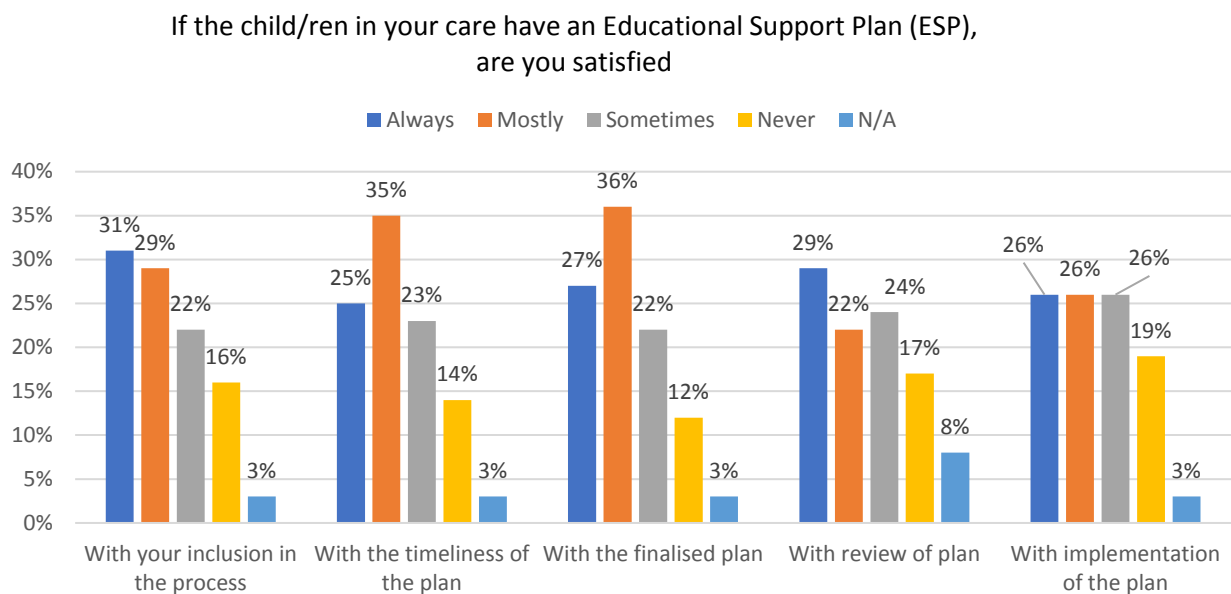
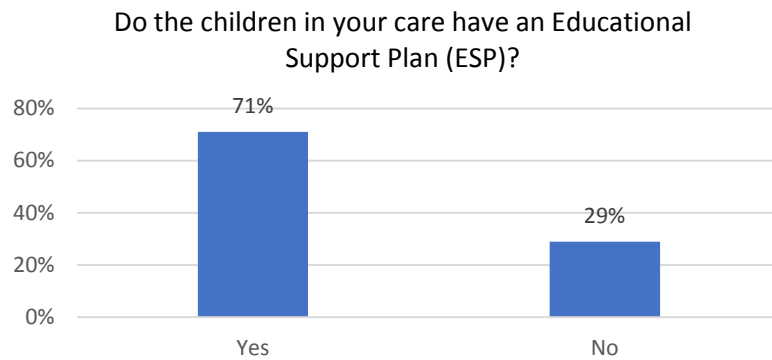
57% of carers reported feeling only sometimes or never satisfied in **being consulted in regards to family contact** (61% 2020). These figure continue to be disappointing and do not align with Child Safety's commitments to carers under the Statement of Commitment which state *“support and facilitate the participation of foster and kinship carers in the decisions affecting the life of the child or young person in their care and have the carer's knowledge and opinions inform decision-making processes to ensure the best interests of the child”* Carers often have critical observations and information to input into decision making. Consultation does not mean that carers make the decision, it means that Child Safety spend time assessing critical information the carer holds in their experience of providing 24/7 care to the child.

Carers also expressed overwhelmingly that they are only sometimes or never **kept up to date about changes in either their CSSC or region/departmental structure**. Whilst the sector has introduced the Carer Connect App, and carers are gradually using this tool as a means of being updated, it must be acknowledged that all carers are individuals and should be communicated with in a way that meets their needs. For some this will continue to be via email, phone and even face to face. The Carer Connect app is mentioned earlier in this report, and pleasingly 71% of carers who completed this survey were aware of the app, however only 45% were currently using it.

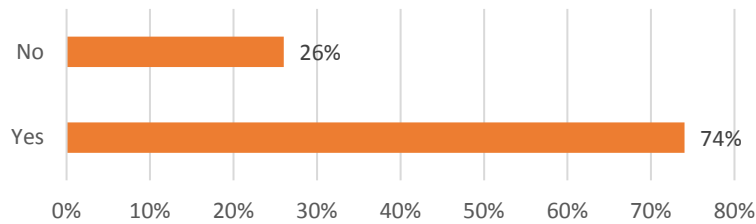
Education Support Plans

Carers were asked if they had a current ESP plan in place for the child/ren in their care, and 71% reported they did have a plan (59% in the 2020 Carer Survey).

Carers were then asked a range of questions relating to the ESP process and their satisfaction is shown below.



Do you feel that children in your care have received sufficient support to attend school (including early childhood education)?

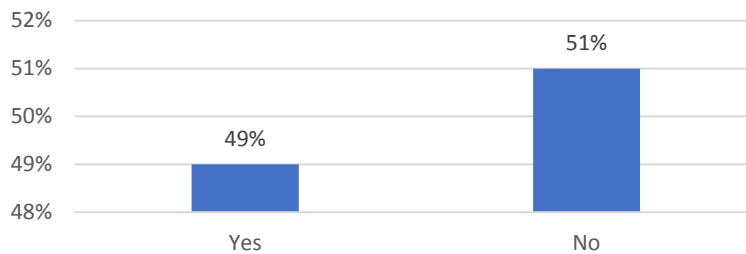


It would seem from the above data that most carers have reported they are either always or mostly satisfied with the processes surrounding ESP plans.

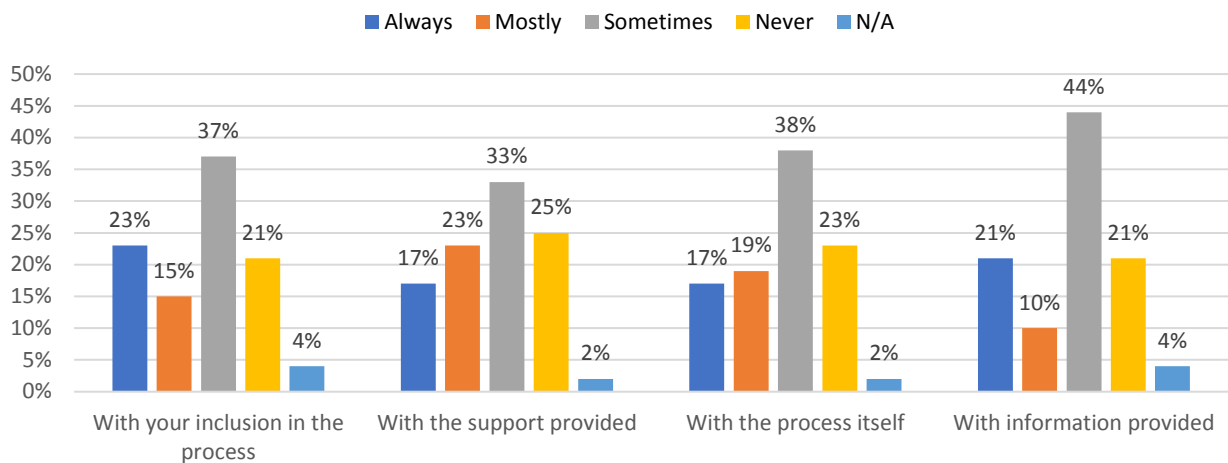
Child Health Passports

Carers were asked if the child/ren in their care had a current Child Health Passport, and 49% reported having one. A range of other questions were then asked relating to the processes of Child Health Passports and how satisfied they were, carers reported as follows:

Does the child/ren in your care have a Child Health Passport (CHP)?

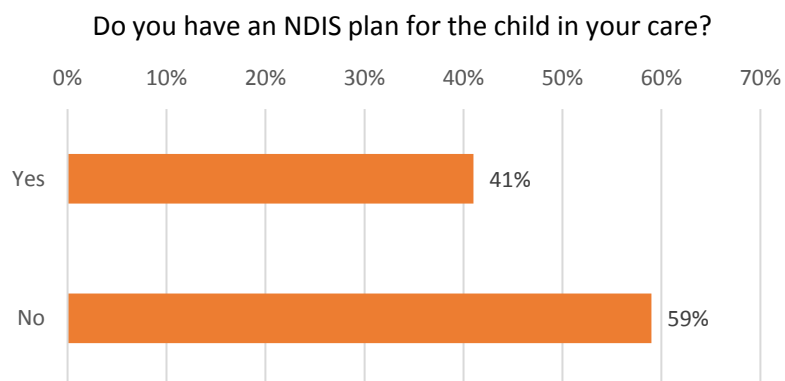
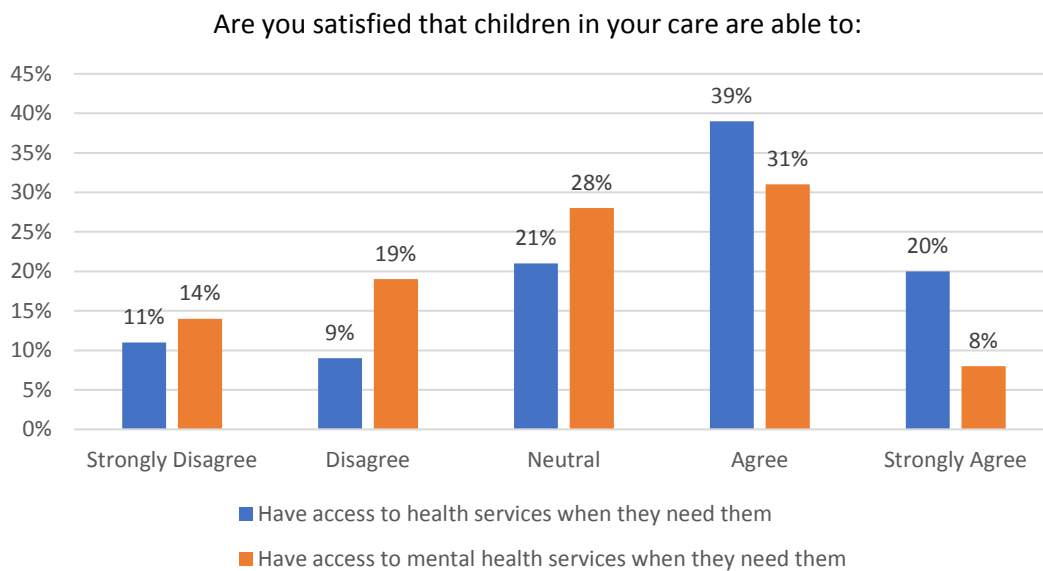
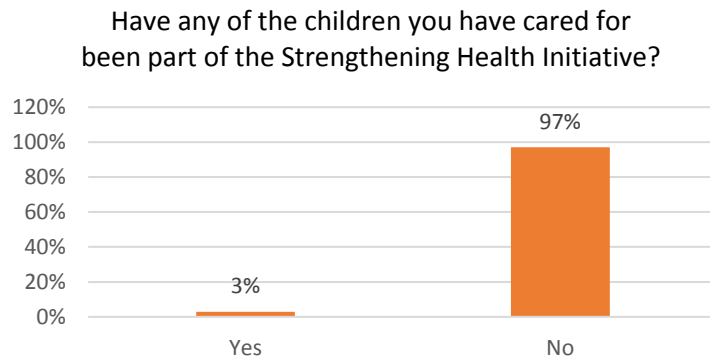


If the child/ren in your care have a Child Health Passport (CHP) are you satisfied?

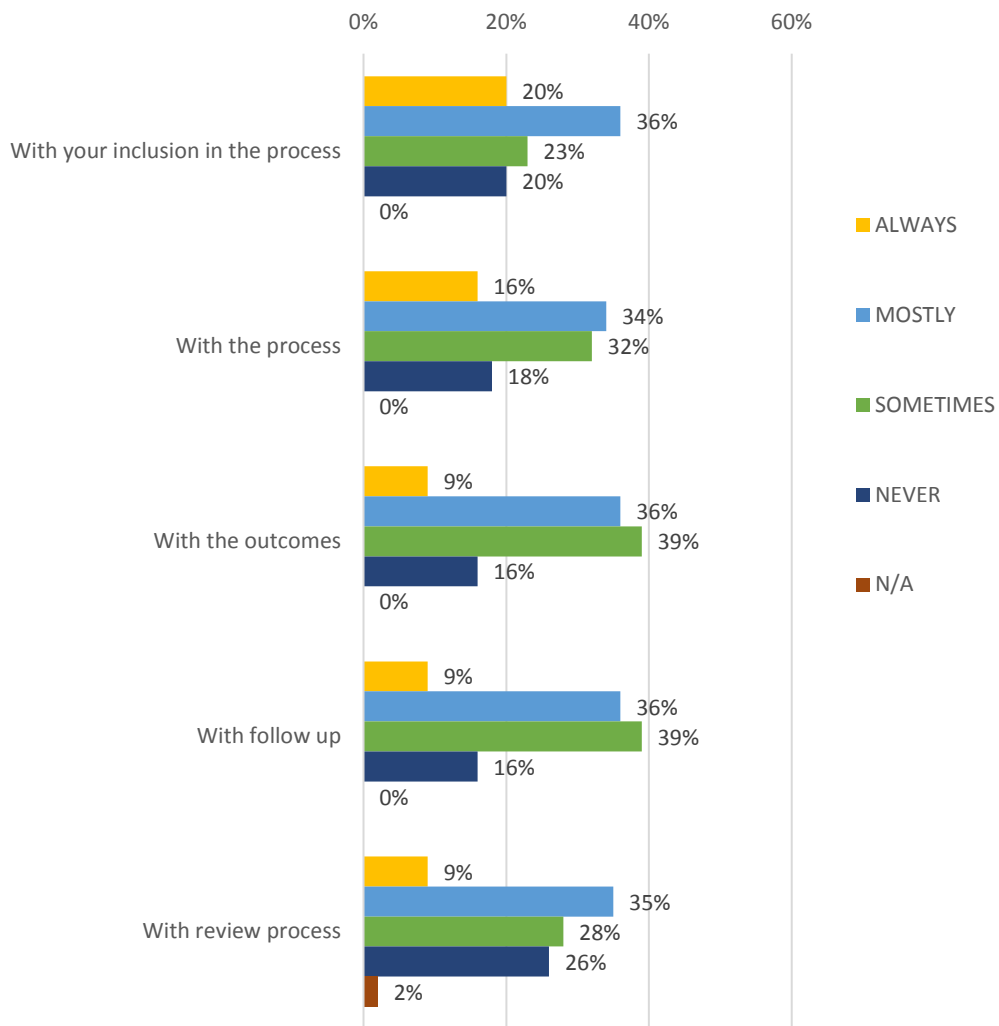


Strengthening Health Initiative

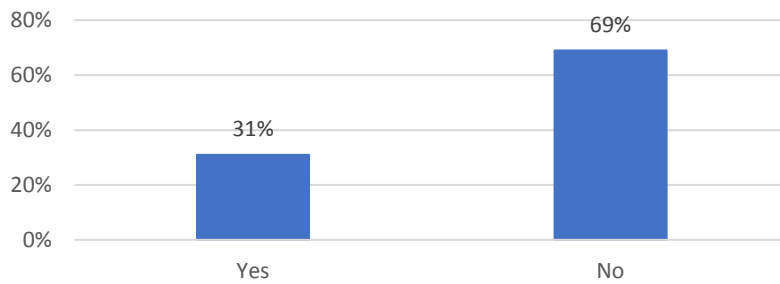
Carers were asked a range of questions in this category, and reported as follows:



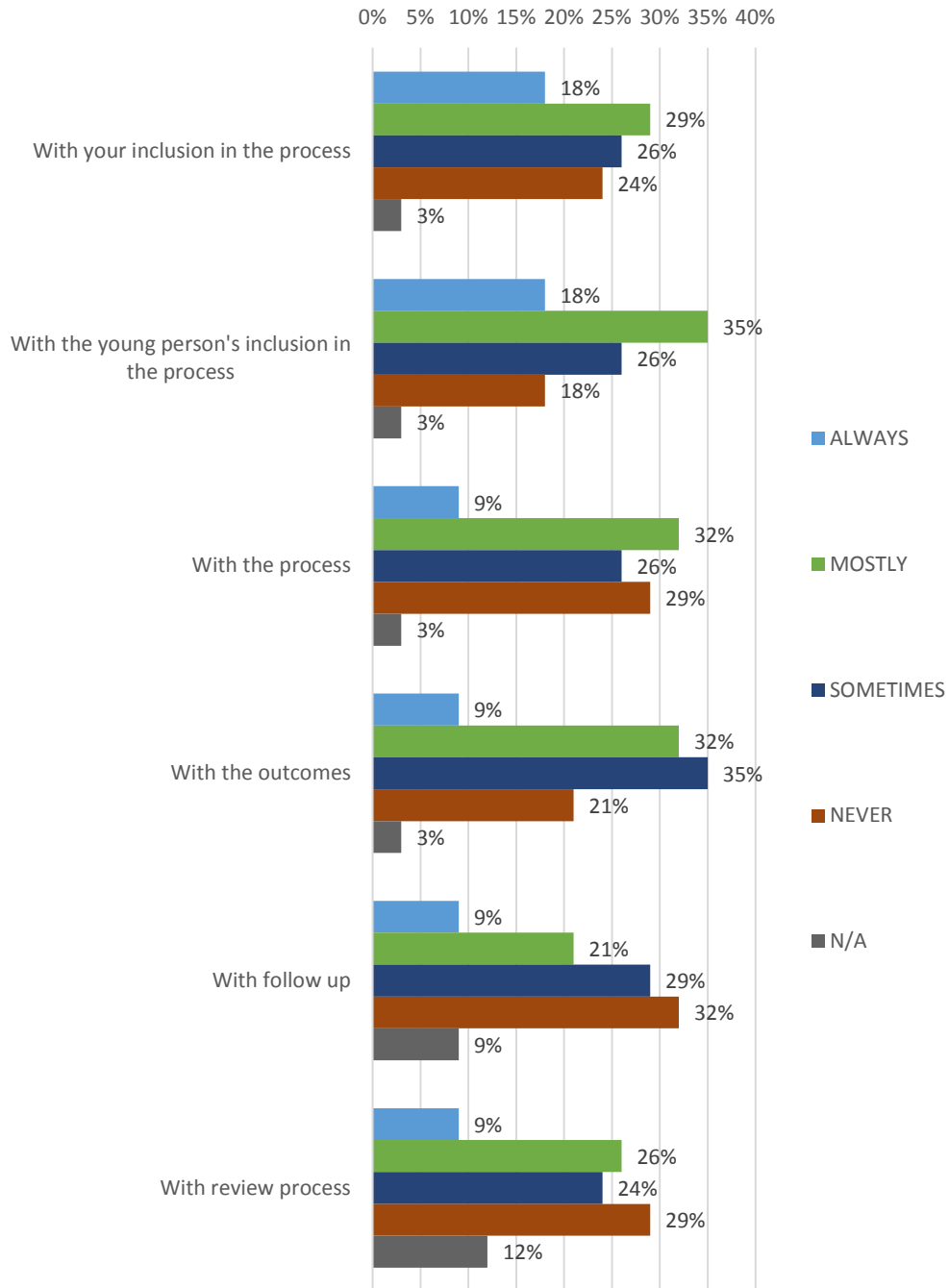
If yes, are you satisfied?



Have you/are you supporting a young person through transition to adulthood?



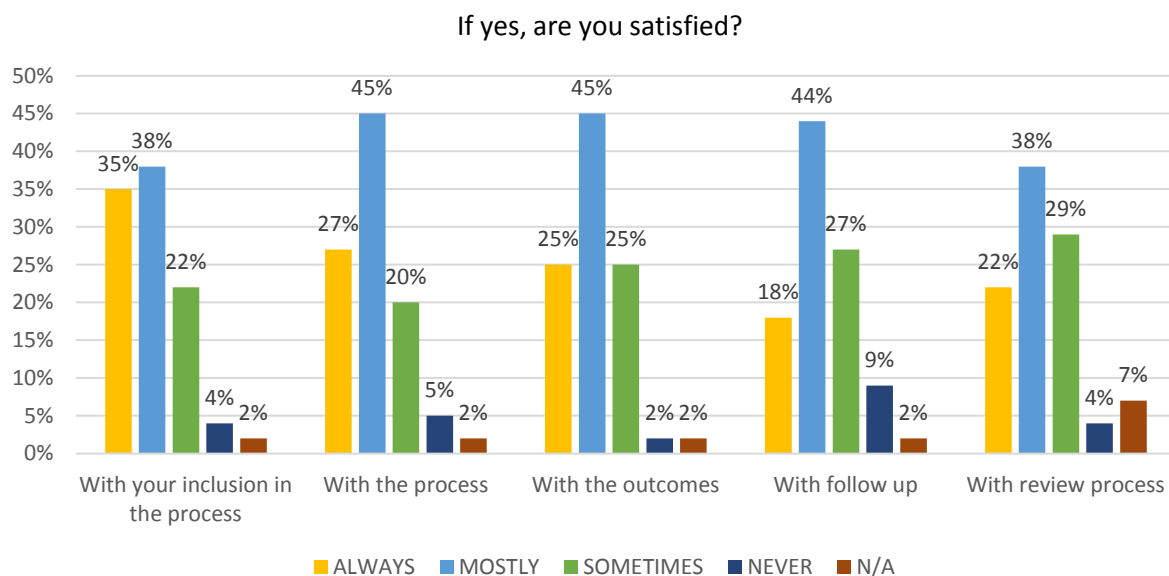
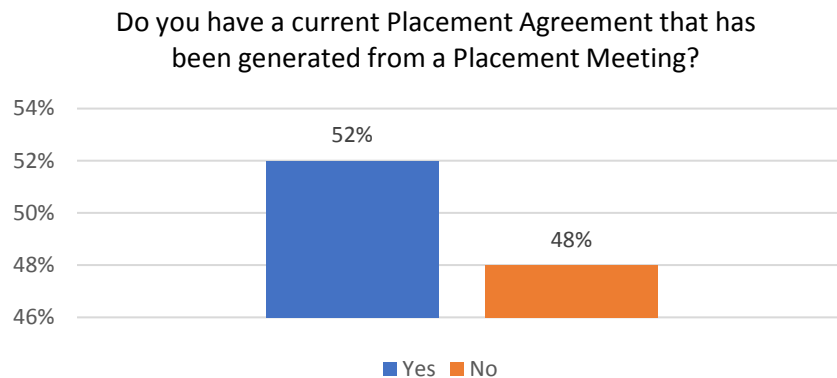
Have you/are you supporting a young person through transition to adulthood? If yes, are you satisfied?



Placement Agreements

Carers were asked if they had a current Placement Agreement generated from a placement meeting, 52% of carers reported they do, (63% said they did in 2020 Carer Survey).

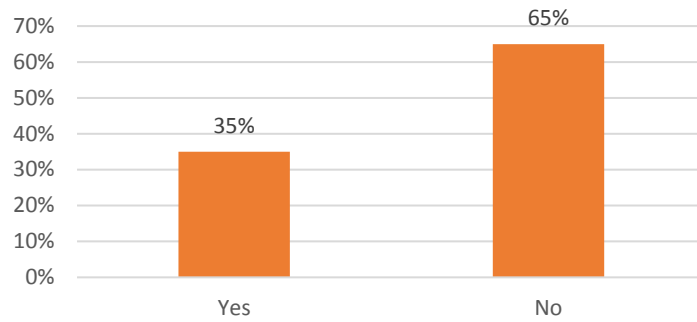
Carers were asked a range of questions relating to their satisfaction around the processes of Placement Agreements with the following responses.



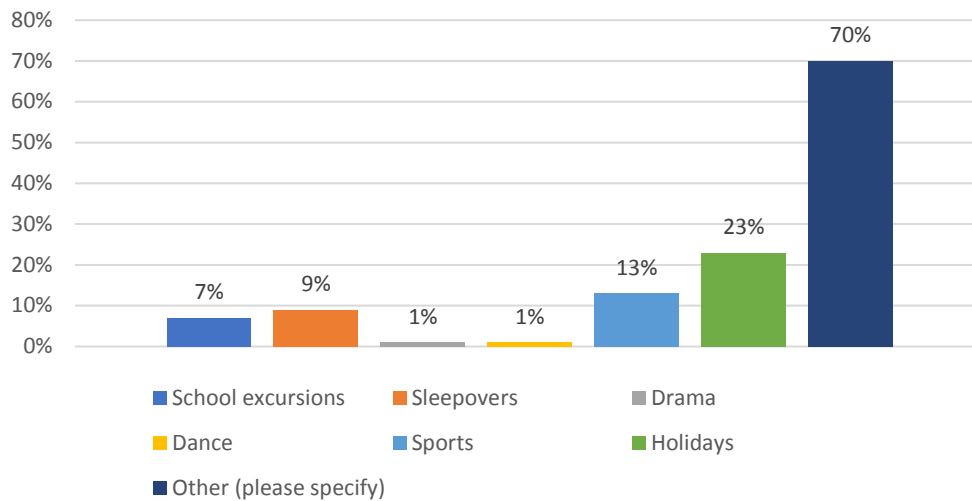
It is positive to see that for those carers who do have a Placement Agreement or are aware of one in place are mostly satisfied with Placement Agreements across the areas of inclusion, process and outcomes although the follow up and review process continues to require attention.

Carers were then asked whether they received a copy of the Placement Agreement meeting minutes, and 65% stated they did not, (81% in 2020).

Did you receive a copy of the minutes from your Placement Meeting?



Have children or young people in your care been unable to join the following due to departmental restrictions:

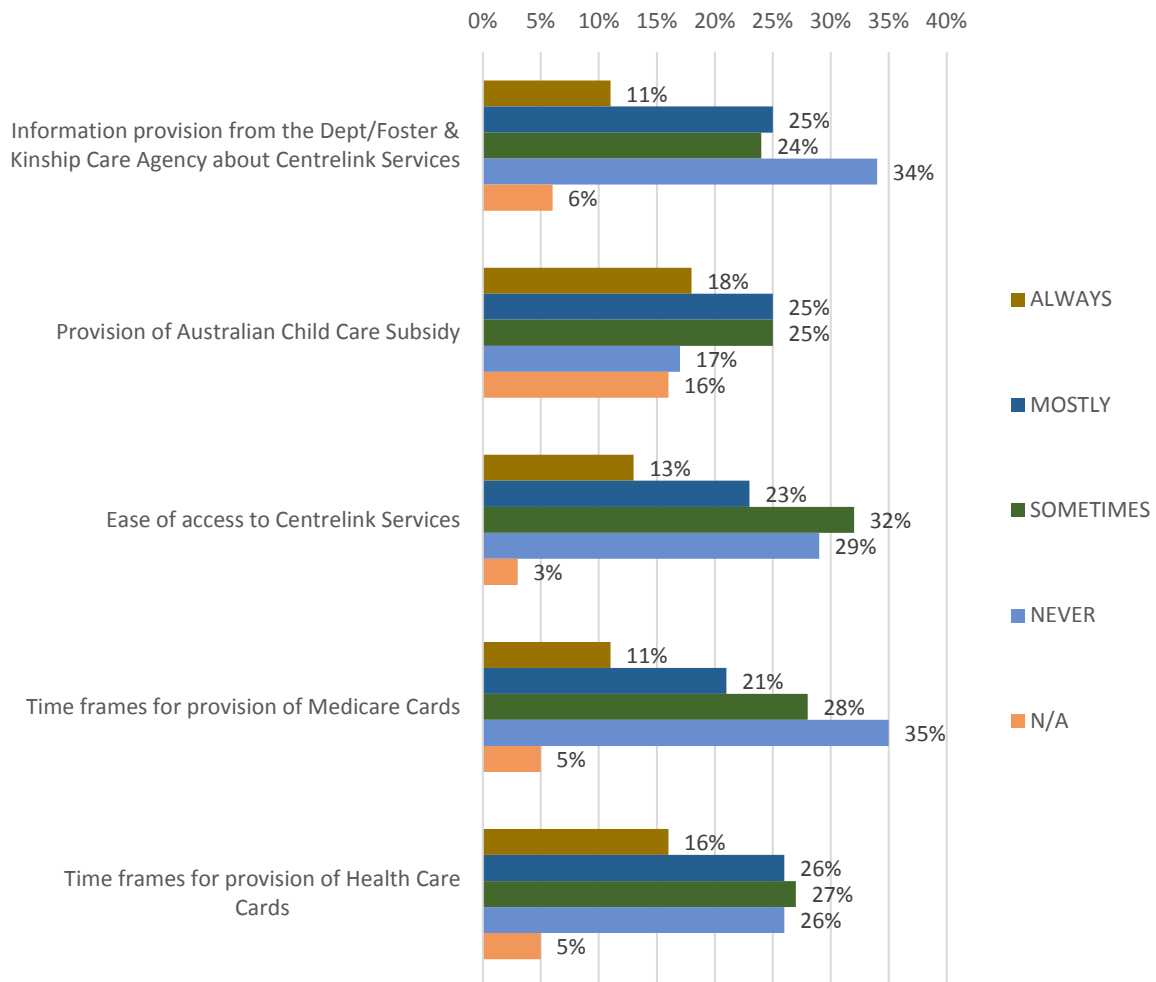


The above question was one requested by the Queensland Family and Child Commission to include into the Carer survey 2022. Carers were also able to provide comment on areas that were not provided as an option.

Centrelink

Carers were asked a range of questions relating to Centrelink and how they were supported to access services through Centrelink from the CSSC, responses were as follows.

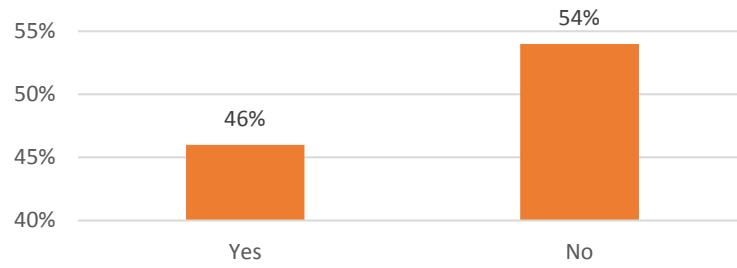
Interaction with Centrelink is often a part of accepting a placement.
How satisfied are you with



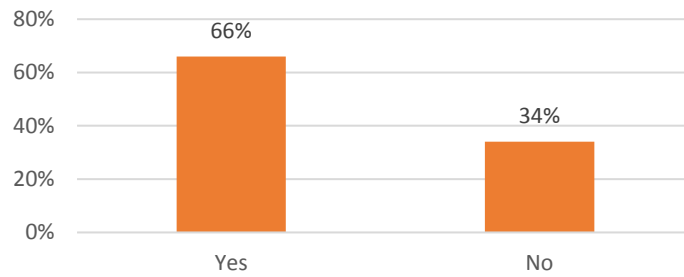
It is evident from the above graph that carers are feeling a level of dissatisfaction in this area with the majority of carers feeling that they don't **receive relevant information or support from their CSSC in relation to how and what they can access from Centrelink.**

Carers were then asked a question relating to **ease of access to Centrelink Services** for the children in their care, and 61% reported feeling only sometimes or never satisfied in this area. 63% of carers reported only sometimes or never feeling satisfied with the **timeframes for provision of Medicare Cards**, and 53% feeling sometimes or never feeling satisfied with the **timeframes for provision of Health Care Cards**. These figures represent at least half of all carers not having access to the critical and necessary documents required for ease of access to essential services.

Are you aware of the Grandparent's and Non-parent phone line run by Services Australia?

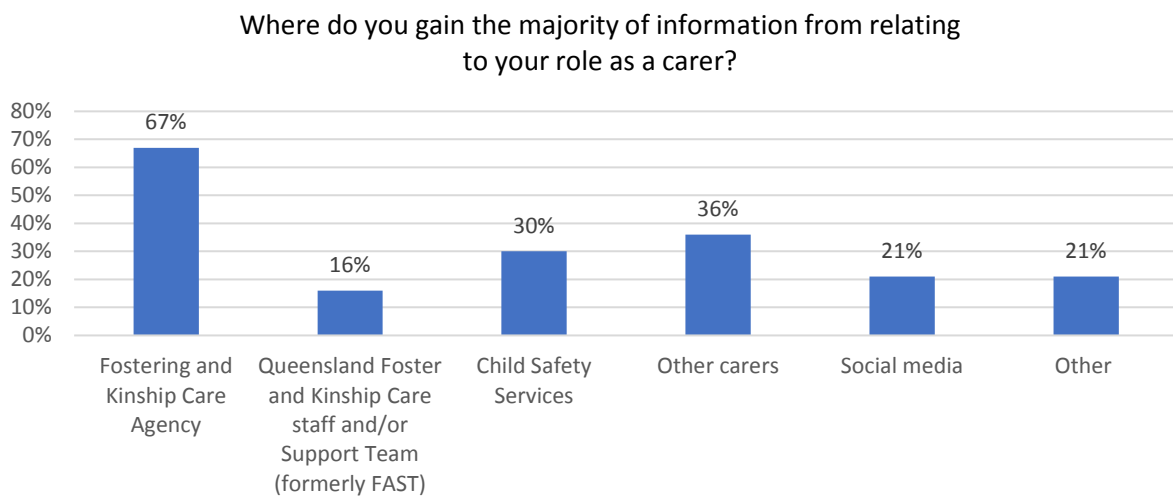
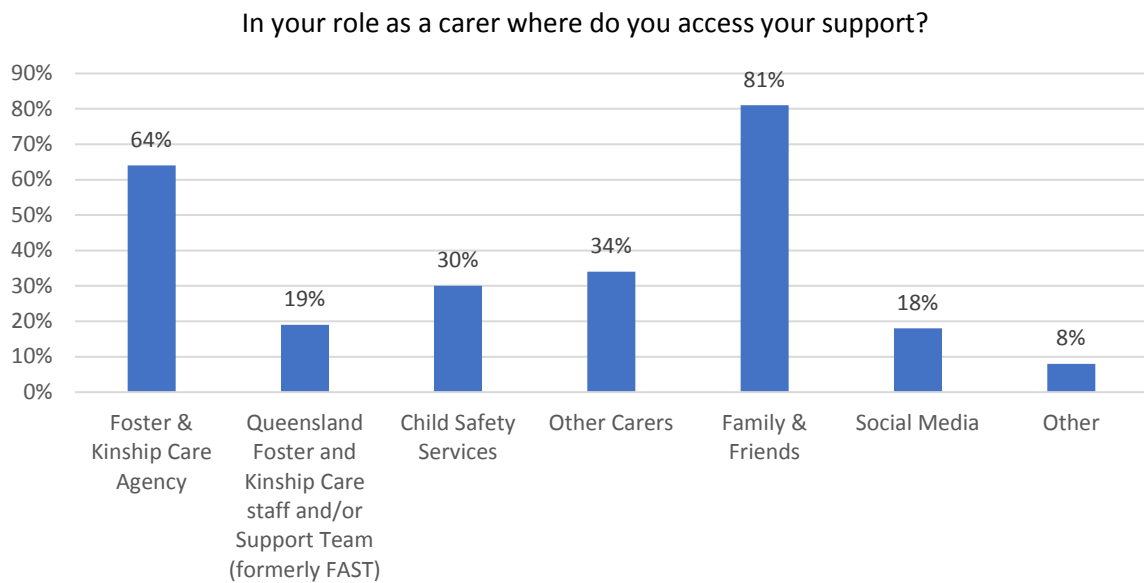


Was the matter that you called for resolved through the use of this resource?



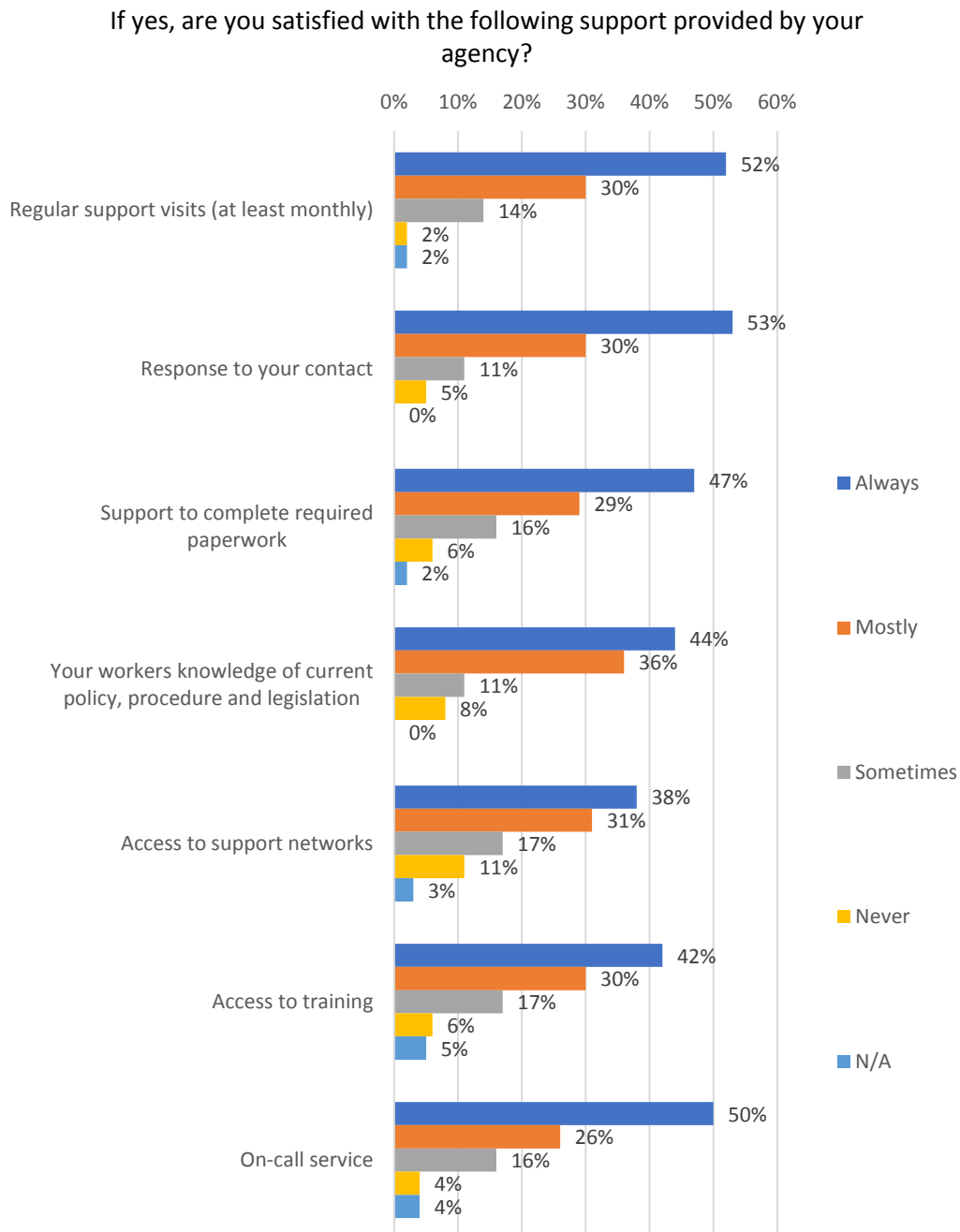
Support

Carers were asked where they accessed the majority of their support from.



Foster and Kinship Care Programs

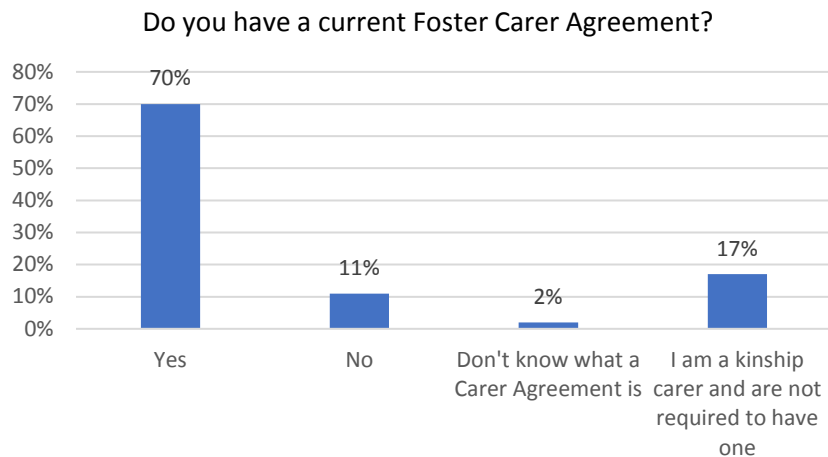
Carers were asked a range of questions relating to the support provided by Fostering and Kinship Care Agencies. Firstly, carers were asked if they were attached to a Fostering and Kinship Care Agency and of the 105 who answered this question 96 answered yes, and 9 were still not attached to an agency.



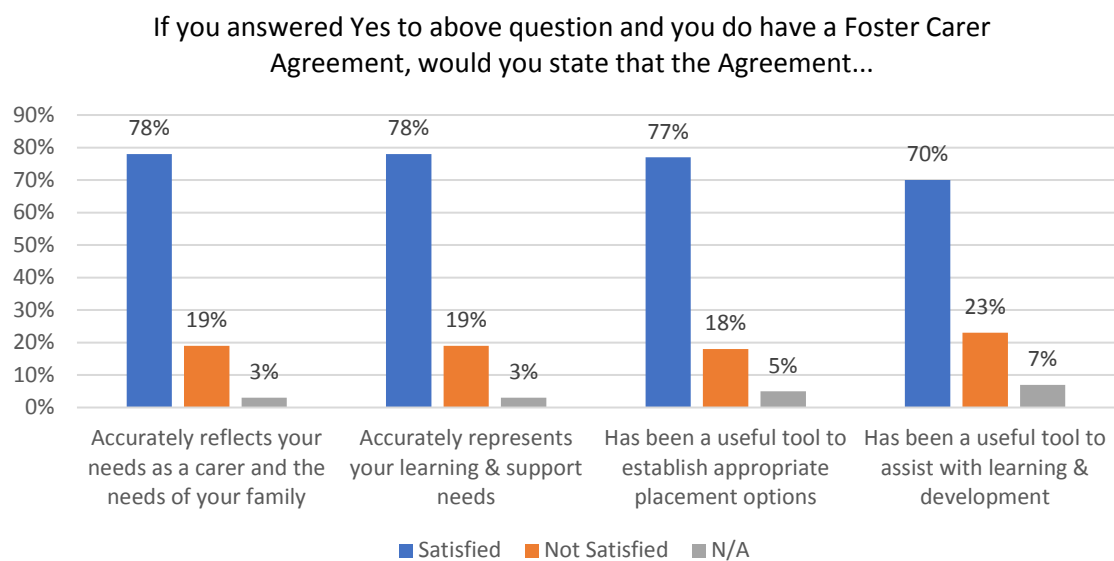
It is positive to see that the majority of carers responding are always or mostly satisfied with the support provided by their agency.

Foster Carer Agreements

Carers were asked if they had a current Foster Carer Agreement, and whilst a high percentage did have one, there was a number of kinship carers who completed the survey and therefore are not required to have one. Kinship carers could also account for some of those who did not know what one was.



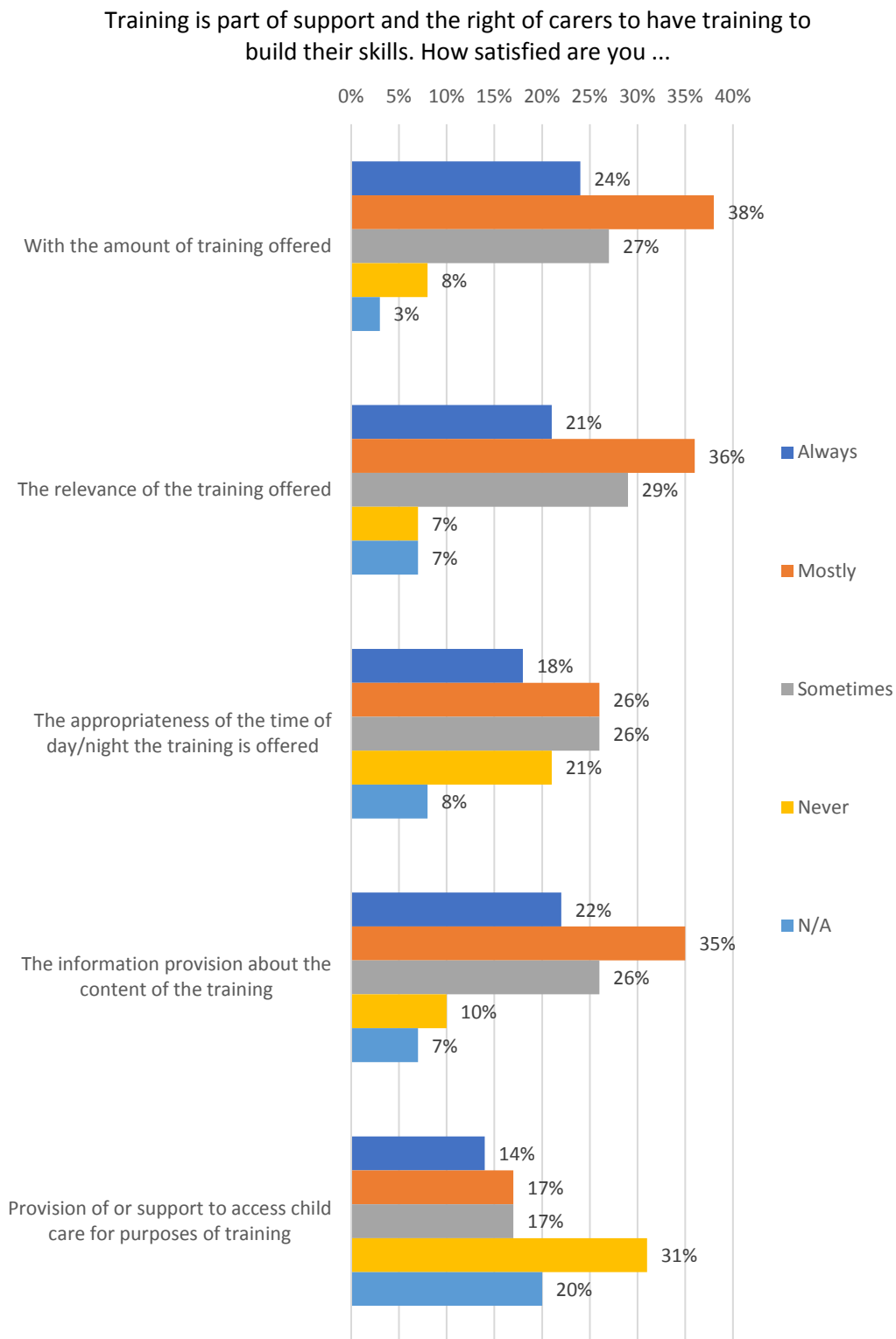
Carers were then asked a range of questions relating to the usefulness of the Foster Carer Agreement and responded as follows:



Carers have reported high levels of satisfaction across the board in relation to the Foster Carer Agreements. Of those who did not report satisfaction.

Training

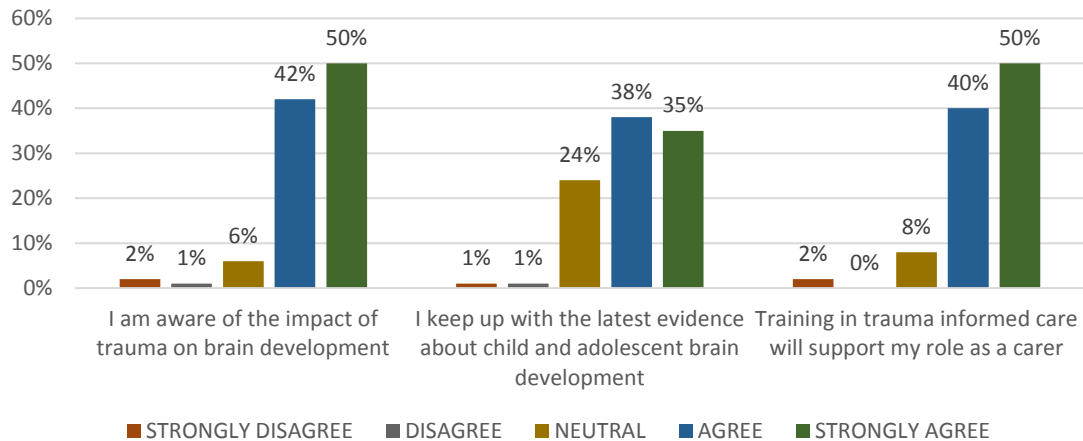
Carers were asked a range of questions relating to their training experiences and responded as follows.



Carers were asked whether they were satisfied with **provision of or support to access childcare during training**. 31% of carers reported feeling always or mostly satisfied in this area.

The Queensland Family and Child Commission requested additional questions were asked of carers during this survey relating to their knowledge, understand and access to trauma informed care as follows:

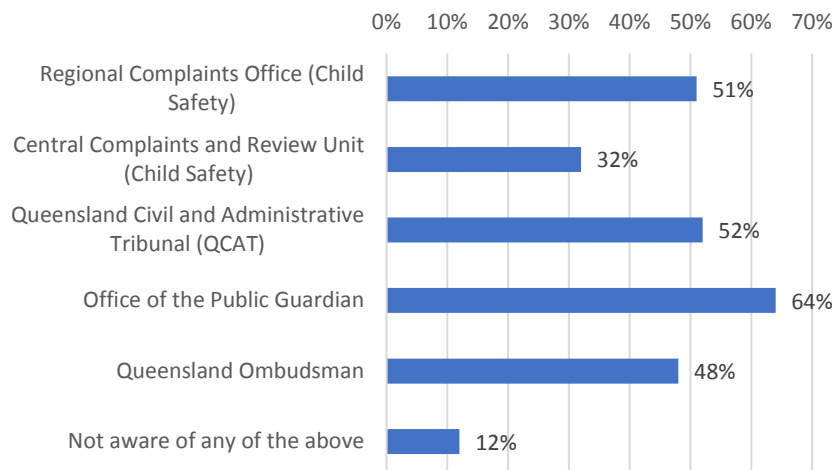
In respect to trauma informed care, please provide responses to the following:



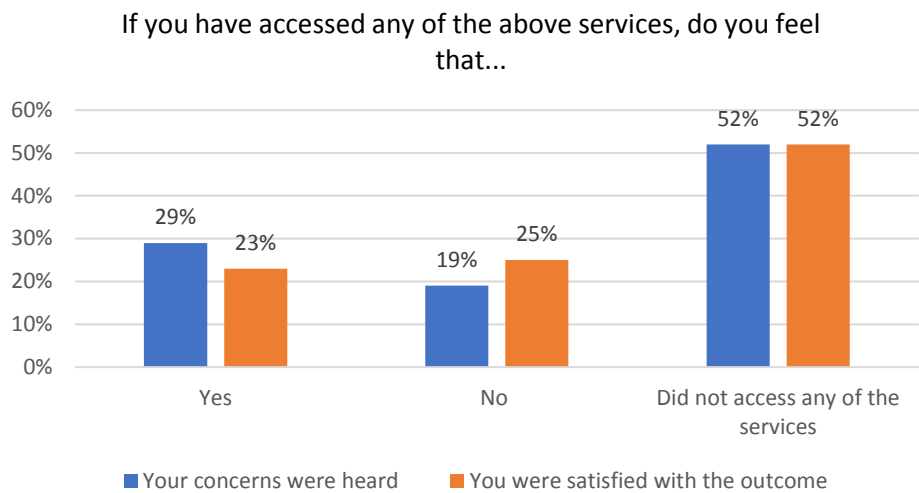
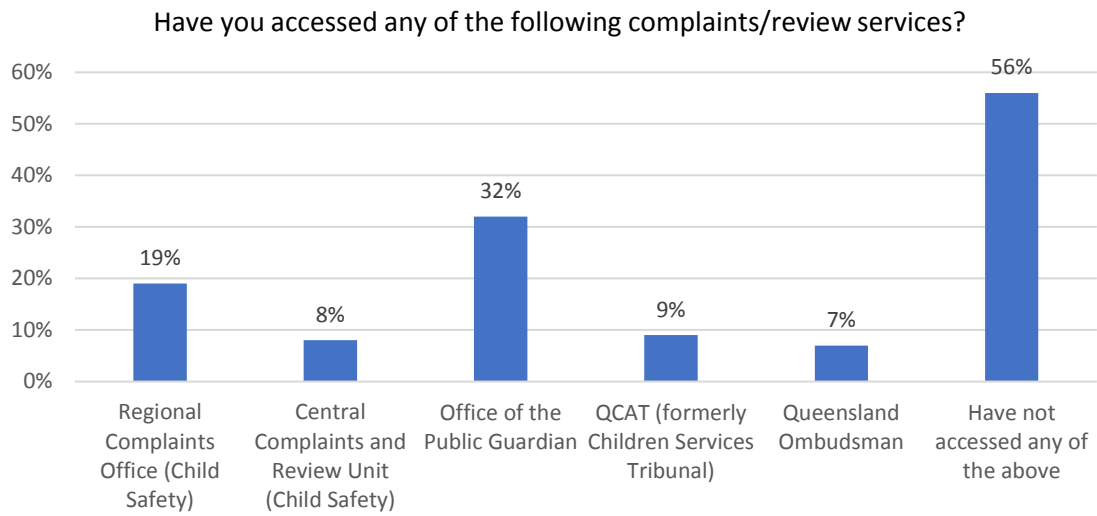
Complaints/Appeals

Carers were asked to identify which complaint/appeal processes they were aware of and which services they had accessed. Of the 141 carers from South West region who completed the survey, 102 carers responded.

Which of the following complaints/review processes are you aware of?

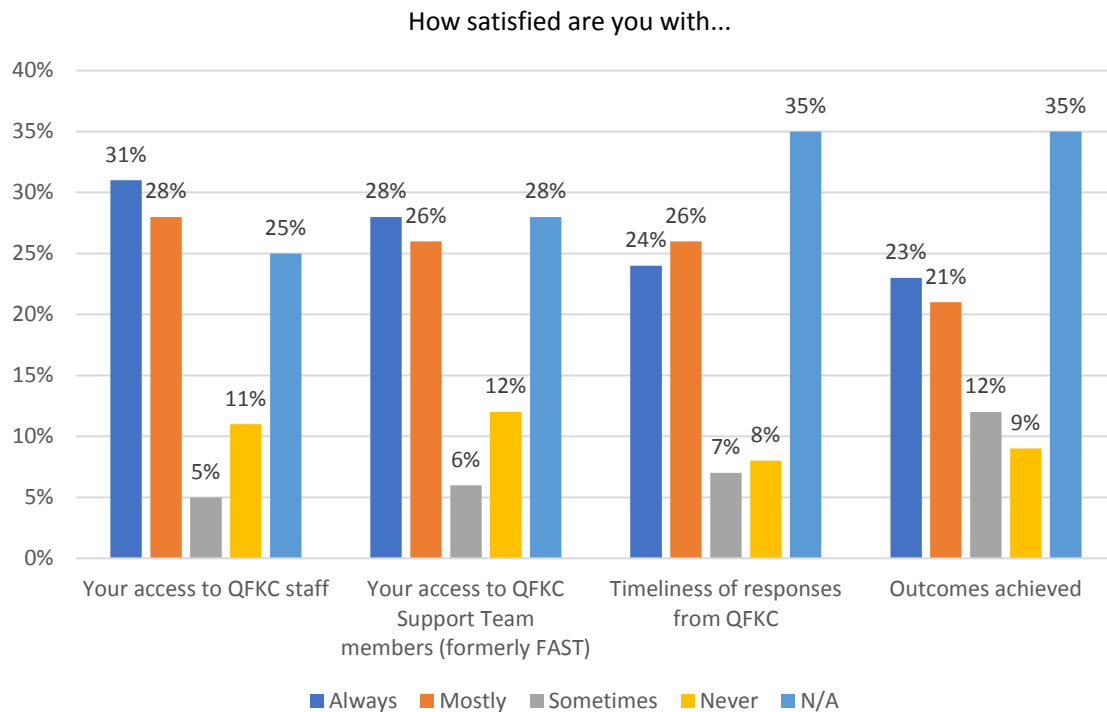
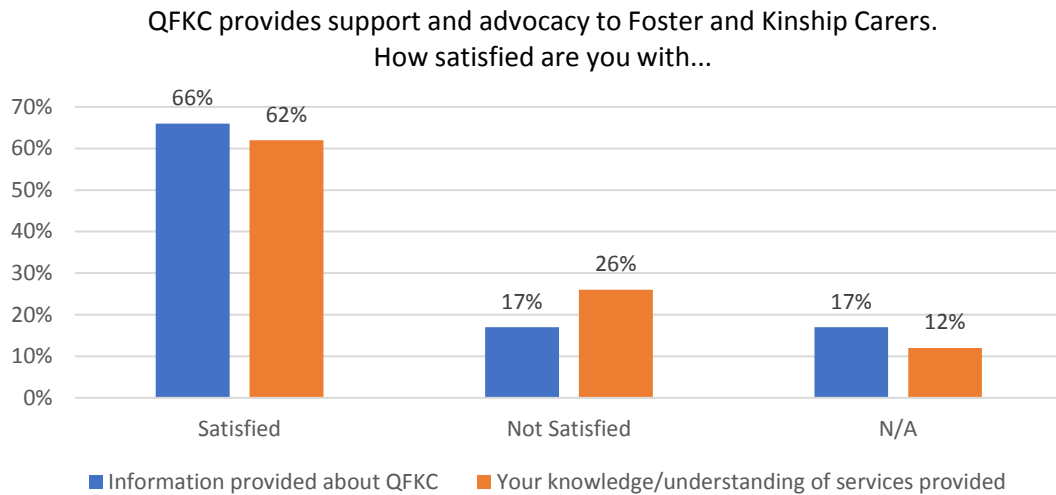


Carers were asked if they felt heard and were satisfied with the outcome regarding their contact with the above services.

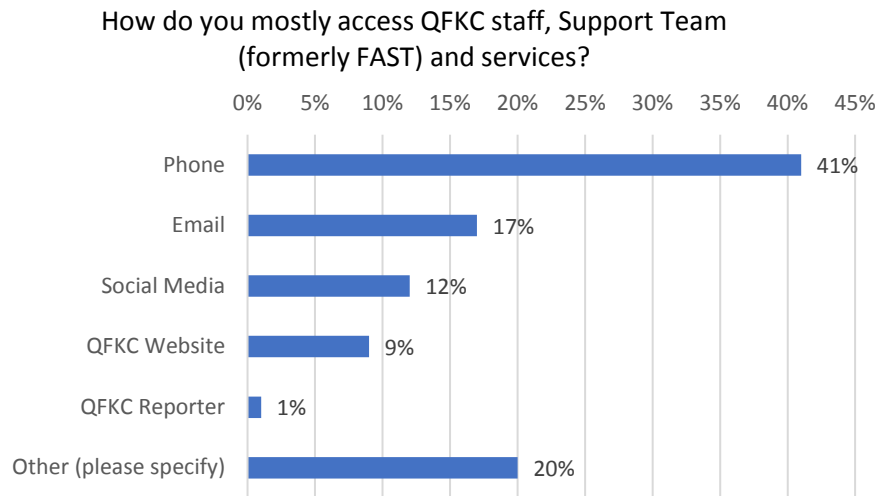


Queensland Foster and Kinship Care

Carers were asked a range of questions relating to Queensland Foster and Kinship Care (QFKC). Firstly, carers were asked if they were satisfied with the provision of information about QFKC, 66% of carers reported satisfaction. In respect to knowledge and understanding of services provided 62% of carers reported feeling satisfied. 17% and 26% of carers were not satisfied in these areas.

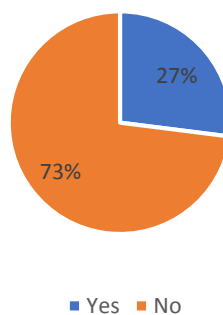


Carers were asked how they mostly access QFKC staff, support team members and other services available through QFKC, carers responded as follows:

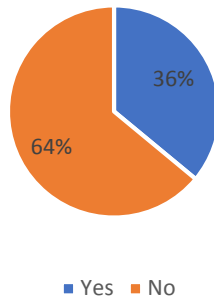


Child Safety – Culture and Practice

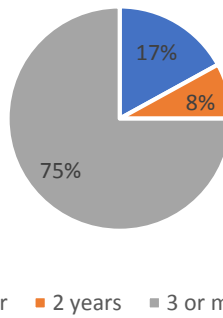
Have you noticed any positive change in practice since 2020?



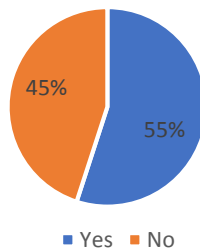
Would you consider culture and practice in Child Safety has improved in the last 2 years?



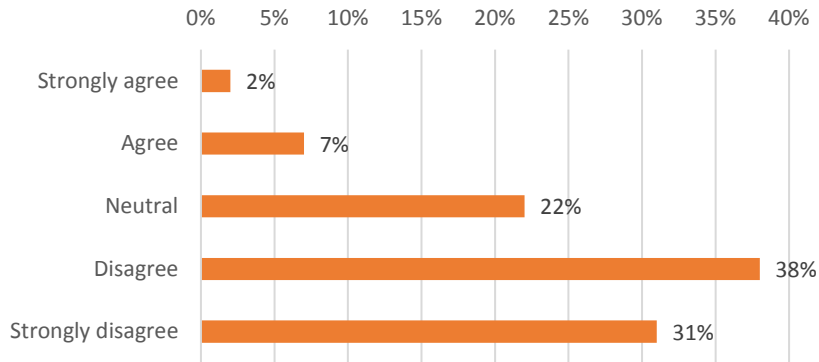
Do you intend to continue caring for?



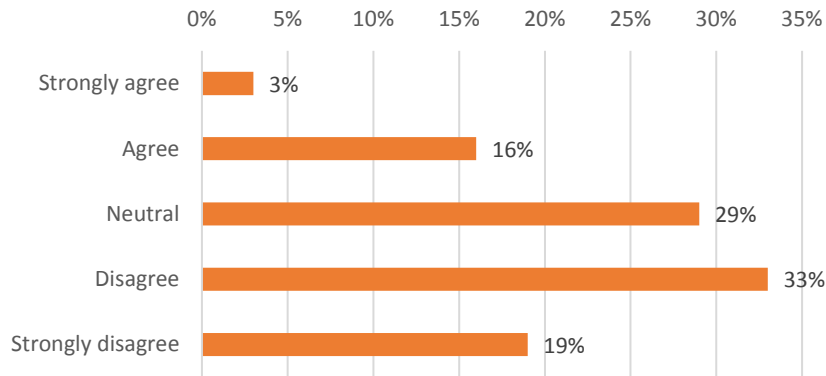
Is there any support/issue that would influence this decision?



Do you feel that the community has confidence in the child protection and family support system?



Do you believe the child protection and family support system meets the needs of children, young people and families?



Looking Forward – carers were asked...

Would you advise a friend to be a carer?

