

# **FOSTER & KINSHIP CARERS SURVEY 2022 REPORT**

## **Far North QLD Region**



**Queensland  
Foster and  
Kinship Care**

## Contents

About the Carer .....	3
Relationship Status .....	4
Carer Connect & Statement of Commitment .....	6
Cultural Diversity.....	8
CALD (Culturally and Linguistically Diverse) Community.....	11
Child Safety Services .....	12
Child Safety Processes.....	14
Standard of Care/Harm Report Process.....	15
Confidentiality.....	16
Financial .....	17
Local Practice in CSSC.....	20
Education Support Plans.....	22
Child Health Passports .....	23
Strengthening Health Initiative.....	24
Placement Agreements.....	27
Centrelink.....	29
Support .....	31
Foster and Kinship Care Programs .....	32
Foster Carer Agreements.....	33
Training .....	34
Complaints/Appeals.....	35
Queensland Foster and Kinship Care .....	37
Child Safety – Culture and Practice.....	38
Looking Forward – carers were asked.....	40

Queensland Foster and Kinship Care Inc.  
7/10 Depot Street, BANYO QLD 4014

 07 3256 6166 |  admin@qfkc.com.au |  www.qfkc.com.au  
ABN 16 454 122 946

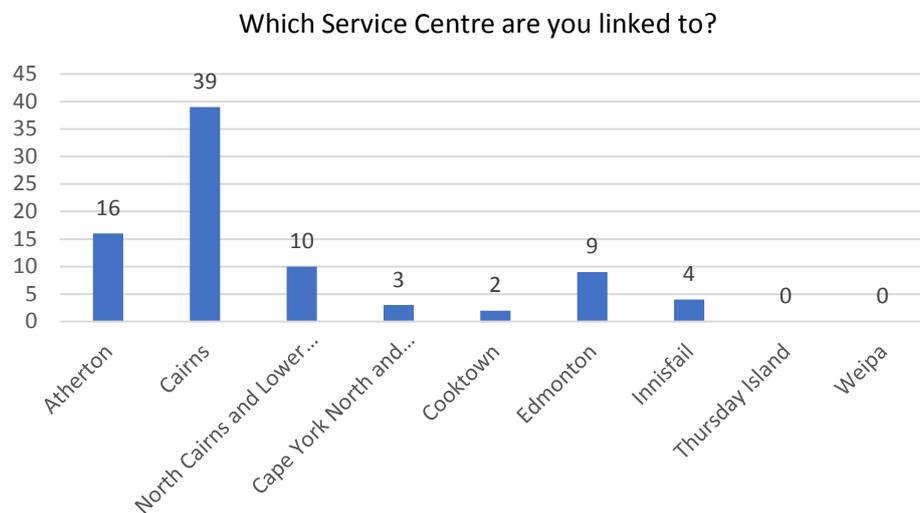
## Survey

The responses throughout the survey are a representation of the carers who answered individual questions, highlighting that not all questions are responded to by all carers undertaking the survey.

While making comparisons to previous carer survey results, this has not been possible in all reports whereby regional boundaries have changed since 2020.

## About the Carer

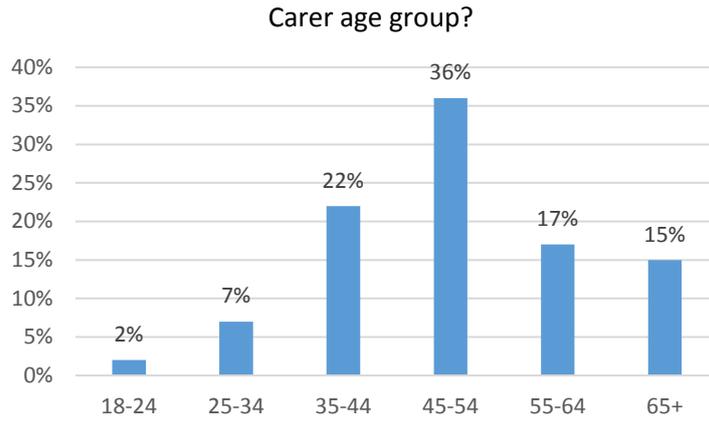
In Far North Queensland region 83 foster and kinship carers completed the 2022 Carer Survey and were represented in the following Child Safety Service Centres, noting the majority of CSSCs were represented in the survey.



Of the carers in Far North Queensland who responded, 68 identified as foster carers (84%), 12 identified as kinship carers (15%) and 1 carer identified as provisionally approved.

Carers were asked if they were supported by a fostering and kinship carer agency and 91% of carers who completed the survey stated they were.

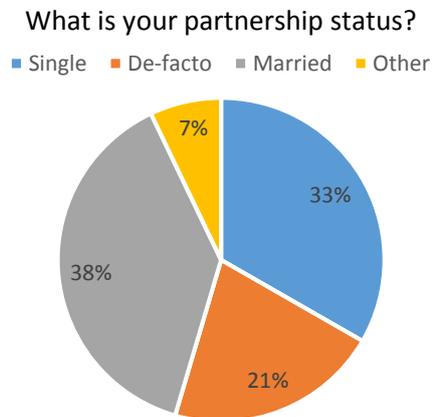
Carers were asked to identify the age group they fitted into.



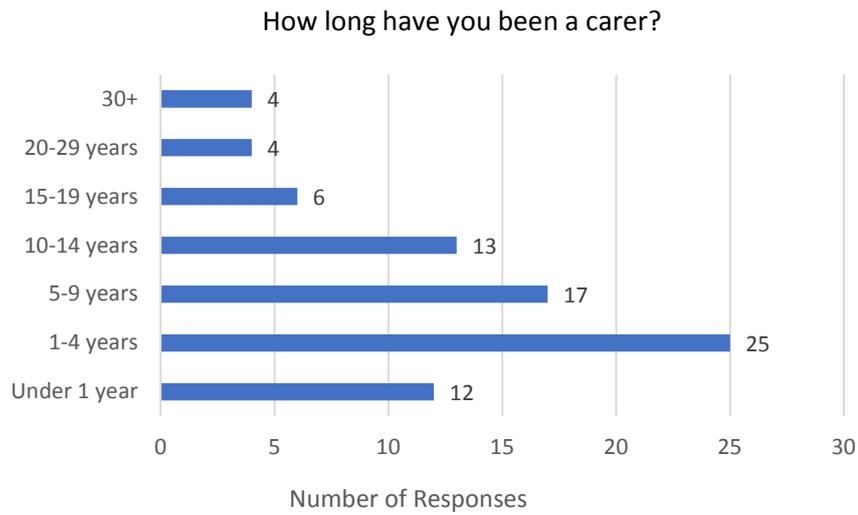
### Aboriginal, Torres Strait Islander and CALD Carers

8 carers in Far North Queensland who completed the survey identified as Aboriginal and 4 carers identified as CALD.

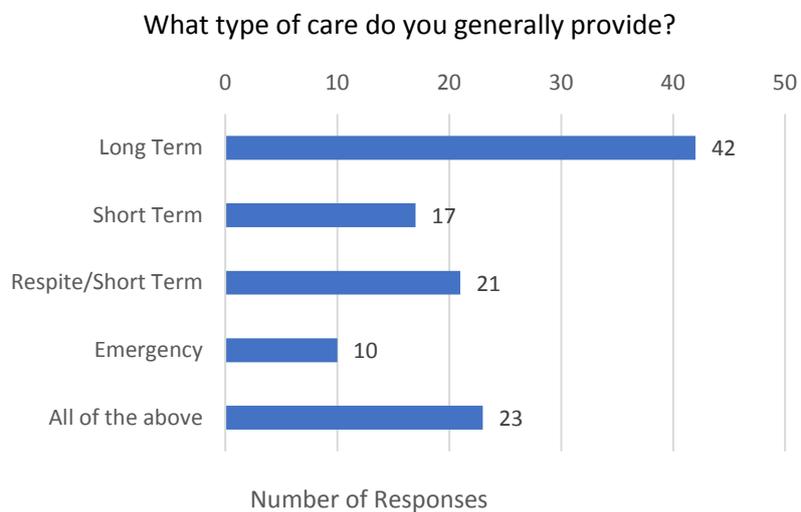
### Relationship Status



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

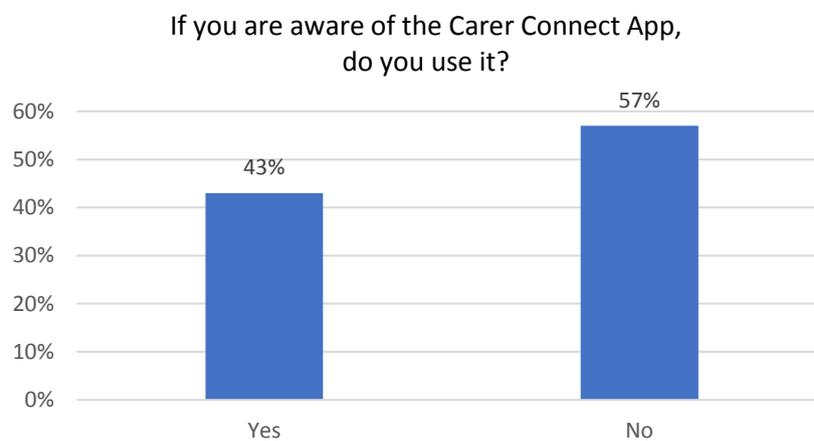
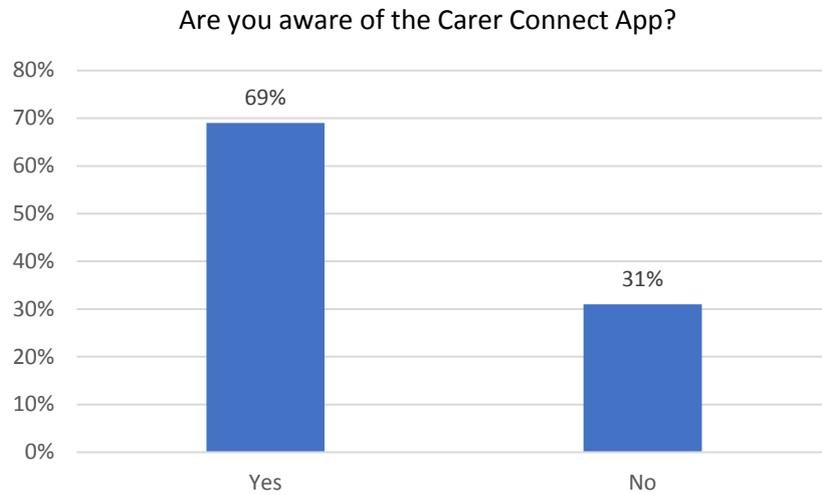


Carers were asked which type of care they provide, please note that carers were able to select more than one type of care.

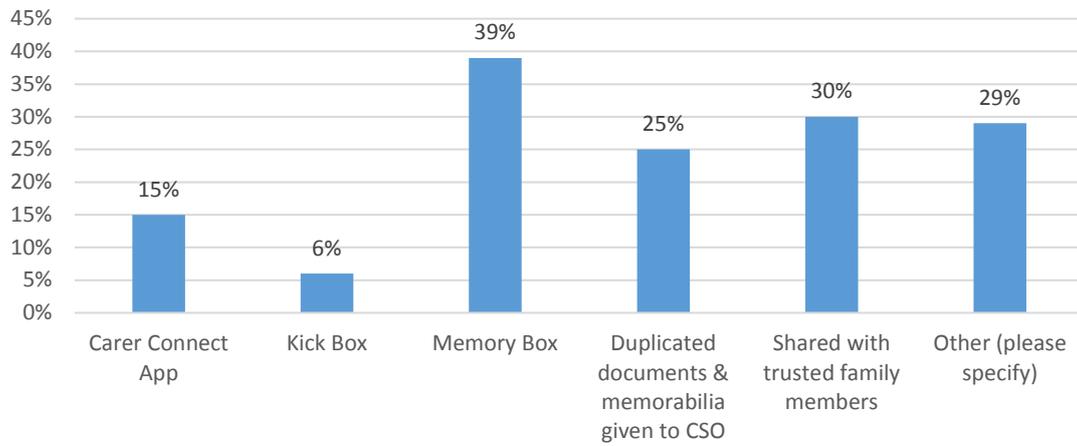


## Carer Connect & Statement of Commitment

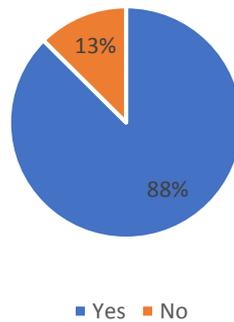
Carers were asked about their familiarity with the Carer Connect App and the Statement of Commitment. The following responses were provided.



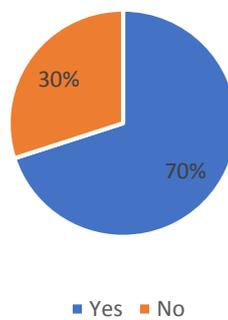
### How do you store the child and young people's sentimental or treasured items?



### Are you aware of the Statement of Commitment?

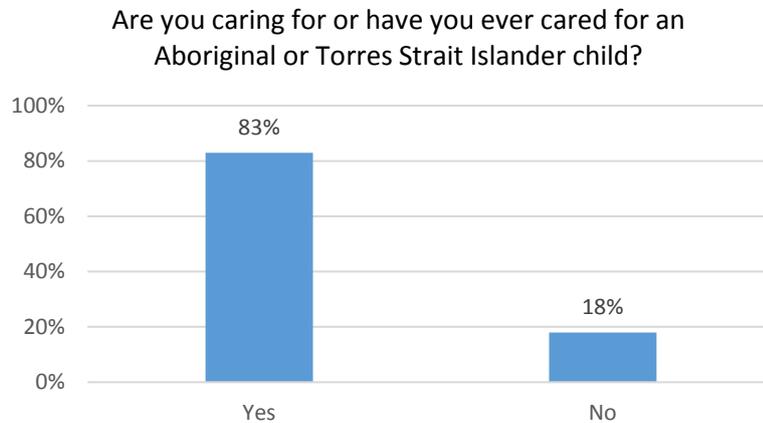


### If you are aware of the Statement of Commitment, have you found it a useful document in your role as a carer?



## Cultural Diversity

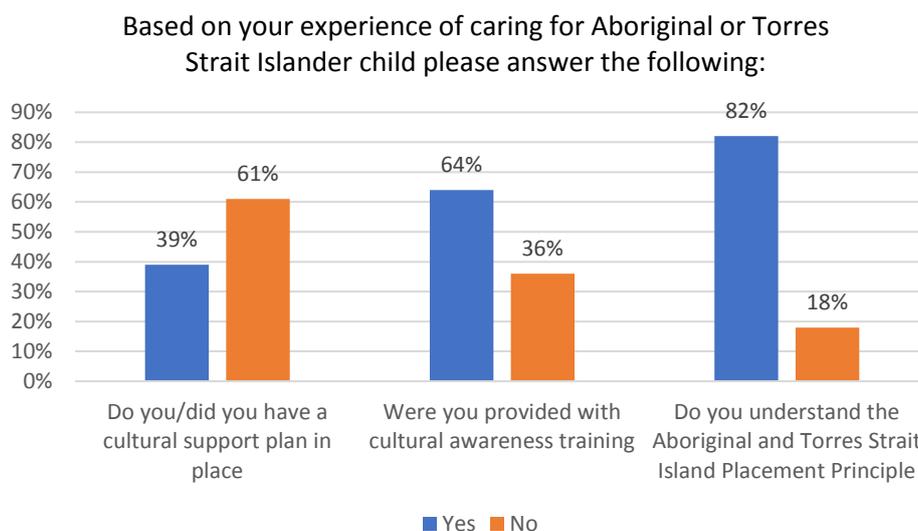
Carers were asked a range of questions relating to care of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children as follows.



Given that only 8 carers identified as Aboriginal, the majority of those carers who have responded yes to this question would not identify as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander.

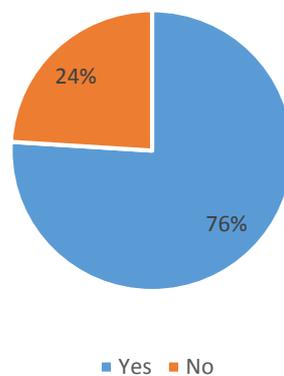
Carers who answered yes to the above question, were asked if they had a Cultural Support Plan in place, 39% answered yes, leaving 61% of children placed in care where they identified as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander without a Cultural Support Plan or where the carer had no knowledge of its existence.

Carers were also asked if they were provided with cultural awareness training to assist them to care for a child who identified as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander, and as evidenced below 36% of carers who responded advised they did not receive any training to assist them in building their cultural knowledge in their care of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Island children.

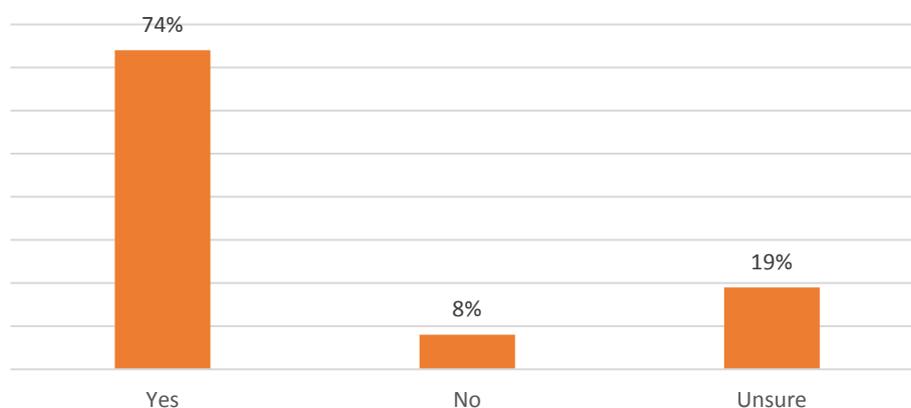


Carers were asked whether they understood the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Child Placement Principle. This principle is explored with foster carers in the Getting Ready to Start training (previously known as Quality Care Pre-Service Training) however, it must be noted that carers are inundated with information during this training and if this is not followed up with further education and information, it is likely it won't be retained by carers. The majority of carers reported understanding the principle with 82% confirming their understanding and 18% identifying not understanding the principle. 76% also advised they were aware of additional principles for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children contained in the Child Protection Act 1999 (Section 5C) that were introduced into legislation in 2018.

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

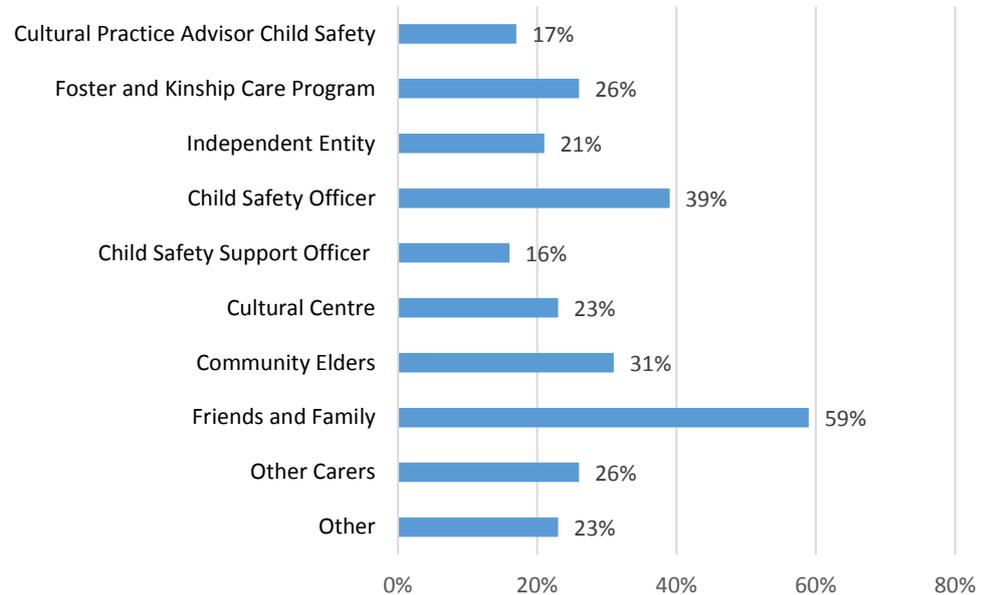


### Are you confident in the application of the additional Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Principles in your day to day care of children and young people?



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

As carers where do you access your cultural information from?



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

There were also comments made by Aboriginal carers in this section whereby the cultural needs of the children they are caring for are being met by the very nature of the placement as per the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander principle.

## CALD (Culturally and Linguistically Diverse) Community

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

Just 5% (4) of carers who completed the survey in the Far North Queensland Region identified from a CALD community. 13% (9) of carers in Far North Queensland who completed the survey reported they either were or had provided care to children who were from the CALD community.

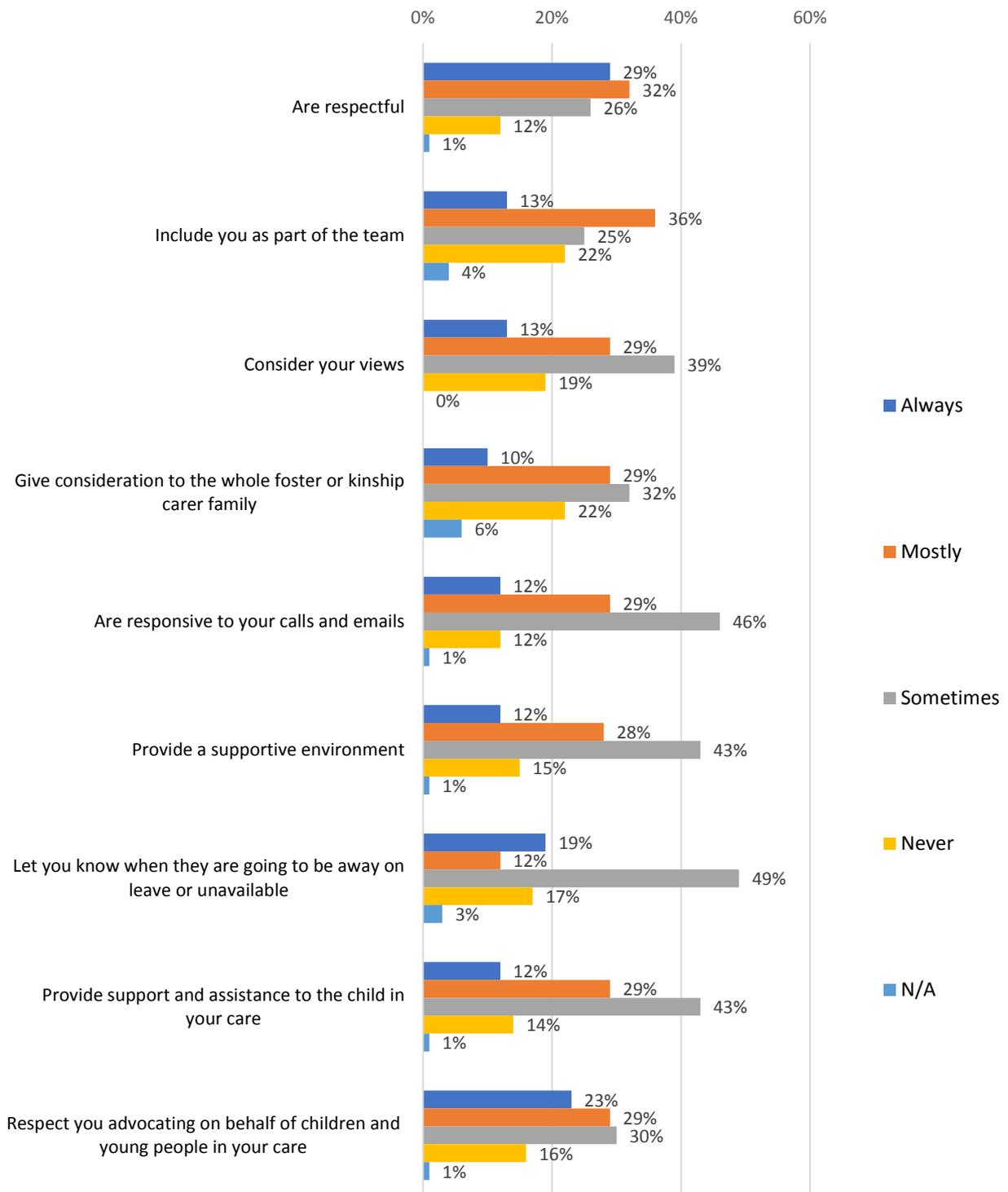
Carers who had provided care to children from a CALD community were asked whether they were provided with appropriate training to assist them to provide culturally appropriate care and 50% of carers who responded advised that they had been provided with training.

Carers were asked to provide examples of how they support a CALD child to remain connected to their culture and the following responses were provided:

## Child Safety Services

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

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



A total of 61% of carers reported feeling **respected** either always or mostly; that leaves 38% of carers who reported only feeling respected sometimes or never. (1% reported this as being N/A).

A total of 49% of carers reported feeling **like part of a team** either always or mostly which is similar to the 2020 (48%); that leaves half of the carers who completed the survey in the Far North Queensland region **not feeling like part of a team**.

42% of carers reported feeling that Child Safety **consider their views** either always or mostly, that leaves 58% of carers who completed the survey in the Far North Queensland region **feeling their views are not considered** (No carers answered N/A).

32% of carers reported that they felt there is only **sometimes consideration given to the whole foster or kinship carer family**, 22% of carers responded that they feel Child Safety never consider the whole foster or kinship carer family.

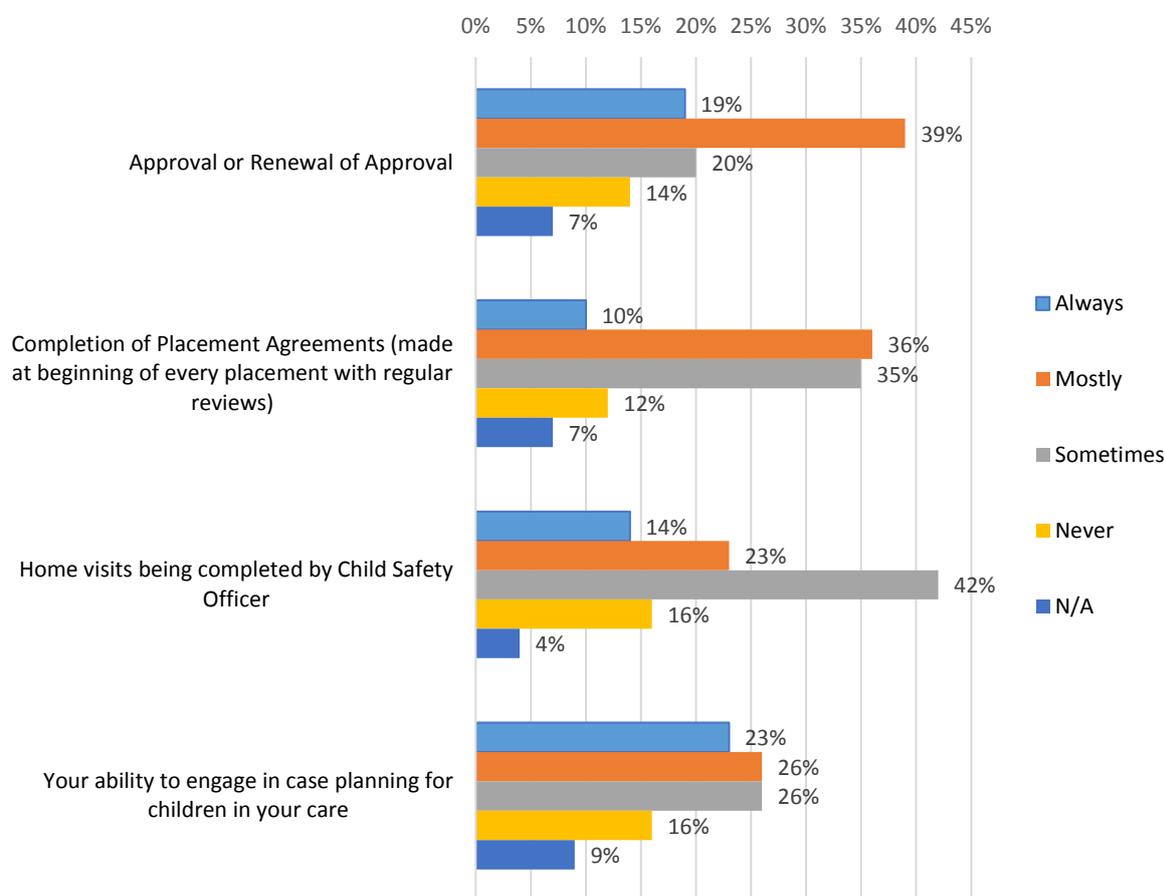
41% of carers reported that their CSSC was **responsive to calls and emails**, 58% reported only sometimes or never and 1% marked N/A. With respect to carers feeling that Child Safety **provides a supportive environment** 58% of carers completing the survey in Far North Queensland feel that this is sometimes or never the case.

Advising the care team when planned leave or unavailability is occurring is a basic communication requirement in order to build a respectful and supportive care team. Carers are expected to **let the care team know when they are going away or are going to be unavailable**, therefore it would be an expectation that this same courtesy is provided to carers. 30% of carers responded either always or mostly being advised. This means 70% of carers who completed the survey in Far North Queensland are left not knowing the child's CSO is on leave.

58% of carers reported that they **only sometimes or never are provided support and assistance to the child in their care**. 46% of carers reported that they only sometimes or never feel **respect to advocate on behalf of children and young people in their carer, for resources, goods and service**. Carers are assessed against their ability to be considered a suitable person to provide care through many criteria, one of these being their ability to appropriately advocate on behalf of children. Stakeholders can hold different views, however it is important that all members of a child's safety and support network feel empowered to advocate on behalf of a child. This leads to accountability, transparency and best practice overall.

## Child Safety Processes

How satisfied are you with the following Child Safety processes



58% of carers in Far North Queensland completing this survey reported feeling either always or mostly satisfied **with the approval and renewal process** and that overall only 16% of carers reported never feeling satisfied in this area.

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

In relation to **home visits being completed by Child Safety Officer** 58% of carers reported feeling sometimes or never satisfied that this was occurring.

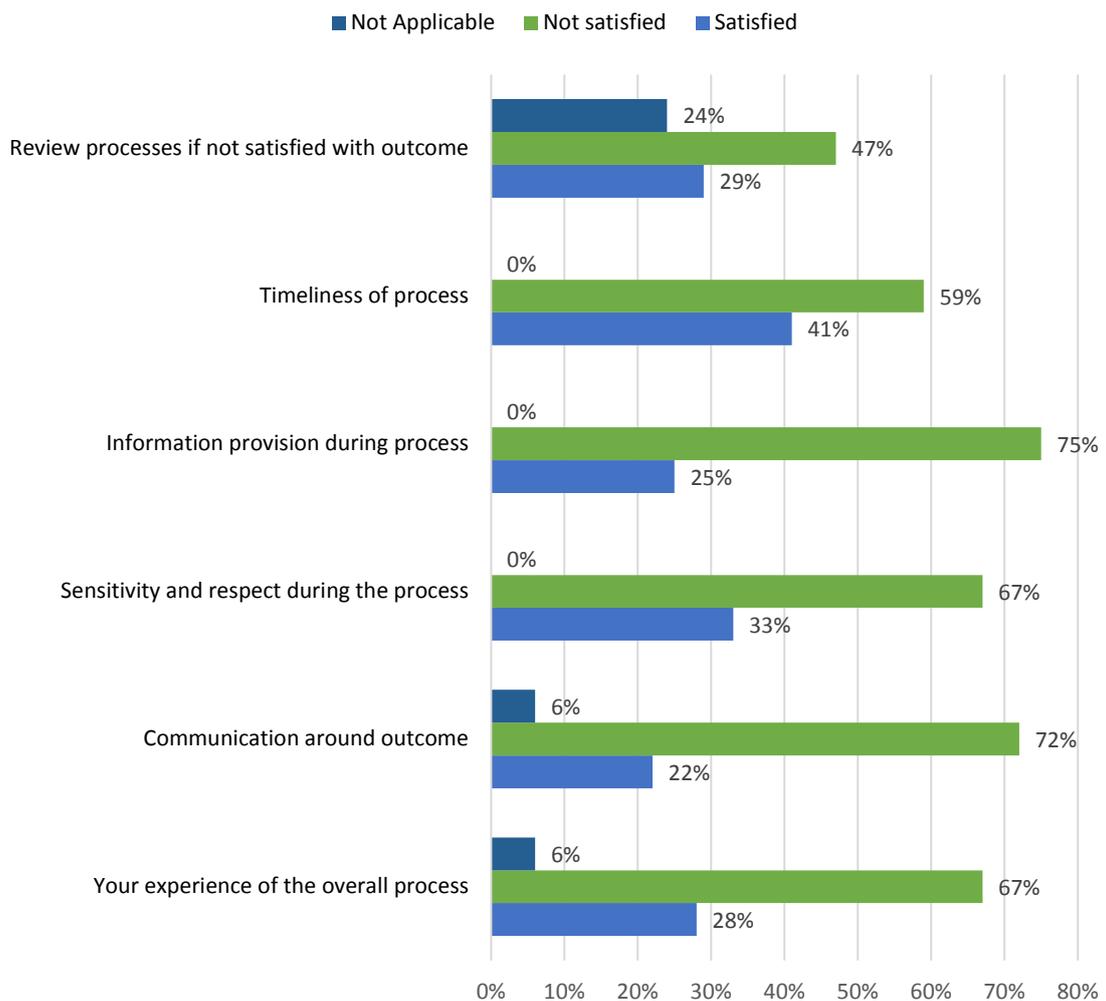
42% of carers reported feeling only satisfied sometimes or never **with their ability to engage in Case Plan meetings for children in their care**. Given statements within the Statement of Commitment that recognise a critical role in participating in decisions affecting children in their care, these figures should reflect a much higher percentage.

## Standard of Care/Harm Report Process

Carers were asked if they had experienced a Standard of Care or Harm Report, and of those surveyed 30% (21) had been through the process; they further offered the following information relating to that experience.

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

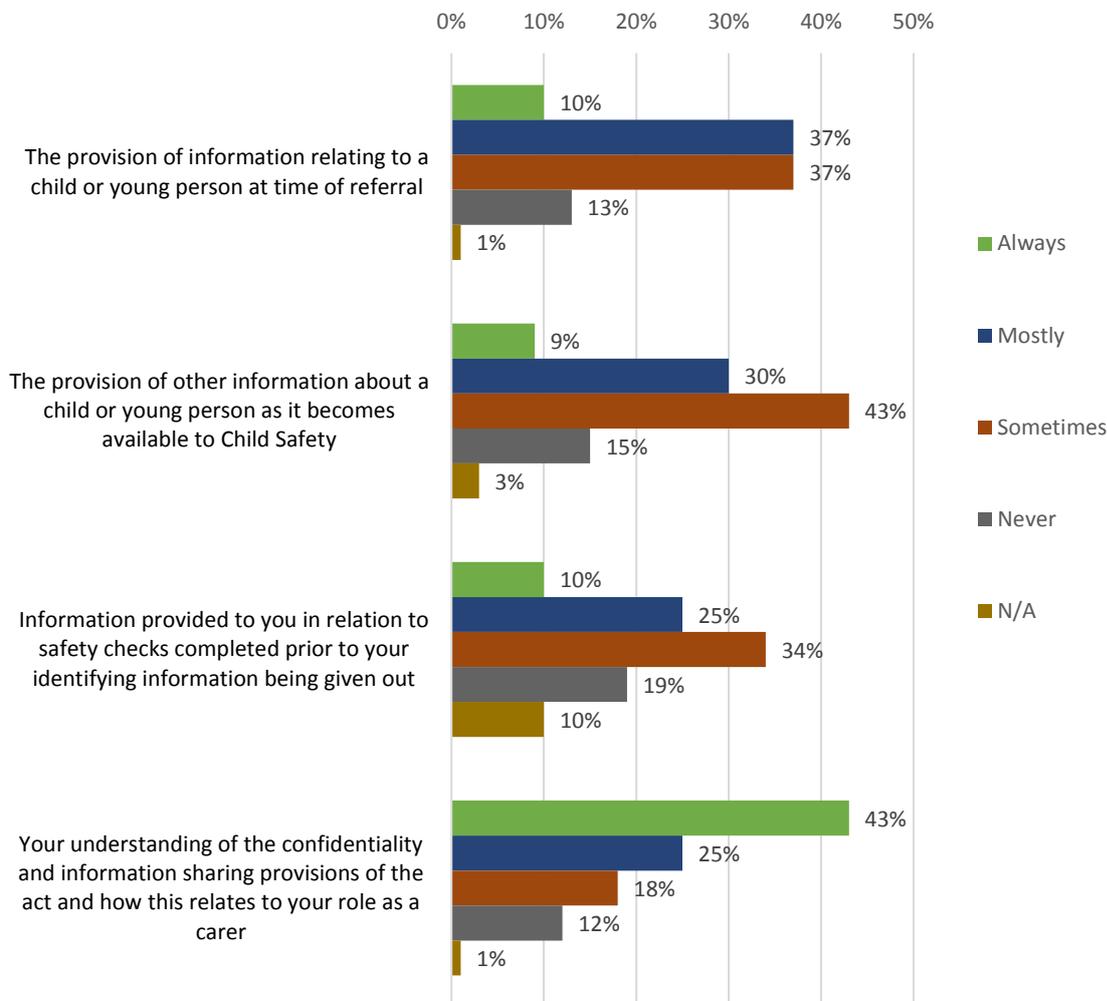
From your experience, please respond to the following:



## Confidentiality

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

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



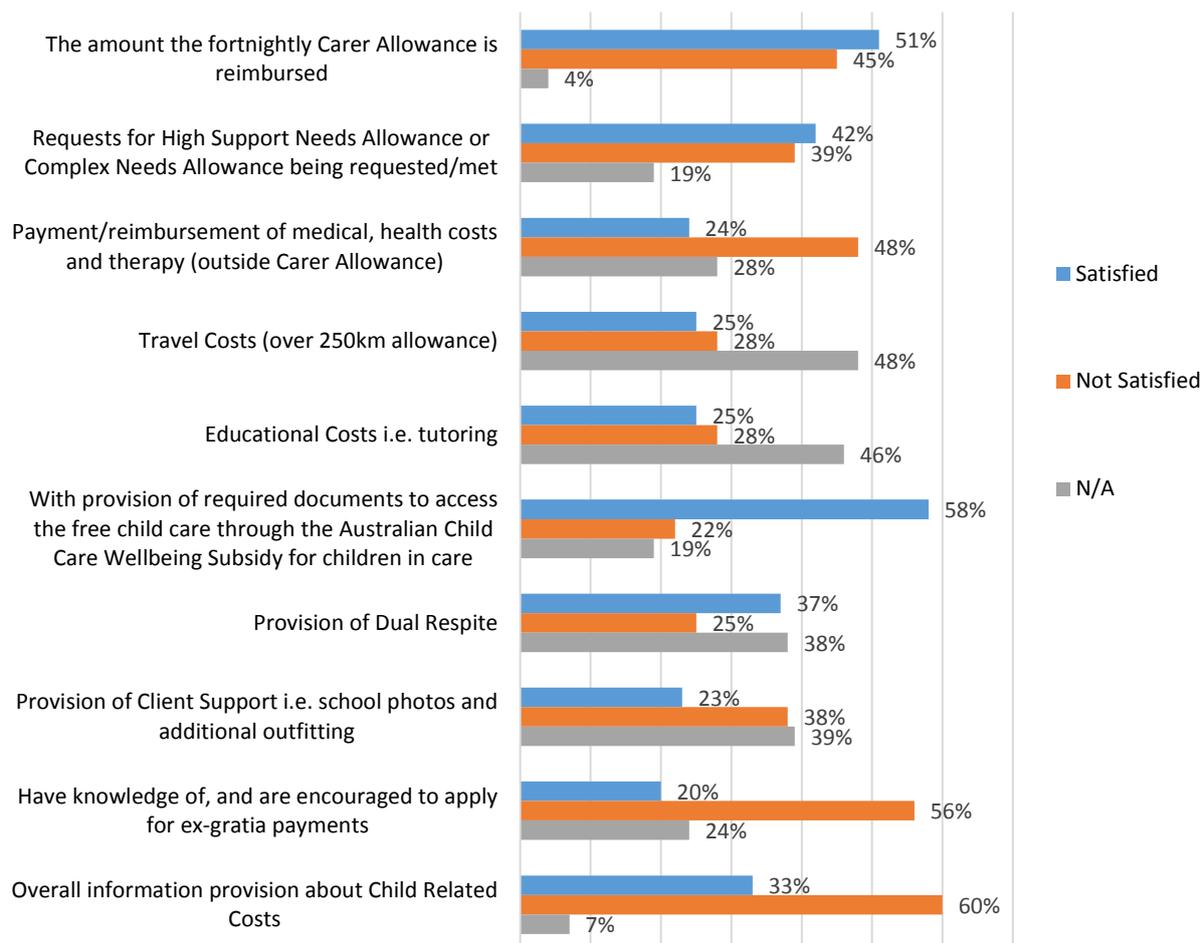
Whilst it is recognised Child Safety very rarely have all the information at time of placement, over time Child Safety gathers information which is vital to pass on to carers as this allows the carers to understand a child’s trauma better and provide appropriate care. Unfortunately 58% of carers reported that they feel **information provision about a child as it becomes available** is only shared with them sometimes or never.

53% of carers reported their satisfaction level at sometimes or never with **information provided in relation to safety checks prior to any identifying information being given out**. 68% shared that they were always or mostly satisfied with their understanding of the **confidentiality provisions of the act and how it related to their role as a carer**.

## Financial

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

In respect to financial support provided, how satisfied are you with the following:

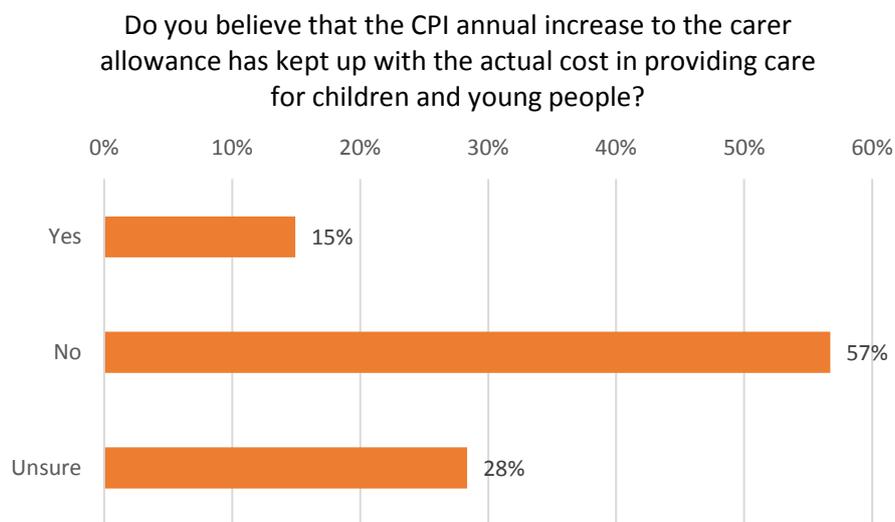


In summary, the dissatisfaction at the **amount of the fortnightly foster carer allowance** has remained static. In previous surveys it has been reported as high as 80% satisfaction, however in this 2022 survey it appears to be continuing its downward trend to a current level of 51% of carers who responded to this question feeling satisfied. This of course could be attributed to many factors, including the cost of living not being compatible with the CPI index, particularly around household expenses of electricity, water, food and other essentials as outlined in the Executive Summary. Not least COVID-19 and current economic challenges that continued to place stress on many household budgets, foster and kinship carers included.

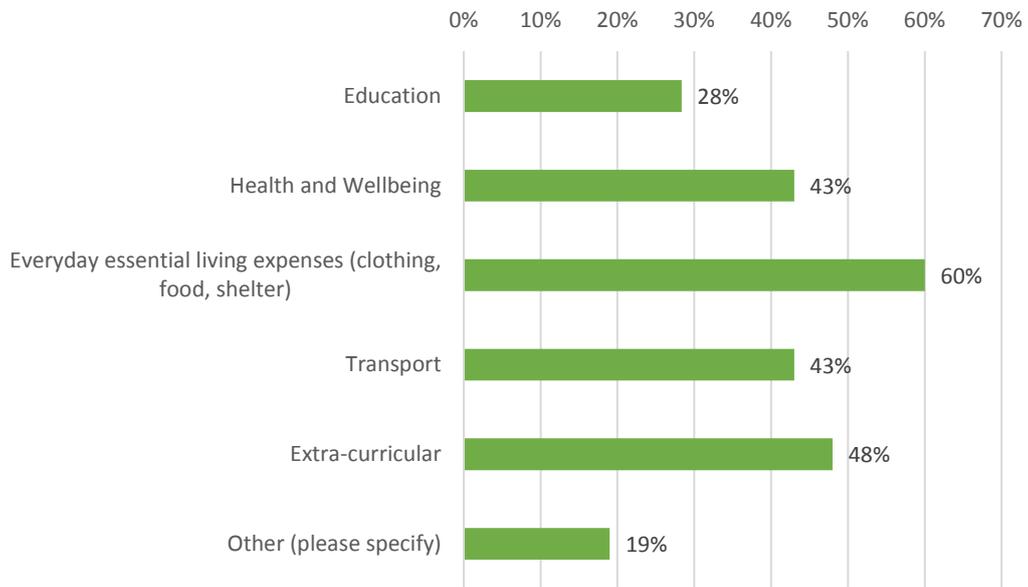
Of those carers who felt that the question relating to **requests for HSNA and CSNA** was applicable, 39% (26 carers) reported feeling not satisfied with their requests being met.

It is pleasing to note that the **provision of required documentation to access the free childcare subsidy for children in care** had a 58% satisfaction rate and only 22% were not satisfied, with 19% noting the questions didn't apply to them. QFKC collaborated with Child Safety in the development of a fact sheet that is now available to all care team members which clearly outlines roles and responsibilities of all key stakeholders in the application of the Australian Child Care Risk Subsidy. It is important that the existence and use of this resource is promoted through Child Safety and Foster and Kinship Care Services to ensure carers are not left with child care debt against their names.

Finally, 60% of carers reported feeling not satisfied with the **overall information provision relating to Child Related Costs**.

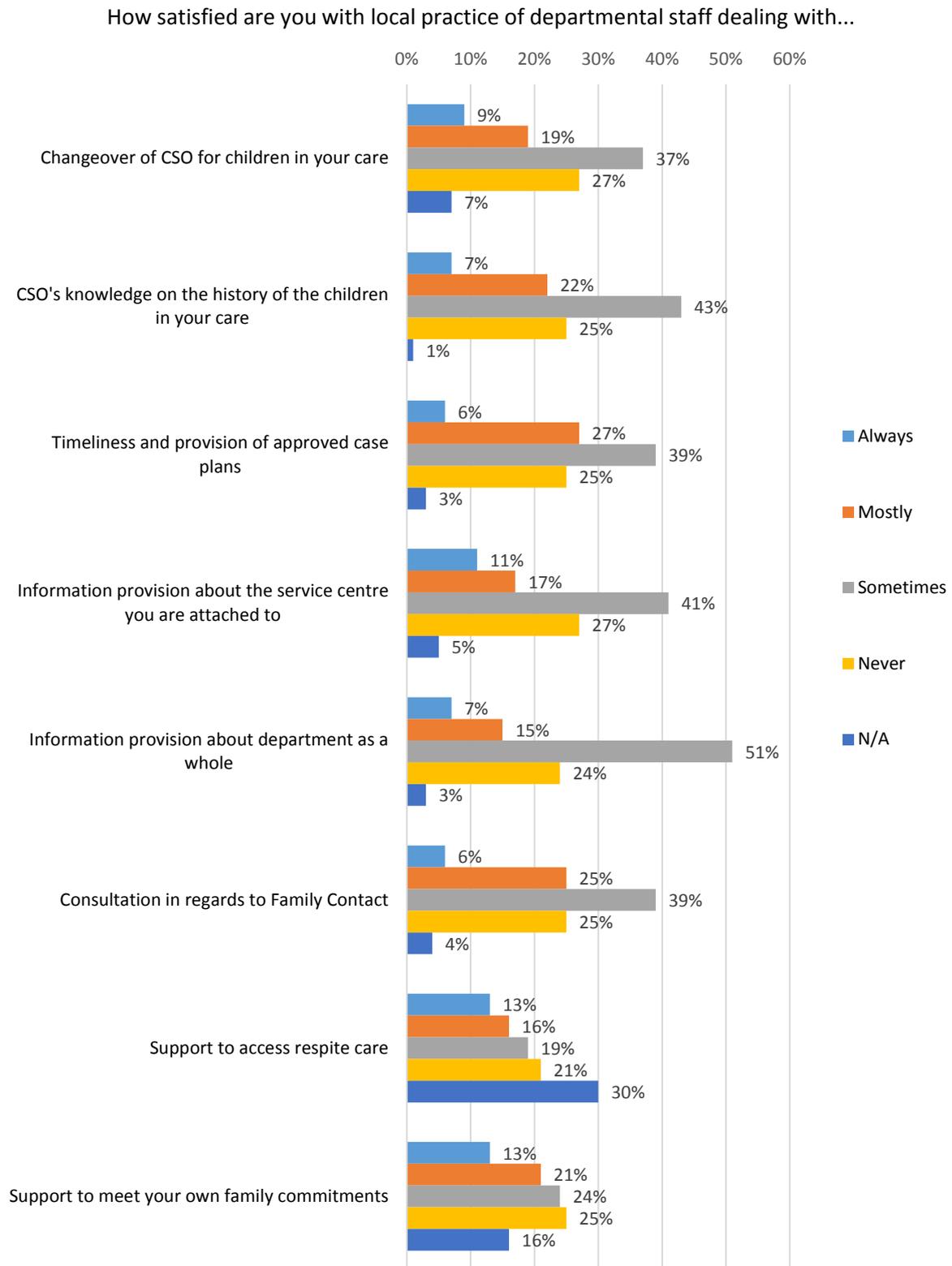


### What do you believe to be the area that places the most amount of financial burden on your carer household?



## Local Practice in CSSC

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



In this current survey there were 64% of carers completing the survey who reported feeling sometimes or never satisfied with the **changeover of CSO for children in their care**.

68% of carers were either sometimes or never satisfied with the **CSOs knowledge on the history of the children in their care**. 64% of carers reported feeling either sometimes or never satisfied with the **timeliness and provision of approved Case Plans**.

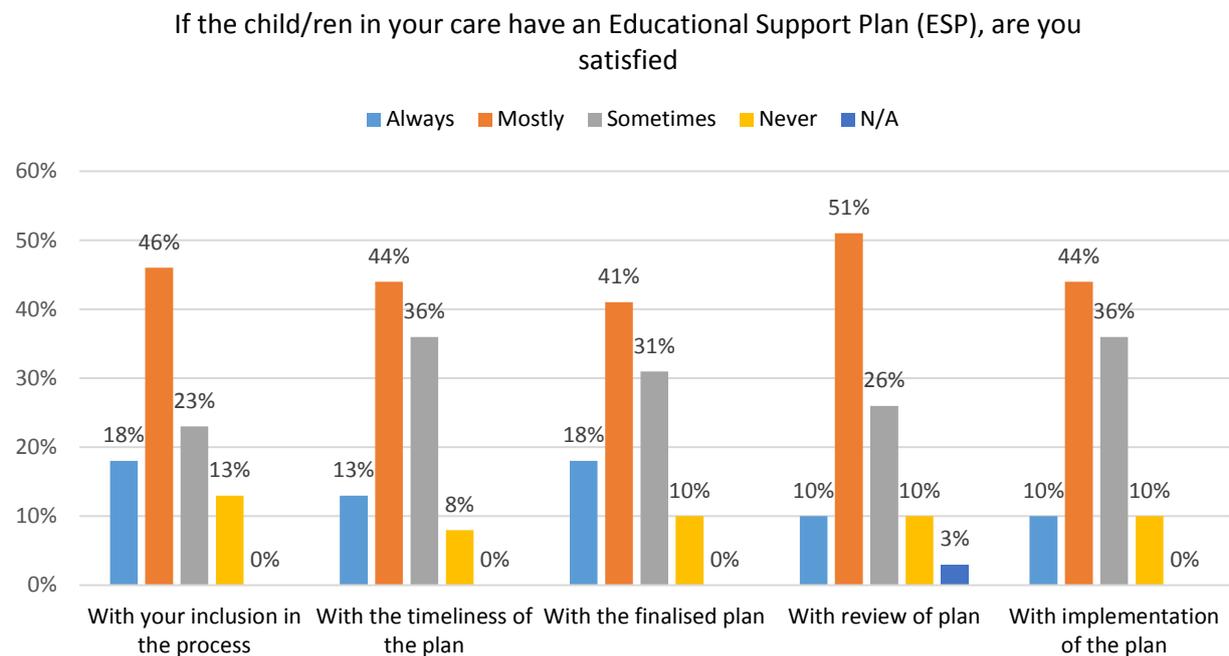
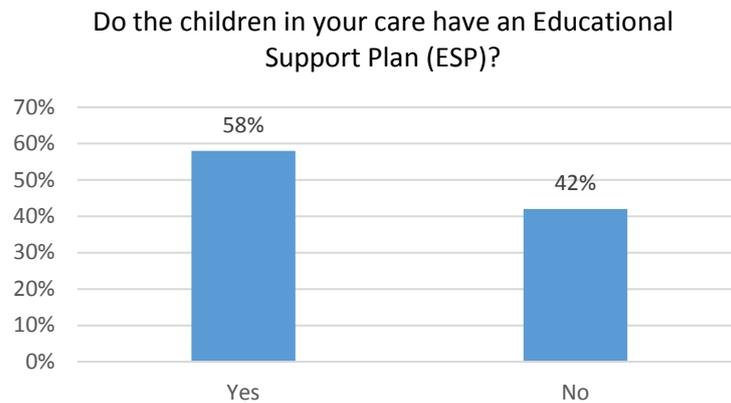
64% of carers reported feeling only sometimes or never satisfied in **being consulted in regards to family contact**. These figure continue to be disappointing and do not align with Child Safety's commitments to carers under the Statement of Commitment which state *"support and facilitate the participation of foster and kinship carers in the decisions affecting the life of the child or young person in their care and have the carer's knowledge an opinions inform decision-making processes to ensure the best interests of the child"* Carers often have critical observations and information to input into decision making. Consultation does not mean that carers make the decision, it means that Child Safety spend time accessing critical information the carer holds in their experience of providing 24/7 care to the child.

Carers also expressed overwhelmingly that they are only sometimes or never **kept up to date about changes in either their CSSC or region/departmental structure**. Whilst the sector has introduced the Carer Connect App, and carers are gradually using this tool as a means of being updated, it must be acknowledged that all carers are individuals and should be communicated with in a way that meets their needs. For some this will continue to be via email, phone and even face to face. The Carer Connect app is mentioned earlier in this report, and pleasingly 69% of carers who completed this survey were aware of the app, however only 57% were currently using it.

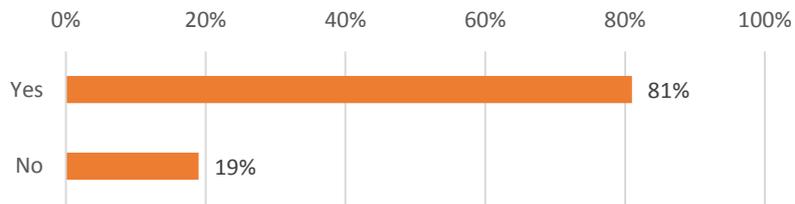
## Education Support Plans

Carers were asked if they had a current ESP plan in place for the child/ren in their care, and 58% reported they did have a plan.

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



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

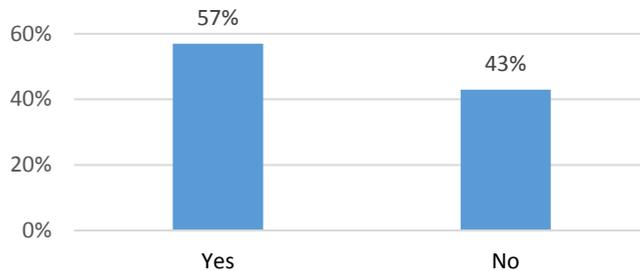


It would seem from the above data that most carers have reported they are either always or mostly satisfied with the processes surrounding ESP plans.

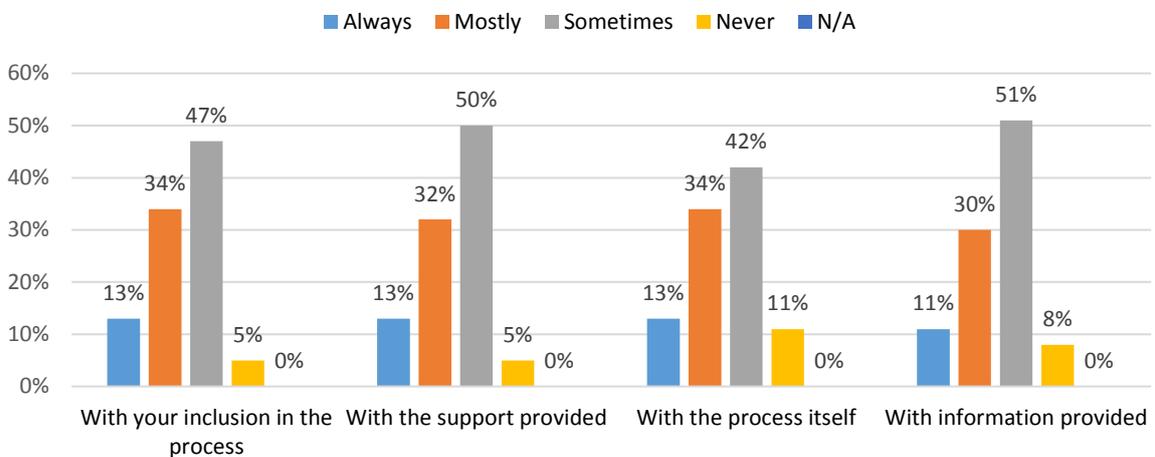
### Child Health Passports

Carers were asked if the child/ren in their care had a current Child Health Passport, and 57% reported having one. A range of other questions were then asked relating to the processes of Child Health Passports and how satisfied they were, carers reported as follows:

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

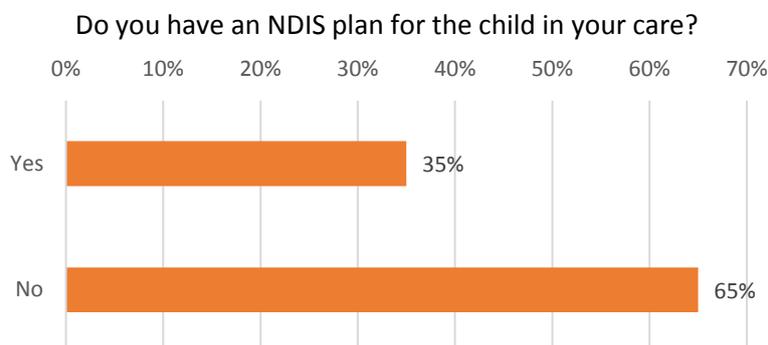
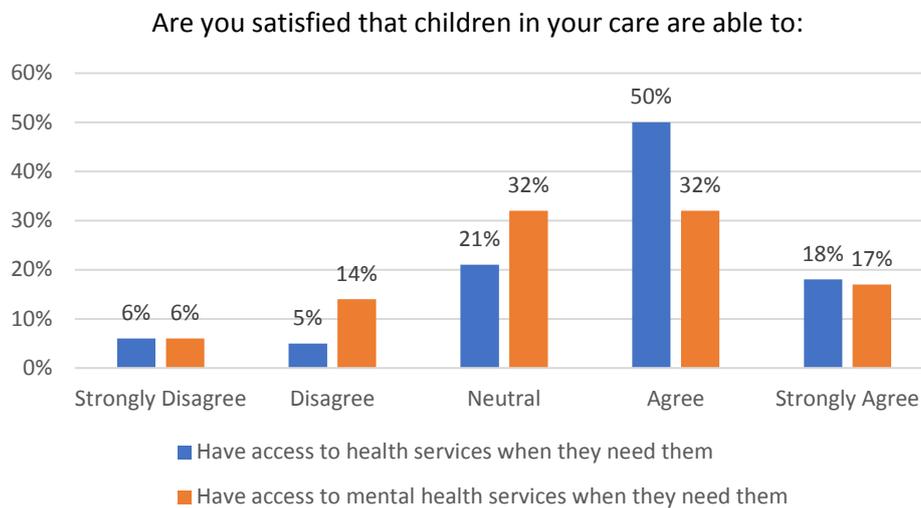
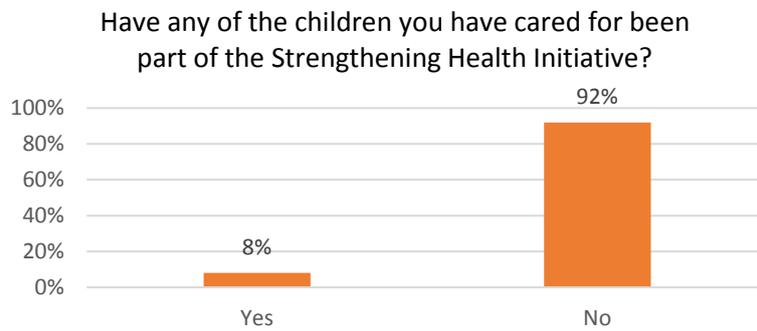


If the child/ren in your care have a Child Health Passport (CHP) are you satisfied?

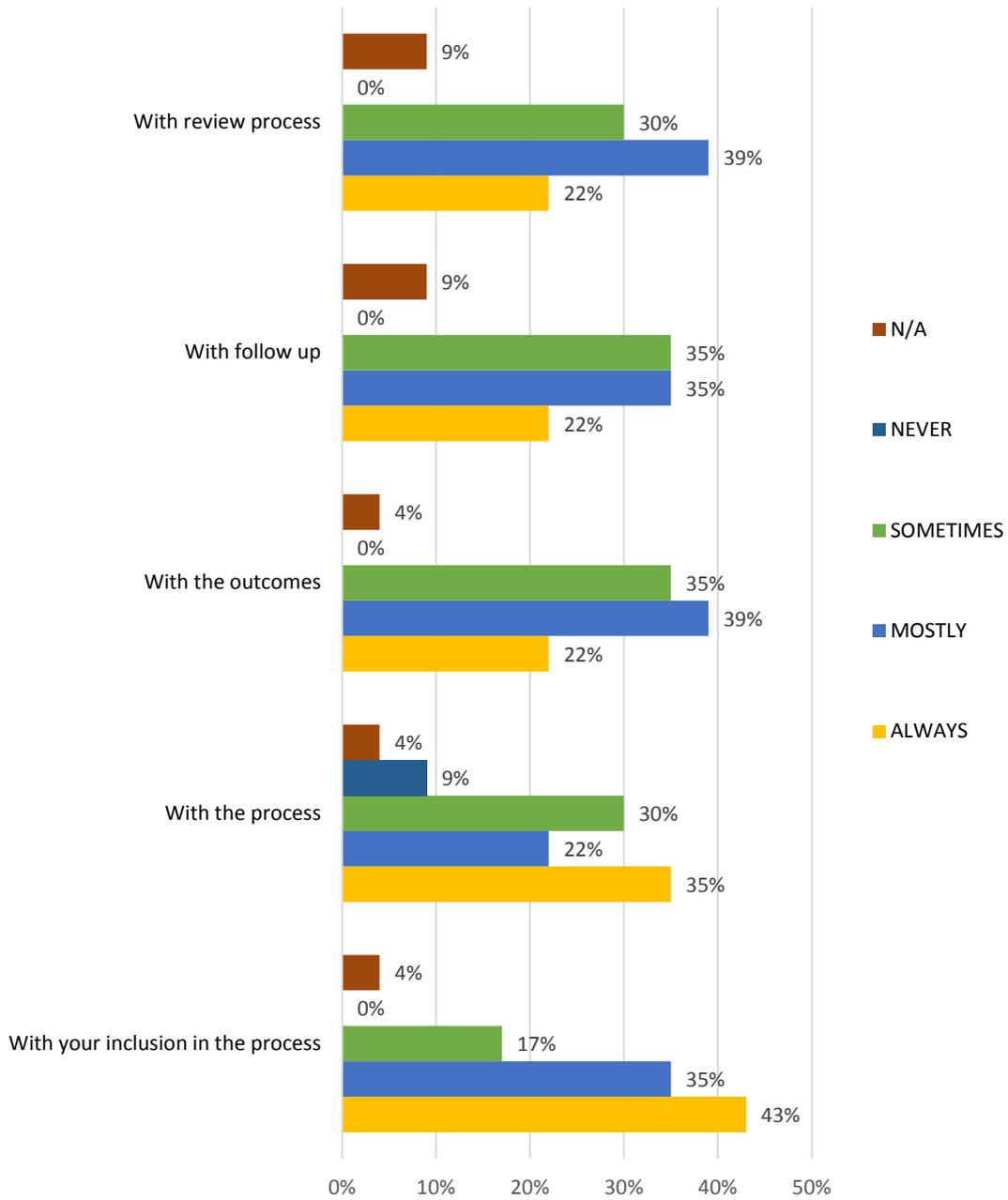


## Strengthening Health Initiative

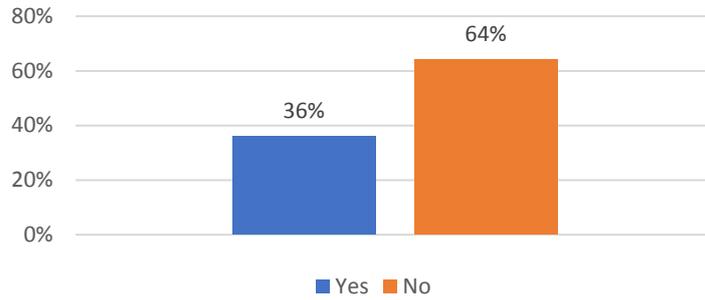
Carers were asked a range of questions in this category, and reported as follows:



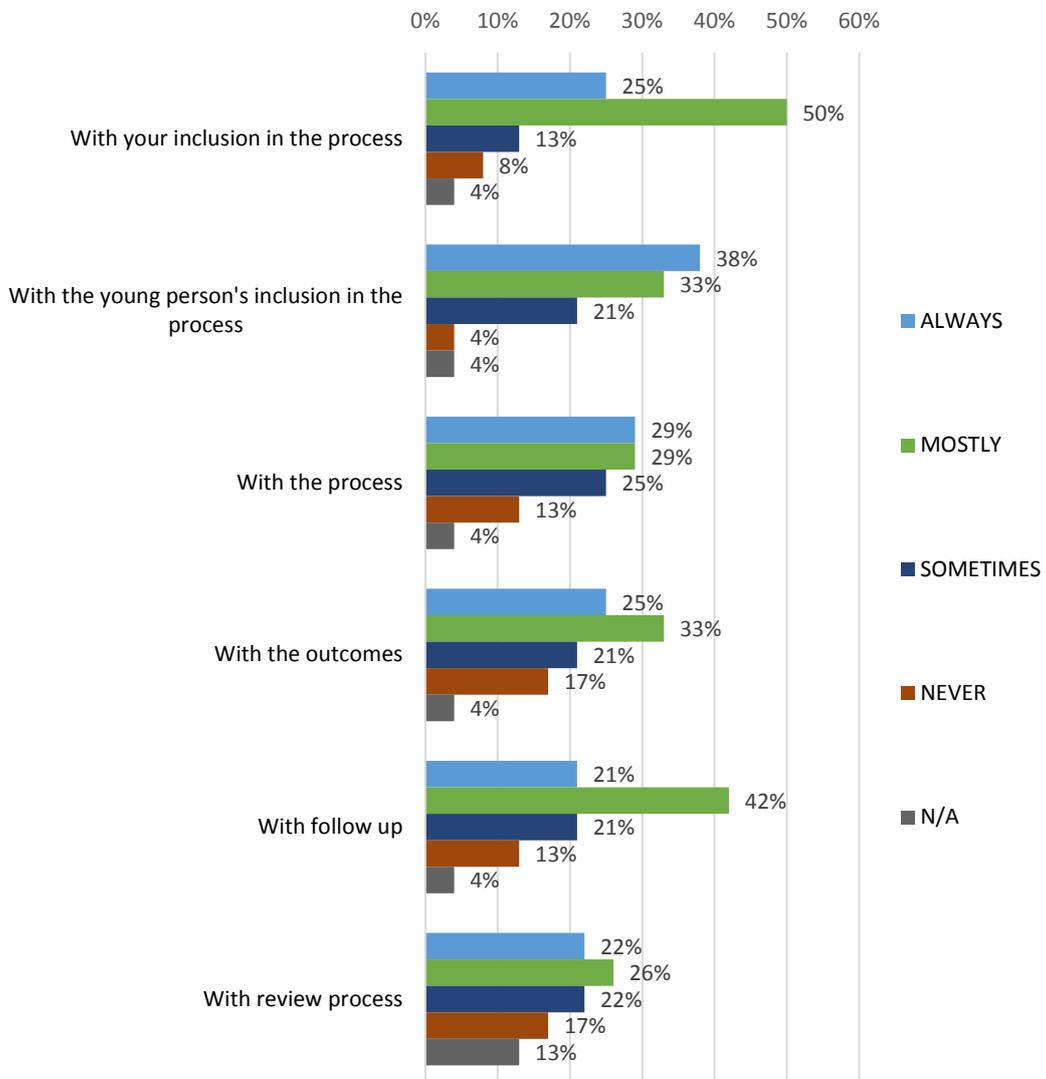
If yes, are you satisfied?



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



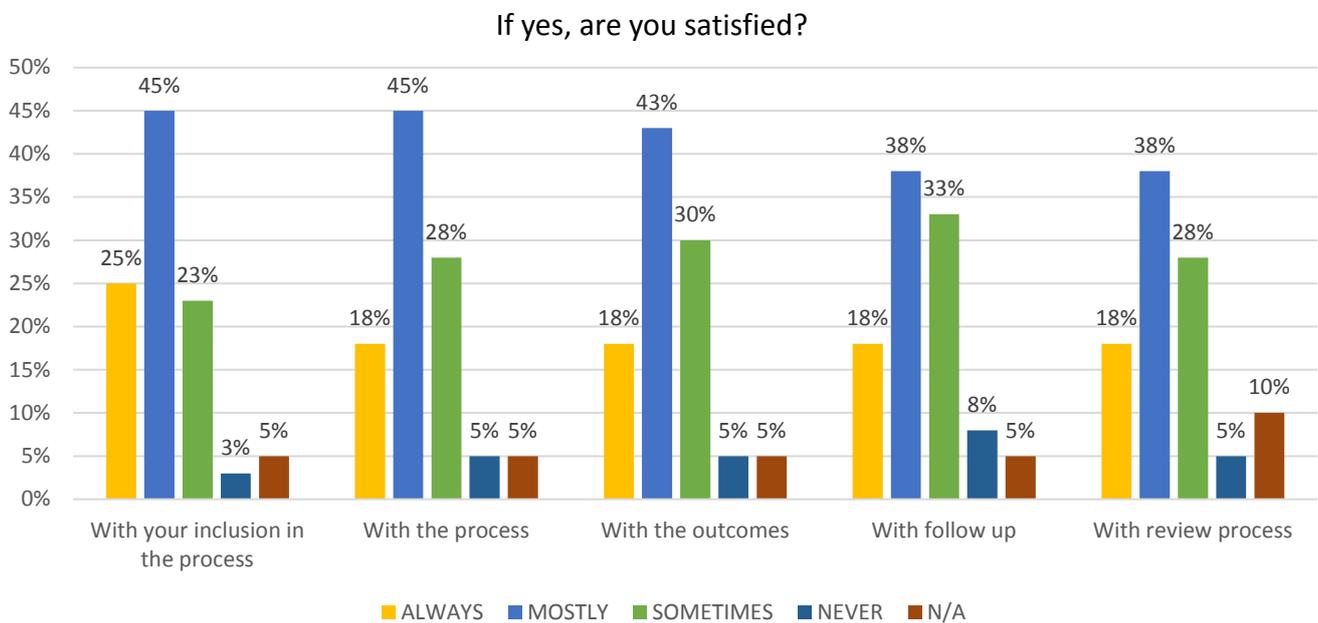
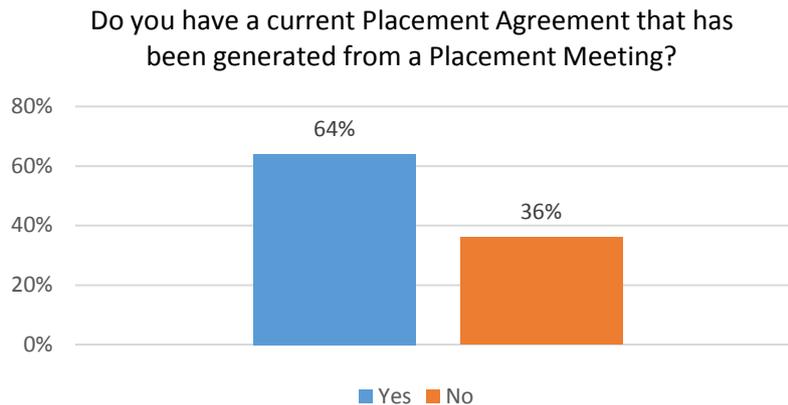
### If yes, are you satisfied?



## Placement Agreements

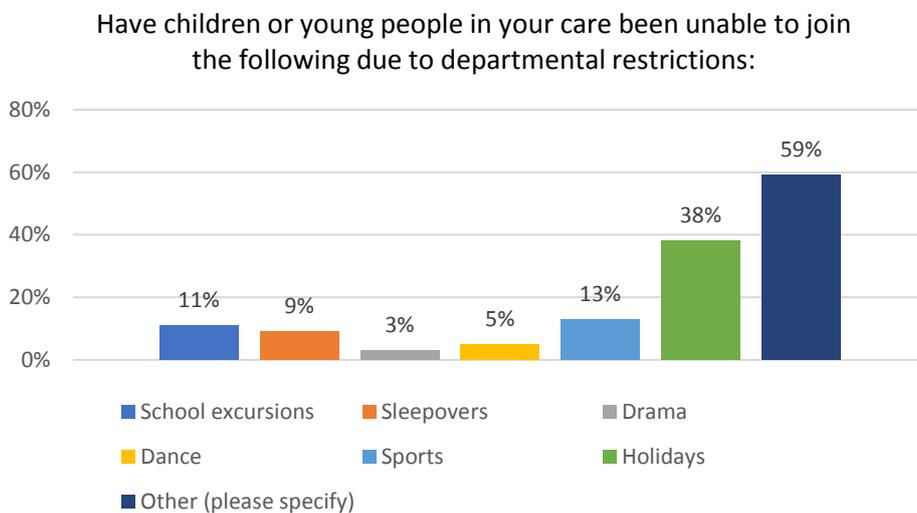
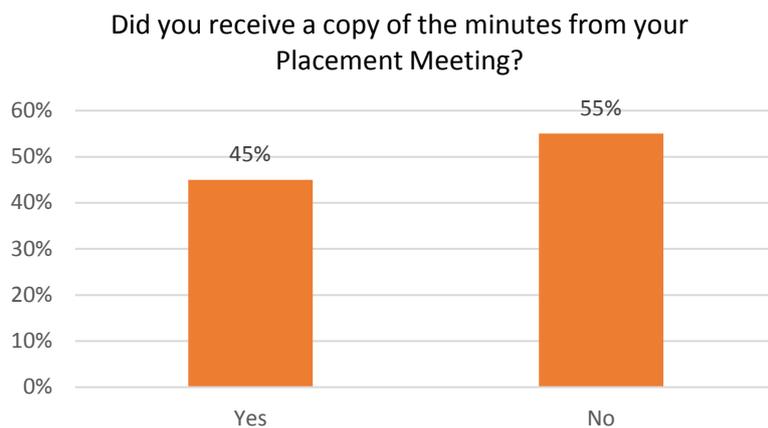
Carers were asked if they had a current Placement Agreement generated from a placement meeting, 64% of carers reported they do.

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



It is positive to see that carers are mostly satisfied with Placement Agreements across the areas of inclusion, process and outcomes although the follow up and review process continues to require attention.

Carers were then asked whether they received a copy of the Placement Meeting minutes, and 55% stated they did not.

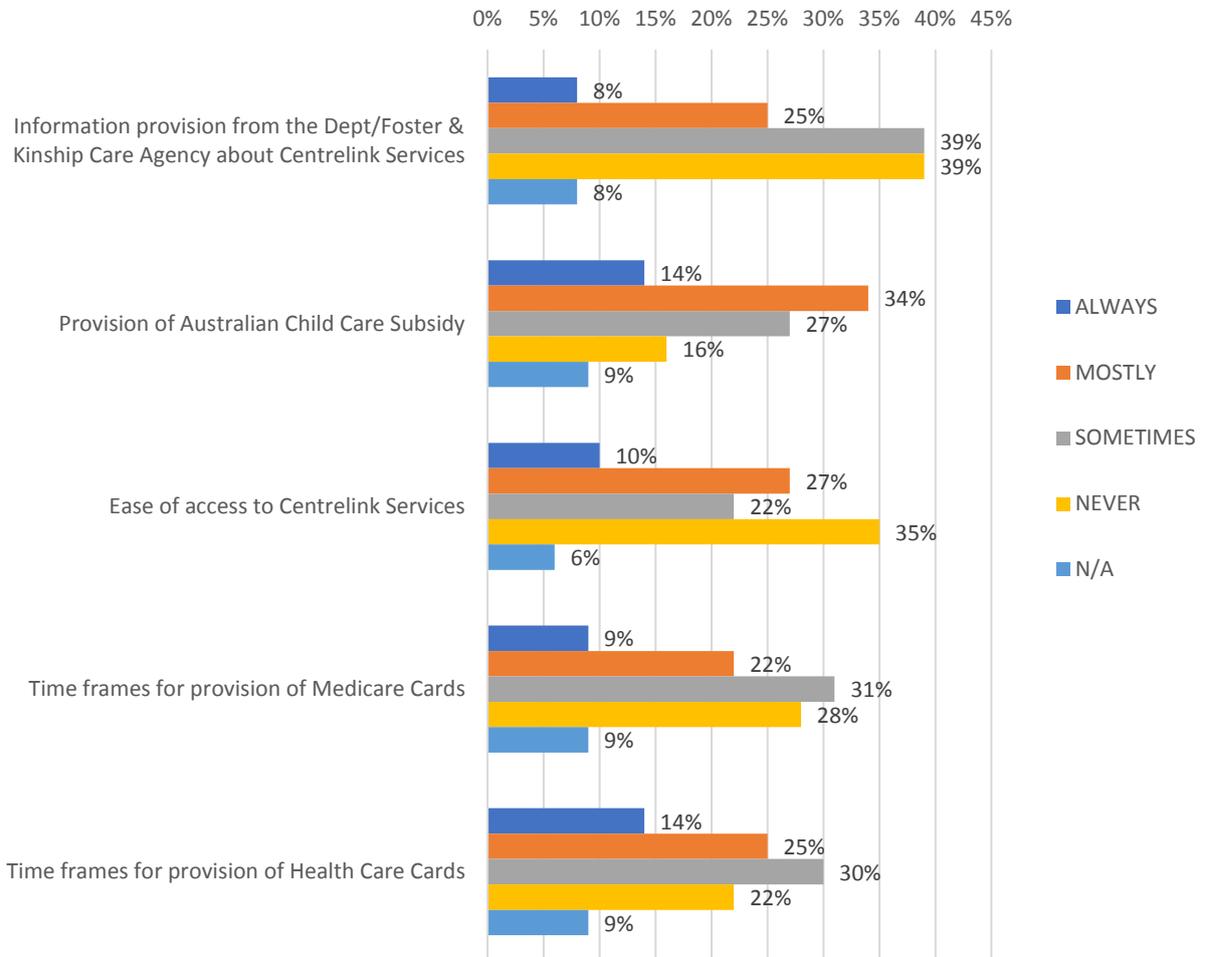


The above question was one requested by the Queensland Family and Child Commission to include into the Carer survey 2022.

## Centrelink

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

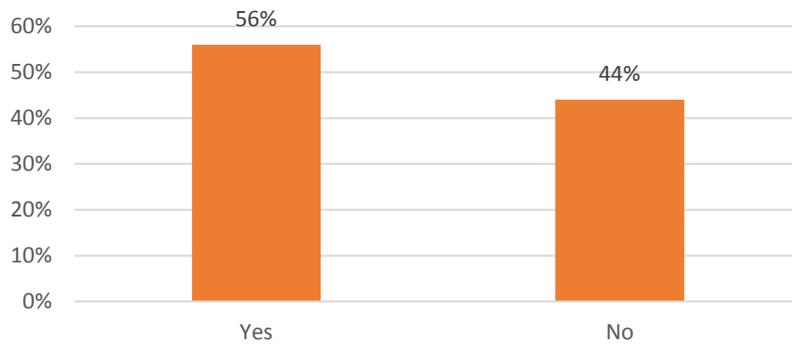
Interaction with Centrelink is often a part of accepting a placement. How satisfied are you with



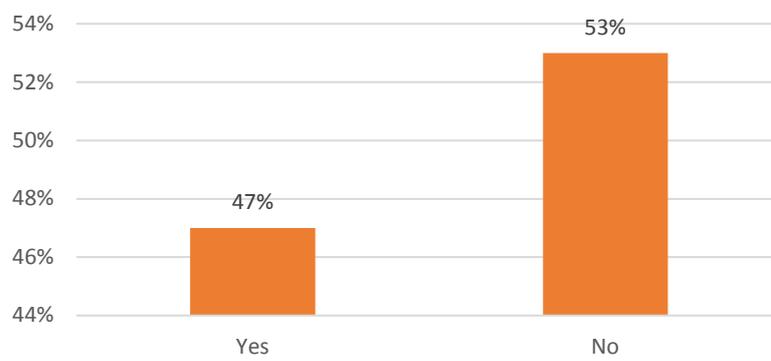
It is evident from the above graph that carers are feeling a level of dissatisfaction in this area with the majority of carers feeling that they don't **receive relevant information or support from their CSSC in relation to how and what they can access from Centrelink.**

Carers were then asked a question relating to **ease of access to Centrelink Services** for the children in their care, and 57% reported feeling only sometimes or never satisfied in this area. 59% of carers reported only sometimes or never feeling satisfied with the **timeframes for provision of Medicare Cards**, and 52% feeling sometimes or never feeling satisfied with the **timeframes for provision of Health Care Cards**. These figures represent at least half of carers not having access to the critical and necessary documents required for ease of access to essential services.

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

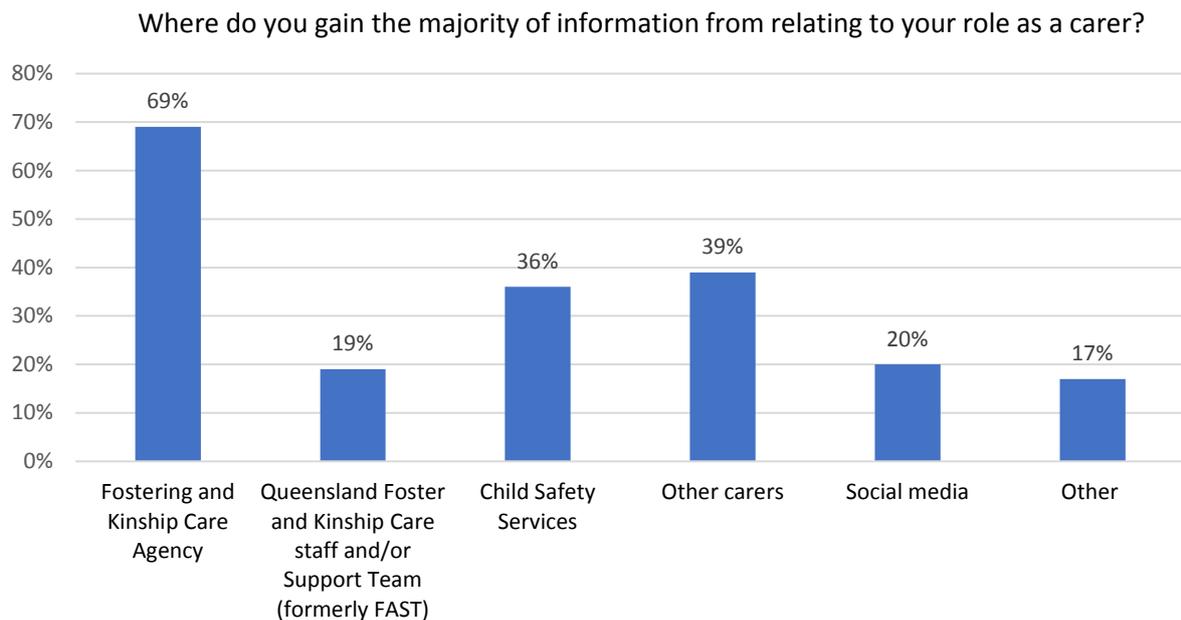
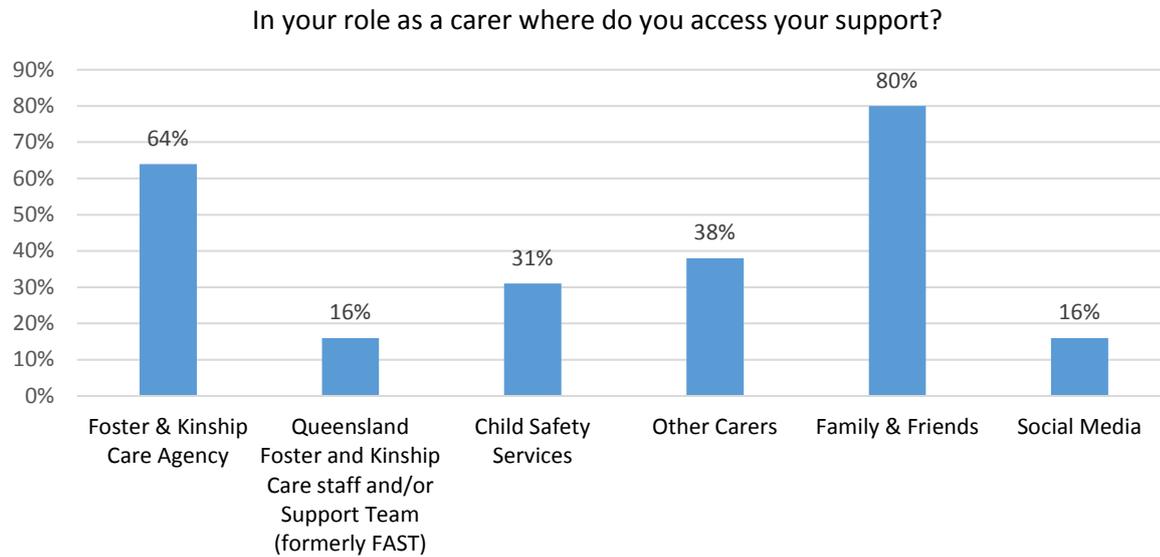


Was the matter that you called for resolved through the use of this resource?



## Support

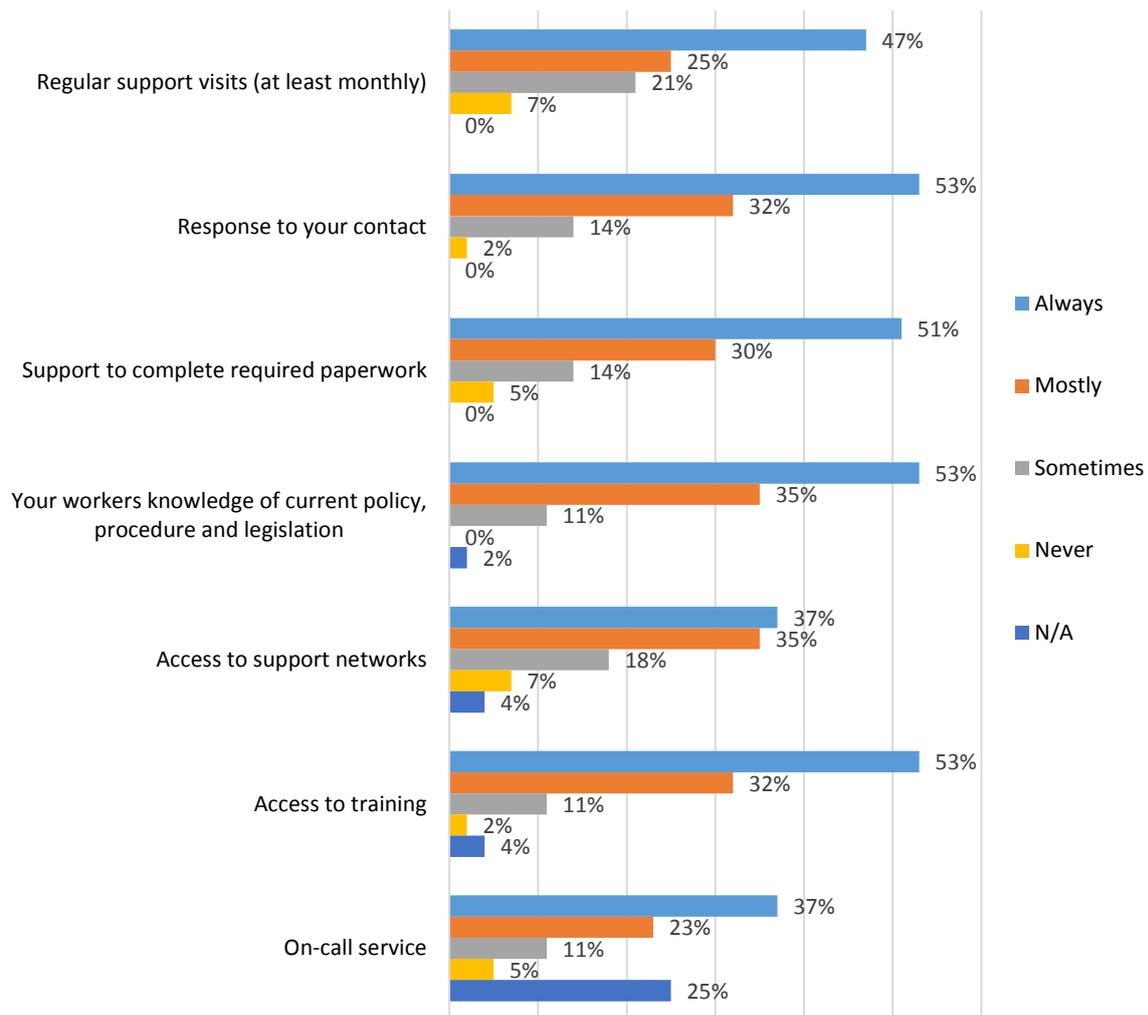
Carers were asked where they accessed the majority of their support from.



## Foster and Kinship Care Programs

Carers were asked a range of questions relating to the support provided by Fostering and Kinship Care Agencies. Firstly, carers were asked if they were attached to a Fostering and Kinship Care Agency and of the 64 who answered this question 57 answered yes, and 7 were still not attached to an agency.

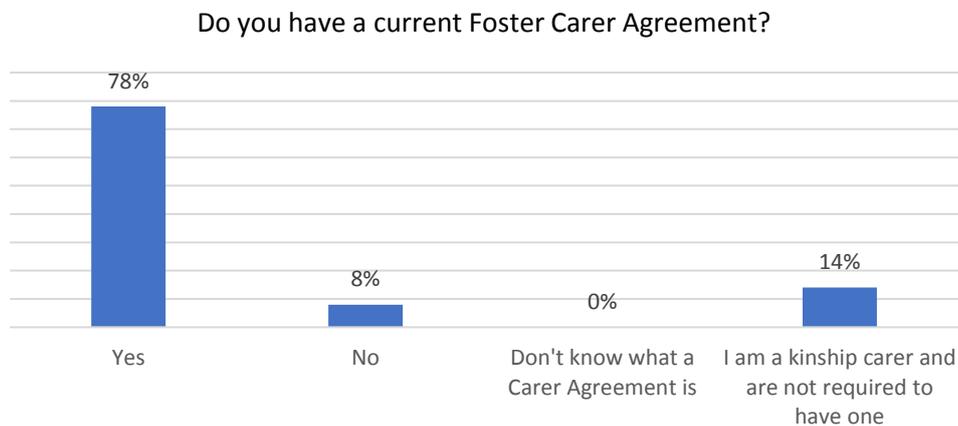
If yes, are you satisfied with the following support provided by your agency?



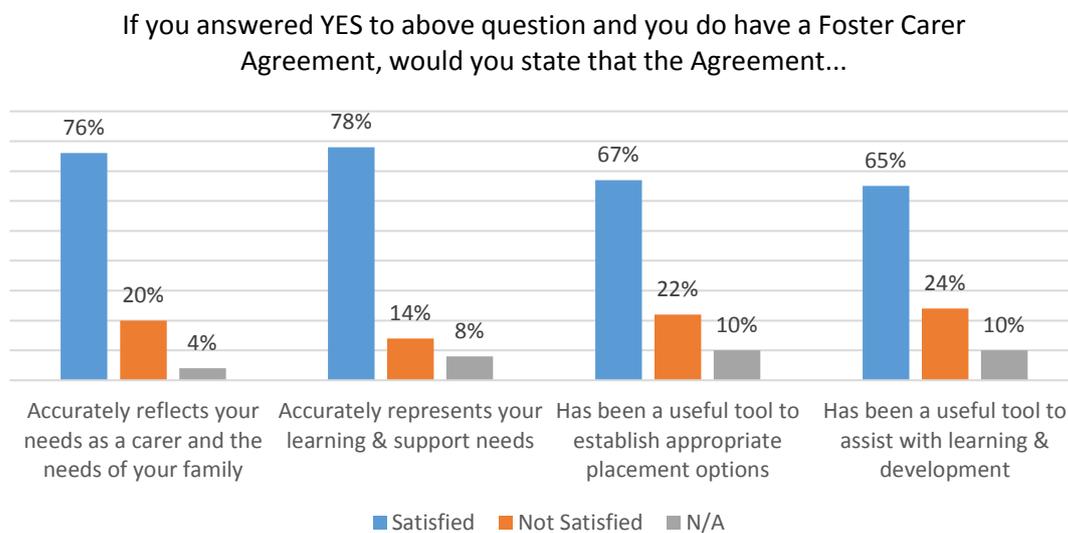
It is positive to see that the majority of carers responding are always or mostly satisfied with the support provided by their agency.

## Foster Carer Agreements

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



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

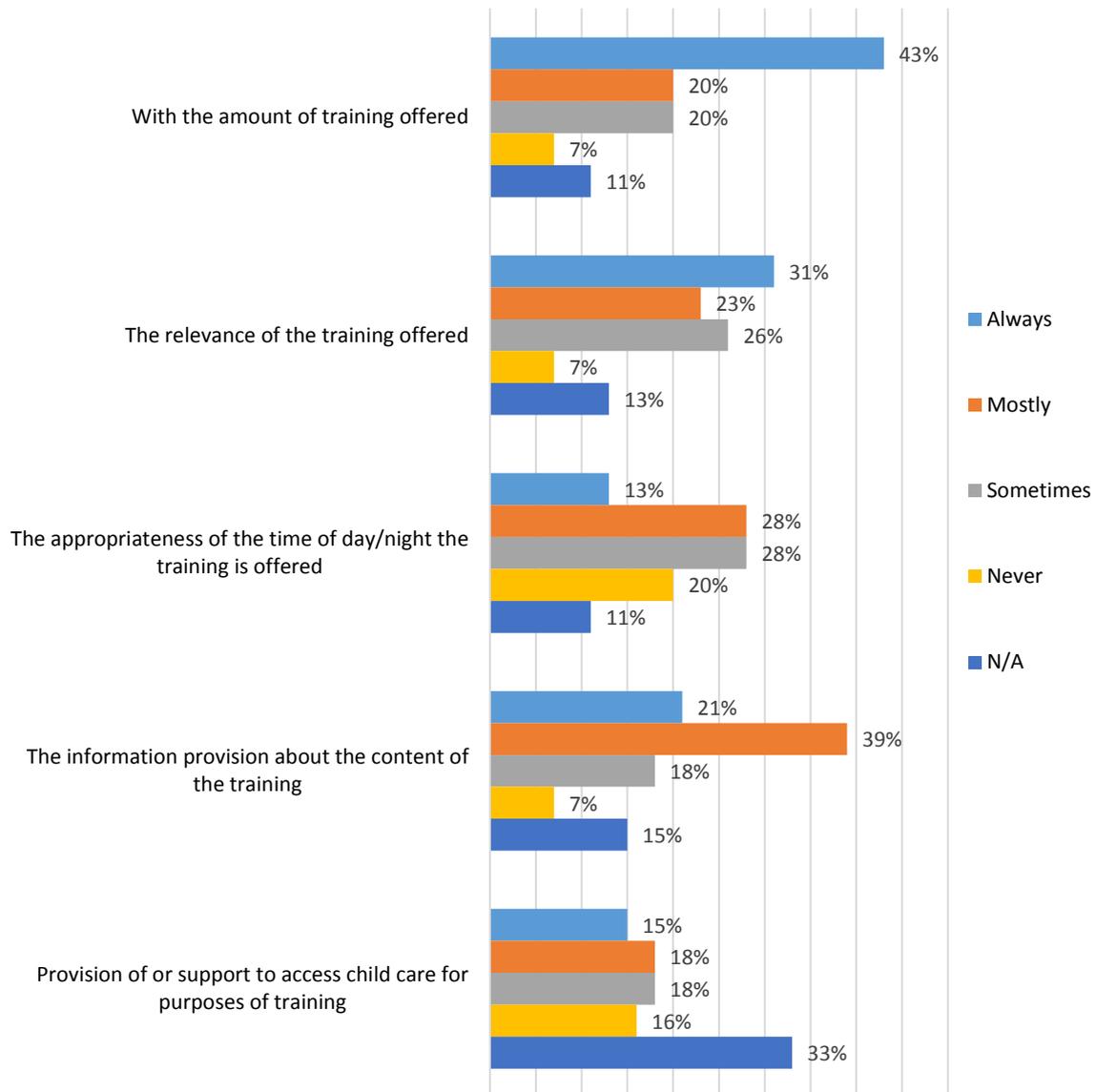


Carers have reported high levels of satisfaction across the board in relation to the Foster Carer Agreements.

## Training

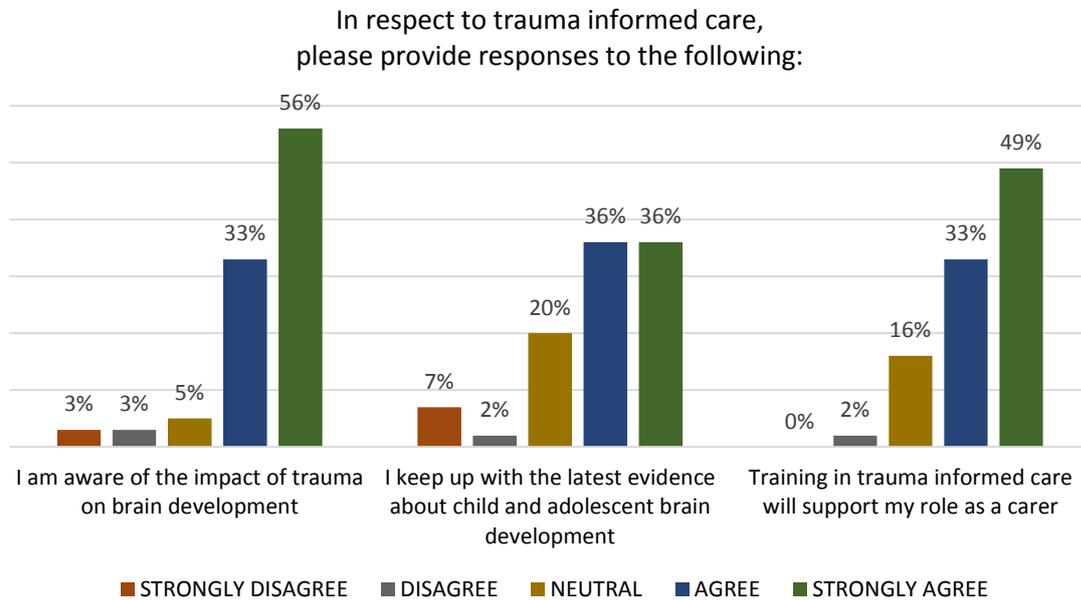
Carers were asked a range of questions relating to their training experiences and responded as follows.

Training is part of support and the right of carers to have training to build their skills. How satisfied are you ...



Carers were asked whether they were satisfied with **provision of or support to access childcare during training**. Only 33% of carers reported feeling always or mostly satisfied in this area.

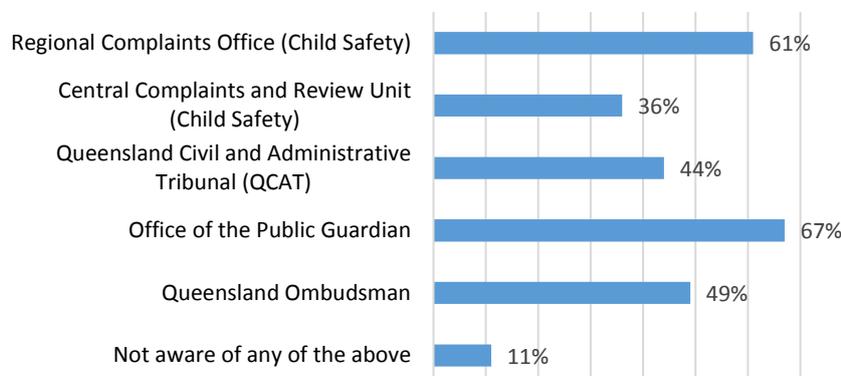
The Queensland Family and Child Commission requested additional questions were asked of carers during this survey relating to their knowledge, understand and access to trauma informed care as follows:



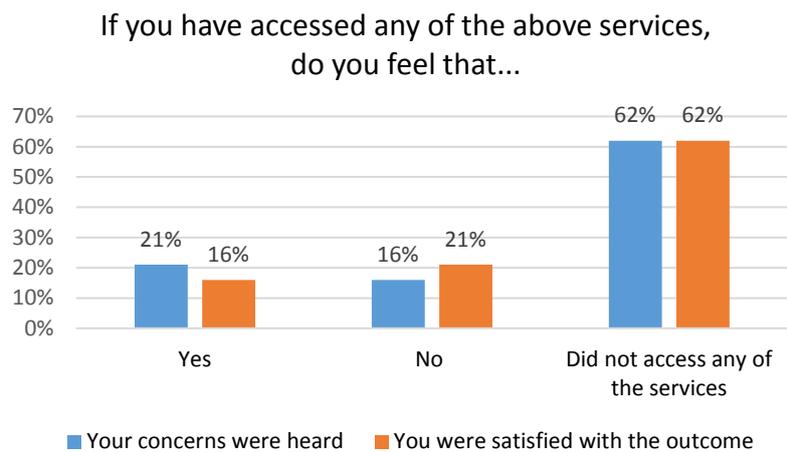
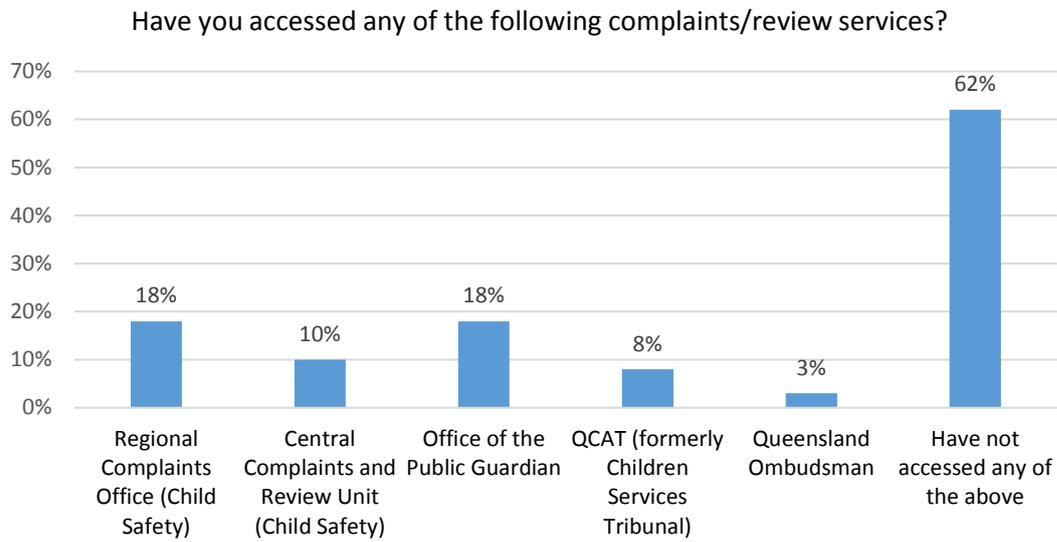
## Complaints/Appeals

Carers were asked to identify which complaint/appeal processes they were aware of and which services they had accessed. Of the 83 carers from Far North Queensland region who completed the survey, 61 carers responded.

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



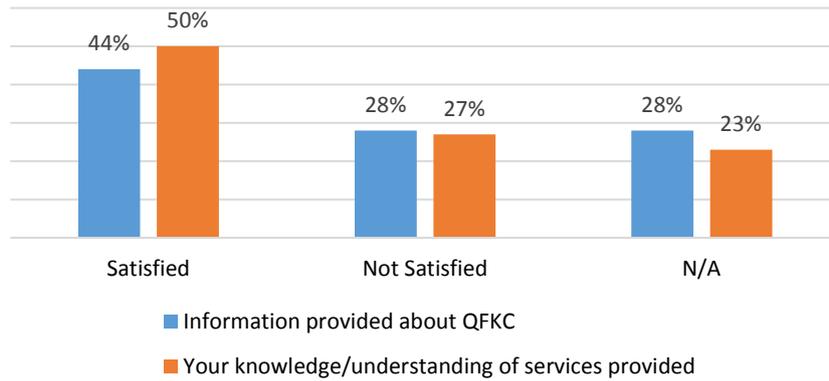
Carers were asked if they felt heard and were satisfied with the outcome regarding their contact with the above services.



## Queensland Foster and Kinship Care

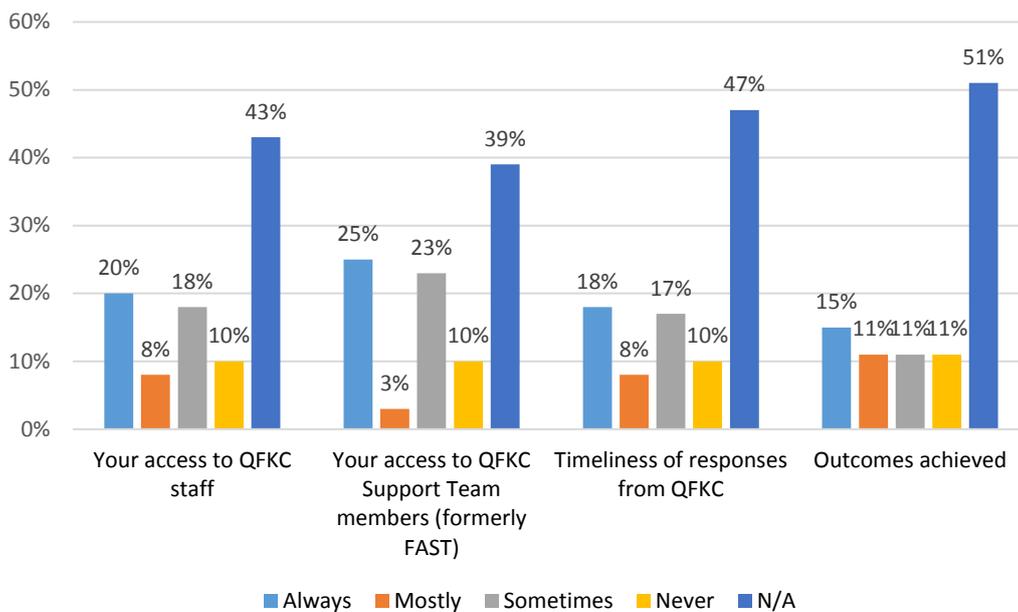
Carers were asked a range of questions relating to Queensland Foster and Kinship Care (QFKC). Firstly, carers were asked if they were satisfied with the provision of information about QFKC, 44% of carers reported satisfaction. In respect to knowledge and understanding of services provided 50% of carers reported feeling satisfied. 28% and 27% of carers were not satisfied in these areas.

QFKC provides support and advocacy to Foster and Kinship Carers. How satisfied are you with...

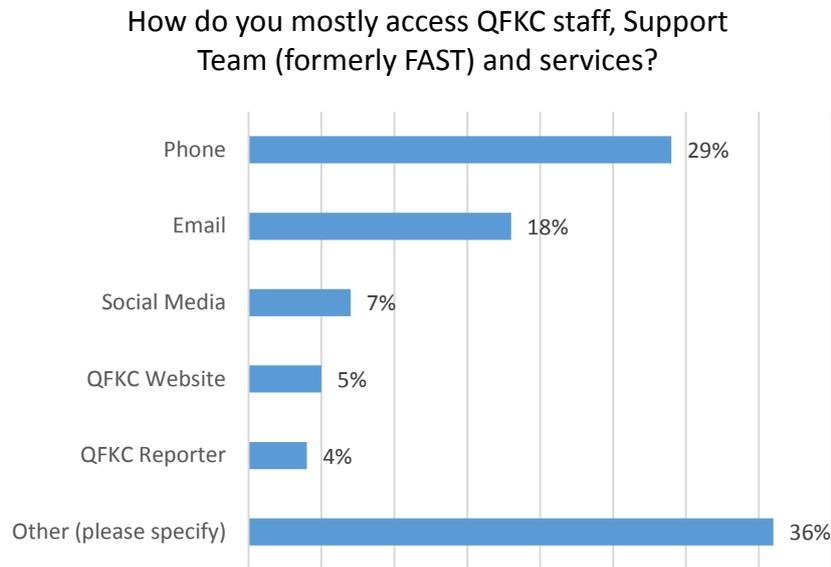


Carers were then asked a range of questions relating to their experiences if they had contact with QFKC, please note that carers who have selected not applicable, have not been included in this data as it is not relevant.

How satisfied are you with...

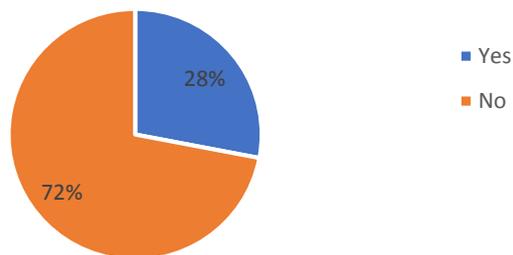


Carers were asked how they mostly access QFKC staff, support team members and other services available through QFKC, carers responded as follows:

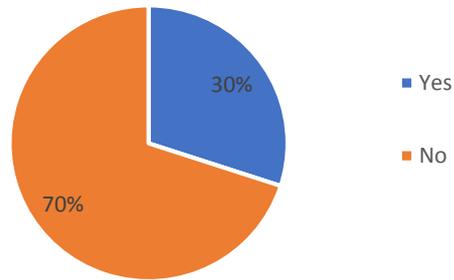


## Child Safety – Culture and Practice

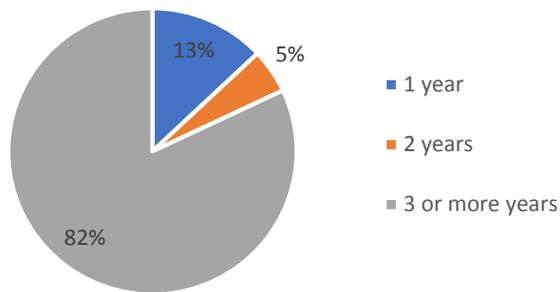
Have you noticed any positive change in practice since 2020?



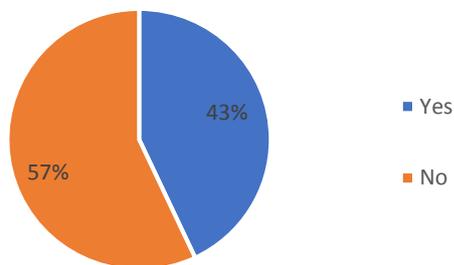
Would you consider culture and practice in Child Safety has improved in the last 2 years?



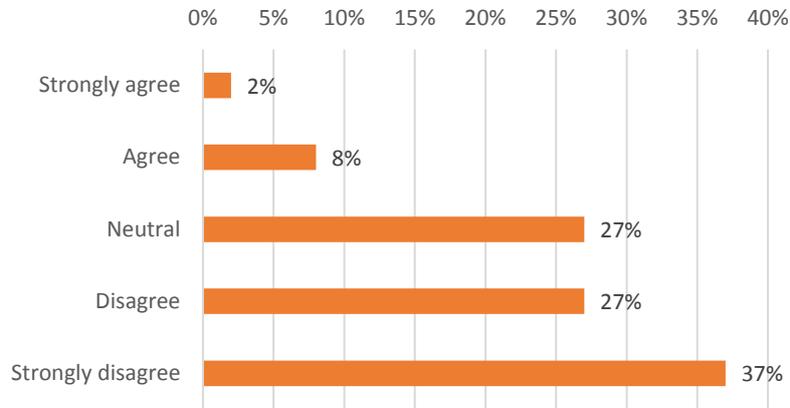
Do you intend to continue caring for?



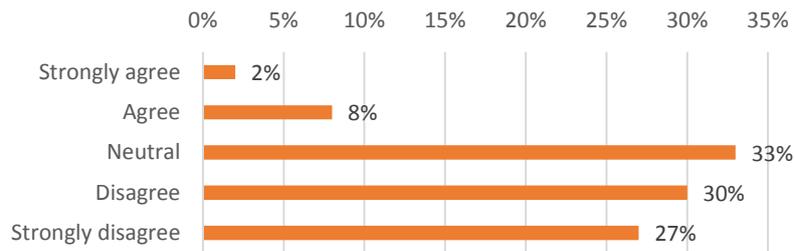
Is there any support/issue that would influence this decision?



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



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



**Looking Forward – carers were asked...**

**Would you advise a friend to be a carer?**

