
North QLD Region

Bowen

Mackay

Mt Isa-Gulf

Townsville North & Hinchinbrook

Townsville South & Burdekin

Townsville West & Charters Waters



North Queensland Region

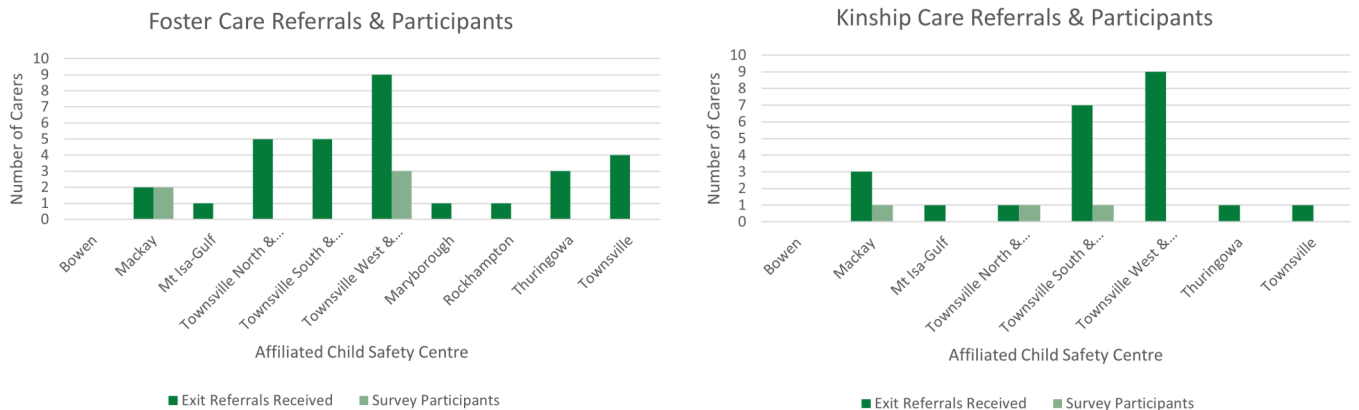
About the Foster and Kinship Carer

Queensland Foster and Kinship Care received 54 exit referral forms within the financial year of 2022-2023 for the North Queensland Region. From this sample, 8 (15%) individuals participated in the Carer Exit Survey - 5 foster carers and 3 kinship carers.

Participation rates differed between the two carer types, as 16% of foster carer referrals received participated in the Carer Exit Survey and 13% of kinship carers participated in this survey. Results show from the graph below;

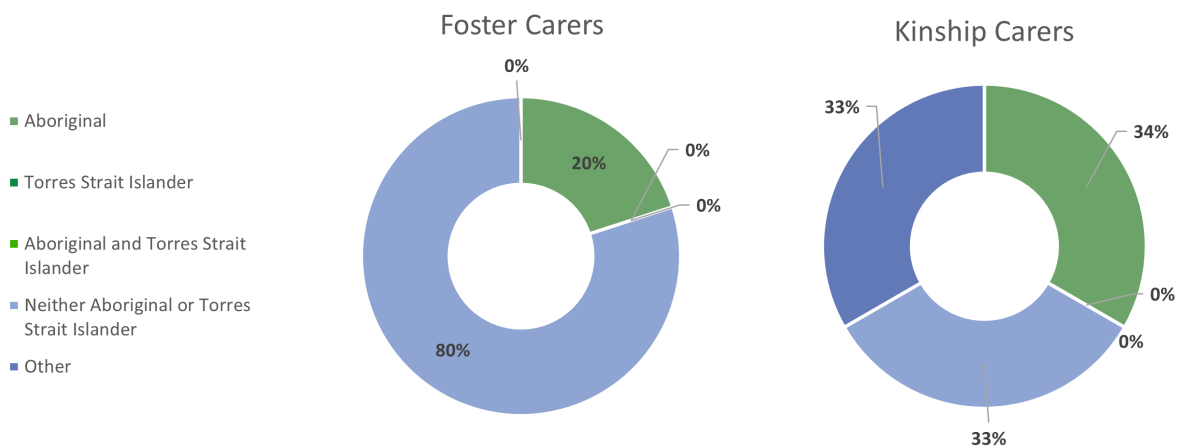
- 100% of foster carers were from Mackay Child Safety Service Centre participated in the survey (2 referrals, 2 participants),
- 33% of foster carers were from Townsville West & Charters Waters Child Safety Service Centre participated in the survey (9 referrals, 3 participants),
- 100% of kinship carers were from Townsville North & Hinchinbrook Child Safety Service Centre participated in the survey (1 referral, 1 participant);
- 33% of kinship carers participants were from Mackay Child Safety Service Centre (3 referrals, 1 participant).

Please note referrals received by agencies provided information of other Child Safety Centres that are located in other regions, however, stated the carer was within the North Queensland Region. There are times carers are situated in one region and affiliated with a Child Safety Centre in a different region—QFKC have noticed this pattern more amongst the kinship care population than foster carers.



Carer Ethnicity

From the 8 participants within the survey, 25% identified as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander and 75% identified as neither and/or other. The below graph provides a breakdown on the ethnicity of the participants and carer status.



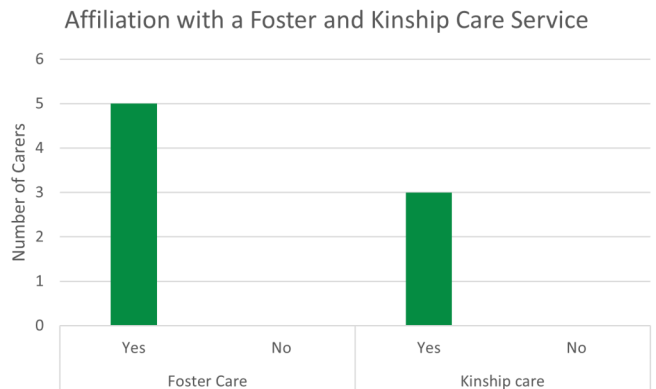
About the Role of a Foster and Kinship Carer

In this section, carers were provided questions to elaborate on their role as a foster/kinship carer, what were their motivations in entering in this role, the duration of being a carer and the amount of children placed in their care during their time.

Foster and Kinship Care Service

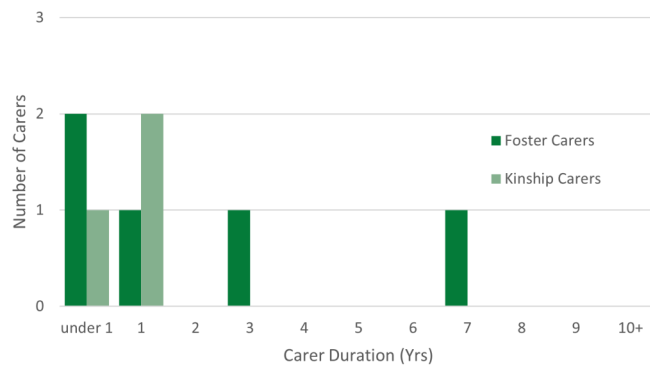
Foster and Kinship Care Services, also known as agencies, provide the day to day support for carers and children in care. Within the North Queensland Region, QFKC is aware of 6 different agency organisations across the region supporting foster and kinship carers.

Participants provided insight to their Foster and Kinship Care Service (agency) affiliation and provided a response—refer to the graph. From survey results, all foster and kinship carers who undertook the survey indicated they affiliated with an agency organisation during their time as a carer.



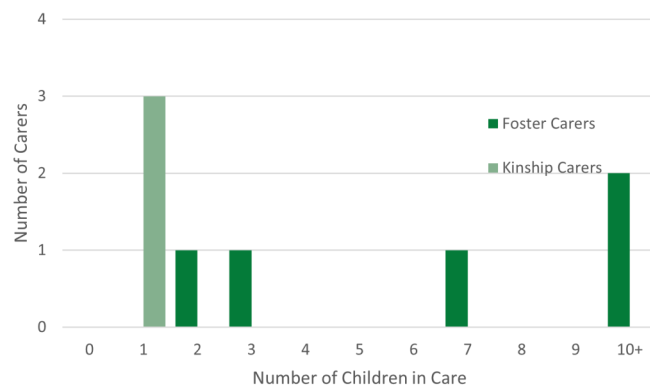
Carer Duration

Foster and kinship carers opted out at various times during their carer role, this may be due to reunification, placement breakdown and many more reasons. From the Carer Exit Survey, majority of foster carers (40%) have left their role under 1 year of caring, followed by another 20% leaving at either the 1, 3 or 7 year mark. With kinship carers, 67% of carers left their role within 1 year of caring. The below graph provides survey results regarding how long the carer was in their role.



Child/ren in Care

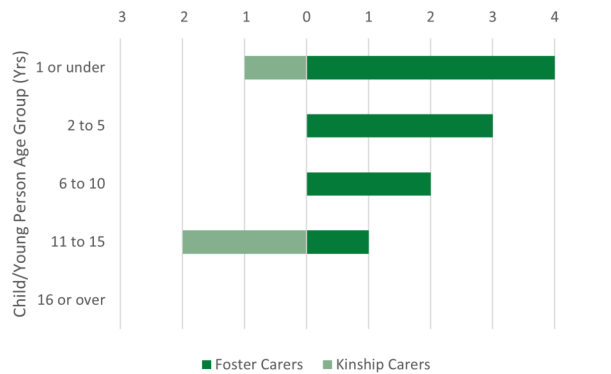
Foster and kinship carers were provided an opportunity to provide an overview on how many children were placed during their caring time. Survey results show 40% of foster carers had over 10 or more children in their care, followed by 20% either having 2,3 or 7 children in their care during their time as a carer. Whereas, kinship carers in the North Queensland Region had all participant carers (100%) having 1 child in their care.



Age Group of Children in Care

Many carers across Queensland care for children for many years and experience various developmental stages of a child's life. Participants within this survey were able to provide indication of the child/ren's ages who they have cared for in their carer role.

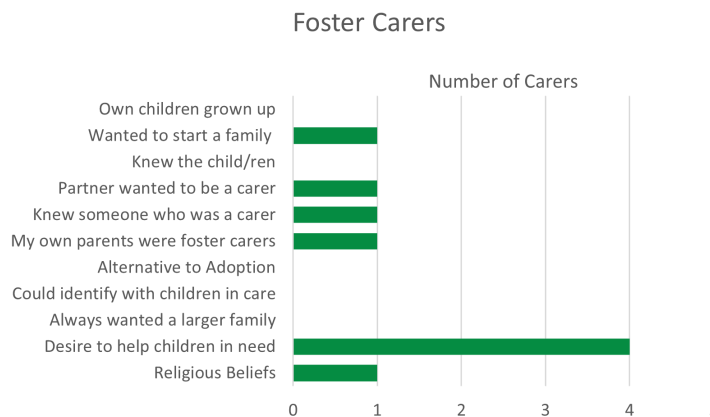
The below graph provides an insight on the age group foster and kinship carers cared for during their time, *please note that many carers have taken care of children for a long period of time and were able to select more than one age group to reflect this.*



In the above graph, foster carer participants in the North Queensland Region stated they provided more care for children between the ages of under 1 to 10 years. However, from the data above kinship carers provided care for a young person ages 11 to 15 years.

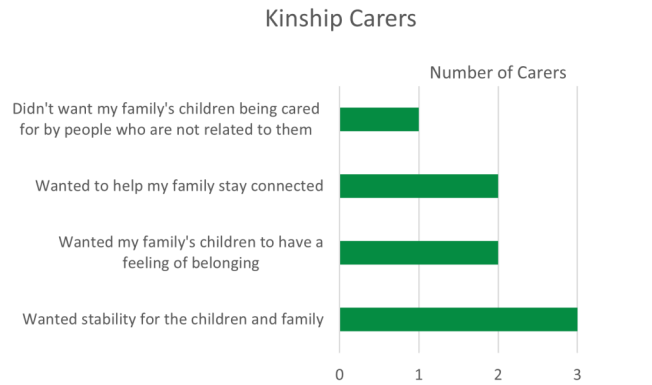
Initial Reason to Care

The Carer Exit Survey asked carers their initial motivations to become a carer. Carers are drawn to being humanitarians by volunteering to provide and create a safe, stable and supportive environments for children in care. In the graphs below, foster and kinship carers were able to select more than one answer as to why they became a carer in the first place.



80% of foster carers in the North Queensland Region had the desire to help children in need. Furthermore other reasons relating to their initial interest to care include;

- 20% wanting to start a family,
- 20% had their partner want to become a carer,
- 20% knew someone who was a carer,
- 20% had parents that were foster carers and;
- 20% was due to religious beliefs.



Kinship care participants provided insight as to what made them initially become a carer:

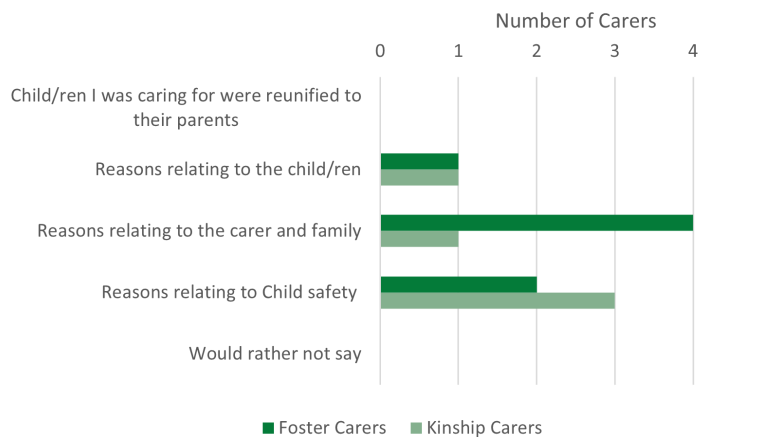
- 100% stated they wanted stability for the children and family,
- 67% wanted their family’s children to have a feeling of belonging or wanted to help the family stay connected and,
- 33% did not want the children to be cared for by someone unrelated to them.

Reasons for Discontinuing

In this section, carers were given the opportunity to expand on the reasons of cessation of their carer status and elaboration on the contributing factors in making this decision.

Main Reason to Discontinue

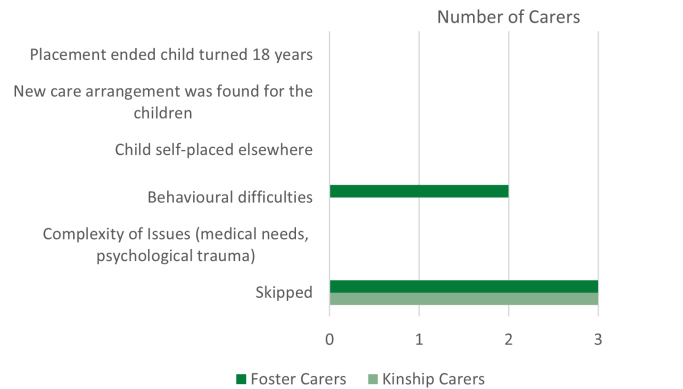
Participants were asked the reasoning for leaving their foster/kinship care role. 80% of foster participants left their role due to reasons relating to themselves and their family, where as 100% of kinship care participants within the North Queensland Region indicated reasons relating to Child Safety was their main reasoning to discontinue their role as a carer. Further breakdown on a carer’s main reasoning in discontinuing their role is in the graph below.



Carers were able to expand on this if they wish to provide greater insight as to the reasoning behind their decision. Carers were able to expand on this if they wish to provide greater insight as to the reasoning behind their decision. The following graphs in the next page provides an overview of the carer’s responses based on child-related reasons and family-related reasons. Some graphs are not provided as there are limited responses associated with the survey question, and therefore are provided in percentages. Kinship carers were given a set of different options within the survey due to the nature of their carer role.

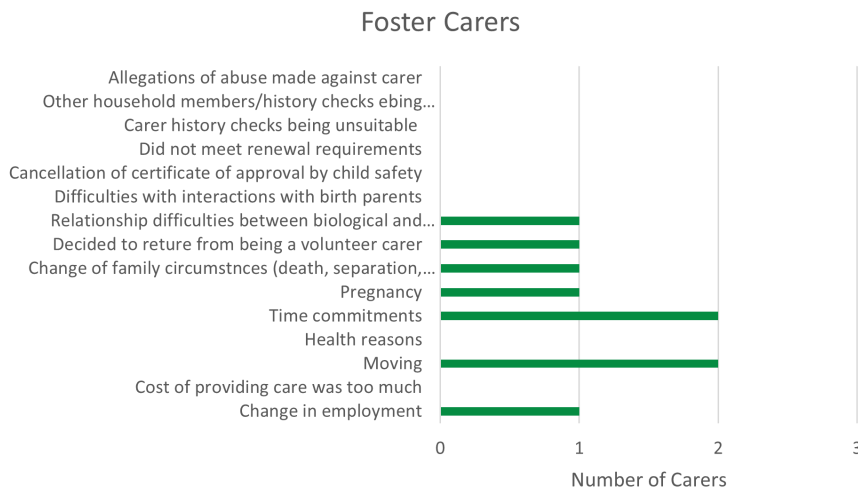
Please note only a number of participants, 2-3 foster carers and 2 kinship carers, participated in the next two graphs and were able to select more than one answer to provide further insight in making their decision to cease their role. Percentages provided includes all participants to provide a more accurate indication of carer results.

Reasons Relating to the Child/ren in Carer’s Care



40% of foster care participants indicated there were **behaviour difficulties** that played a role in ceasing their carer certificate. Kinship carer participants all skipped this question and did not elaborate whether the child or children in care were related to their discontinuation, and the remainder 3 foster carers within the North Queensland region also skipped this question.

Reasons Relating to the Carer and their Family



60% of the North Queensland foster carer indicated reasons relating to themselves and their family influenced their reasoning to stop fostering. Referring to the graph above— carers within the North Queensland Region stated time commitments and moving were reasons of continuing, furthermore, carers informed further insight such as **relationship difficulties with the biological family, deciding to retire, change in family circumstance, having a pregnancy or change in employment.**

Kinship carers were also provided an opportunity to expand on their reasoning to which 33% of kinship carers indicated that ceasing their carer role was either due to their **role impacting on extended family relationships**, their **time commitments** or having **changes within their family circumstances.**

Carer Satisfaction

Participants were able to provide feedback on a Likert-scale, also known as a satisfaction scale, to give us an indication on their satisfaction rate in key areas of being a foster or kinship carer. These include their service satisfaction with Child Safety and nature of their placements. Carers were provided an opportunity to read/hear statements and provided feedback from the following scale—very satisfied, satisfied, neutral, unsatisfied or very unsatisfied.

Please note an error had occurred during the development of the survey and therefore, Child Safety satisfaction level statement 2 and 3 are duplicated. QFKC included both duplicated statements as at times results were not the same.

Overall, 50% of foster carers had a **neutral** satisfaction level with Child Safety, with 83% of kinship carers having a **very dissatisfied** satisfaction level. Results show 60% of foster carers were **neutral** with their ability to appeal a decision that was made by Child Safety, to which 75% of kinship carer participants was **very dissatisfied**. 100% of kinship carers were **very dissatisfied** with Child Safety’s policies and procedures for dealing with a harm report/SOC process, where as 80% of foster carers stated having neutral. Further breakdown of the statements is the graphs below.

Child Safety Satisfaction

Foster Carers

Statements	Very Satisfied	Satisfied	Neutral	Dissatisfied	Very Dissatisfied	Skipped
Ability to appeal a decision related to you that was made by Child Safety	0%	0%	60%	20%	20%	0%
<u>Ability to make a complaint about a service provided by Child Safety</u>	0%	40%	40%	20%	0%	0%
<u>Ability to make a complaint about a service provided by Child Safety</u>	0%	60%	20%	20%	0%	0%
Child Safety's policies and procedures for dealing with a Harm Report/SOC Process	0%	0%	80%	0%	20%	0%
Overall Satisfaction	0%	25%	50%	15%	10%	0%

Kinship Carers

Statements	Very Satisfied	Satisfied	Neutral	Dissatisfied	Very Dissatisfied	Skipped
Ability to appeal a decision related to you that was made by Child Safety	0%	33%	0%	0%	67%	0%
<u>Ability to make a complaint about a service provided by Child Safety</u>	0%	0%	0%	0%	100%	0%
<u>Ability to make a complaint about a service provided by Child Safety</u>	0%	0%	0%	33%	67%	0%
Child Safety's policies and procedures for dealing with a Harm Report/SOC Process	0%	0%	0%	0%	100%	0%
Overall Satisfaction	0%	8%	0%	8%	83%	0%

Placement Satisfaction

Carers provided insight on their overall satisfaction levels of placement decisions, ranging from the number of children in their care to the arrangement of the child having contact with their family members.

Foster Carers

48% of foster carers within the North Queensland Region were **neutral** with their placement, a further breakdown of the statement within this section is provided below.

Statements	Very Satisfied	Satisfied	Neutral	Dissatisfied	Very Dissatisfied	Skipped
The number of children being placed with you at any one given time being reasonable	0%	40%	40%	20%	0%	0%
The extent to which children and young people were provided with an opportunity to participate in decisions about their care	0%	20%	20%	40%	20%	0%
The arrangement for children to have contact with their parents and other family members	0%	0%	80%	20%	0%	0%
Opportunity for you to participate in professional development	0%	40%	40%	20%	0%	0%
The level of support provided to a child during the placement	0%	20%	60%	20%	0%	0%
The manner in which the carer approval process was undertaken	0%	20%	60%	20%	0%	0%
Your ability to have input into decisions about the child's care	0%	20%	60%	0%	20%	0%
The level of support provided to you during the placements	20%	20%	20%	20%	20%	0%
Overall Satisfaction	3%	23%	48%	20%	8%	0%

Kinship Carers

38% of kinship carers within the North Queensland Region were **dissatisfied** with their placement decisions, a further breakdown of the statement within this section is provided below.

Statements	Very Satisfied	Satisfied	Neutral	Dissatisfied	Very Dissatisfied	Skipped
The extent to which children and young people were provided with an opportunity to participate in decisions about their care	0%	0%	0%	67%	33%	0%
The arrangement for children to have contact with their parents and other family members	0%	33%	0%	67%	0%	0%
Opportunity for you to participate in training specific to the needs of the children	33%	0%	33%	0%	33%	0%
The level of support provided to a child during the placement	0%	33%	0%	33%	33%	0%
The manner in which the carer approval process was undertaken	0%	33%	0%	33%	33%	0%
Your ability to have input into decisions about the child's care	0%	33%	0%	67%	0%	0%
The level of support provided to you during the placements	0%	33%	33%	0%	33%	0%
Overall Satisfaction	5%	24%	10%	38%	24%	0%

Communication and Support as a Carer

Communication and engagement between all stakeholders, including departments, agencies, and other support organisations, assist carers in their role in providing the best care possible for children. Carers were provided an opportunity to share their feedback in the statements below. Feedback was also provide on the Foster Care Agreement and Placement Agreement, however, these series of questions were tailored for the foster care population and was not provided to those identifying as kinship carers.

Engagement Level Satisfaction

Foster Carers

52% of North Queensland participants were overall **neutral** with their engagement with stakeholders, however, breaking down the statements provided to the carers the results are as follows:

- 40% were either **neutral** or **dissatisfied** with the information provided to them regarding the child prior to placement;
- 60% were **neutral** with the engagement and response from Child Safety
- 40% were **very satisfied** with the engagement and response from their Foster and Kinship Care Service
- 40% were either **satisfied** or **neutral** with the engagement and response from the Community Visitor and/or Child Advocate

Statements	Very Satisfied	Satisfied	Neutral	Dissatisfied	Very Dissatisfied	Skipped
The information provided to you about the child prior to placement	0%	0%	40%	40%	20%	0%
The level of engagement and response you've experienced with Child Safety	0%	20%	60%	0%	20%	0%
The level of engagement and response you've experienced with your Foster and Kinship Care Service	40%	20%	40%	0%	0%	0%
The level of engagement and response you've experienced with the QFKC Support Team (FAST)	0%	0%	80%	0%	20%	0%
The level of engagement and response you've experienced with the Community Visitor and or Child Advocate	0%	40%	40%	0%	20%	0%
Overall Satisfaction	8%	16%	52%	8%	16%	0%

Kinship Carers

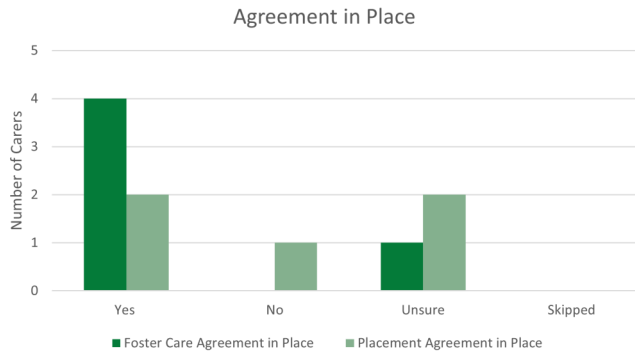
33% of North Queensland kinship participants were overall either **satisfied** or **neutral** with their engagement with stakeholders, however, breaking down the statements provided to the carers the results are as follows:

- 33% were either **satisfied**, **neutral** or **very dissatisfied** with the information provided to them regarding the child prior to placement;
- 33% were either **neutral**, **dissatisfied** or **very dissatisfied** with the engagement and response from Child Safety
- 67% were **satisfied** with the engagement and response from their Foster and Kinship Care Service
- 67% were **satisfied** with the engagement and response from the Community Visitor and/or Child Advocate

Statements	Very Satisfied	Satisfied	Neutral	Dissatisfied	Very Dissatisfied	Skipped
The information provided to you about the child prior to placement	0%	33%	33%	0%	33%	0%
The level of engagement and response you've experienced with Child Safety	0%	0%	33%	33%	33%	0%
The level of engagement and response you've experienced with your Foster and Kinship Care Service	0%	67%	0%	33%	0%	0%
The level of engagement and response you've experienced with the QFKC Support Team (FAST)	0%	0%	100%	0%	0%	0%
The level of engagement and response you've experienced with the Community Visitor and or Child Advocate	33%	67%	0%	0%	0%	0%
Overall Satisfaction	7%	33%	33%	13%	13%	0%

Foster Care Agreement & Placement Agreement

A Foster Care Agreement is a written agreement between the foster carer, child safety and foster and kinship care service, **80% of carers had a Foster Care Agreement in place**. A Placement Agreement is a written documents that provides information about the child/ren and a plan created between Child Safety and the carer to jointly plan for meeting the needs of the child/ren. **40% of foster carer participants stated having had a Placement Agreement in place**.



Placement Agreement Satisfaction

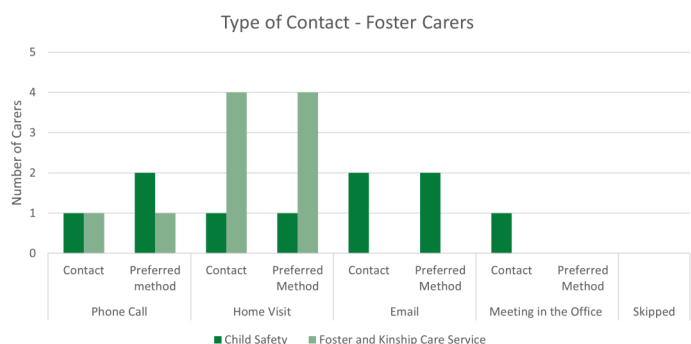
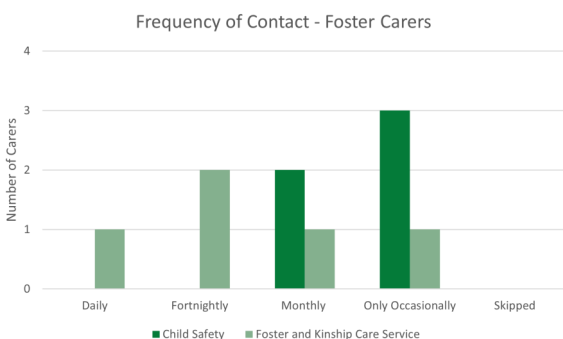
Foster carers were given the opportunity to provide their satisfaction level on the placement agreement, 40% of foster carers were **neutral** with how the Placement Agreement covered support. However, 60% of foster carers were **neutral** with how the meetings regarding the Placement Agreement were a forum to work as part of a care team.

Statements	Very Satisfied	Satisfied	Neutral	Dissatisfied	Very Dissatisfied	Skipped
Satisfaction level of the Placement Agreement covered the supports required	0%	20%	40%	0%	0%	40%
Satisfaction level of the Placement Agreement meetings provided a forum to work as part of a care team	0%	0%	60%	0%	0%	40%

Contact with Agency & Child Safety

Carers were given an opportunity to provide an overview of the regularity of contact between themselves with Child Safety and their agency.

Foster Carers



North Queensland foster care participants received contact from Child Safety **occasionally** (60%) and their Foster and Kinship Care Service on a **fortnightly** basis (40% of respondents). Furthermore, from the data in the graphs above;

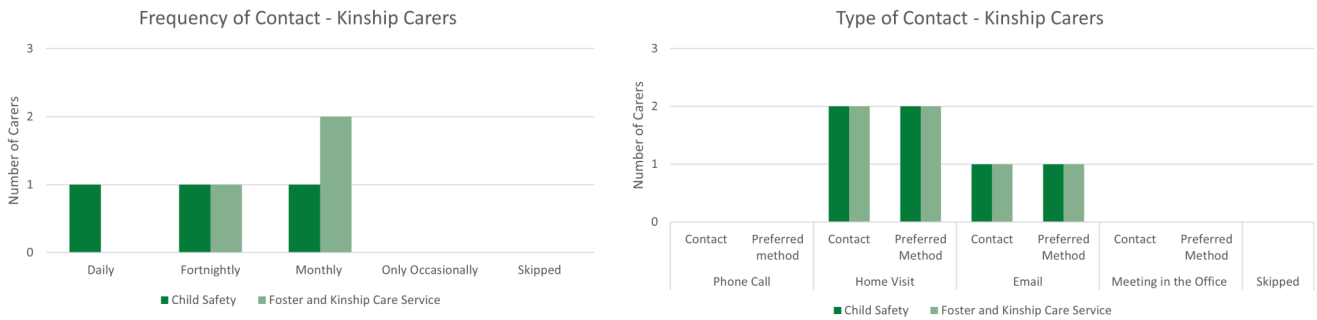
- 40% stated contact occurred through an **email** with Child Safety, whereas 0% stating this type of contact occurred with their Foster and Kinship Care Service,

Contact with Agency & Child Safety Continued

Foster Carers

- 80% stated contact with their Foster and Kinship Care Service occurred as a **home visit**,
- 40% would have preferred contact in the form of either a **phone call** or **email** from Child Safety followed by 20% stating they would have preferred a **home visit** and,
- 46% would have preferred a **home visit** from their Foster and Kinship Care Service, followed by a **phone call** which 38% of carers stated.

Kinship Carers



Kinship carers within the North Queensland Region received contact from Child Safety either had **daily** (33%), **fortnightly** (33%) or **monthly** (33%) contact, whereas contact with their Foster and Kinship Care Service occurred on a **monthly** basis (67%) followed by **fortnightly** (33%). Furthermore, from the data in the graphs above;

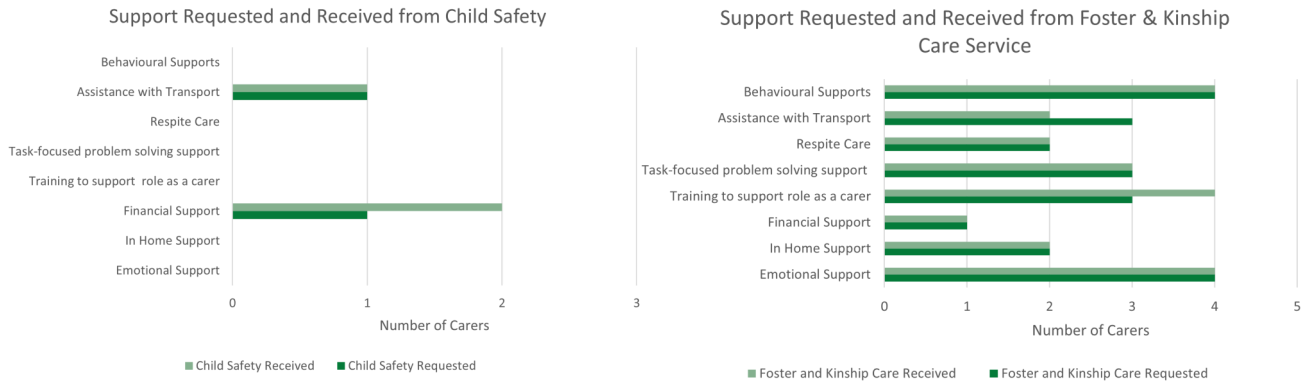
- 67% stated contact occurred through a **home visit** with their Foster and Kinship Care Service, whereas 67% stating this type of contact occurred with Child Safety,
- 33% stated contact with Child Safety occurred through **email**,
- Type of contact occurred with Child Safety and the kinship carer’s Foster and Kinship Care Service was 100% of what the kinship care cohort had preferred as their form of contact—**home visit** & **email**.

Support Received and Requested

Participants were provided an opportunity to reflect on the support services requested during their time as a carer, and inform whether these requests were fulfilled. The form of support could be in the form of either professional, financial and/or emotional support.

Carers were to indicate which stakeholder assisted them with their requested support, if they requested such support. Please note, some carers have ticked more than one option. Therefore the total amount of responses is reflected to the number of answers provides rather than the number of carers.

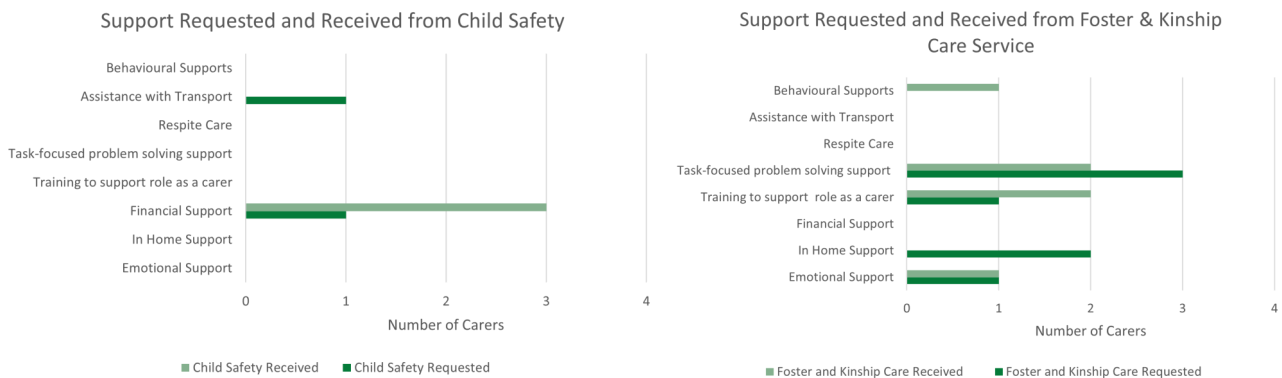
Foster Carers



Support requested and received by North Queensland Region foster carer participants indicated that requested support was received and those who have not requested, received such support—these are assistance with transportation, and financial support (refer to the graph above—*Support Requested and Received from Child Safety*). In relation to Foster and Kinship Care Services;

- 100% or more received the following support—emotional, in-home, financial, training, problem solving support, and respite care, however;
- 67% stated receiving the requested assistance with transportation.

Kinship Carers



North Queensland kinship carer participants indicated the assistance with transport was not received from Child Safety, however, financial support were fulfilled with additional carers receiving such support without additional requests (refer to the graph above—*Support Requested and Received from Child Safety*). In relation to Foster and Kinship Care Services;

- 100% or more received the following support—emotional and training to support their role, however;
- 67% stated receiving task-focused problem support, and
- 0% received any behavioural supports or In-Home support despite requests.

Carer Allowance

Foster and Kinship carers are provided a fortnightly caring allowance for each child in their care to assist with basic costs of caring for a child. Carers provided a satisfaction rate on statements related to the caring allowance, the amount provided to meet the cost of the child, and reimbursements on out-of-pocket expenses.

Foster Carers

30% of foster carers were overall **very satisfied** with the carer allowance, in this question an average of 20% of North Queensland Region foster care participants skipped this question. From the table below;

- 40% of carers were **neutral** with how reimbursements were if any out of pocket expenses occurred,
- 40% were **very satisfied** with the range of allowance provided to meet the cost of caring,
- 20% were either **very satisfied, satisfied, neutral, or very dissatisfied** with how quickly to allowances were paid and,
- 40% were **very satisfied** with the allowance payment rates.

Statements	Very Satisfied	Satisfied	Neutral	Dissatisfied	Very Dissatisfied	Skipped
How quickly you were reimbursed when out of pocket expenses were incurred	20%	0%	40%	0%	20%	20%
The range of allowances provided by Child Safety to help meet the costs of caring for the child	40%	0%	20%	0%	20%	20%
How quickly allowances were paid	20%	20%	20%	0%	20%	20%
The allowances payment rates	40%	0%	20%	0%	20%	20%
Overall Satisfaction	30%	5%	25%	0%	20%	20%

Kinship Carers

50% of kinship carers were overall either **satisfied** or **very dissatisfied** with the carer allowance (refer to the table below). From the table below;

- 67% of carers were **satisfied** with how reimbursements were if any out of pocket expenses occurred,
- 67% were **very dissatisfied** with the range of allowance provided to meet the cost of caring;
- 67% were **satisfied** with how quickly to allowances were paid and,
- 67% were **very dissatisfied** with the allowance payment rates.

Statement	Very Satisfied	Satisfied	Neutral	Dissatisfied	Very Dissatisfied	Skipped
How quickly you were reimbursed when out of pocket expenses were incurred	0%	67%	0%	0%	33%	0%
The range of allowances provided by Child Safety to help meet the costs of caring for the child	0%	33%	0%	0%	67%	0%
How quickly allowances were paid	0%	67%	0%	0%	33%	0%
The allowances payment rates	0%	33%	0%	0%	67%	0%
Overall Satisfaction	0%	50%	0%	0%	50%	0%

Training and Development

Carers across Queensland underwent an assessment process before a recommendation of approval. During and after the assessment process, carers are given an opportunity to complete training to develop their understanding on the child safety system, children development and trauma-informed training. Queensland carers are also provided information on the roles and responsibilities of stakeholders involved (Child Safety and their agency), as well as their policies and procedures.

Participants of the survey provided feedback on the delivery of information by providing a satisfaction rate around training and information.

47% foster carers were overall **satisfied** with the training and development before and during their role as a carer, however, results show from the kinship carer demographic, 41% overall had a **neutral** satisfaction. Please note from this region, 20% of foster carer and average of 4% of kinship care participants skipped this question.

Insights from the survey results show the following;

- Majority of responses from foster carers were between the ranges of **neutral** to **satisfactory** for statements (refer to table below for Foster Care responses),
- 33% of kinship carers were **very dissatisfied** with the information provided on Child Safety’s policies, legislation and procedure, whereas 60% of foster carers stated they were **satisfied** with this statement,
- 40% of foster carers were either **satisfied** or **neutral** with their ability to access additional training specific to the child’s needs, however, 33% of kinship carer were either **very satisfied, neutral** or **very dissatisfied**,
- 60% of foster carers were **satisfied** with information provided to assist them in their role, 33% of kinship carers stated either **very satisfied, satisfied** or **neutral** with the statement.

Further break down on other statements and results is provided below for foster carers and on the next page for kinship care participants.

Statements	Very Satisfied	Satisfied	Neutral	Dissatisfied	Very Dissatisfied	Skipped
Pre-service training- Get Ready	0%	60%	20%	0%	0%	20%
Standard training - Starting Out	0%	60%	20%	0%	0%	20%
Advanced training - Continuous learning opportunities	0%	20%	60%	0%	0%	20%
Information provided on Child Safety's Policies, Legislation and Procedures	0%	60%	0%	20%	0%	20%
Information provided to assist you with the foster care role	0%	60%	0%	20%	0%	20%
Information provided about your role and responsibilities	0%	60%	20%	0%	0%	20%
Information provided about Child Safety's role and responsibilities	0%	40%	40%	0%	0%	20%
Information provided about your Foster and Kinship Care Service's role and responsibilities	0%	40%	40%	0%	0%	20%
Information provided about other agencies role and responsibilities	0%	40%	40%	0%	0%	20%
Information about positive behaviour support strategies and acceptable discipline practices	0%	40%	40%	0%	0%	20%
Your ability to access to additional training specific to the child's needs if requested	0%	40%	40%	0%	0%	20%
Hope and Healing - trauma informed approaches	0%	40%	40%	0%	0%	20%
Overall Satisfaction	0%	47%	30%	3%	0%	20%

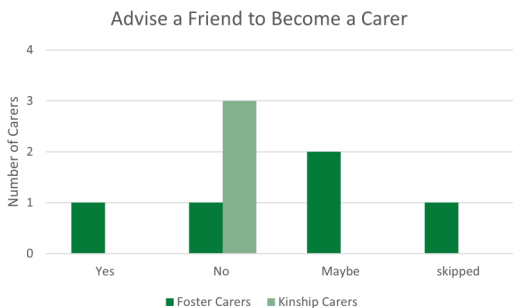
Foster Carers

Kinship Carers

Statements	Very Satisfied	Satisfied	Neutral	Dissatisfied	Very Dissatisfied	Skipped
Information provided on Child Safety's Policies, Legislation and Procedures	0%	33%	33%	0%	33%	0%
Information provided to assist you with the kinship care role	33%	33%	33%	0%	0%	0%
Information provided about your role and responsibilities	0%	33%	33%	33%	0%	0%
Information provided about Child Safety's role and responsibilities	0%	33%	33%	33%	0%	0%
Information provided about your Foster and Kinship Care Service's role and responsibilities	0%	33%	67%	0%	0%	0%
Information provided about other agencies role and responsibilities	0%	33%	67%	0%	0%	0%
Information about positive behaviour support strategies and acceptable discipline practices	0%	67%	33%	0%	0%	0%
Your ability to access to additional training specific to the child's needs if requested	33%	0%	33%	0%	33%	0%
Hope and Healing - trauma informed approaches	0%	0%	33%	33%	0%	33%
Overall Satisfaction	7%	30%	41%	11%	7%	4%

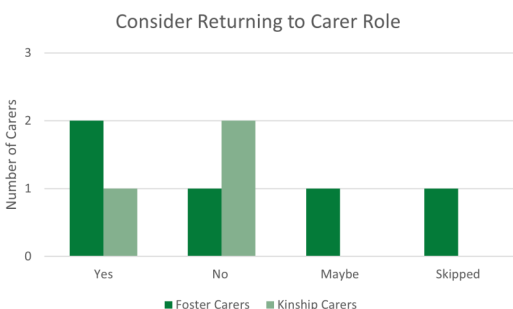
Overall Experience

Understanding a carer’s overview on how their experiences provides an insight the overall experience on their carer journey and whether they would recommend this voluntary role with other friends and family and/or return to this role at a later stage in their life.



Advising a friend to become a carer varied between the two carer types—40% of foster carer participants indicated they **may** advise a friend in which no kinship carers stated the same response.

100% of kinship carer participants **would not** advise a family/friend to volunteer, however, only 20% of foster carers had the same response.



Consideration in returning to their carer role, 40% of foster carers indicated they **would** return to this role later in life, whereas 67% of kinship carer participants stated they **would not**.



Both carer types provided insight as to whether their experience as a carer meet their initial expectation, to which 40% of the foster carer cohort stated their experience **did not meet** their initial expectations. With the kinship care participant this was 100%.