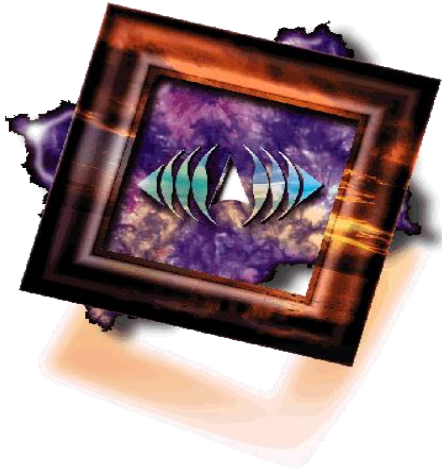


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## Foster/Kinship Carer Wellbeing Survey 2018

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for Children Youth and Families  
Community Services Directorate  
ACT Government

Prepared By  
Key Insights Pty Ltd  
November 2018

**Key Insights acknowledges the traditional custodians of the ACT, the Ngunnawal people. Key Insights acknowledges and respects their continuing culture and the contribution they make to the life of the city of Canberra and the region.**

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Final	October 2018	E Davis-Meehan
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# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

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Child and Youth Protection Services (CYPS), within the Children, Youth and Families (CYF) Division of the Community Services Directorate, is the statutory body that oversees child protection services in the ACT. In 2017, there were 986 foster and kinship carers caring for a child or young person. The majority of these carers reside in the ACT however, some live in the surrounding areas or in another state or territory.

In 2018, at the request of the Carer Wellbeing Sub-Committee, CYF initiated this survey project and contracted Key Insights Pty Ltd to undertake the work. A pre-survey workshop was held with the Carer Wellbeing Sub-Committee to draft the survey questions.

The purpose of the survey is to draw on the experiences and views of carer respondents to enable CYF to realise the following objectives:

- understand the current carer experience, and
- provide a means of tracking improvements or changes over time.

Responses were received from 215 carers (foster and kinship) which is a response rate of 23 per cent. Overall, 188 of the 215 carers who completed the survey answered all questions and 198 carers completed all but one question. This yields a completion rate for the survey of 88%. The Additional Comments question was optional and is not counted in these numbers, but 137 responses were received.

All carers in the target population were encouraged to participate; each carer received an individual letter, and email for those with an email address, inviting them to participate. It was important to offer all carers a chance to have their say, while at the same time attempting to minimise any recruitment bias by offering several ways to complete the survey and by encouraging participation from all carer types. The research does not present a random sample and not all sub group response rates were equal. Individual comparisons were not tested for statistical significance. However, the sampling strategy has produced a strong sample that suggests that consideration of implications for the whole population across the key findings of this research would be useful.

## Key Findings

### Expectations and Training

There is a high level of ambivalence around the question of **how well carer expectations and prior commitments have been met**, with 35% of respondents having mixed feelings around this issue. The results indicate that the majority of respondents, across carer types, are not satisfied with the extent to which their expectations or prior commitments have been met.

There appears to be a pattern of lower satisfaction with expectations and prior commitments being met, in those who have been carers for more than two years.

Overall, **foster carers feel that the training and preparation they receive is adequate** and meets their needs. Training was also listed as the third most valuable factor in making life easier for carers.

Respite Carers and Permanent / Enduring Responsibility / Adoptive Carers feel the *most* prepared and trained amongst carer types.

Analysis by length of time as a carer shows that those who have been carers for less than six months feel the *most* prepared and trained but there is no real pattern in the results for those who have been carers for longer.

### **Involvement in Decision Making**

In general, respondents expressed some dissatisfaction with being listened to and heard, the level of involvement in decisions and the satisfactory explanation of decisions relating to the children and young people in their care.

The analysis of factors that make life easier or cause stress for carers supports these results; showing that the level of involvement in decision making about children in their care is one of the factors that cause the *most stress* for them.

Short Term Crisis Carers and Respite Carers are the *most dissatisfied* with the level of involvement in decision-making.

### **Indigenous Carers**

Overall the Indigenous respondents showed a higher level of satisfaction than the average result for all carers, across all areas except for the Adequacy of Preparation and Training. Particular care needs to be taken with Indigenous results due to the small number of respondents from this cohort.

### **Support Services**

Across all carers, Carer Support from Non-Government Agencies (e.g. ACT Together, ACF/Therapeutic Team), is the *most* used support service with 66% of respondents having used this service and 42% of them finding it valuable.

In general, most services are not well used, with non-usage rates ranging from 60% to 97%. Even so, for the small percentages of respondents who used a service; many found that service to be valuable. This was especially true for respite care, external professional support services, career advocacy groups (e.g. Carers ACT) and informal / social carer's networks.

### **Making Life Easier or Causing Stress?**

The factors that are most highly regarded as *making life easier* for carers are:

- Relationships with other carers (67% positive, 2% negative responses)
- Information provided about the child in their care (61% positive, 12% negative responses)

The factors that cause the most stress for respondents are:

- Level of involvement in decision making about children in my care (37%)
- Communication with Child and Youth Protection Services (40%).

Implementation of "A Step-up for Our Kids. Out of Home Care Strategy" returned the lowest positive response (8%) with the remaining responses distributed somewhat evenly across Mixed Feelings (26%), Causes Stress (31%) and Don't Know/Don't think about it (35%). The "don't know/don't think about it" was a noticeably higher percentage than for any other factor, indicating that respondents may not see the strategy as relevant or tangible for them.

The factors with the lowest average rankings (on a scale of -1 to 1) are:

- The implementation of "A Step-up for Our Kids. Out of Home Care Strategy" (-0.35)
- Communication with Child and Youth Protection Services (-0.29).

Between 25% and 50% of respondents reported having mixed feelings across most factors regarding what makes their life easier and what caused them stress. This may mean that at times some factors cause stress and at other times those same factors can make life easier. 39% of respondents had mixed feelings about their general health and mental well being and a further 11% didn't know or didn't think about it. General health and wellbeing caused stress to 25% of respondents.

## **Cultural Plans**

Of those respondents with a Cultural Plan in place, 37% feel there is not enough support to implement it.

## **Carer Comments**

Two thirds of survey respondents provided additional comments regarding their experience as a Foster/Kinship carer, with very few of these comments providing positive feedback.

The comments support and inform the survey results presented in this report and the qualitative analysis by CYF will assist in its response to the survey results.

A post-survey workshop was held with the Carer Wellbeing Sub-Committee to review the analysis and provide suggestions for the presentation of results in the final report. The Sub-Committee and CYF intend to further explore the implications of this research in order to develop strategies to improve the wellbeing of carers.

Key Insights is grateful to Professor Daryl Higgins for his expert input throughout this research project.

**Ellen Davis-Meehan**

**Director, Key Insights Pty Ltd.**

# Abbreviations and Terminology

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ACT	Australian Capital Territory
CSD	Community Services Directorate
CYPS	Child and Youth Protection Services
CYF	Children Youth and Families
CONCURRENT CARER	Foster carers supporting restoration while also being committed to caring for a child permanently if restoration is not successful.
EPR	Enduring Parental Responsibility

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Appendix 1: Invitation Letter/Email to Carers

Appendix 2: Survey Instrument

# 1 INTRODUCTION

## 1.1 BACKGROUND

Child and Youth Protection Services (CYPS), within the Children, Youth and Families (CYF) Division of the Community Services Directorate, is the statutory body that oversees child protection services in the ACT. CYF delivers and commissions out of home care services for children and young people who are not able to reside with their birth families. The majority of children and young people who are in out of home care, reside with either kinship carers, carers who are part of the child's extended family or are considered someone significant in their lives; or foster carers, volunteer members of the community who are not known to the child or young person before they reside with them.

In 2015, the ACT Government began the operation of a five year Out of Home Care Strategy – A Step Up for Our Kids. More information about A Step Up for Our Kids can be found on the Community Services Directorate website.

The Strategy is focused on preventing children and young people from entering out of home care by offering intensive supports to their families to keep them at home. When the risk is too high and children and young people need to be brought into care, the aim is to try and restore them to their family with additional supports to reduce the risk that brought them into care in the first place. If children and young people are unable to return home the next step is to try and have them placed in a permanent arrangement with a carer as quickly as possible.

A main action of the Strategy has been outsourcing a large part of out of home care service system to a non-government entity, ACT Together. ACT Together is a consortium of providers that have come together to provide a continuum of services to best meet children and young people's needs. Both ACT Together and CYPS offer support and oversight of foster carers and kinship carers depending on the care arrangement.

Another key area of the Strategy was the introduction of a carer advocacy and support service, provided by Carers ACT.

In 2017, there were 986 foster and kinship carers caring for a child or young person. The majority of these carers reside in the ACT however, some live in the surrounding areas or in another state or territory.

In 2018, at the request of the Carer Wellbeing Sub Committee, CYF initiated this Survey project and contracted Key Insights Pty Ltd to undertake the work.

## 1.2 STUDY OBJECTIVES

The purpose of the survey is to draw on the experiences and views of carer respondents to enable CYF to realise the following objectives:

- understand the current carer experience; and
- provide a means of tracking improvements or changes over time.

# 2 METHODS

## 2.1 SURVEY DESCRIPTION

The survey instrument is reproduced in **Appendix 2**.

The survey instrument was designed to gather information from each respondent in the following areas:

- Expectations and commitments regarding the carer experience
- Adequacy of preparation and training
- Level of involvement in decision-making
- Use of support services
- Factors that cause stress or make life easier as a carer
- Cultural plans
- Family situation
- Carer experience – carer type and length of time
- Demographic information e.g. gender, ethnicity, location.

The final survey instrument was piloted with a small group of carers (Carers Wellbeing Sub-Committee) prior to implementation to ensure it was succinct and easy to complete. Questions were simple multiple choice with only one open-ended question that was optional.

The survey was available to be completed on-line or over the phone with Key Insights personnel.

## 2.2 RESPONSE RECORDING

During the survey, all responses were recorded on the online survey instrument either directly by the respondent or, if completed over the phone, by the Key Insights interviewer.

## 2.3 SAMPLING STRATEGY

The target population for this survey is current foster carers, kinship carers and permanent carers caring for children on ACT Care and Protection Orders.

The population includes all foster carers and kinship carers who currently have a child or young person in their care or have had a placement in the previous six months; this includes long term, short term or respite placements, and placements under Enduring Parental Responsibility (EPR) Orders or Adoption Orders. This approach aimed to capture the voice of carers who recently received a service from Child and Youth Protection Services or ACT Together.

The total number of carers who met the criteria was 917 and comprised:

- 353 foster carers only
- 502 kinship carers only
- 7 foster and kinship carers
- 47 respite carers
- 8 foster or kinship carers who also have a child in their care on an EPR placement
- 77 carers identifying as being Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander. It should be noted that some carers do not have their Indigenous state recorded.

The sampling strategy aimed to provide a sample that would be representative of the total carer population so that the views expressed in the survey could deliver insights to the views of all carers. The Carer Wellbeing Subcommittee and CYF were committed to ensuring that all carers had a chance to have input to this research. Therefore, the sample is not a random sample, however, the aim was to:

- capture enough survey responses from the carer population to provide a sample that could provide results with an acceptable Margin of Error (5%) at an appropriate Confidence Level (95%).
- capture enough survey responses for each carer type so that some analysis could be undertaken at a carer type level.
- achieve a distribution of carer types in the sample that reflects the distribution within the total carer population.

To meet the sampling objective, Child Youth and Protection Services invited all carers who met the criteria to complete the survey over a four-week period from 20 July 2018 to 19 August 2018. A letter and an email were sent to these carers promoting the survey and providing a link to the survey site. Those carers who preferred to complete the survey over the phone were able to make a direct call to Ellen Davis-Meehan.

The invitation letter is included in **Appendix 1**.

The invitation letter was sent in the post on Friday, 20 July 2018 and many invitations were emailed either by ACT Together or Children, Youth and Families over the course of the survey being open. Letters or emails were sent to individual carers rather than households.

As stated above, the sampling strategy did not involve a random selection process; all carers meeting the criteria were given an opportunity to participate and respondents “opted in” or self-selected. However, during the survey period Key Insights monitored the respondent demographics to track how well the sample was spread across the different carer types. Children, Youth and Families (CYF) then sent follow-up emails and made efforts to raise the number of respondents for cohorts with low response rates.

For the purposes of this report, the results are described in terms of respondents rather than the carer population. This is a cautious approach. It is not possible to determine whether there is any bias as a result of self-selection. There may be many reasons why people opt-in to a survey and

this may be different for each respondent. Not all sub group response rates were equal; and individual comparisons were not tested for statistical significance. Therefore, any individual result may have occurred due to chance. We can have greater confidence that it wouldn't have occurred by chance when the difference was in the order of magnitude of 12 percentage points.

## 2.4 SAMPLING RESULTS

Responses were received from 215 carers; 188 carers completed all questions and 198 carers completed all but one question.

This yields a response rate of 23% of the carer population and a survey completion rate of 88%.

The Additional Comments question was optional and is not counted in these numbers, but 137 responses were received.

Table 2.1 shows the distribution of the sample by carer type, the responses received from Indigenous carers and the calculated Margin of Error and Confidence Level achieved.

**Table 2.1 Survey Sample Size**

	Carer Population		Survey Sample		Confidence Level	Margin of Error
<b>All Carers</b>	<b>917</b>		<b>215</b>		<b>95%</b>	<b>6%</b>
<b>By Carer Type</b>	Note: some carers provide multiple types of care and are therefore counted twice in this breakdown					
Kinship Carers	513	56%	68	32%	95%	<b>11%</b>
Foster Carers	364	40%	198	92%	95%	5%
Respite Carers	47	5%	49	23%	95%	5%
<b>Indigenous Carers<sup>1</sup></b>	<b>77</b>	<b>8%</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>5%</b>	<b>90%</b>	<b>23%</b>

Note that the sum of carers across carer-types is greater than All Carers since some carers provide multiple types of care and are therefore counted in more than one group.

These results show that reliable analysis can be done at the all-carers level and at the carer-type level for Foster Carers and Respite Carers.

Analysis at the carer-type level for Kinship carers is less reliable with an 11% Margin of Error at a 95% Confidence Level<sup>2</sup>. The analysis for Indigenous carers provided in Section 3.5 is indicative only and should be used with caution.

<sup>1</sup> Note that some carers do not have their Indigenous state recorded.

<sup>2</sup> In practical terms, a Margin of Error of 5% at a Confidence Level of 95% means that if 50% of respondents answered "yes" to a yes or no question, the true proportion of the population who answered "yes" would lie between 45% and 55%, 95 times out of 100.

## 2.5 DATA ANALYSIS

Analysis was carried out using MS Excel Data Analysis Toolpak add-in. Frequency counts and cross tabulations have been used to present basic descriptive results throughout the report. Charts were created using MS Excel.

The results for each survey question have been presented as a frequency and/or a percentage response.

The questions where respondents were asked to select a response from a pre-defined Likert Scale have been analysed by converting the response to a numeric value, using one of the measurement scales presented in Table 2.2. These numeric values have been used to calculate average rankings which provide a good measure of the views of respondents on those questions. The frequency and/or percentage responses are used along with the average rankings to interpret the results.

**Table 2.2 Measurement Scales**

<b>Satisfaction</b>	
<b>Response</b>	<b>Scale</b>
Very Satisfied	2
Satisfied	1
Mixed Feelings	0
Dissatisfied	-1
Very Dissatisfied	-2

<b>Adequacy</b>	
<b>Response</b>	<b>Scale</b>
Very Well	2
Well	1
Adequate	0
Poor	-1
Very poor	-2

<b>Help or Stressor</b>	
<b>Response</b>	<b>Scale</b>
Makes my life as a carer easier / enhances the experience	1
Mixed Feelings	0
Causes me stress / makes being a carer harder	-1

# 3 SURVEY RESULTS

## 3.1 SURVEY RESPONDENTS

### 3.1.1 Survey Sample

The target population for this survey is current foster carers, kinship carers and permanent carers caring for children on ACT Care and Protection Orders who meet the criteria outlined in Section 2.3. This target population comprises 917 carers.

Responses were received from 215 carers; 188 carers completed all questions and 198 carers completed all but one question.

For a target population of 917, the achieved sample size of 215 provides a Margin of Error of 6% at a Confidence Level of 95%. In practical terms, this means that if 50% of respondents answered “yes” to a yes or no question, the true proportion of the population who answered “yes” would lie between 44% and 56%, 95 times out of 100.

### 3.1.2 Carer Details

Respondents were asked to provide information on the type of care they provide i.e. under which type of ACT Order and for how long they have been carers.

The frequency and percentage response for carer type is shown in Table 3.1. Note that the total number of responses is greater than the sample size as some carers provide multiple types of care and are therefore counted more than once. The results are also presented graphically in Figure 3.1 and Figure 3.2.

Results showing carer experience (i.e. time as a carer) are presented in Figure 3.3.

**Table 3.1 Type of Care Provided by Respondents**

	<b>Respondents Providing One Type of Care</b>	<b>Respondents Providing Multiple Types of Care</b>	<b>Total No. Responses</b>	<b>Total Percentage of Responses</b>
Short Term Crisis Carer	6	40	46	<b>15%</b>
Concurrent Carer	26	27	53	<b>17%</b>
Permanent / Enduring Responsibility / Adoptive Carer	58	41	99	<b>31%</b>
Respite Carer	8	41	49	<b>16%</b>
Kinship Carer (CYPS)	27	5	32	<b>10%</b>
Kinship Carer (ACT Together)	29	7	36	<b>11%</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>154</b>	<b>161</b>	<b>315</b>	<b>100%</b>



## CARER TYPES

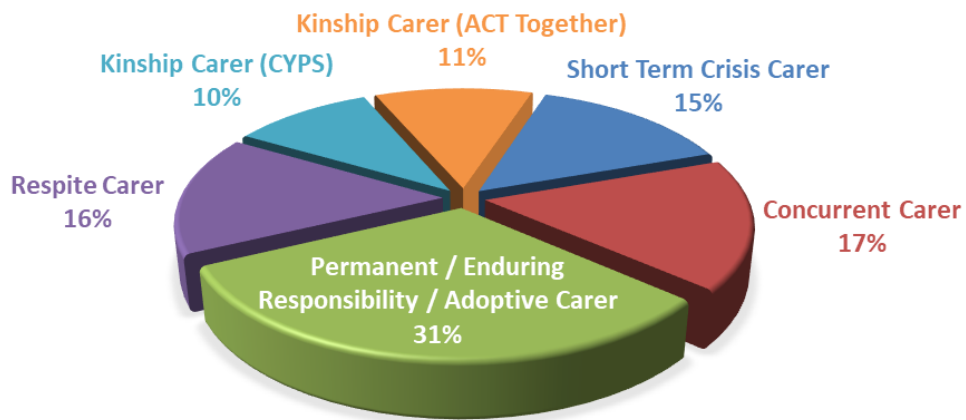


Figure 3.1 Respondents by Carer Type

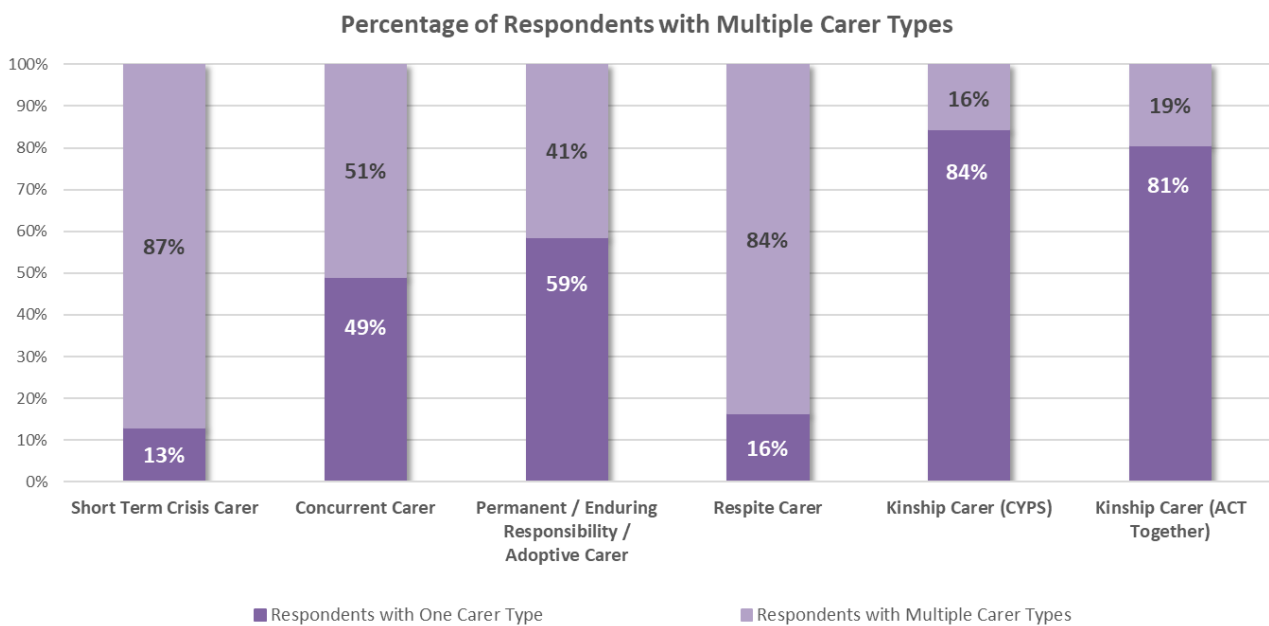


Figure 3.2 Percentage of Respondents Providing Multiple Types of Care

### How long have you been a Carer?

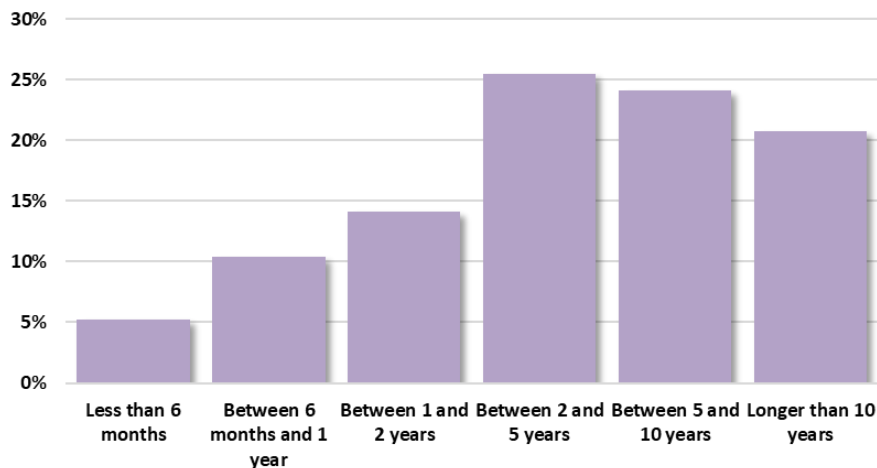


Figure 3.3 Length of Time as a Carer

#### KEY FINDINGS

The largest group of respondents self-identified as Permanent/Enduring Responsibility/Adoptive Carers (31%) with the other carer types between 10% and 17% of the survey population. These percentages may be high due to the carer's interpretation of the carer type.

Kinship Carers are under-represented in the survey with this group comprising 22% of survey population and 56% of total carer population.

A large percentage of the respondents who are Short Term Crisis Carers (87%) and Respite Carers (84%) also care for children under another type of ACT Order.

21% of respondents have been a carer for over 10 years and 45% for over 5 years.

#### 3.1.3 Family Situation

Respondents were asked to provide information about their family i.e. are they living with a partner and do they have other children under 18 years old living at home with them. The results are shown in Figure 3.4 and Figure 3.5. In Figure 3.5 colours are used to indicate the mix of children in the family as follows:

- Purple: One Foster/Kinship Child
- Light Purple: Additional Foster/Kinship Child(ren)
- Orange: Biological Child(ren)

### LIVING WITH A PARTNER

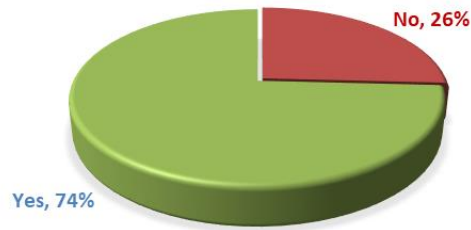


Figure 3.4 Percentage of Respondents Living with a Partner

### Children under 18 living with the Carer

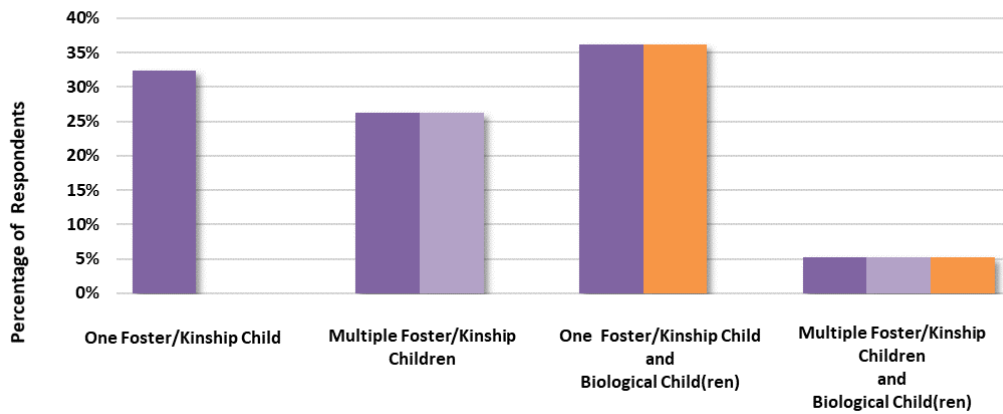


Figure 3.5 Children Under 18 Living with the Carer

### KEY FINDINGS

The majority of respondents live with a partner (74%).

Over 35% of respondents have biological child(ren) (under 18) living at home with them.

Over 25% have other Foster/Kinship children living with them.

5% have multiple Foster/Kinship children and biological child(ren).

### 3.1.4 Gender, Ethnicity and Location

In the survey, respondents were asked to provide the following information about themselves:

- Gender
- Ethnicity (Aboriginal, Torres Strait Islander, Both, Neither, Neither but CALD)
- Postcode for their regular residential address.

The responses for Gender and Ethnicity are provided in Figure 3.6.



Figure 3.6 All Respondents by Gender and Ethnicity

The analysis of respondents' residential location was done using the postcode they provided in the survey. Over 50% of the respondents come from 8 ACT postcodes.

### KEY FINDINGS

The majority of respondents were female (79%).

An overwhelming percentage identified as Non-Indigenous (91%); 5% of respondents identified as Aboriginal and no respondents identified as Torres Strait Islander. However, carers known to have identified as Aboriginal form 8% of the total carer population, so this group is under-represented in the survey.

The largest percentage response came from respondents in postcode 2615 (14.9%) and respondents were generally well spread across the ACT.

## 3.2 EXPECTATIONS AND PRIOR COMMITMENTS

Respondents were asked to indicate their level of satisfaction with their carer experience in relation to their expectations and any commitments that were made to them prior to becoming carers.

### QUESTION

*Please think about your expectations and the commitments made before you started as a carer. How satisfied are you that those expectations and commitments have been met?*

*Very satisfied, Satisfied, Mixed Feelings, Dissatisfied, Very Dissatisfied, Not sure/Don't Know*

The results are presented as a *percentage response* (e.g. 10% of respondents replied “Very Satisfied” etc) and an *average ranking* which indicates the average response as a numerical value. The average ranking is calculated by converting the response to a number as shown in Table 3.2. An average ranking greater than zero indicates a positive level of satisfaction while a ranking below zero indicates some level of dissatisfaction.

**Table 3.2 Satisfaction Ranking Scale**

Satisfaction	
Response	Scale
Very Satisfied	2
Satisfied	1
Mixed Feelings	0
Dissatisfied	-1
Very Dissatisfied	-2
Not Sure/Don't Know	Not included in ranking

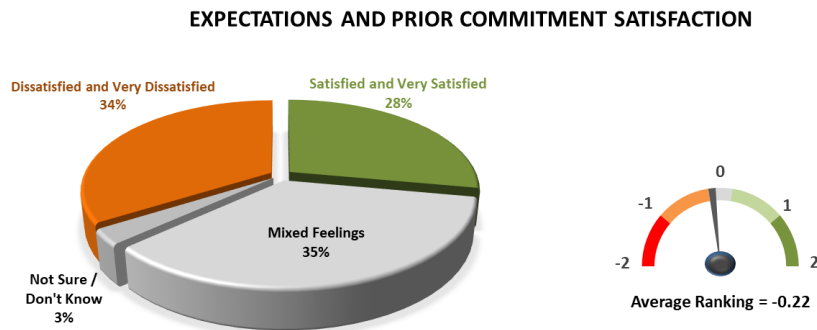
The responses to this question have been analysed for all respondents (Section 3.2.1), for all respondents by carer type (Section 3.2.2) and by length of time as a carer (Section 3.2.3).

### 3.2.1 All Respondents

The survey results in Table 3.3 show the percentage of respondents for each response option. The percentage response and average ranking for all carers is presented in Figure 3.7.

**Table 3.3 Expectations and Prior Commitments Satisfaction**

	Frequency	Percentage Response
Very satisfied	15	7%
Satisfied	45	21%
Mixed Feelings	76	35%
Dissatisfied	25	12%
Very dissatisfied	48	22%
Not sure / don't know	6	3%
<b>TOTAL RESPONSE</b>	<b>215</b>	<b>100%</b>



**Figure 3.7 Expectations and Prior Commitments – Overall Satisfaction**

## KEY FINDINGS

There is a high level of ambivalence around this issue with the largest response being Mixed Feelings (35%). This is likely to mean that respondents feel some expectations have been *met* and others have *not been met*.

The overall results for all respondents show:

- Dissatisfied and Very Dissatisfied: 34%
- Satisfied and Very Satisfied: 28%
- Mixed Feelings 35%
- Average ranking (on a scale from -2 to 2): -0.22

These results indicate that the majority of respondents are not satisfied with the extent to which their expectations or prior commitments made to them have been met.

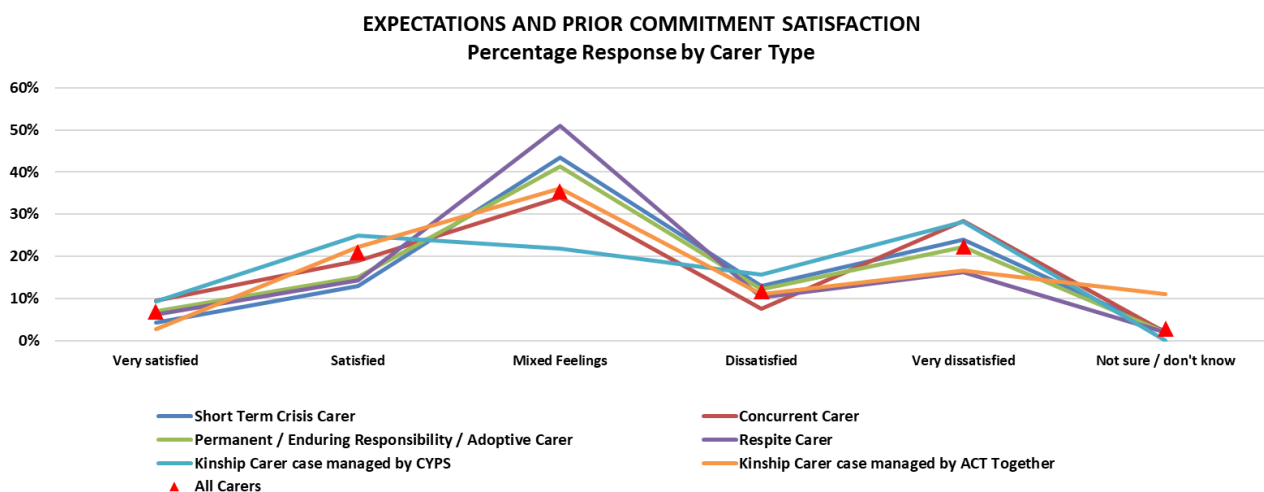
### 3.2.2 By Carer Type

The survey results have been analysed by carer type to determine whether respondents of different carer types feel differently about this issue.

The survey results in Table 3.4 show the percentage response at each level on the Likert scale and the calculated average ranking by carer type. The results are also presented graphically in Figure 3.8 and Figure 3.9. The all-carers result has been included in these figures for comparison.

**Table 3.4 Expectations and Prior Commitments Satisfaction by Carer Type**

	Very satisfied	Satisfied	Mixed Feelings	Dissatisfied	Very dissatisfied	Not sure / don't know	Total Responses	Average Ranking
Short Term Crisis Carer	4%	13%	44%	13%	24%	2%	100%	-0.40
Concurrent Carer	9%	19%	34%	8%	28%	2%	100%	-0.27
Permanent / Enduring Responsibility / Adoptive Carer	7%	15%	42%	12%	22%	2%	100%	-0.28
Respite Carer	6%	14%	52%	10%	16%	2%	100%	-0.17
Kinship Carer case managed by CYPs	9%	25%	22%	16%	28%	0%	100%	-0.28
Kinship Carer case managed by ACT Together	3%	22%	36%	11%	17%	11%	100%	-0.19
<b>All Respondents</b>	<b>7%</b>	<b>21%</b>	<b>35%</b>	<b>12%</b>	<b>22%</b>	<b>3%</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>-0.22</b>



**Figure 3.8 Expectations and Prior Commitments - by Carer Type**

EXPECTATIONS AND PRIOR COMMITMENT SATISFACTION  
Average Ranking by Carer Type



Figure 3.9 Expectations and Prior Commitments - Average Ranking by Carer Type

KEY FINDINGS

Figure 3.8 shows a similar distribution pattern for all carer types, with the exception of the Kinship carers managed by CYPS; these carers show a lower percentage response for Mixed Feelings.

There is high level of ambivalence around this issue with the largest response across most carer types being Mixed Feelings (30%-50%).

Kinship carers managed by CYPS and Concurrent Carers showed the highest percentage of Very Dissatisfied responses (28%).

The average rankings (on a scale of -2 to 2) are between 0 and -0.4 for all carer types which means that there is a general level of dissatisfaction around this issue.

Short Term Crisis Carers were the most dissatisfied, with the lowest average ranking (-0.40).

These results indicate that no carer type has a majority who are satisfied with the extent to which their expectations or prior commitments have been met.



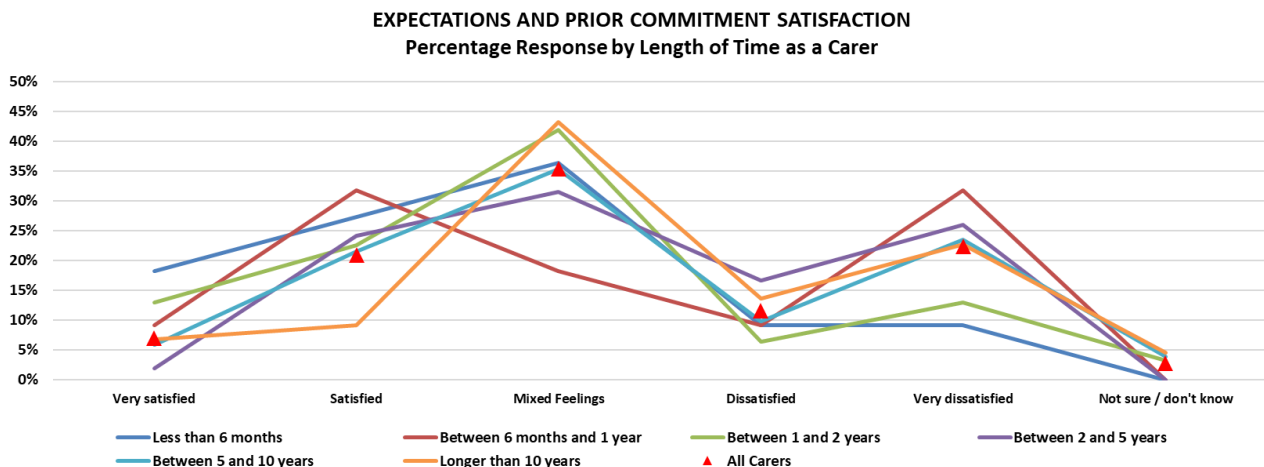
### 3.2.3 By Length of Time as a Carer

The survey results have been analysed by length of time as a carer to determine whether carers' views on this question differ depending on how long they have been a carer.

The survey results in Table 3.5 show the percentage response at each level on the Likert scale and the calculated average ranking by length of time as a carer. The results are also presented graphically in Figure 3.10 and Figure 3.11. The all-carers result has been included in these figures for comparison.

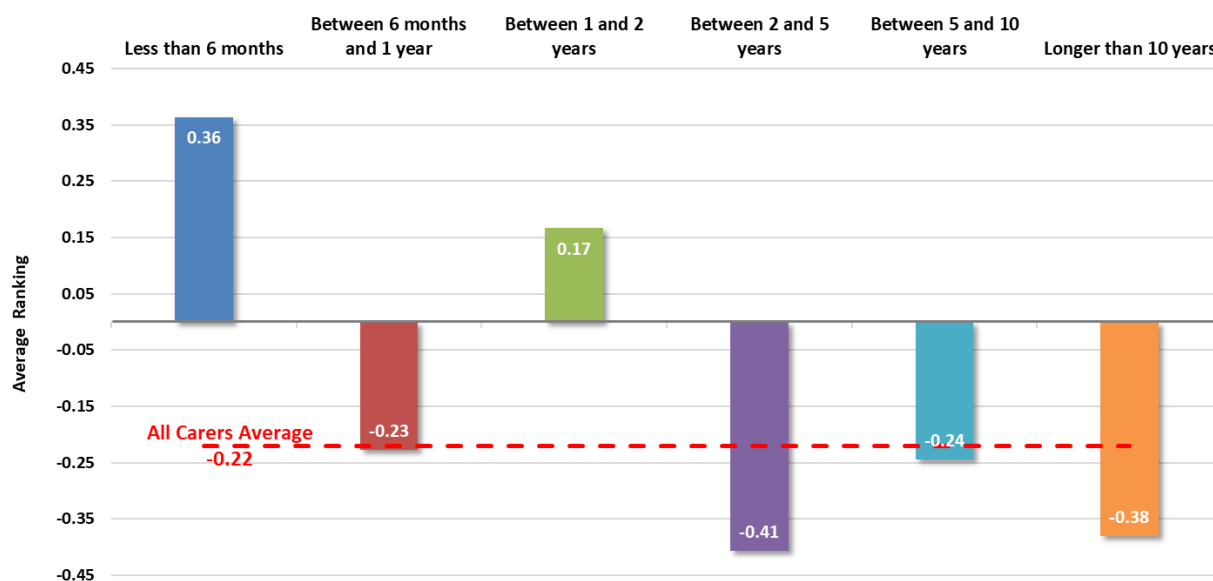
**Table 3.5 Expectations and Prior Commitments Satisfaction by Length of Time as a Carer**

	Very satisfied	Satisfied	Mixed Feelings	Dissatisfied	Very dissatisfied	Not sure / don't know	Total Response	Average Ranking
<b>Less than 6 months</b>	18%	27%	36%	9%	9%	0%	100%	0.36
<b>Between 6 months and 1 year</b>	9%	32%	18%	9%	32%	0%	100%	-0.23
<b>Between 1 and 2 years</b>	13%	23%	42%	6%	13%	3%	100%	0.17
<b>Between 2 and 5 years</b>	2%	24%	31%	17%	26%	0%	100%	-0.41
<b>Between 5 and 10 years</b>	6%	22%	34%	10%	24%	4%	100%	-0.24
<b>Longer than 10 years</b>	7%	9%	42%	14%	23%	5%	100%	-0.38
<b>All Respondents</b>	<b>7%</b>	<b>21%</b>	<b>35%</b>	<b>12%</b>	<b>22%</b>	<b>3%</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>-0.22</b>



**Figure 3.10 Expectations and Prior Commitments - by Length of Time as a Carer**

**EXPECTATIONS AND PRIOR COMMITMENT SATISFACTION**  
Average Ranking by Length of Time as a Carer



**Figure 3.11 Expectations and Prior Commitments - Average Ranking by Length of Time as a Carer**

### KEY FINDINGS

Figure 3.10 shows that the distribution pattern across the response options for the following groups of carers is different from the rest of the respondents:

- carers for less than 6 months: show a higher than average response for Satisfied and Very Satisfied, and lower than average response for Dissatisfied and Very Dissatisfied
- carers for 6 months to 1 year: show higher than average response for Satisfied and Dissatisfied
- carers for more than 10 years: show a lower than average response for Satisfied.

The level of ambivalence around this issue is similar to that seen for all carers and for all carer types; Mixed Feelings is the largest response in all length-of-time groups (31%-43%) except for those who have been carers for 6 months to 1 year (18%).

A comparison of the average rankings for length-of-time groups against the all carers average ranking (-0.22) shows:

- Carers for up to 2 years: -0.23 to 0.36 i.e. close to or above the all-carers average
- Carers for more than 2 years: -0.24 to -0.41 i.e. below the all-carers average.

These results indicate that there is some pattern of lower satisfaction levels in this area, in those respondents who have been carers for more than 2 years.

### 3.3 PREPARATION AND TRAINING

Respondents were asked to indicate how well prepared or trained they felt for their role as carers.

#### QUESTION

*All things considered, how well do you consider that you have been properly prepared or trained, either formally or informally, for the role of foster carer / kinship carer / permanent carer at this current time?*

*Very well, Well, Mixed Adequately, Poorly, Very Poorly, Not sure/Don't Know*

The results are presented as a percentage response and an average ranking. The average ranking is calculated by converting the Likert scale response to a numerical value as shown in Table 3.6. Any ranking over 0 indicates a “more than adequate” response.

**Table 3.6 Adequacy Ranking Scale**

Adequacy	
Response	Scale
Very Well	2
Well	1
Adequate	0
Poor	-1
Very poor	-2
Not Sure/Don't Know	Not included in ranking

The responses to this question have been analysed for all Foster Carers (Section 3.3.1), for all respondents by carer type (Section 3.3.2) and by length of time as a carer (Section 3.3.3).

Since Kinship Carers are not offered training, the results in Section 3.3.1 and Section 3.3.3 are calculated for Foster carers only, with the Kinship carers being excluded. However, the results for Kinship Carers are included in the analysis by carer type in Section 3.3.2.

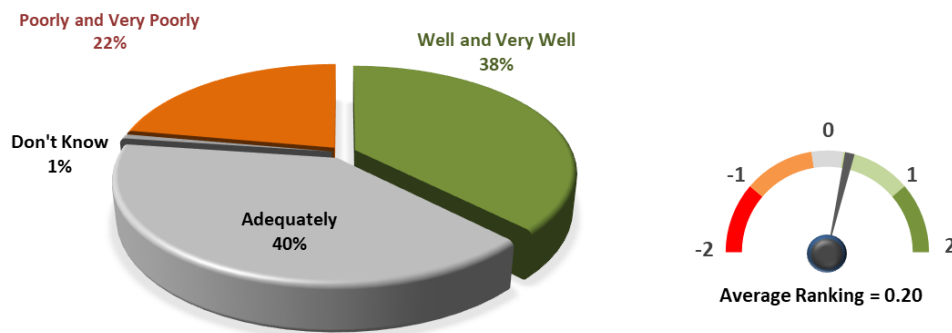
#### 3.3.1 Foster Carers

The survey results in Table 3.7 show the response at each level on the Likert scale, as a frequency and percentage of all respondents. The percentage response and average ranking for all carers is presented in Figure 3.12.

**Table 3.7 How Well Prepared or Trained (Foster Carers)**

	Frequency	Percentage Response
Very well	22	15%
Well	34	23%
Adequately	59	40%
Poorly	18	12%
Very poorly	15	10%
Don't know / not sure	1	1%
<b>TOTAL RESPONSE</b>	<b>149</b>	<b>100%</b>

**PREPARATION AND TRAINING  
FOSTER CARERS ONLY**



**Figure 3.12 How Well Prepared or Trained (Foster Carers) – Overall Result**

**KEY FINDINGS**

The largest response for this question is Adequate (40%).

Overall, the average ranking is positive (0.20) which means that foster carers generally feel adequately prepared to well prepared or trained for their role as carers.

These results indicate that while the training and preparation meets the needs of carers, there is room to shift this rating into even more positive territory.

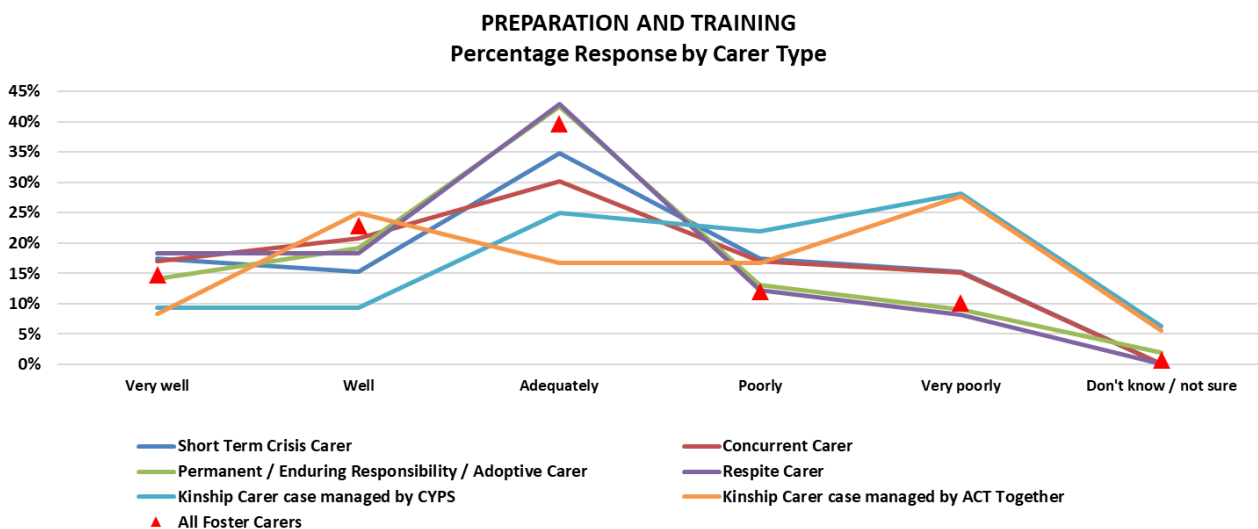
### 3.3.2 By Carer Type

The survey results have been analysed by carer type to identify areas of commonality and difference.

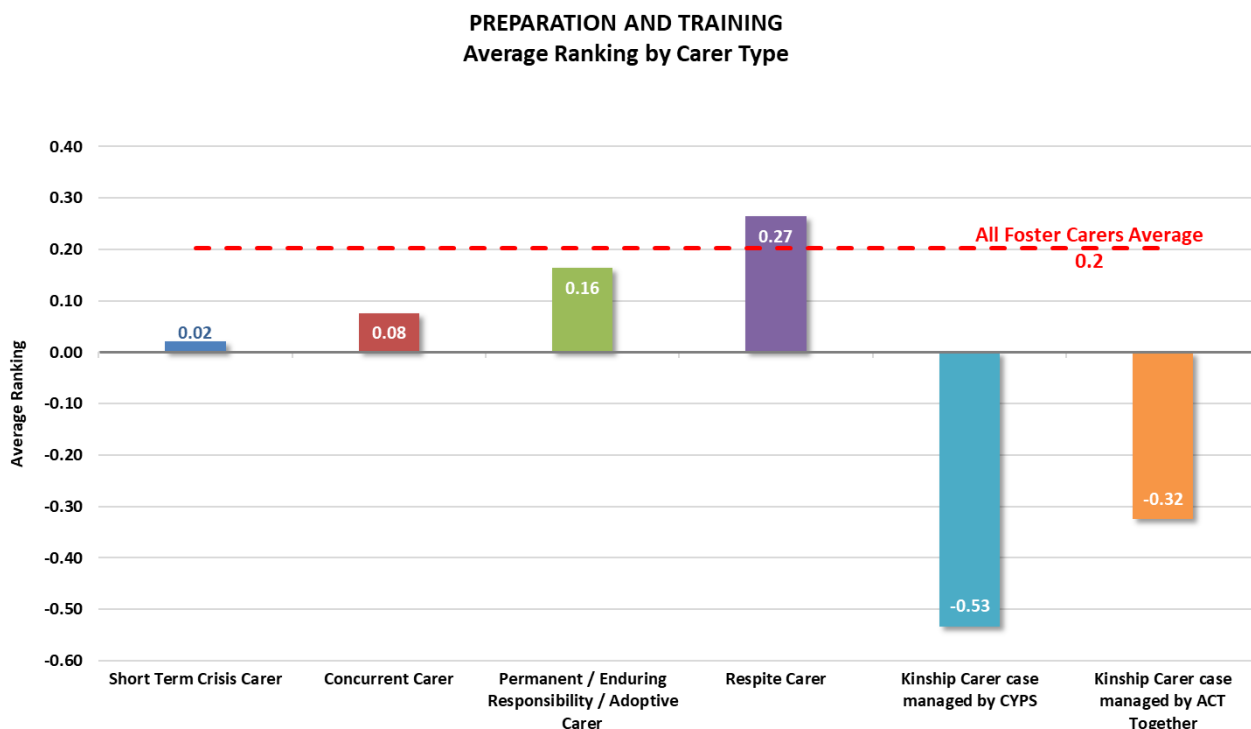
The survey results in Table 3.8 show the percentage response at each level on the Likert scale and the calculated average ranking by carer type. The results are also presented graphically in Figure 3.13 and Figure 3.14. The result for all foster carers has been included in these figures for comparison.

**Table 3.8 How Well Prepared or Trained by Carer Type**

	Very well	Well	Adequately	Poorly	Very poorly	Don't know / not sure	Total Response	Average Ranking
Short Term Crisis Carer	17%	15%	35%	17%	15%	0%	100%	<b>0.02</b>
Concurrent Carer	17%	21%	30%	17%	15%	0%	100%	<b>0.08</b>
Permanent / Enduring Responsibility / Adoptive Carer	14%	19%	42%	13%	9%	2%	100%	<b>0.16</b>
Respite Carer	18%	18%	43%	12%	8%	0%	100%	<b>0.27</b>
Kinship Carer case managed by CYPS	9%	9%	25%	22%	28%	6%	100%	<b>-0.53</b>
Kinship Carer case managed by ACT Together	8%	25%	17%	17%	28%	6%	100%	<b>-0.32</b>
<b>All Foster Carers</b>	<b>15%</b>	<b>23%</b>	<b>40%</b>	<b>12%</b>	<b>10%</b>	<b>1%</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>0.20</b>



**Figure 3.13 How Well Prepared or Trained - by Carer Type**



**Figure 3.14 How Well Prepared or Trained - Average Ranking by Carer Type**

### KEY FINDINGS

Kinship Carers (CYPS and ACT Together) feel the *least* prepared and trained, with both carer types returning the lowest percentage for Very Well Prepared/Trained (8%-9%) and the highest percentage for Very Poorly Prepared/Trained (28%). These are also the only carer types with a negative average ranking (-0.53 and -0.32). This result is to be expected since no training is offered to Kinship Carers and they may have had little time for preparation. They have not necessarily asked to become carers and may have had a child from their kinship group placed with them on very short notice.

Respite Carers and Permanent / Enduring Responsibility / Adoptive Carers feel the most prepared and trained, showing the highest percentage for Adequately Prepared/Trained (43% and 42% respectively).

Overall, Respite Carers returned the highest average ranking (0.27).

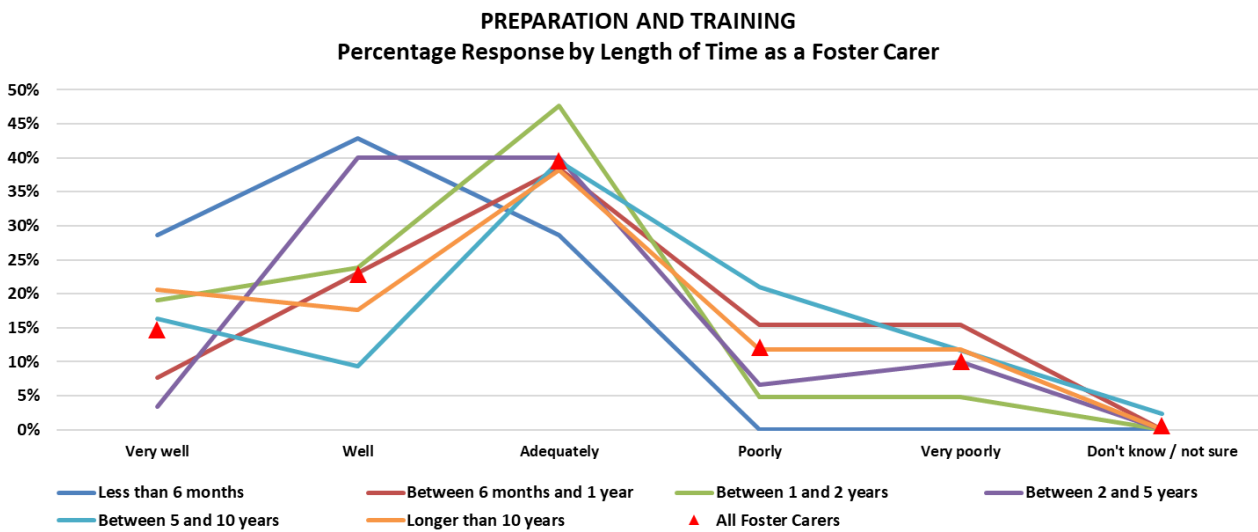
### 3.3.3 By Length of Time as a Foster Carer

The survey results have been analysed by length of time as a foster carer to identify areas of commonality and difference. Note that the results are provided for Foster Carers only, since Kinship Carers do not receive any training.

The survey results in Table 3.9 show the percentage response at each level on the Likert scale and the calculated average ranking by carer type. The results are also presented graphically in Figure 3.15 and Figure 3.16. The all foster carers result has been included in these figures for comparison.

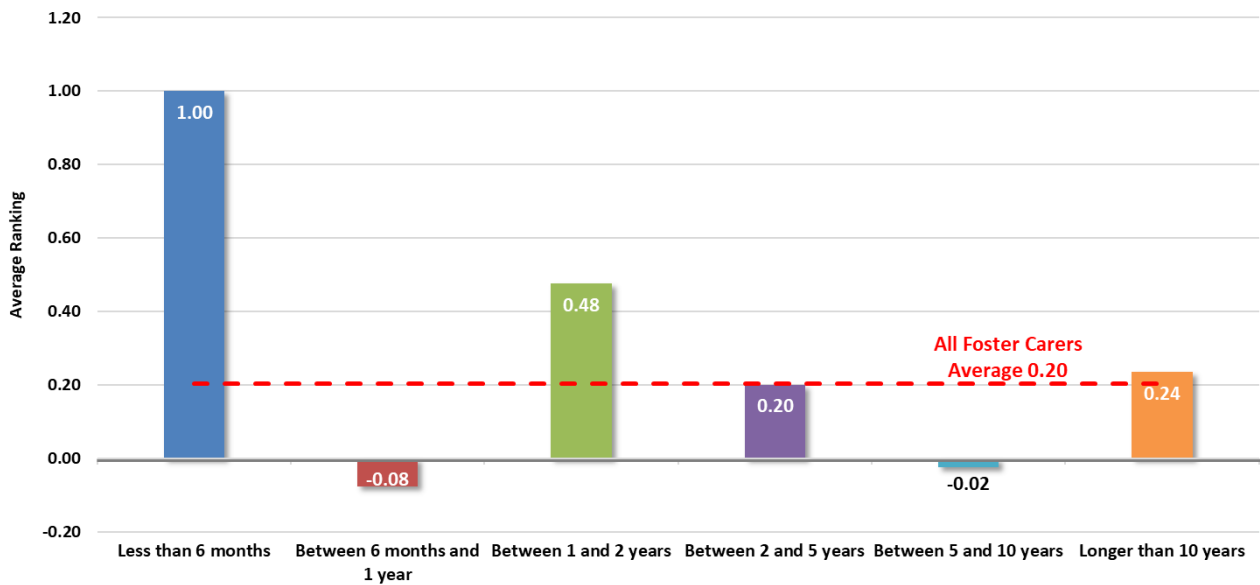
**Table 3.9 How Well Prepared or Trained by Length of Time as a Foster Carer**

	Very Well	Well	Mixed Feelings	Poorly	Very poorly	Not sure / don't know	Total Response	Average Ranking
<b>Less than 6 months</b>	29%	43%	29%	0%	0%	0%	100%	1.00
<b>Between 6 months and 1 year</b>	8%	23%	38%	15%	15%	0%	100%	-0.08
<b>Between 1 and 2 years</b>	19%	24%	48%	5%	5%	0%	100%	0.48
<b>Between 2 and 5 years</b>	3%	40%	40%	7%	10%	0%	100%	0.20
<b>Between 5 and 10 years</b>	16%	9%	40%	21%	12%	2%	100%	-0.02
<b>Longer than 10 years</b>	21%	18%	38%	12%	12%	0%	100%	0.24
<b>All Foster Carers</b>	15%	23%	40%	12%	10%	1%	100%	0.20



**Figure 3.15 How Well Prepared or Trained - by Length of Time as a Foster Carer**

**PREPARATION AND TRAINING**  
Average Ranking by Length of Time as a Foster Carer



**Figure 3.16 How Well Prepared or Trained - Average Ranking by Length of Time as a Foster Carer**

**KEY FINDINGS**

There is wide variance in the responses across the length-of-time groups and this is reflected in the average rankings.

Those who have been foster carers for less than six months feel the most well trained or prepared with an average ranking of 1.0 (on a scale from -2 to 2).

Overall, there appears to be no real pattern for those respondents who have been foster carers for longer than six months.



### 3.4 INVOLVEMENT IN DECISION MAKING

Respondents were asked to indicate how satisfied they are with being listened to and heard, when decisions are made about children in their care.

The following questions were asked.

<b>QUESTION</b>	<p><i>When decisions are made about children in your care, how satisfied are you that you have been listened to and heard?</i></p> <p><i>Very satisfied, Satisfied, Mixed Feelings, Dissatisfied, Very Dissatisfied, Not sure/Don't Know</i></p>
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<b>QUESTION</b>	<p><i>When decisions are made about children in your care, how satisfied are you that your views are adequately reflected in decisions and responses that are taken?</i></p> <p><i>Very satisfied, Satisfied, Mixed Feelings, Dissatisfied, Very Dissatisfied, Not sure/Don't Know</i></p>
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<b>QUESTION</b>	<p><i>How well have the reasons behind decisions been explained to you?</i></p> <p><i>Very well, Well, Mixed Adequately, Poorly, Very Poorly, Not sure/Don't Know</i></p>
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The results are presented as a percentage response and an average ranking. The average ranking is calculated by converting the Likert scale response to a numerical value as shown in Table 3.10. Any ranking over 0 indicates a “more than satisfied/adequate” response.

**Table 3.10 Satisfaction and Adequacy Ranking Scales**

Satisfaction Response	Adequacy Response	Scale
Very Satisfied	Very Well	2
Satisfied	Well	1
Mixed Feelings	Adequate	0
Dissatisfied	Poor	-1
Very Dissatisfied	Very poor	-2
Not Sure/Don't know	Not Sure/Don't know	Not included in ranking

The response to these questions has been analysed for all respondents and for all respondents by carer type.

Section 3.4.4 provides a summary of the overall satisfaction with the level of involvement in decision-making.

### 3.4.1 Listened to and Heard?

<b>QUESTION</b>	<p><i>When decisions are made about children in your care, how satisfied are you that you have been listened to and heard?</i></p> <p><i>Very satisfied, Satisfied, Mixed Feelings, Dissatisfied, Very Dissatisfied, Not sure/Don't Know</i></p>
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The survey results in Table 3.11 show the percentage response at each level on the Likert scale and the calculated average ranking by carer type. The percentage response and the average rankings are presented by carer type in Figure 3.17 and Figure 3.18. The results for all respondents are shown in Figure 3.19.

**Table 3.11 Listened to and Heard**

	Very satisfied	Satisfied	Mixed Feelings	Dissatisfied	Very dissatisfied	Not sure / don't know	Total Response	Average Ranking
Short Term Crisis Carer	4%	0%	37%	22%	37%	0%	100%	<b>-0.87</b>
Concurrent Carer	13%	17%	17%	26%	26%	0%	100%	<b>-0.36</b>
Permanent / Enduring Responsibility / Adoptive Carer	8%	11%	32%	21%	26%	1%	100%	<b>-0.47</b>
Respite Carer	6%	2%	31%	29%	24%	8%	100%	<b>-0.69</b>
Kinship Carer case managed by CYPs	13%	22%	25%	3%	38%	0%	100%	<b>-0.31</b>
Kinship Carer case managed by ACT Together	6%	25%	28%	22%	19%	0%	100%	<b>-0.25</b>
<b>All Respondents</b>	<b>10%</b>	<b>15%</b>	<b>30%</b>	<b>17%</b>	<b>26%</b>	<b>2%</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>-0.34</b>

### Listened to and Heard Percentage Response by Carer Type

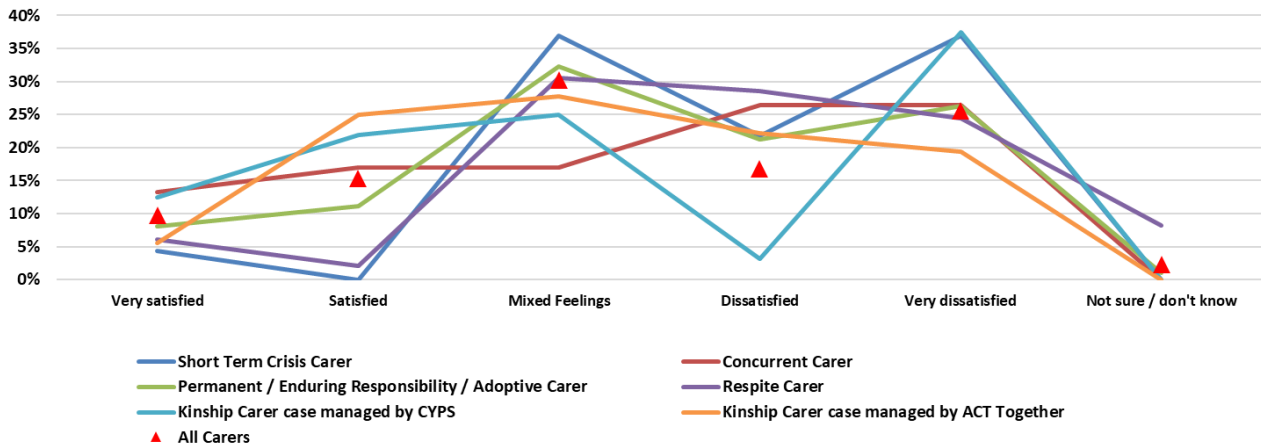


Figure 3.17 Listened to and Heard - by Carer Type

### Listened to and Heard Average Ranking by Carer Type

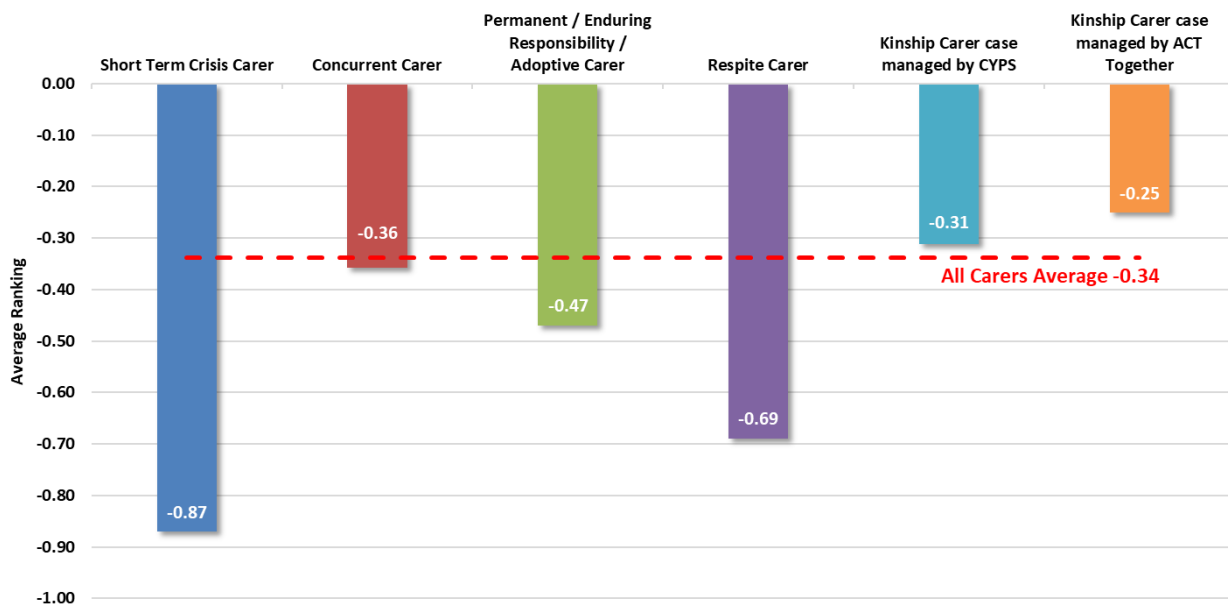


Figure 3.18 Listened to and Heard - Average Ranking by Carer Type

## Listened to and Heard

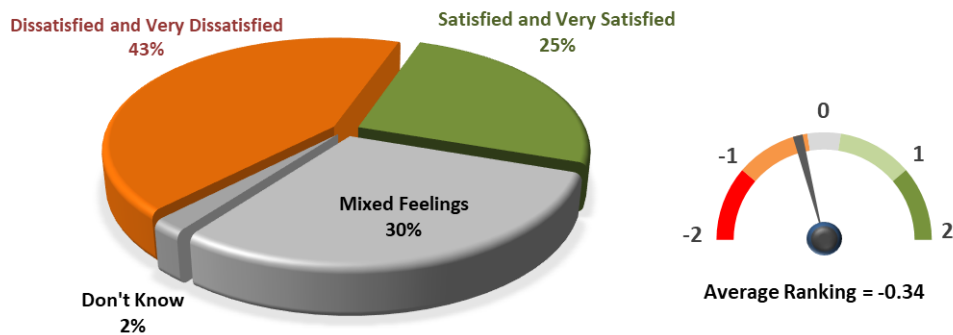


Figure 3.19 Listened to and Heard - Overall Satisfaction

### KEY FINDINGS

Figure 3.17 shows there is wide variation in the distribution pattern across carer types indicating that their experiences in this area are quite different.

Short Term Crisis Carers and Respite Carers returned the lowest responses for Satisfied/Very Satisfied (0% / 4% and 2% / 6% respectively).

Short Term Crisis Carers also showed the highest levels of dissatisfaction with 59% returning either Dissatisfied (22%) or Very Dissatisfied (37%).

With the exception of Kinship Carers managed by ACT Together, respondents in all other carer types returned a very high response rate for Very Dissatisfied, ranging from 24% to 38%.

Average rankings, on a scale from -2 to 2, were negative for all carer types ranging from:

- Lowest: Short Term Crisis Carers (-0.87)
- Highest: Kinship Carers managed by ACT Together (-0.25).

Carer types with the lowest average rankings are Respite Carers (-0.69) and Short Term Crisis Carers (-0.87).

The overall results for all respondents show:

- Dissatisfied and Very Dissatisfied: 43%
- Satisfied and Very Satisfied: 25%
- Mixed Feelings: 30%
- Average ranking (on a scale from -2 to 2): -0.34

These results indicate that the majority of respondents are not confident they are being listened to and heard when decisions are being made about the children in their care.

### 3.4.2 Views Adequately Reflected in Decisions?

#### QUESTION

When decisions are made about children in your care, how satisfied are you that your views are adequately reflected in decisions and responses that are taken?

Very satisfied, Satisfied, Mixed Feelings, Dissatisfied, Very Dissatisfied, Not sure/Don't Know

The survey results in Table 3.12 show the percentage response at each level on the Likert scale and the calculated average ranking by carer type. The percentage response and the average rankings are presented by carer type in Figure 3.20 and Figure 3.21. The results for all respondents are shown in Figure 3.22.

Table 3.12 Views Adequately Reflected in Decisions

	Very satisfied	Satisfied	Mixed Feelings	Dissatisfied	Very dissatisfied	Not sure / don't know	Total Response	Average Ranking
Short Term Crisis Carer	7%	7%	28%	24%	35%	0%	100%	-0.74
Concurrent Carer	17%	15%	19%	23%	26%	0%	100%	-0.26
Permanent / Enduring Responsibility / Adoptive Carer	6%	19%	32%	14%	27%	1%	100%	-0.38
Respite Carer	6%	10%	24%	24%	27%	8%	100%	-0.60
Kinship Carer case managed by CYPs	13%	25%	28%	3%	31%	0%	100%	-0.16
Kinship Carer case managed by ACT Together	8%	33%	25%	14%	19%	0%	100%	-0.03
<b>All Respondents</b>	<b>10%</b>	<b>20%</b>	<b>30%</b>	<b>13%</b>	<b>25%</b>	<b>2%</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>-0.23</b>

Views Adequately Reflected in Decisions  
Percentage Response by Carer Type

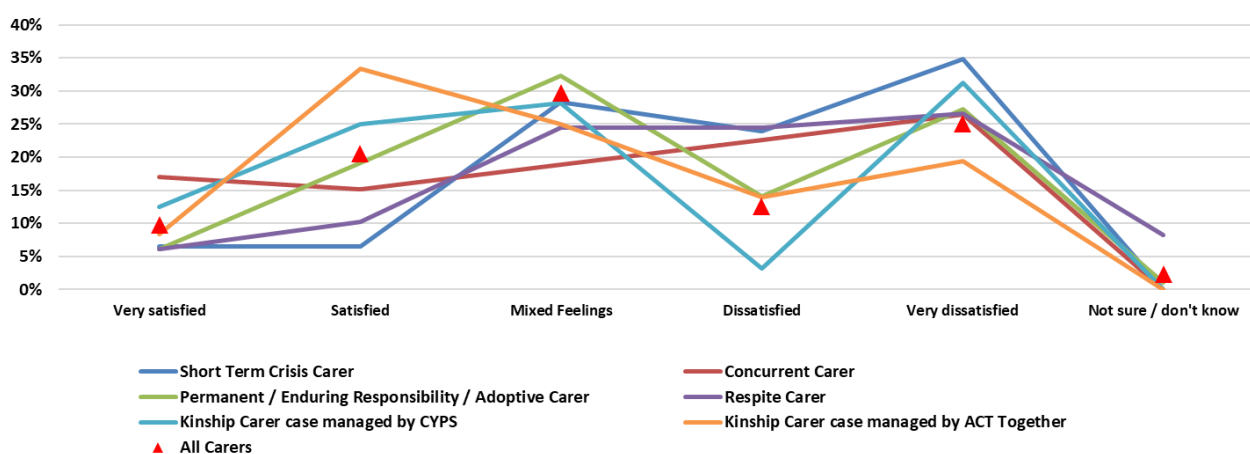


Figure 3.20 Views Adequately Reflected in Decisions - by Carer Type

### Views Adequately Reflected in Decisions Average Ranking by Carer Type

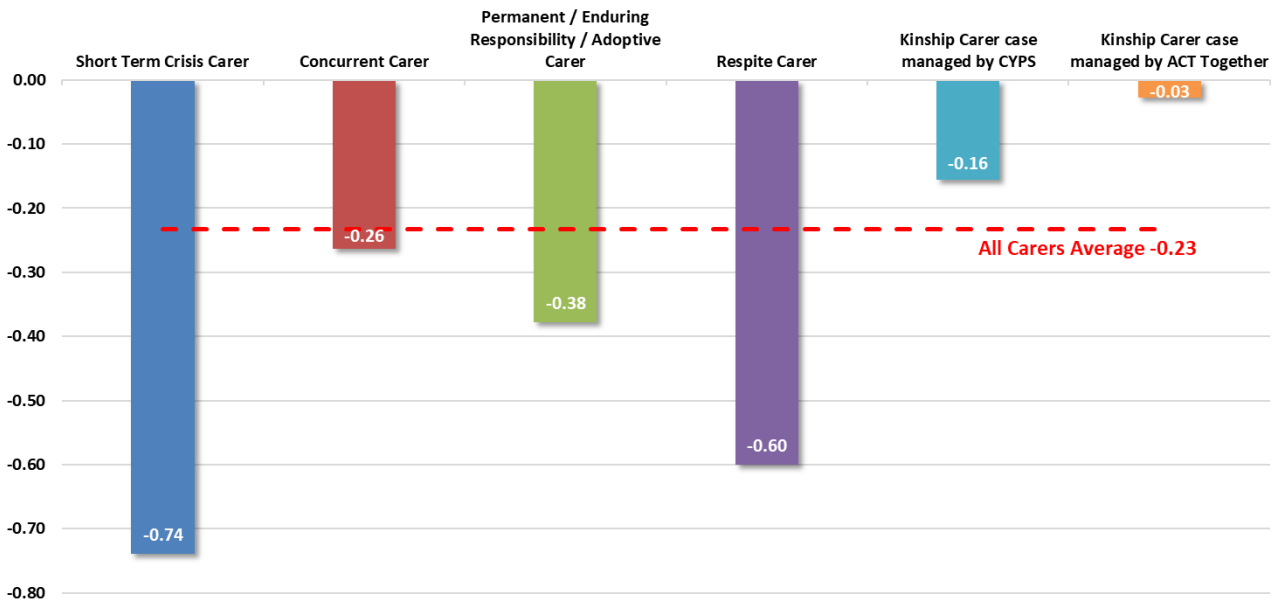


Figure 3.21 Views Adequately Reflected in Decisions - Average Ranking by Carer Type

### Views Adequately Reflected in Decisions



Figure 3.22 Views Adequately Reflected in Decisions – Overall Satisfaction

## KEY FINDINGS

Figure 3.20 shows there is wide variation in the distribution pattern across carer types indicating that their experiences in this area are quite different.

There is some consistency between the results for this question and the previous question (Listened to and Heard) regarding distribution pattern across carer types and overall results.

Short Term Crisis Carers and Respite Carers returned the lowest responses for Satisfied (7% and 10% respectively).

Short Term Crisis Carers also showed the highest levels of dissatisfaction with 59% returning either Dissatisfied (24%) or Very Dissatisfied (35%).

With the exception of Kinship Carers managed by ACT, all other carer types returned a very high response rate for Very Dissatisfied, ranging from 26% to 35%.

Average rankings, on a scale from -2 to 2, were negative for all carer types ranging from:

- Lowest: Short Term Crisis Carers (-0.74)
- Highest: Kinship Carers managed by ACT Together (-0.26).

Carer types with the lowest average rankings are Short Term Crisis Carers (-0.74) and Respite Carers (-0.60).

The overall results for all respondents show:

- Dissatisfied and Very Dissatisfied: 38%
- Satisfied and Very Satisfied: 30%
- Mixed Feelings 30%
- Average ranking (on a scale from -2 to 2): -0.23

These results indicate that carers are not satisfied their views are being adequately reflected in the decisions that are being made for the children in their care.

### 3.4.3 Reasons Behind Decisions Explained?

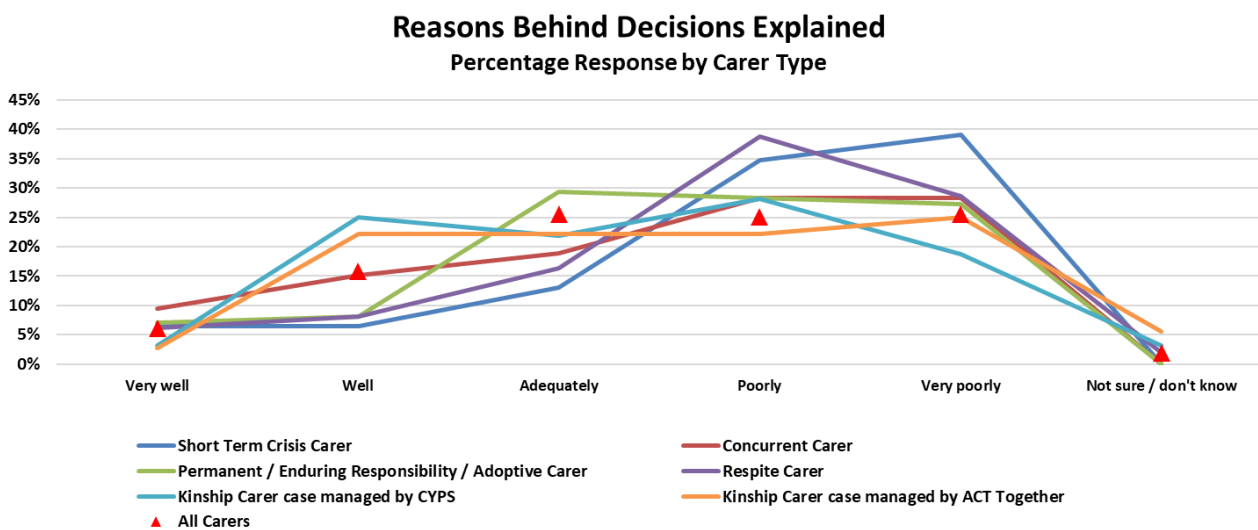
<b>QUESTION</b>	<i>How well have the reasons behind decisions been explained to you?</i>
	<i>Very well, Well, Mixed Adequately, Poorly, Very Poorly, Not sure/Don't Know</i>

The survey results in Table 3.13 show the percentage response at each level on the Likert scale and the calculated average ranking by carer type. The percentage response and the average rankings

are presented by carer type in Figure 3.23 and Figure 3.24. The results for all respondents are shown in Figure 3.25.

**Table 3.13 Reasons Behind Decisions Explained**

	Very Well	Well	Adequately	Poorly	Very Poorly	Not sure / don't know	Total Response	Average Ranking
Short Term Crisis Carer	7%	7%	13%	35%	39%	0%	100%	-0.93
Concurrent Carer	9%	15%	19%	28%	28%	0%	100%	-0.51
Permanent / Enduring Responsibility / Adoptive Carer	7%	8%	29%	28%	27%	0%	100%	-0.61
Respite Carer	6%	8%	16%	39%	29%	2%	100%	-0.77
Kinship Carer case managed by CYPs	3%	25%	22%	28%	19%	3%	100%	-0.35
Kinship Carer case managed by ACT Together	3%	22%	22%	22%	25%	6%	100%	-0.47
<b>All Respondents</b>	<b>6%</b>	<b>16%</b>	<b>26%</b>	<b>25%</b>	<b>26%</b>	<b>2%</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>-0.49</b>



**Figure 3.23 Reasons Behind Decisions Explained - by Carer Type**



### Reasons Behind Decisions Explained Average Ranking by Carer Type

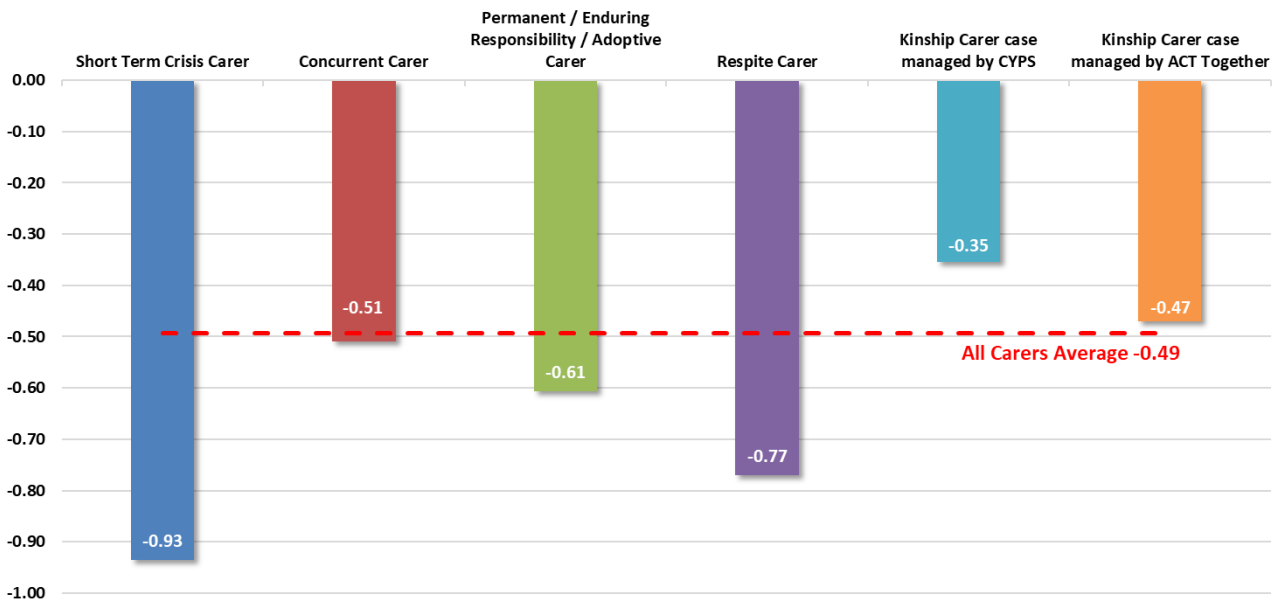


Figure 3.24 Reasons Behind Decisions Explained - Average Ranking by Carer Type

### Reasons Behind Decisions Explained

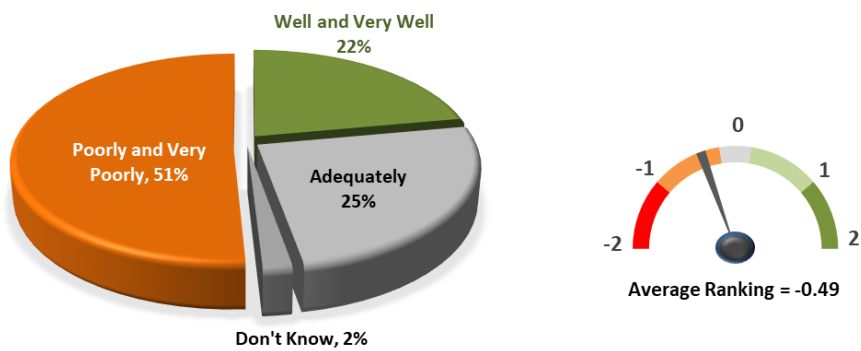


Figure 3.25 Reasons Behind Decisions Explained – Overall Result

## KEY FINDINGS

Figure 3.23 shows there is some consistency in the distribution pattern across carer types, with the highest percentage responses being Poorly or Very Poorly for most groups.

Short Term Crisis Carers showed the highest percentage of negative responses with 74% returning either Poor (35%) or Very Poor (39%).

All carer types showed a very low percentage response for Very Well (3%-9%).

Short Term Crisis Carers (7%), Permanent / Enduring Responsibility / Adoptive Carers (8%) and Respite Carers (8%) returned the lowest responses for Well.

With the exception of Kinship Carers managed by CYPS, respondents in all other carer types returned a very high response rate for Very Poorly, ranging from 25% to 39%.

Average rankings, on a scale from -2 to 2, were negative for all carer types ranging from:

- Lowest: Short Term Crisis Carers (-0.93)
- Highest: Kinship Carers managed by CYPS (-0.35).

Carer types with the lowest average rankings are Short Term Crisis Carers (-0.93) and Respite Carers (-0.77).

The overall results for all respondents show:

- Poorly and Very Poorly: 51%
- Well and Very Well: 22%
- Adequately: 25%
- Average ranking (on a scale from -2 to 2): -0.49

These results indicate the majority of carers feel that the reasons behind the decisions that are being made for children in their care are poorly or very poorly explained.

### 3.4.4 Overview for Involvement in Decision Making

Summary results from the three Decision Making questions are presented side by side in this section to provide an indication of the overall level of satisfaction with involvement during the decision-making process.

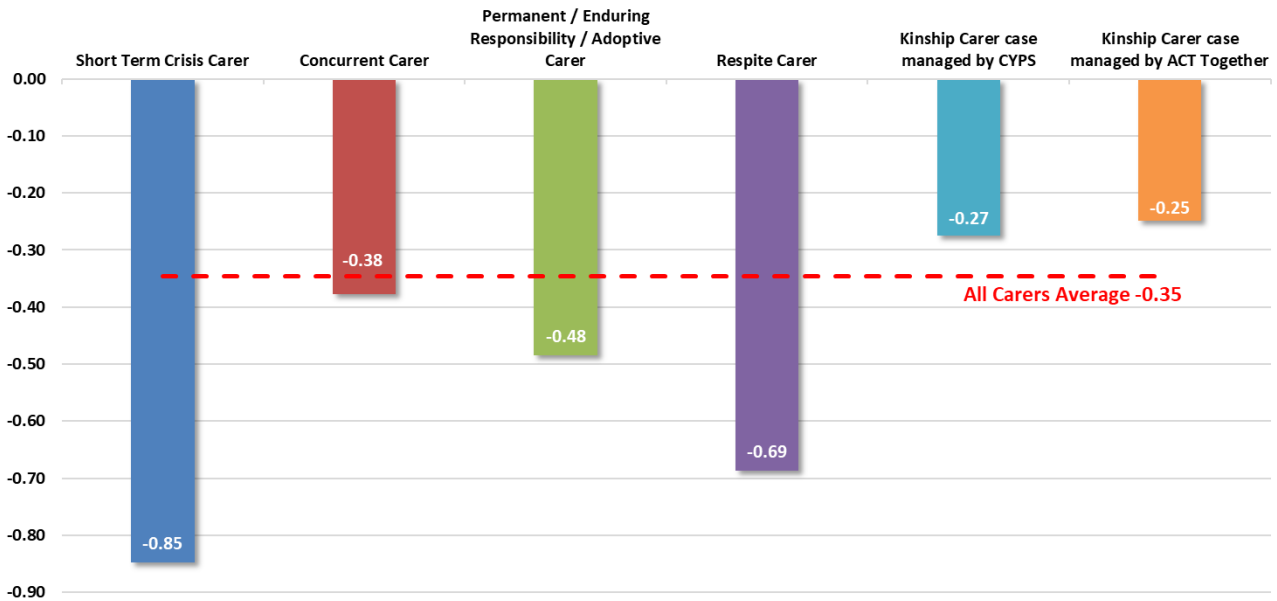
Table 3.14 shows the three average rankings by carer type and for all respondents and these results are also presented graphically in Figure 3.26.

The overall average rankings showing the level of satisfaction with the level of involvement in decision-making as a whole is presented in Figure 3.27.

**Table 3.14 Involvement in Decision Making by Carer Type**

	Listened to and heard	Views adequately reflected in decisions	Reasons behind decisions explained	Overall Average
Short Term Crisis Carer	-0.87	-0.74	-0.93	-0.85
Concurrent Carer	-0.36	-0.26	-0.51	-0.38
Permanent / Enduring Responsibility / Adoptive Carer	-0.47	-0.38	-0.61	-0.48
Respite Carer	-0.69	-0.60	-0.77	-0.69
Kinship Carer case managed by CYPS	-0.31	-0.16	-0.35	-0.27
Kinship Carer case managed by ACT Together	-0.25	-0.03	-0.47	-0.25
All Respondents	-0.34	-0.23	-0.49	-0.35

**DECISION MAKING QUESTIONS OVERALL RESULT  
Average Ranking by Carer Type**



**Figure 3.26 Involvement in Decision Making - Average Rankings by Carer Type**

### Overview for Decision Making Questions

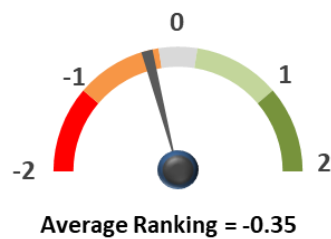


Figure 3.27 Involvement in Decision Making – Overall Result by Carer Type

### KEY FINDINGS

The average rankings within each carer type show a similar level of dissatisfaction across the three areas of the involvement in the decision-making process, with the adequacy of the feedback process (reasons behind decisions explained) returning the lowest average ranking.

Average rankings are negative across all carer types for all areas of the decision-making process.

Short Term Crisis Carers and Respite Carers are the *least* satisfied with the level of involvement in decision-making, returning average rankings of -0.85 and -0.69 respectively.

Overall average ranking for all respondents regarding their satisfaction with the level of involvement in the decision-making process is -0.35 indicating that involvement in all three areas of decision-making could be improved.

### 3.5 SUMMARY FOR INDIGENOUS CARERS

A summary of the results for respondents who identified as Indigenous is provided for the following questions:

<b>QUESTION</b>	<p><i>Please think about your expectations and the commitments made before you started as a carer. How satisfied are you that those expectations and commitments have been met?</i></p> <p><i>Very satisfied, Satisfied, Mixed Feelings, Dissatisfied, Very Dissatisfied, Not sure/Don't Know</i></p>
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<b>QUESTION</b>	<p><i>All things considered, how well do you consider that you have been properly prepared or trained, either formally or informally, for the role of foster carer / kinship carer / permanent carer at this current time?</i></p> <p><i>Very well, Well, Mixed Adequately, Poorly, Very Poorly, Not sure/Don't Know</i></p>
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<b>QUESTION</b>	<p><i>When decisions are made about children in your care, how satisfied are you that you have been listened to and heard?</i></p> <p><i>Very satisfied, Satisfied, Mixed Feelings, Dissatisfied, Very Dissatisfied, Not sure/Don't Know</i></p>
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<b>QUESTION</b>	<p><i>When decisions are made about children in your care, how satisfied are you that your views are adequately reflected in decisions and responses that are taken?</i></p> <p><i>Very satisfied, Satisfied, Mixed Feelings, Dissatisfied, Very Dissatisfied, Not sure/Don't Know</i></p>
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<b>QUESTION</b>	<p><i>How well have the reasons behind decisions been explained to you?</i></p> <p><i>Very well, Well, Mixed Adequately, Poorly, Very Poorly, Not sure/Don't Know</i></p>
-----------------	---

Note that the survey population included 11 respondents who identified as Aboriginal and no respondents who identified as Torres Strait Islander.

Within the target population, 77 carers identify as being Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander and some carers do not have their Indigenous status recorded. Therefore, a sample size of 11 respondents is not sufficient to reflect the views of Indigenous carers. These results are presented for interest only.

The survey results in Table 3.15 show the percentage response at each level on the Likert scale and the calculated average ranking for each question. The percentage response and the average rankings are presented in Figure 3.28 and Figure 3.29. The results for all respondents are included in the average rankings figure for reference.

Table 3.15 Summary for Indigenous Carers

	Very satisfied	Satisfied	Mixed Feelings	Dissatisfied	Very dissatisfied	Not sure / don't know	Total Response	Aboriginal Carers Average Ranking	All Respondents Average Ranking
Expectations and Prior Commitments Satisfaction	18%	18%	18%	18%	27%	0%	100%	-0.18	-0.22
Adequacy of Preparation and Training for the Carer role	27%	9%	27%	9%	27%	0%	100%	0.00	0.20
DECISION MAKING - Listened to and heard	36%	0%	27%	0%	36%	0%	100%	0.00	-0.34
DECISION MAKING - Views reflected in decisions	36%	9%	27%	9%	18%	0%	100%	0.36	-0.23
DECISION MAKING - Reasons behind decisions explained	18%	18%	18%	18%	27%	0%	100%	-0.18	-0.49

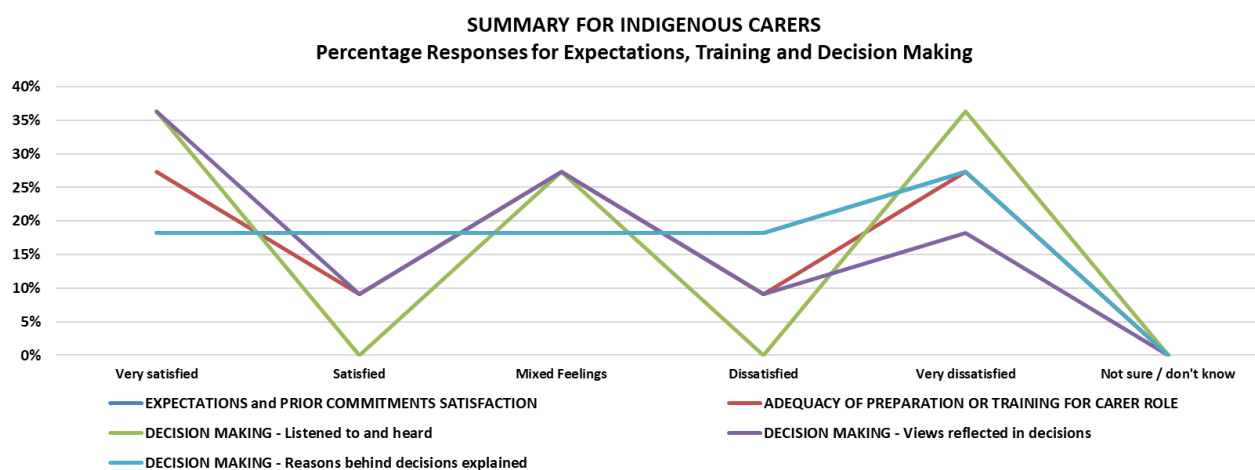
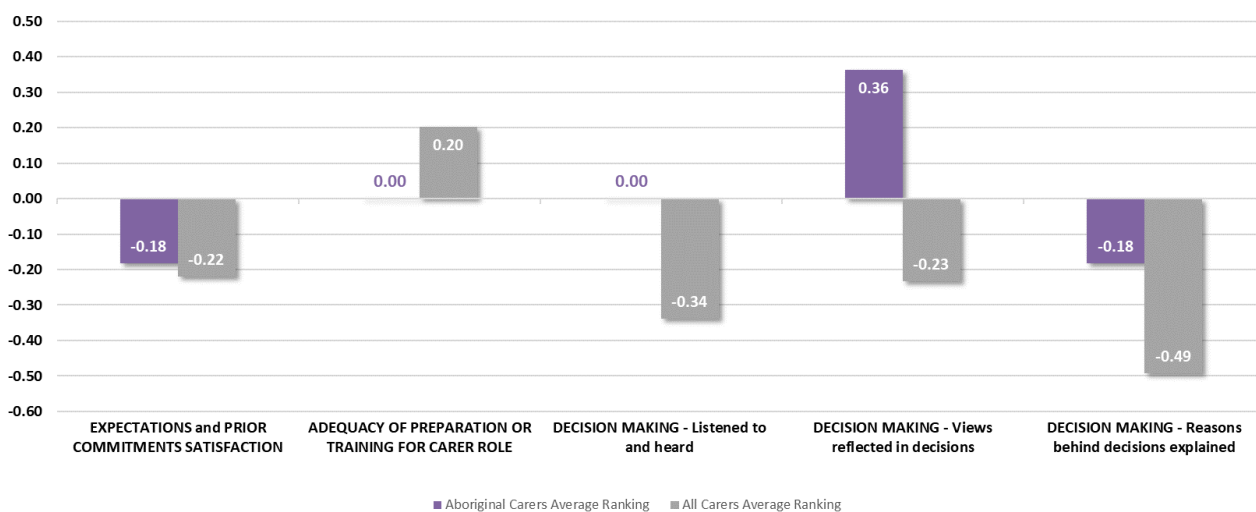


Figure 3.28 Summary for Indigenous Carers - Percentage Response

**SUMMARY FOR INDIGENOUS CARERS**  
Average Rankings for Expectations, Training and Decision Making



**Figure 3.29 Summary for Indigenous Carers - Average Rankings**

### KEY FINDINGS

Indigenous carers who responded to this survey were satisfied their views are being adequately reflected in decisions made about children in their care, with this question showing the highest average ranking (0.36).

The areas in which they show *least satisfaction* are:

- How well expectations and prior commitments made before becoming a carer have been met (-0.18)
- How well the reasons behind decisions made about children in their care have been explained (-0.18).

Overall the Indigenous respondents showed a higher level of satisfaction than the average result for all respondents, across all areas except for the Adequacy of Preparation and Training.

### 3.6 SUPPORT SERVICES

Respondents were asked to consider a list of support services that are available to Carers and to indicate whether they have used these services and if they were useful or valuable to them.

#### QUESTION

*In the last 6 months, what support services have you used and how valuable were they to you as a carer?*

*Have used and valuable, Have used and not valuable, Haven't Use but know about, Haven't used, did not know about*

The support services that carers were asked to consider are:

- Carer support staff from government department (e.g. Child and Youth Protection Services)
- Carer support from non-government agencies (e.g. ACT Together, ACF/Therapeutic Team)
- External professional support (psychologists, counsellors etc.)
- Carer Advocacy Groups (e.g. Carers ACT)
- Carer Support organisations and groups (e.g. Foster Care Association)
- After hours crisis support
- Respite care
- Disability Support Services
- Transport Services
- Legal Services
- Specialised Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Service
- Informal / social carer's network
- General information about parenting and caring (not foster carer specific).

The available response options were:

Have used and valuable

Haven't used but know about

Have used and not valuable

Haven't used, did not know about

These response options have been interpreted as follows:

- Have used and valuable – considered a *positive* response; the service was needed by the carers and when used it provided valuable support
- Have used and not valuable – considered a *negative* response; the service was needed and used by carers, but it did not fulfil their requirements or provide valuable relief or assistance
- Haven't used but know about – considered a *mixed* response; there could be many reasons why the service was not used - carers may have no need for this particular service, there may be blockers to them accessing the service or they may have heard that it doesn't work or is not useful; on the other hand, the service has visibility and carers know it is available for them



- Haven't used, did not know about – considered a *negative* response; there may be carers with needs that the service could have addressed, providing them with valuable support, but the carers' lack of awareness may mean that they struggled with their need or found other means of support that may have been less appropriate or costlier for them
- N/A – not included in the results.

The survey results are shown in Table 3.16 as a percentage of all respondents and presented graphically in Figure 3.30 for all carers, Figure 3.31 for Foster Carers and Figure 3.32 for Kinship Carers. Note that the N/A responses are not included in the results.

In Figure 3.30, Figure 3.31 and Figure 3.32 the responses have been grouped by usage with the responses from those who have used the service presented on the right, and from those who have not used it presented on the left. Positive responses are presented as green, negative responses as red and mixed responses as orange.

**Table 3.16 Support Services Usage and Value**

	Valuable	Not valuable	Total Used	Know about	Did not know about	Total Not Used	Total Response
Carer support staff from government department (e.g. Child and Youth Protection Services)	16%	13%	<b>29%</b>	29%	42%	<b>71%</b>	<b>100%</b>
Carer support from non-government agencies (e.g. ACT Together, ACF/Therapeutic Team)	42%	24%	<b>66%</b>	25%	8%	<b>34%</b>	<b>100%</b>
External professional support (psychologists, counsellors etc.)	39%	3%	<b>42%</b>	45%	13%	<b>58%</b>	<b>100%</b>
Carer Advocacy Groups (e.g. Carers ACT)	19%	4%	<b>22%</b>	54%	24%	<b>78%</b>	<b>100%</b>
Carer Support organisations and groups (e.g. Foster Care Association)	12%	5%	<b>16%</b>	48%	36%	<b>84%</b>	<b>100%</b>
After hours crisis support	14%	12%	<b>26%</b>	55%	19%	<b>74%</b>	<b>100%</b>
Respite care	20%	3%	<b>23%</b>	64%	13%	<b>77%</b>	<b>100%</b>
Disability Support Services	9%	4%	<b>13%</b>	59%	28%	<b>87%</b>	<b>100%</b>
Transport Services	26%	5%	<b>32%</b>	41%	28%	<b>68%</b>	<b>100%</b>
Legal Services	1%	2%	<b>3%</b>	44%	53%	<b>97%</b>	<b>100%</b>
Specialised Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Service	5%	5%	<b>10%</b>	51%	39%	<b>90%</b>	<b>100%</b>
Informal / social carer's network	36%	3%	<b>39%</b>	34%	27%	<b>61%</b>	<b>100%</b>
General information about parenting and caring (not foster carer specific)	43%	6%	<b>49%</b>	32%	19%	<b>51%</b>	<b>100%</b>

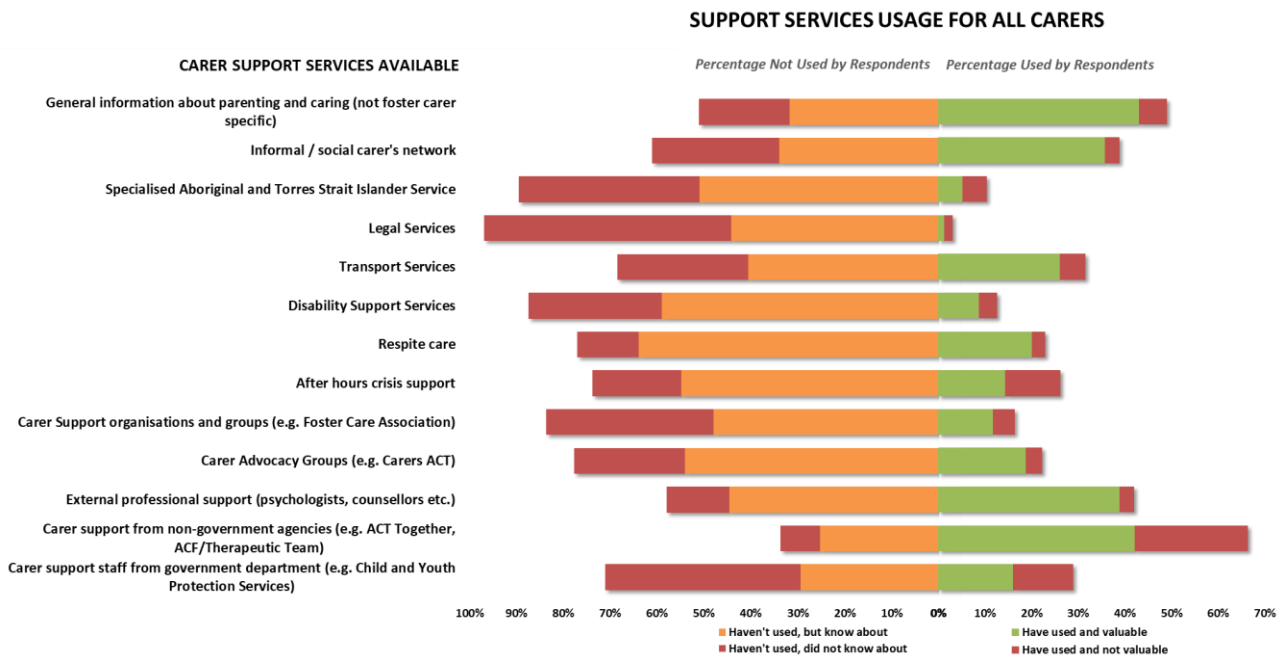


Figure 3.30 Support Services Usage and Value – All Carers

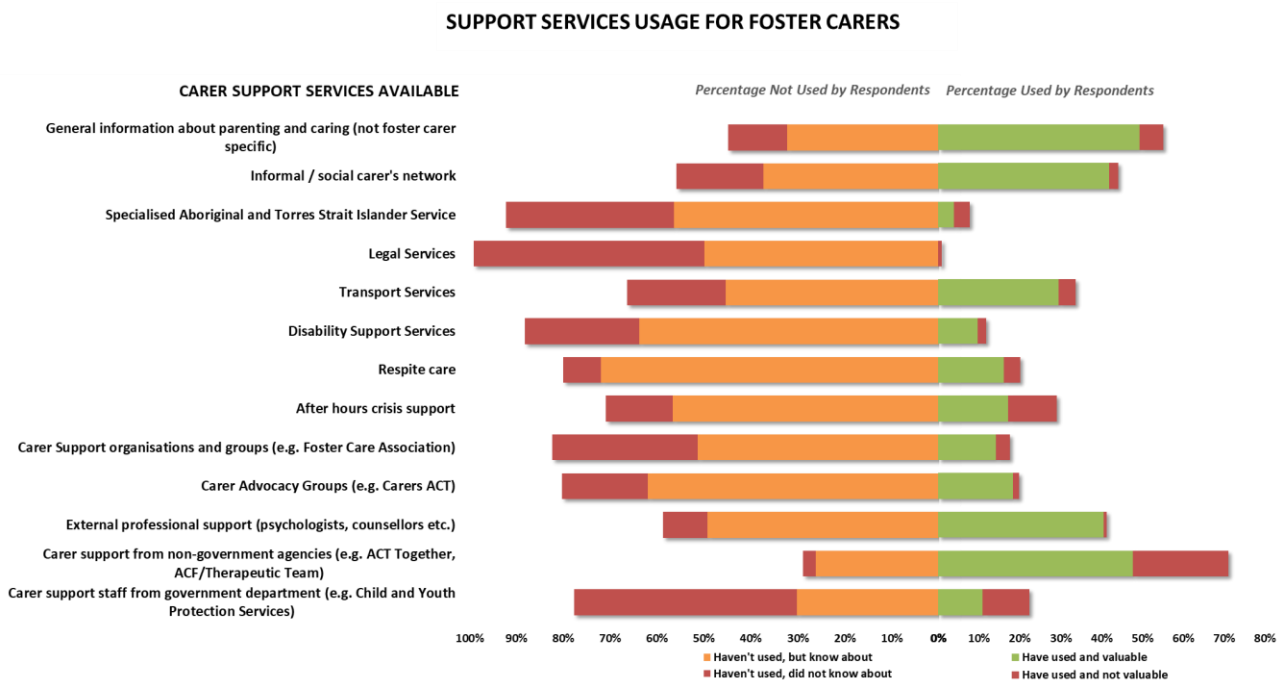


Figure 3.31 Support Services Usage and Value - Foster Carers

### SUPPORT SERVICES USAGE FOR KINSHIP CARERS

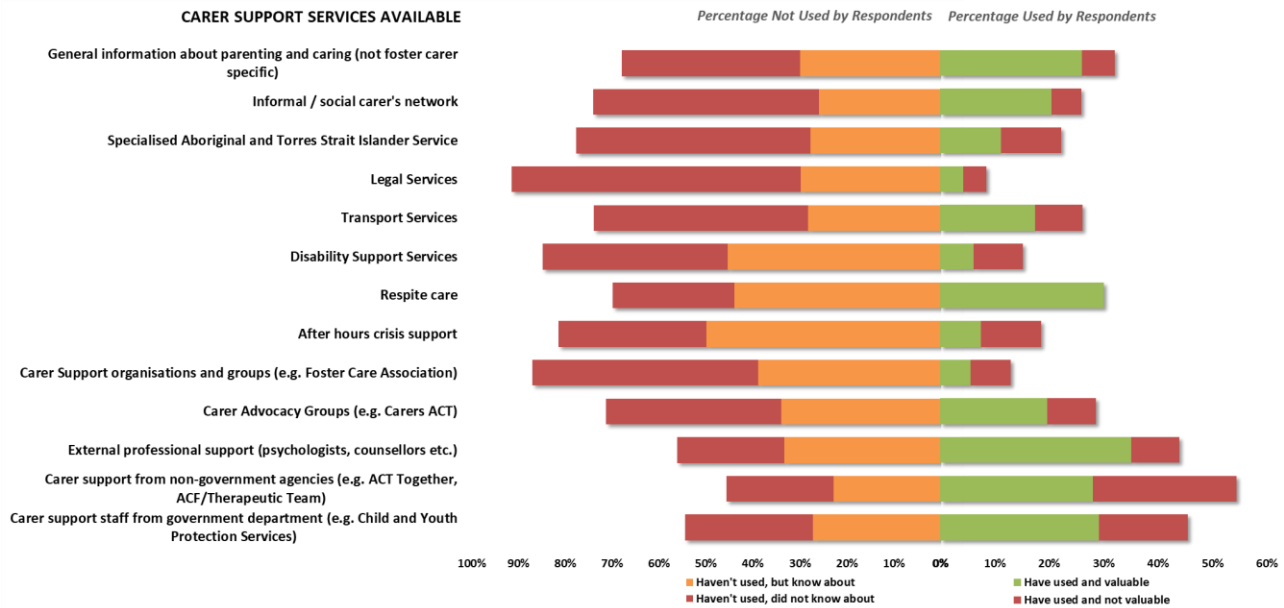


Figure 3.32 Support Services Usage and Value - Kinship Carers

### KEY FINDINGS

The support service most used by respondents is Carer Support from Non-Government Agencies (e.g. ACT Together, ACF/Therapeutic Team), with 66% of respondents having used this service, and 42% of them finding it valuable.

For all other services except General Information about Parenting and Caring and External Professional Support, the percentage of respondents not using the support service far outweighed the percentage that used it.

Legal Services is the least used support service (3%) with over half of the respondents not aware that it is available. Note however, that this is a specialised service and not everyone is offered or needs Legal Services.

Although the Specialised Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Service was used by a small percentage of respondents (5%) it was used by 33% of the respondents who identified as Indigenous. This service was also used by respondents who identified as Non-Indigenous.

A large percentage of respondents indicated that they did not know about the following services:

- Legal Services (53%)
- Carer support staff from government department (e.g. Child and Youth Protection Services) (42%)
- Specialised Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Service (39%) – note that this excludes those who felt the service was not applicable to them (N/A)
- Carer Support organisations and groups (e.g. Foster Care Association) (36%).

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Some differences were noted between the Foster Carer and the Kinship Carer respondents:

- Foster Carers made more use of General Information on Parenting, Informal /Social carer's network and Carer support from non-government agencies (e.g. ACT Together, ACF/Therapeutic Team)
- Kinship Carers made more use of the Specialised Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Service, Respite Care and Carer support staff from government department (e.g. Child and Youth Protection Services). All Kinship carers that used the respite care service found it valuable.

### 3.7 MAKING LIFE EASIER OR CAUSING STRESS?

Respondents were asked to consider a list of factors and to indicate whether they have made their life easier or found them to be a cause of stress.

#### QUESTION

*We would like to know what causes you stress in the system and what makes your life easier*

*Makes my life as a carer easier/enhances the experience, Mixed Feelings, Causes me stress/makes being a carer harder, I don't know/don't think about it, N/A*

The factors that carers were asked to consider are:

- Relationships with other carers
- Information provided to me about the child in my care (background or past experiences)
- Training
- Relationships with other support staff
- Meetings with Case Worker(s)
- Understanding the child protection processes (permanency, contacts etc)
- Communication with ACT Together
- Impacts on / interactions with my wider family
- My general health and mental wellbeing
- The amount of support I receive
- My general financial situation
- Level of involvement in decision making about children in my care
- Communication with Child and Youth Protection Services
- The implementation of "A Step-up for Our Kids. Out of Home Care Strategy".

The results are categorised in the analysis as being a Help (making life easier) or a Stressor (causing stress).

The results are presented as percentage response and as an average ranking. The ranking is calculated by converting the Likert scale response to a numerical value as shown in Table 3.17. Any ranking over 0 indicates the factor provided some assistance to carers while any ranking below 0 indicates it was not helpful.

Note that the N/A responses are not included in the results.

**Table 3.17 Help or Stressor Ranking Scale**

<b>Help or Stressor</b>	
<b>Response</b>	<b>Scale</b>
Makes my life as a carer easier / enhances the experience	1
Mixed Feelings	0
Causes me stress / makes being a carer harder	-1
I don't know / don't think about	Not included in ranking
<b>N/A</b>	Not included in ranking or percentage responses

The survey results are shown in Table 3.18 as a percentage of all responses (excluding N/A), presented graphically in Figure 3.33 as a percentage response and in Figure 3.34 as an average ranking.

In Figure 3.33 the responses are presented as a stacked, colour-coded bar indicating percentage responses as follows:

- Green: Makes my life easier / enhances the experience
- Orange: Mixed Feelings
- Red: Causes me stress / makes my life harder
- Grey: I don't know / don't think about it

In Figure 3.34 the average ranking bars for factors that carers feel are *causing stress* are presented in red on the left, and bars for factors that carers feel are *making life easier* are presented in green on the right.

**Table 3.18 Help or Stressor Percentage Response**

	Makes my life as a carer easier / enhances the experience	Mixed feelings	Causes me stress / makes being a carer harder	I don't know / don't think about	Total Response	Average Ranking
Relationships with other carers	67%	18%	2%	13%	100%	0.75
Information provided to me about the child in my care (background or past experiences)	61%	25%	12%	2%	100%	0.50
Training	40%	42%	8%	11%	100%	0.35
Relationships with other support staff	40%	29%	18%	13%	100%	0.25
Meetings with Case Worker(s)	37%	32%	27%	4%	100%	0.10
Understanding the child protection processes (permanency, contacts etc)	34%	33%	28%	5%	100%	0.07
Communication with ACT Together	34%	32%	29%	5%	100%	0.05
Impacts on / interactions with my wider family	33%	30%	30%	7%	100%	0.04
My general health and mental wellbeing	26%	39%	25%	11%	100%	0.01
The amount of support I receive	28%	36%	32%	5%	100%	-0.04
My general financial situation	27%	31%	32%	10%	100%	-0.05
Level of involvement in decision making about children in my care	27%	36%	37%	0%	100%	-0.09
Communication with Child and Youth Protection Services	14%	35%	40%	10%	100%	-0.29
The implementation of "A Step-up for Our Kids. Out of Home Care Strategy"	8%	26%	31%	35%	100%	-0.35

### HELPS CARERS OR CAUSES STRESS - PERCENTAGE RESPONSE

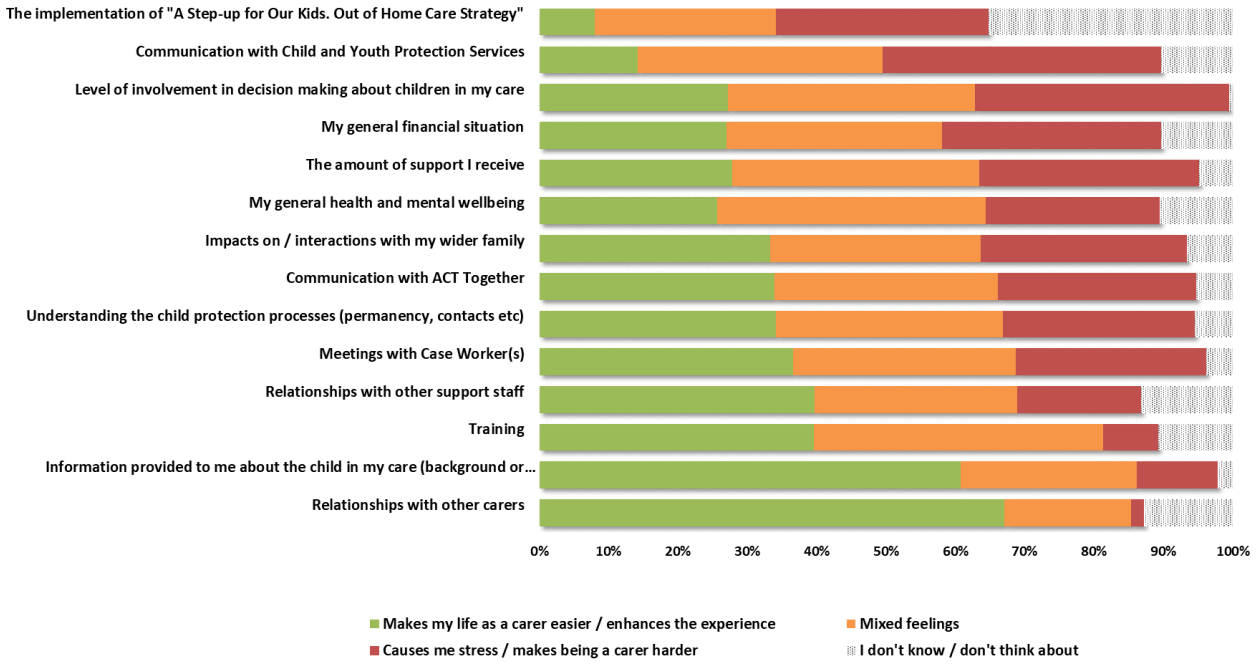


Figure 3.33 Help or Stressor - Percentage Response

### HELPS CARERS OR CAUSES STRESS - RANKINGS

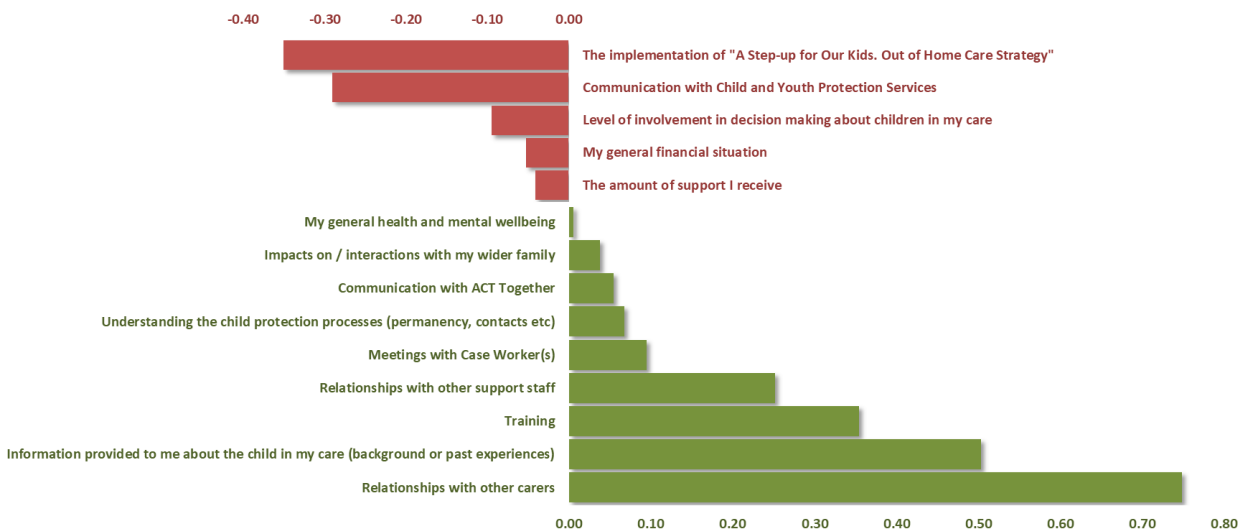


Figure 3.34 Help or Stressor - Average Rankings



## KEY FINDINGS

The factors that are most highly regarded as making life easier for respondents are:

- Relationships with other carers (67%, avg ranking 0.75)
- Information provided about the child in their care (61%, avg ranking 0.5).

The factors that cause the most stress for respondents are:

- Level of involvement in decision making about children in my care (37%)
- Communication with Child and Youth Protection Services (40%).

Implementation of "A Step-up for Our Kids. Out of Home Care Strategy" returned the lowest positive response (8%) with the remaining responses distributed somewhat evenly across Mixed Feelings (26%), Causes Stress (31%) and Don't Know/Don't think about it (35%).

25% of respondents reported that their general health and wellbeing causes them stress, with 39% of respondents having mixed feelings and a further 11% not knowing or not thinking about it.

The factors with the lowest average rankings (on a scale of -1 to 1) are:

- The implementation of "A Step-up for Our Kids. Out of Home Care Strategy" (-0.35)
- Communication with Child and Youth Protection Services (-0.29).

### 3.8 CULTURAL PLANS

Respondents were asked about Cultural Plans for the children in their care.

<b>QUESTION</b>	<p><i>Do you have a cultural plan for the child (children) and/or young person (young people) in your care?</i></p> <p><i>Yes, No, Not Applicable, Don't know</i></p>
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<b>QUESTION</b>	<p><i>Do you have enough support to implement the cultural plan?</i></p> <p><i>Yes, No, Not Applicable, Mixed feelings, Don't know</i></p>
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The results are provided as a percentage response in Table 3.19 and presented graphically in Figure 3.35. The question regarding support is analysed only for those respondents who indicated that they have a cultural plan in place.

**Table 3.19 Cultural Plans**

<b>Cultural Plan in place</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Yes	21%
No	42%
Don't know	7%
Not applicable	30%
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>100%</b>

<b>Cultural Plan in Place with Adequate support to implement</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Yes	26%
No	37%
Mixed feelings	26%
Not applicable	11%
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>100%</b>

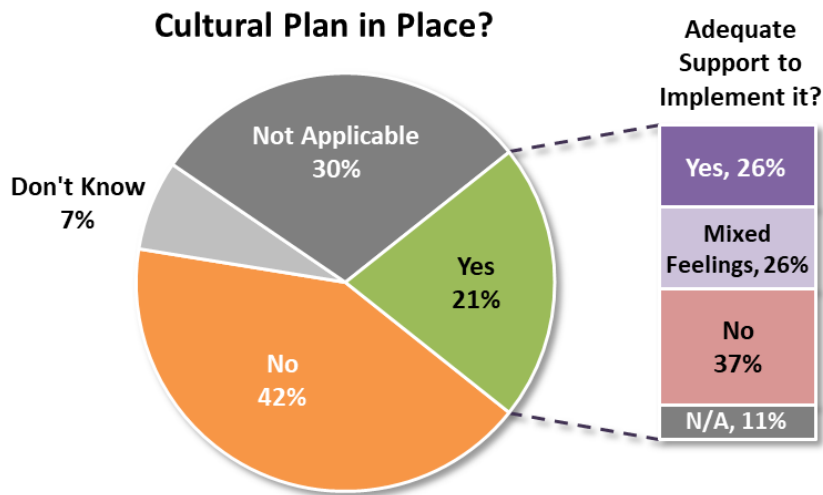


Figure 3.35 Cultural Plans

### KEY FINDINGS

Less than a third of the respondents for whom a cultural plan is applicable, know that they have a plan in place (i.e. 21% out of 70%). However, it may be that some respondents who answered “No” may actually sit within the “Not Applicable” category.

Of the respondents with a Cultural Plan in place, 37% feel there is not enough support to implement it.

### 3.9 ADDITIONAL COMMENTS

Respondents were given the opportunity to provide additional comments regarding their experience as a Foster/Kinship carer.

#### QUESTION

*Is there anything else that you would like to raise about your well-being that could help improve your experience and the experiences of other carers in the future?*

*Free text responses allowed*

137 respondents (64%) provided comments, some of which are quite lengthy, covering a number of issues.

The comments support and inform the findings from the survey questions. They also provide feedback on a number of issues that were not addressed in the survey and, in general, provide insight into a wider range of concerns and difficulties experienced by carers. These qualitative inputs are being analysed by CYPS to assist in shaping its strategic response to the survey results.

# 4 CONCLUSIONS

The target population for this survey is foster carers, kinship carers and permanent carers caring for children on ACT Care and Protection Orders, who currently have a child or young person in their care or have had a placement in the previous six months.

Survey responses were received from 215 carers from a total carer population of 917 which provides a sample with a 6% Margin of Error at a 95% Confidence Level. All carers were invited to participate in the survey, encouraged via follow-up and given the option to complete either online or by telephone; these efforts have minimised any recruitment bias.

The survey respondents include carers from each carer type, carers who are caring for only one child, carers who care for multiple children under different types of placement orders and carers who also have biological children living at home with them.

Approximately 20% of respondents have been a carer for more than ten years, 50% have been carers for two to ten years and 30% have been carers for less than two years.

The percentages of respondents identifying as Aboriginal (5%) and respondents who are Kinship carers (26%) are less than in the total carer population (8% and 56% respectively) which means that the views represented at the “all carers” level in this report will be less strongly influenced by the views of these groups than it would be if they were better represented within the survey population. However, the results presented by carer-type provide a good reflection of the views of each type of carer within the survey, and a separate analysis has been provided for Indigenous carers.

## 4.1 EXPECTATIONS AND PRIOR COMMITMENTS

There is a high level of ambivalence around the question of how well carer expectations and prior commitments have been met, with 35% of respondents having mixed feelings around this issue. This is likely to mean that carers feel some expectations have been *met* and others have *not been met*. Overall the average ranking is slightly negative (-0.22).

Views are similar across all carer types, however Kinship carers managed by CYPS and Concurrent Carers showed the highest level of dissatisfaction (28% of each group indicating they are Very Dissatisfied) and Short Term Crisis Carers showed the lowest overall average ranking (-0.40).

The results indicate that the majority of respondents, across carer types, are not satisfied with the extent to which their expectations or prior commitments have been met.

Results by length of time as a carer show that the average rankings for those who have been carers for up to two years (avg ranking -0.23 to 0.36) is close to or above the average for all-carers, while average rankings for those who have been carers for more two years (-0.24 to -0.41) is below.

These results indicate that there is some pattern of lower satisfaction with expectations and prior commitments being met, in those who have been carers for more than two years.

## 4.2 PREPARATION AND TRAINING

Overall, foster carers feel that the training and preparation they receive is adequate and meets their needs, but with an average ranking of 0.20 (on a scale of -2 to 2) there is room to shift this rating into even more positive territory. Training was also listed as the third most valuable factor in making life easier for carers.

Kinship Carers (CYPS and ACT Together) feel the *least* prepared and trained and are the only groups that returned *negative* average rankings. This result is to be expected since these carers are not offered training and may have had a child from their kinship group placed with them at very short notice.

Respite Carers and Permanent / Enduring Responsibility / Adoptive Carers feel the *most* prepared and trained (43% and 42% respectively) and Respite Carers returned the highest average ranking (0.27).

Analysis by length of time as a carer shows that those who have been foster carers for less than six months feel the *most* prepared and trained with an average ranking of 1.0 (on a scale from -2 to 2), but there is no real pattern in the results for those who have been carers for longer.

## 4.3 INVOLVEMENT IN DECISION MAKING

In general, carers expressed some dissatisfaction with the level of involvement in all three areas explored in the survey i.e.:

- When decisions are made about children in your care, how satisfied are you that you have been listened to and heard?
- When decisions are made about children in your care, how satisfied are you that your views are adequately reflected in decisions and responses that are taken?
- How well have the reasons behind decisions been explained to you?

Overall, the average satisfaction ranking (on a scale from -2 to 2) for all carer types is **-0.35** indicating that involvement in all three areas of decision-making could be improved.

Note that the analysis of factors that make life easier or cause stress for carers supports these results, showing that the level of involvement in decision making about children in their care is one of the factors that cause the *most stress* for them.

Short Term Crisis Carers and Respite Carers are the *most dissatisfied* with the level of involvement in decision-making, returning average rankings of -0.85 and -0.69 respectively.

Of these three areas, carers were *most concerned* about the level of feedback, feeling that the reasons behind decisions were not being adequately explained to them.

### ***Listened to and heard***

The results for this area show wide variation across carer types indicating that their experiences in this are quite different. Average rankings (on a scale from -2 to 2) ranged from -0.25 to -0.87.

Short Term Crisis Carers and Respite Carers were the *most dissatisfied*, returning the lowest average rankings (-0.87 and -0.69 respectively),

Kinship Carers managed by ACT and by CYPS were the *least dissatisfied*, returning the highest average rankings (-0.25 and -0.31 respectively).

The overall results for all respondents show:

- Dissatisfied and Very Dissatisfied: **43%**
- Satisfied and Very Satisfied: 25%
- Mixed Feelings: 30%
- Average ranking (on a scale from -2 to 2): -0.34

These results indicate that the majority of respondents are not confident their opinions are being heard and may be looking for more involvement in the decisions that are being made for the children in their care.

### ***Views Adequately Reflected in Decisions?***

Short Term Crisis Carers and Respite Carers were the *most dissatisfied* with the extent to which their views are being reflected in decisions made about children in their care.

Short Term Crisis Carers showed the highest levels of dissatisfaction with 59% returning either Dissatisfied (24%) or Very Dissatisfied (35%).

The overall results for all respondents show:

- Dissatisfied and Very Dissatisfied: **38%**
- Satisfied and Very Satisfied: 30%
- Mixed Feelings: 30%
- Average ranking (in a scale from -2 to 2): -0.23

These results indicate that respondents are not satisfied their views are being adequately reflected in the decisions that are being made for the children in their care.

### ***Reasons Behind Decisions Explained?***

There is some consistency across carer types in the results for this area, with the highest percentage responses being Poorly or Very Poorly for most groups and a very low percentage response for Very Well (7%-9%) across all groups.

Short Term Crisis Carers showed the highest percentage of negative responses with 74% returning either Poor (35%) or Very Poor (39%).

The overall results for all respondents show:

- Poorly and Very Poorly: **51%**
- Well and Very Well: 22%
- Adequately: 26%
- Average ranking (in a scale from -2 to 2):-0.49

These results indicate that the majority of respondents feel that the reasons behind decisions that are being made for the children in their care and poorly explained.

#### **4.4 SUMMARY FOR INDIGENOUS CARERS**

The results for Indigenous carers show they were satisfied their views are being adequately reflected in decisions made about children in their care, with this question showing the highest average ranking (0.36).

The areas in which they show *least satisfaction* with the lowest average rankings are:

- How well expectations and prior commitments made before becoming a carer have been met (-0.18)
- How well the reasons behind decisions made about children in their care have been explained (-0.18).

Overall the Indigenous respondents showed a higher level of satisfaction than the average result for all carers, across all areas except for the Adequacy of Preparation and Training.

#### **4.5 SUPPORT SERVICES**

Some differences were noted between the Foster Carers and the Kinship Carers:

- Foster Carers made more use of General Information on Parenting, Informal /Social carer's network and Carer support from non-government agencies (e.g. ACT Together, ACF/Therapeutic Team)
- Kinship Carers made more use of the Specialised Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Service, Respite Care and Carer support staff from government department (e.g. Child and Youth Protection Services). All Kinship carers that used the respite care service found it valuable.



Across all carers, Carer Support from Non-Government Agencies (e.g. ACT Together, ACF/Therapeutic Team), is the *most* used support service with 66% of respondents having used this service and 42% of them finding it valuable.

In general, most other services are not well used, with non-usage rates ranging from 51% to 97%.

Legal Services was the *least* used support service and also the service that most carers were not aware of. However, this is a specialised service and not all carers are offered or need Legal Services.

Between 30% and 40% of respondents did not know some of these services are available, in particular:

- Legal Services<sup>3</sup> (53%)
- Carer support staff from government department (e.g. Child and Youth Protection Services) (42%)
- Carer Support organisations and groups (e.g. Foster Care Association) (36%).

#### 4.6 MAKING LIFE EASIER OR CAUSING STRESS?

The factors that are most highly regarded as *making life easier* for carers are:

- Relationships with other carers
- Information provided about the child in their care.

The factors causing the *most stress* for carers are:

- Level of involvement in decision making about children in my care
- Communication with Child and Youth Protection Services.

Implementation of "A Step-up for Our Kids. Out of Home Care Strategy" returned the lowest positive response (8%) with the remaining responses distributed somewhat evenly across Mixed Feelings (26%), Causes Stress (31%) and Don't Know/Don't think about it (35%). The 'don't know/don't think about it' was a noticeably higher percentage than for any other factor, indicating that respondents may not see the strategy as relevant or tangible for them.

Implementation of "A Step-up for Our Kids. Out of Home Care Strategy" is about the delivery of better services for vulnerable children and children in care and also improving relationships with and support for foster and kinship carers. The perception by carers that this strategy is causing stress and making their life as a carer more difficult rather than easier bears more investigation.

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<sup>3</sup> Note in the workshop on draft results, the Carer Wellbeing Sub-Committee felt that Legal Services shouldn't have been included in this list.

## **4.7 CULTURAL PLANS**

Cultural Plans do not appear to be well defined or implemented with less than a third of the respondents for whom this is applicable having a plan in place. However, it may be that some who said No to having a plan in place may fall into the Not Applicable category.

Of the respondents with a Cultural Plan in place, 37% feel there is not enough support to implement it.


## **4.8 ADDITIONAL COMMENTS**

A large number of respondents (137/64%) provided additional comments regarding their experience as a Foster/Kinship carer, with very few of these comments providing positive feedback.

The comments support and inform the survey results presented in this report and also raise the issues that were not addressed in the survey. Further qualitative analysis by CYF will support the development of strategy as a response to issues raised in this survey.

# APPENDIX 1

## Invitation Letter/Email to Carers



## Key Insights Pty Ltd

ABN 35064587346

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**July 18<sup>th</sup>, 2018**

Dear Carer

You are invited to participate in the Foster and Kinship Carer Survey which aims to check in with all Carers of children and young people on ACT Care and Protection Orders to understand if you are feeling heard, and if you are getting enough support for being a foster carer or kinship carer. Children, Youth and Families have contracted Key Insights Pty Ltd. to independently undertake this research.

**Could you please complete this survey by August 6<sup>th</sup>, 2018? Here is the link to the survey: <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/ACTFosterCare>**

This is an on-line survey that will be analysed as a group rather than individually. Individual responses will be kept in confidence and Key Insights will not reveal individual answers to the client or any other organisation or person.

This survey originates from the Carer Wellbeing Sub-Committee; a group that includes carer representatives, Carers ACT, ACT Together and Children, Youth and Families (CYF). CYF will receive a final report and it will be reviewed and acted upon by the Carer Wellbeing Sub-Committee.

The results will be used to understand whether carers feel supported under *A Step Up for Our Kids: Out of Home Care Strategy 2015-2020*.

The survey is not compulsory, and you may stop at any time. If you complete the survey you may choose to go into the draw to win one of three \$100 Coles/Myer Gift Cards. To be eligible for the prize you will have to leave your e-mail address or contact number with Key Insights.

PO BOX 4678  
KINGSTON ACT 2604  
EMAIL: [EDM@KEYINSIGHTS.COM.AU](mailto:EDM@KEYINSIGHTS.COM.AU)  
MOB: 0410633067  
[WWW.KEYINSIGHTS.COM.AU](http://WWW.KEYINSIGHTS.COM.AU)

**If you do not like doing online surveys but would still like to participate, you may call Key Insights researcher Ellen Davis-Meehan directly, and she will facilitate the survey over the phone with you. Her direct mobile number is 0419 633 067.**

If you have any questions about this survey please contact the CYF Project Officer, Sarah Kirk on 02 6205 4830. If the survey raises any concerns for you, please contact your carer support worker either through CYPs Kinship Care and Support Team on 6207 1069 or ACT Together on 02 6110 2267.

We want to take this opportunity to thank you for your ongoing care and contribution to children and young people. We look forward to building a stronger out of home care system through listening to the voices of carers.

Thank you for your time.

Kind regards




Ellen Davis-Meehan  
Director  
Key Insights Pty Ltd.

PO BOX 4678  
KINGSTON ACT 2604  
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# APPENDIX 2

## Survey Instrument



### Foster and Kinship Carer Survey

A survey for Carers with children on ACT Orders. Please complete by SUNDAY AUGUST 12TH, 2018.

Please answer all questions in relation to your current status. Answer according to your situation and experiences as of today; the day you are answering the survey. Thank you for giving some of your valuable time to help with this research. It is much appreciated. THIS SURVEY SHOULD TAKE 10 MINUTES TO COMPLETE.

\* 1. Please tell us what type of carer you are. Tick all that apply.

<input type="checkbox"/> Short Term Crisis Carer	<input type="checkbox"/> Respite Carer
<input type="checkbox"/> Concurrent Carer	<input type="checkbox"/> Kinship Carer case managed by CYPs
<input type="checkbox"/> Permanent Carer / Enduring Responsibility Carer / Adoptive Carer	<input type="checkbox"/> Kinship Carer case managed by ACT Together

\* 2. Are you of Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander origin?

<input type="radio"/> Yes, Aboriginal	<input type="radio"/> No
<input type="radio"/> Yes, Torres Strait Islander	<input type="radio"/> No, but I am from a Culturally and Linguistically Diverse background (CALD)
<input type="radio"/> Yes, Both	

\* 3. Please think about your expectations and the commitments made before you started as a carer. How satisfied are you that those expectations and commitments have been met?

Very satisfied	Satisfied	Mixed feelings	Dissatisfied	Very dissatisfied	Not sure / don't know
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

\* 4. All things considered, how well do you consider that you have been properly prepared or trained, either formally or informally, for the role of foster carer / kinship carer / permanent carer, at this current time?

Very well	Well	Adequately	Poorly	Very poorly	Don't know / not sure
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

\* 5. When decisions are made about the children in your care; how satisfied are you that you are listened to and heard?

Very satisfied	Satisfied	Mixed feelings	Dissatisfied	Very dissatisfied	Not sure / don't know
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

\* 6. When decisions are made about children in your care, how satisfied are you that your views are adequately reflected in decisions and responses that are taken?

- |                                      |   |
|--------------------------------------|---|
| <input type="radio"/> Very satisfied | <input type="radio"/> Dissatisfied          |
| <input type="radio"/> Satisfied      | <input type="radio"/> Very dissatisfied     |
| <input type="radio"/> Mixed feelings | <input type="radio"/> Not sure / don't know |

\* 7. How well have the reasons behind decisions been explained to you?

- |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |
|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|
| Very well             | Well                  | Adequately            | Poorly                | Very poorly           | Don't know / not sure |
| <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |

\* 8. In the last 6 months, what support services have you used and how valuable were they to you as a carer?

	Have used and valuable	Have used and not valuable	Haven't used, but know about	Haven't used, did not know about	N/A
Carer support staff from government department (e.g. Child and Youth Protection Services)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Carer support from non-government agencies (e.g. ACT Together, ACF/Therapeutic Team)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
External professional support (psychologists, counsellors etc.)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Carer Advocacy Groups (e.g. Carers ACT)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Carer Support organisations and groups (e.g. Foster Care Association)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
After hours crisis support	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Respite care	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Disability Support Services	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Transport Services	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Legal Services	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Specialised Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Service	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Informal / social carer's network	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
General information about parenting and caring (not foster carer specific)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

\* 9. We would like to know what causes you stress in the system and what makes your life easier.

	Makes my life as a carer easier / enhances the experience	Mixed feelings	Causes me stress / makes being a carer harder	I don't know / don't think about	N/A
Training	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Meetings with Case Worker(s)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Communication with Child and Youth Protection Services	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Information provided to me about the child in my care (background or past experiences)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Communication with ACT Together	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Relationships with other support staff	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Relationships with other carers	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The amount of support I receive	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Understanding the child protection processes (permanency, contacts etc)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Level of involvement in decision making about children in my care	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The implementation of "A Step-up for Our Kids. Out of Home Care Strategy"	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
My general financial situation	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Impacts on / interactions with my wider family	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
My general health and mental wellbeing	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>



\* 10. Do you have a cultural plan for the child (children) and/or young person (young people) in your care?

- Yes
- No
- Not applicable
- Don't know

\* 11. Do you have enough support to implement the cultural plan?

- Yes
- No
- Not applicable
- Mixed feelings
- Don't know

12. Is there anything else that you would like to raise about your well-being that could help improve your experience and the experiences of other care givers in the future?



## Foster and Kinship Carer Survey

Details to help us better analyse the results.

**Now for some final questions about you to help us understand where we need to work on improving what we do.**

\* 13. Are you living with a partner?

- Yes  
 No

\* 14. Do you have other children, under 18 years old, who live with you?

- Yes, I have biological children living with me / us  
 No, there is only one foster child in my / our home.  
 Yes, I have other foster / kinship children living with me / us.  
 Yes, I have biological children AND other foster / kinship children living with me / us.

\* 15. For how long have you been a carer?

- |   |  |
|---|--|
| <input type="radio"/> Less than 6 months          | <input type="radio"/> Between 2 and 5 years  |
| <input type="radio"/> Between 6 months and 1 year | <input type="radio"/> Between 5 and 10 years |
| <input type="radio"/> Between 1 and 2 years       | <input type="radio"/> Longer than 10 years   |

16. What is your gender?

- Male  
 Female  
 X (Indeterminate/Intersex/Unspecified)  
 Prefer not to say

\* 17. Please tell us your postcode