

**FOSTER & KINSHIP  
CARERS SURVEY  
2018  
REPORT**

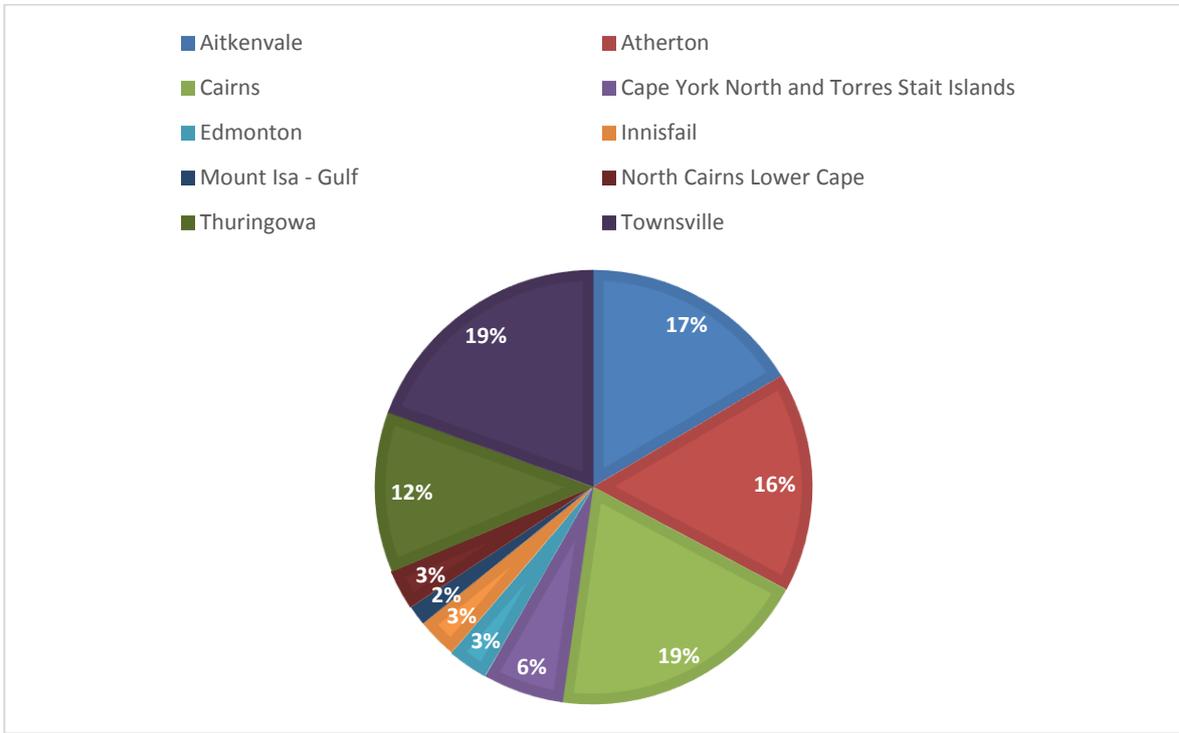
**Northern  
Region**

## Contents

About the Carer .....	2
Relationship Status .....	3
Cultural Diversity.....	5
CALD Community .....	6
How satisfied are you with Relationships with Staff at Child Safety Services .....	7
Child Safety Processes.....	12
Standard of Care/Harm Processes .....	14
Confidentiality.....	15
Financial .....	17
How satisfied are you with local practices of CSSC.....	19
Education Support Plans .....	22
Child Health Passports .....	23
Placement Agreements.....	23
Centrelink.....	24
Support .....	25
Foster and Kinship Care Services .....	26
Foster Care Agreements .....	29
Training .....	29
Complaint/Concerns Processes .....	30
Foster Care Queensland.....	31
FAST Program.....	31
Partners in Care .....	33
Looking Forward .....	33

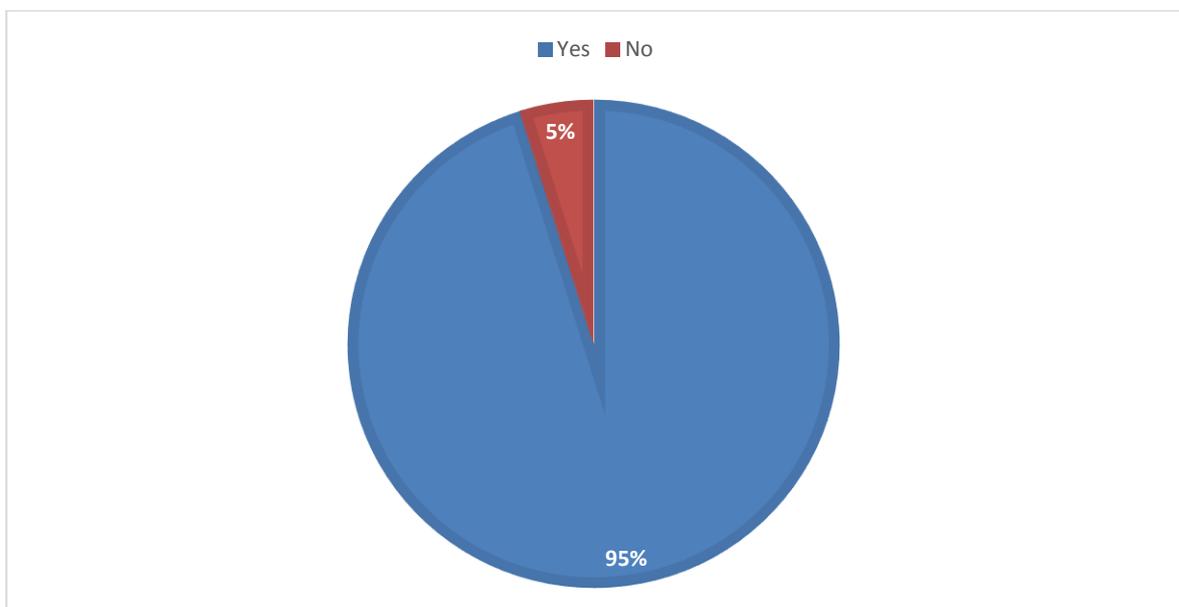
## About the Carer

In Northern Queensland Region 67 Foster and Kinship Carers completed the Carer Survey and were represented in the following Child Safety Service Centres, noting every CSSC was represented in the Survey

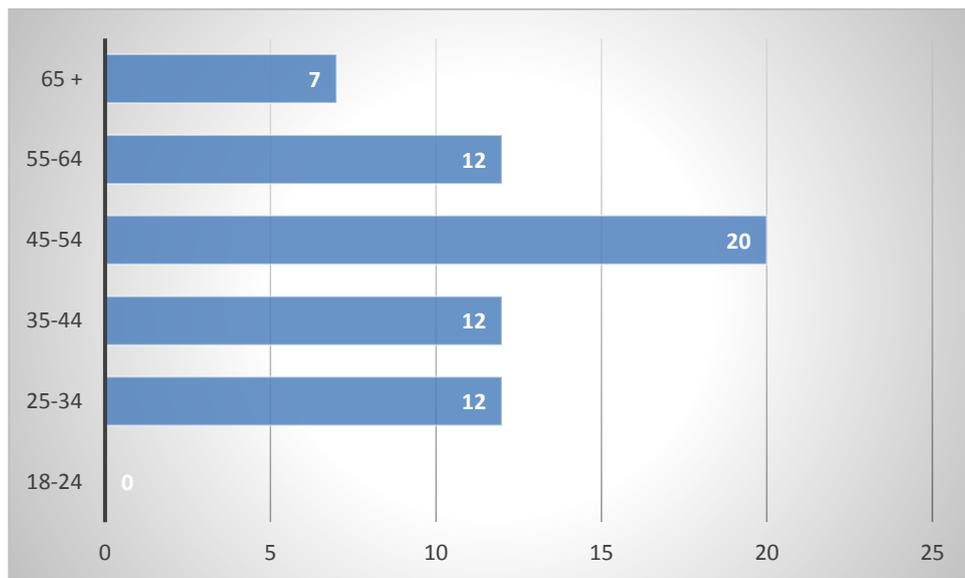


Of the 67 responses in Northern Region, 55 identified as Foster Carers (82%), 8 identified as Kinship Carers (12%) and 1 identified as a provisionally approved carer. There were 3 that did not respond to this question.

Carers were asked if they were supported by a fostering and kinship carer agency with the vast majority of carers in Northern Region who completed the survey confirming they were.



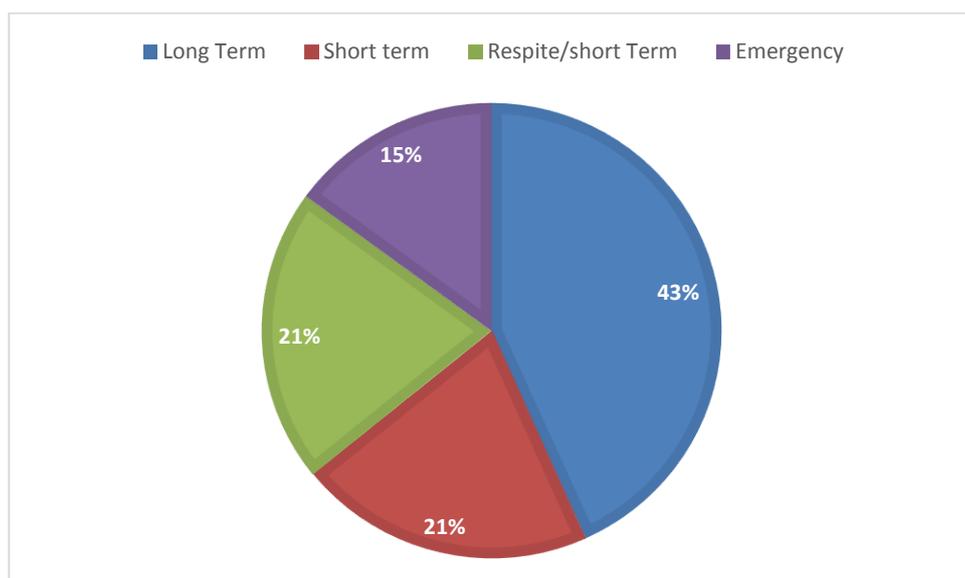
Carers were asked to identify the age group they fitted into.



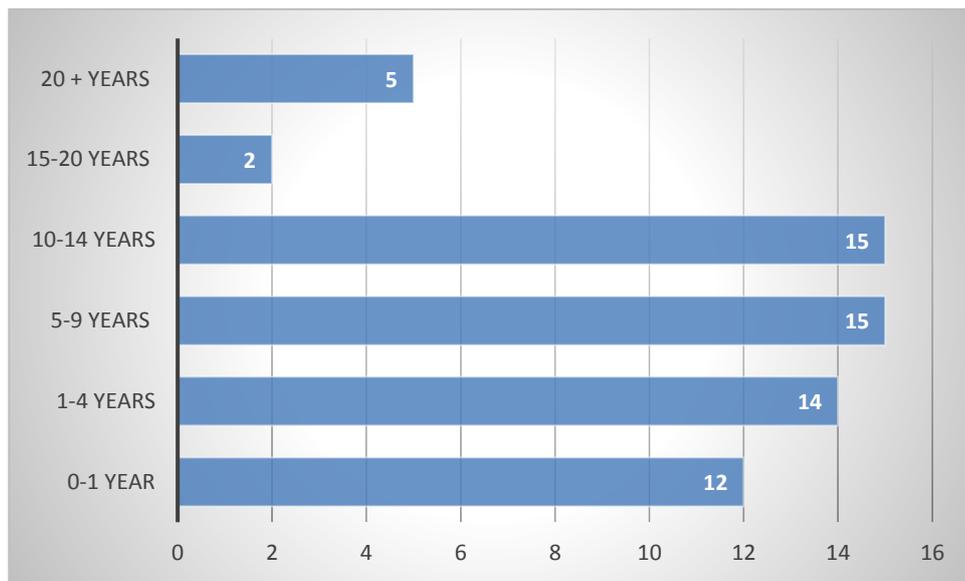
### Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander

6 carers in Central Northern Region who completed the survey identified as Aboriginal. 2 carers identified as Torres Strait Islander and 2 carers identified as Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander.

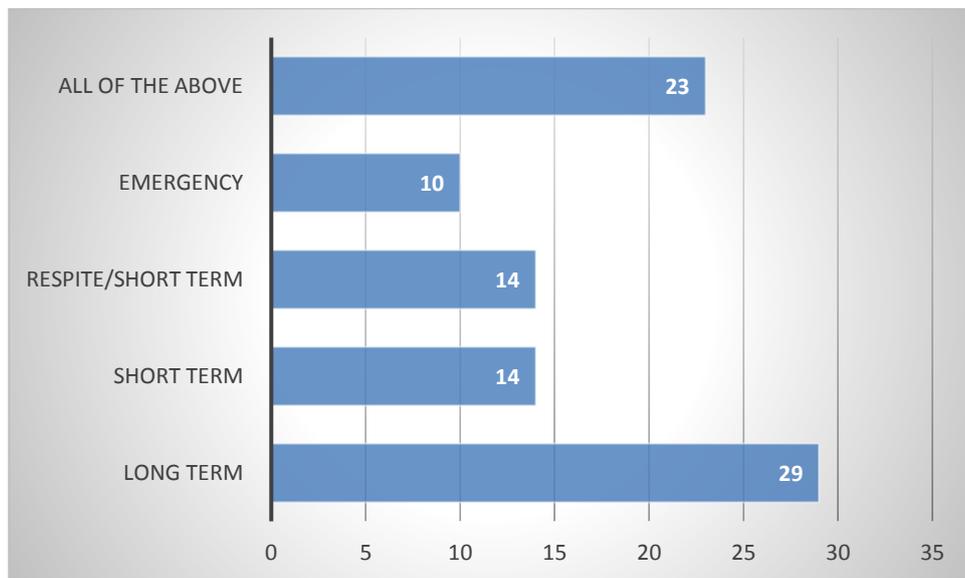
### Relationship Status



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



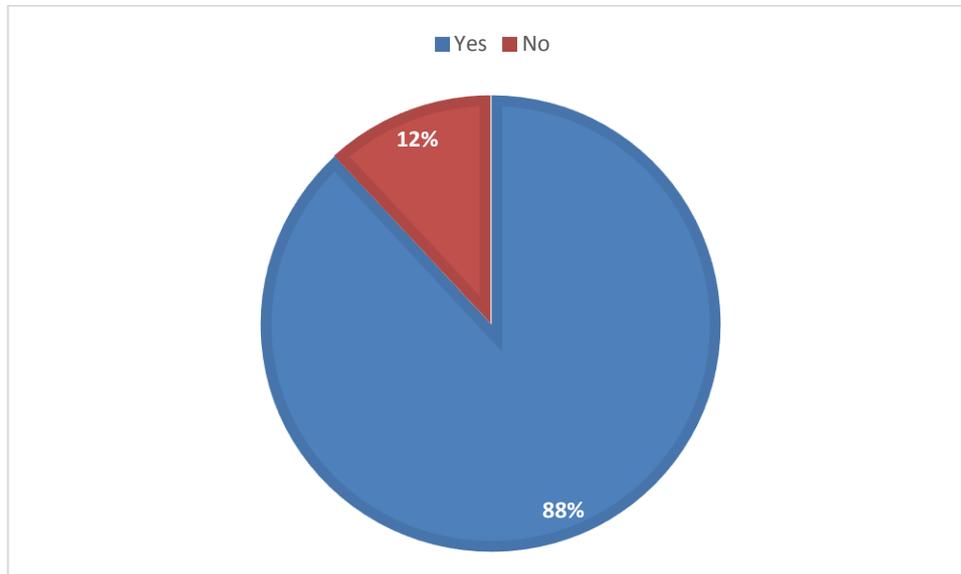
Carers were asked which type of care they provide, please note that carers were able to tick more than one type of care.



## Cultural Diversity

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

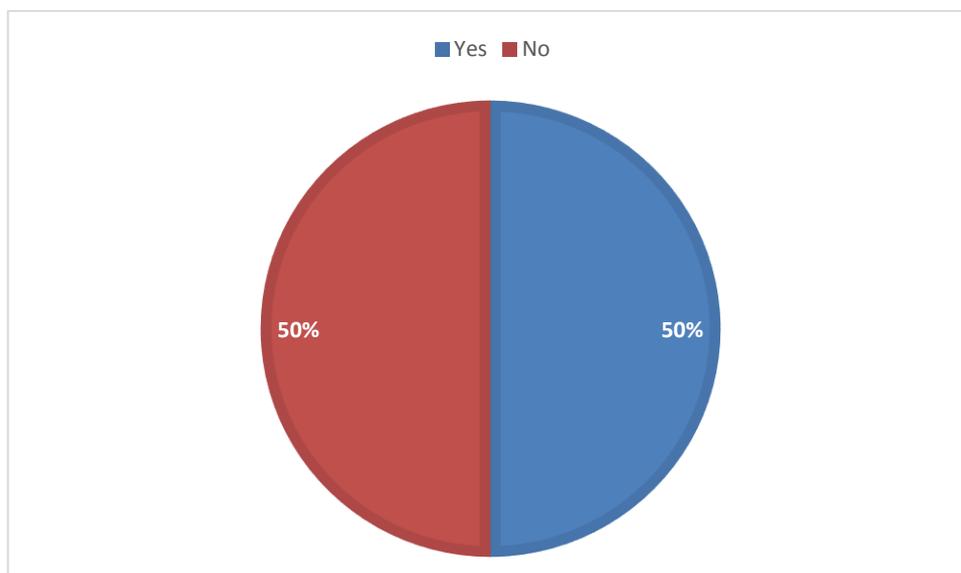
*Are you caring or have you ever provided care for an Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander child?*



Given that only 10 carers identified as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander in this survey, the majority of those carers who have responded yes to this question would not identify as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander.

Carers were then asked if they had answered yes to the above question, whether they had a cultural support plan in place. 54% answered yes to this question, leaving 46% of children placed in care where they identified as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander either without a Cultural support plan or where the carer had no knowledge of its existence.

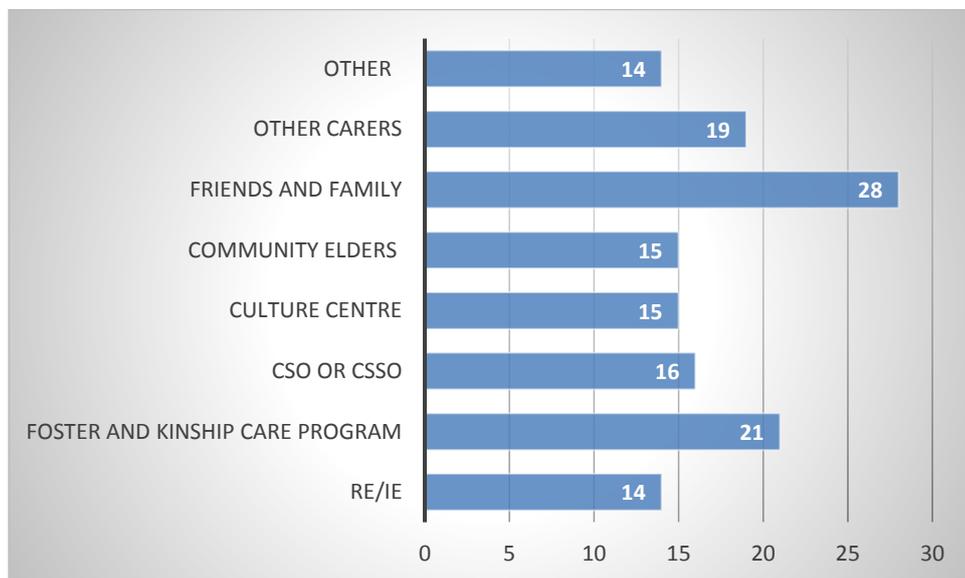
Carers were then asked if they were provided with Cultural awareness training to assist them to care for a child who identified as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander.



As evidenced above half of the carers who responded identified they did not receive any training to assist them in building their cultural knowledge in their care of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children.

Carers were asked whether they understood the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Principle. This principle is explored with foster carers in the Pre-Service Quality 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 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander principal with 87% confirming understanding and 13% identifying not understanding the Principal.

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



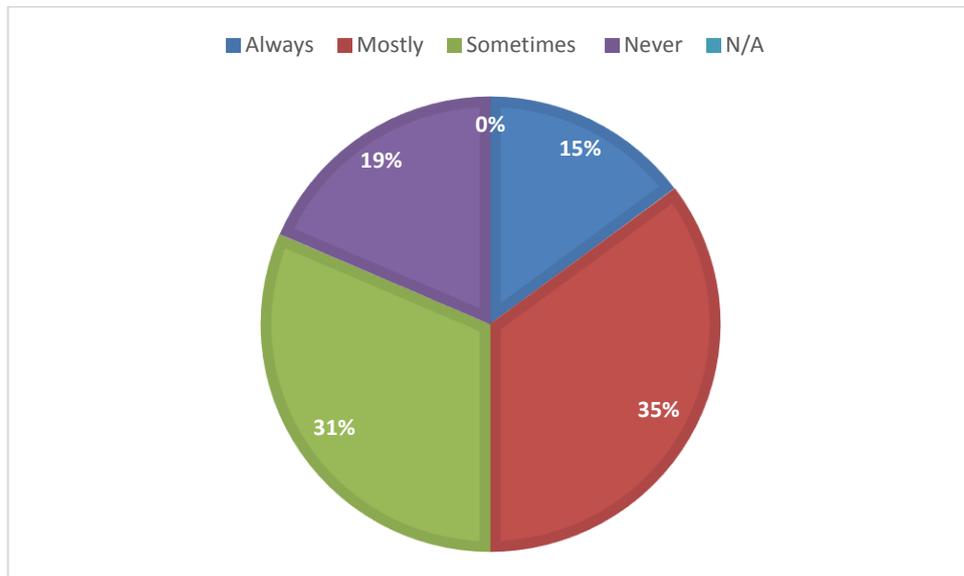
### CALD Community

This is the second survey FCQ 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.

12% of carers (7) who completed the survey in the Northern Region identified from a CALD community and 20% of carers in Northern Region 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. 35% of carers identified that they had been provided with training.

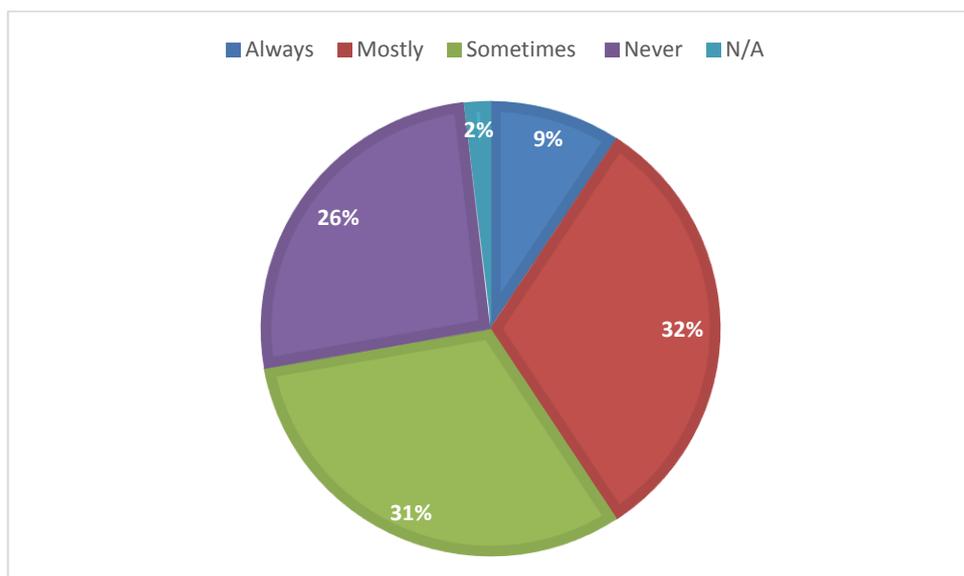
## How satisfied are you with Relationships with Staff at Child Safety Services

Carers were asked whether they felt respected by their CSSC.



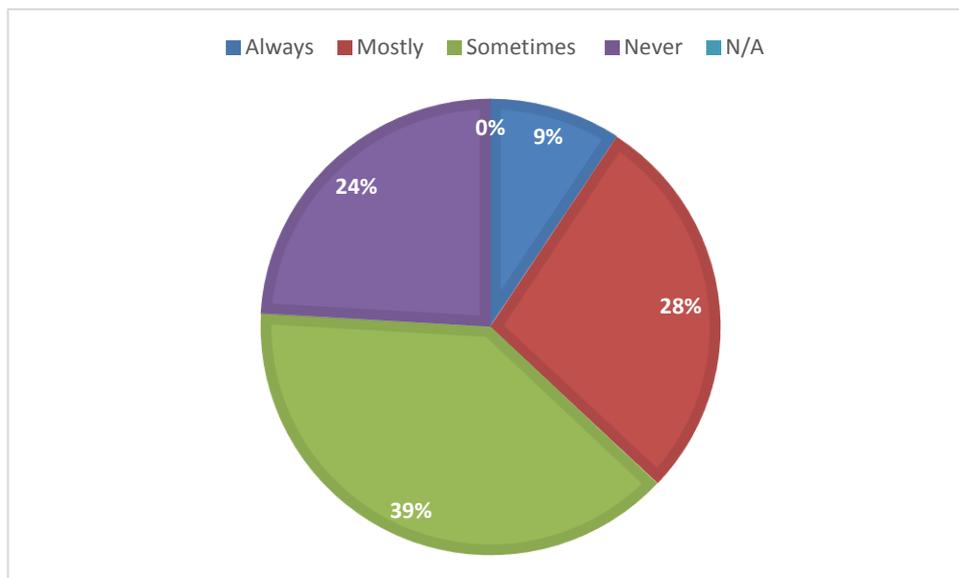
A total of 50% of carers reported feeling respected either always or mostly, 19% of carers reported never feeling respected with 31% reporting they felt respected sometimes.

Carers were asked whether they felt part of a team.



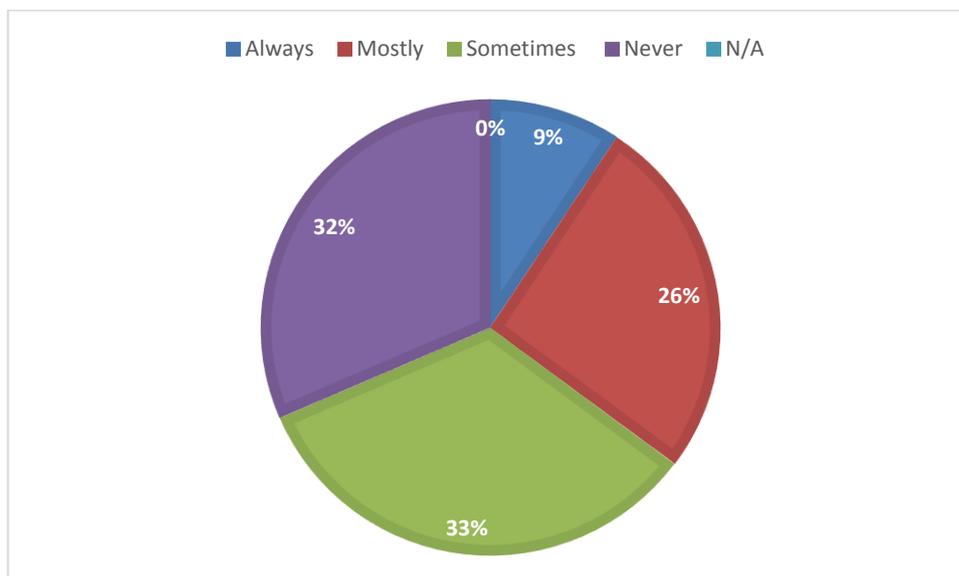
57% of carers reported feeling like part of the team only sometimes or never, with 41% of carers feeling like they were either always or mostly treated as part of the team.

Carers were asked whether they feel as though their views are considered.



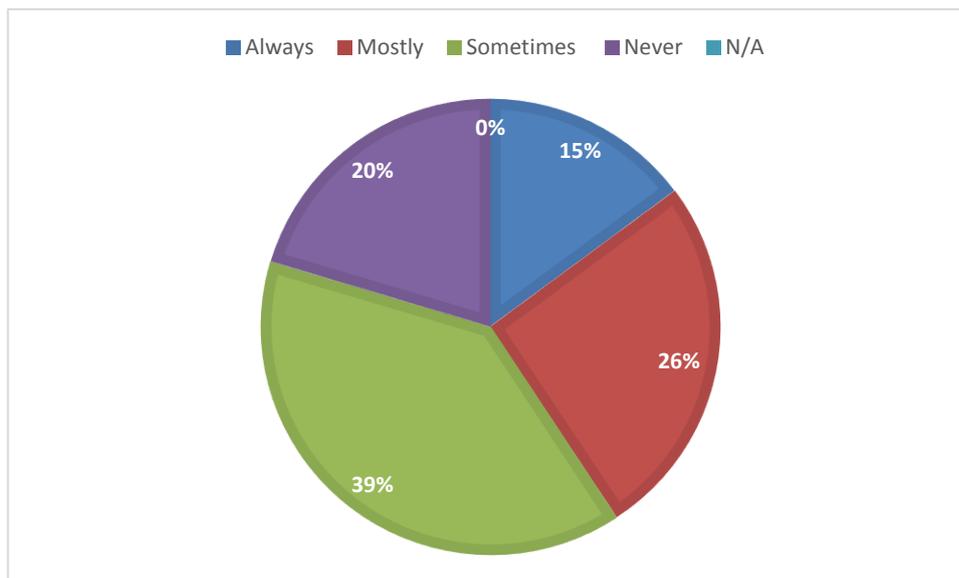
Only 37% of carers reported feeling that they feel their views are either always or mostly considered. This leaves the majority of carers who were surveyed in Northern Region stating that they feel that their views are only considered sometimes or never.

Carers were asked whether they feel as though there is consideration given to their whole foster or kinship family.



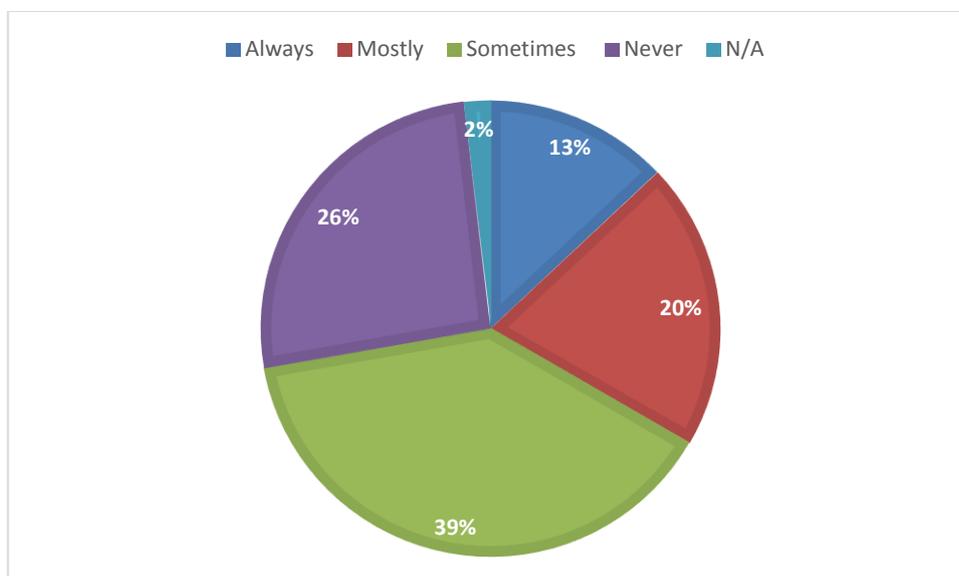
It is concerning that 65% of carers reported that they felt as though there is only sometimes or never any consideration given to the whole of family. Families are more likely to leave the fostering system when they see their whole of family being effected negatively and given little consideration.

Carers were asked whether Child Safety is responsive to their calls and emails.



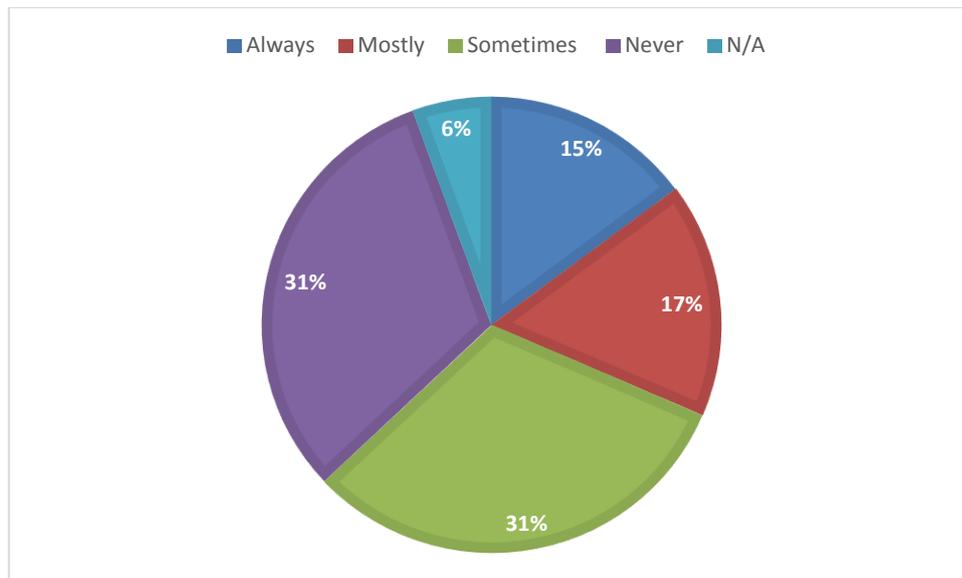
41% of carers reported that their CSSC was responsive to emails and phone calls always or mostly, 59% reported only sometimes and never.

Carers were asked if the CSSC creates a supportive environment.



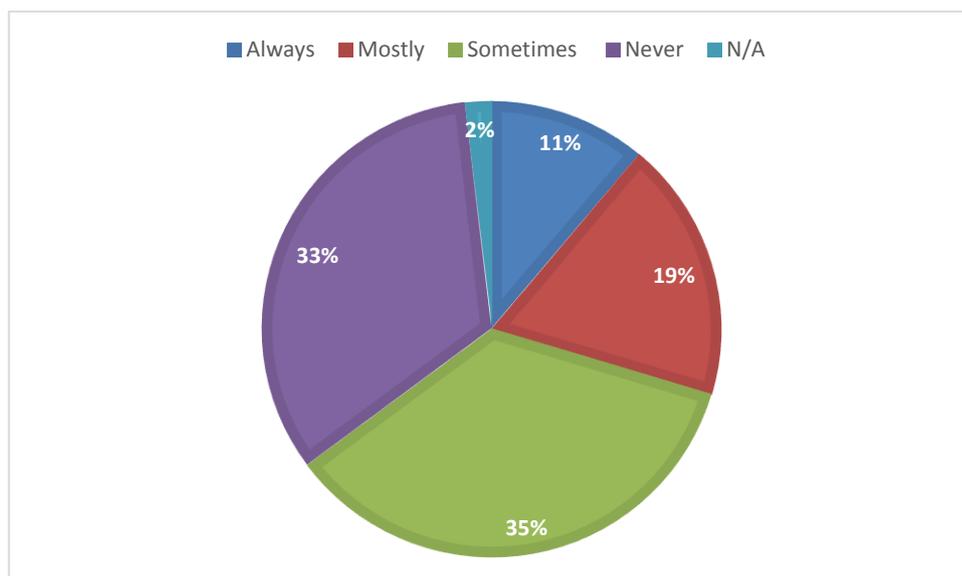
33% of carers reported their CSSC creates a supportive environment and 67% reported only sometimes or never.

Carers were asked if they are assisted in completing applications for reimbursements/claims in a timely manner.



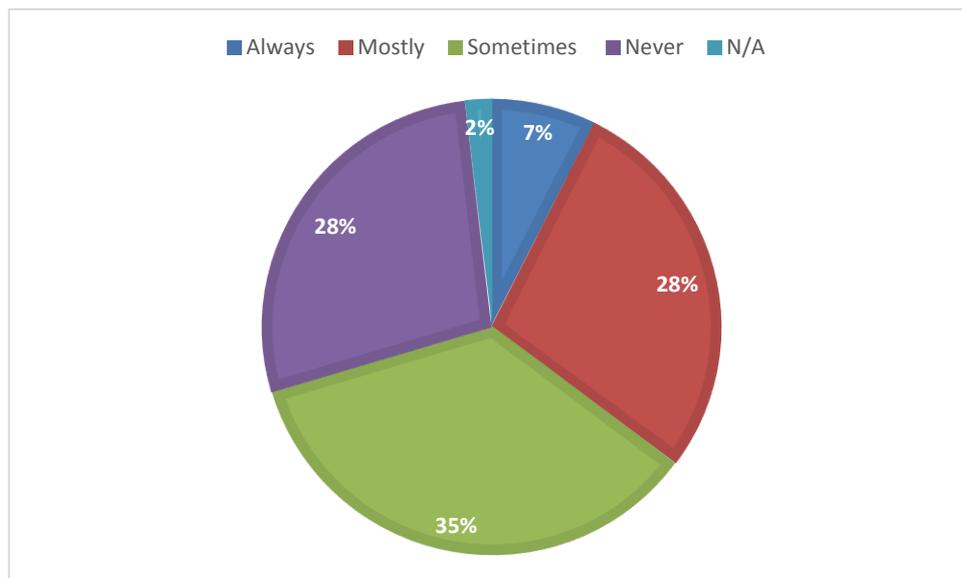
62% of carers reported that they feel that the CSSC only sometimes or never assists in this area. As stated in 2016 Carer Survey, Financial stress can very much impact on placement stability and is often overlooked as a stress factor in foster and kinship families despite financial stress being one of the most recognised sources of stress in normal everyday families.

Carers were asked whether their CSOs let them know when they are going on leave or are going to be unavailable.



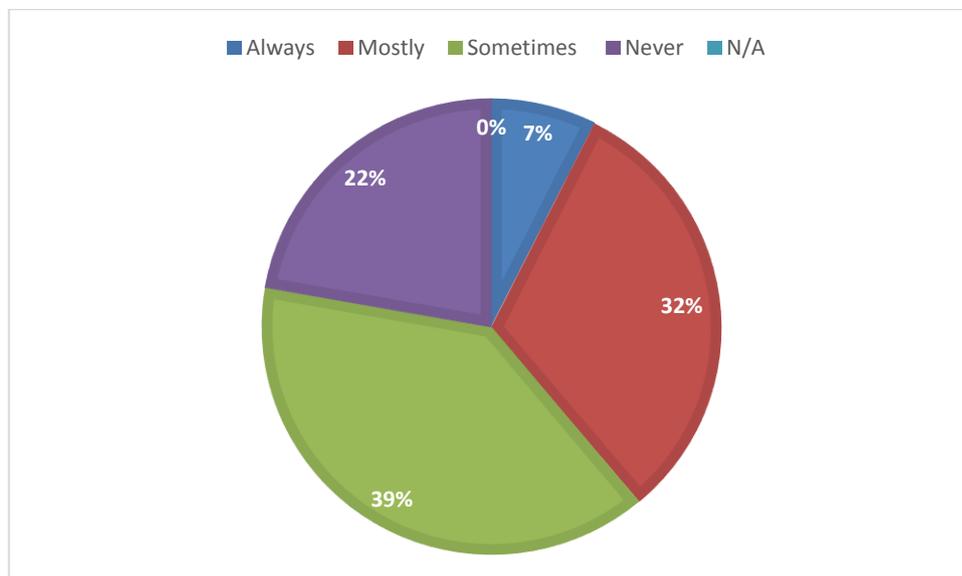
Advising the care team when planned leave or unavailability is occurring is a basic communication requirement in order to build a respectful and supportive care team, 30% of carers reported that they are either always told or mostly told when this occurs leaving a large proportion of carers in the dark during these times.

Carers were asked whether they are given ongoing information about the child in their care.



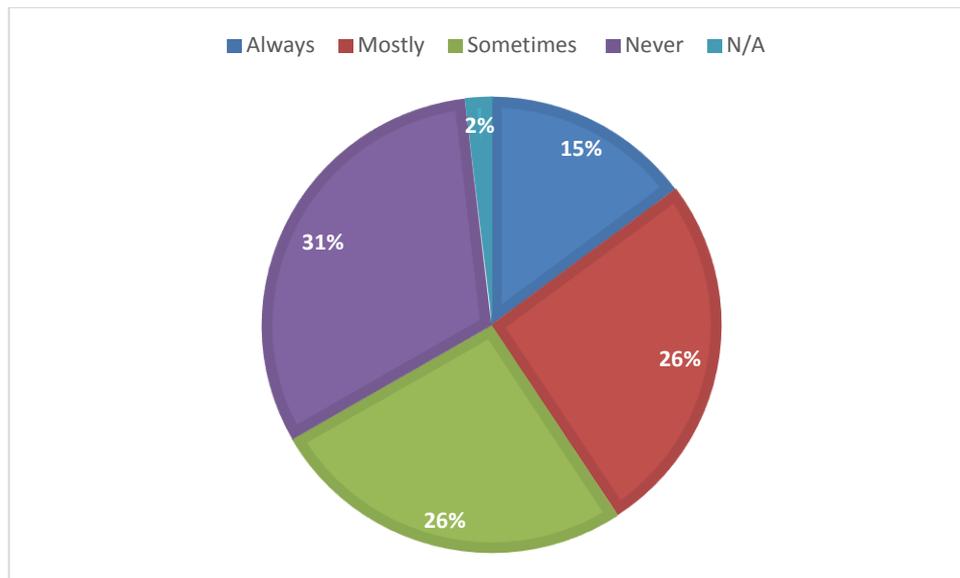
63% of carers reported that they only sometimes or never get updated information about children in their care.

Carers were asked whether support and assistance was provided to them by CSSC for the children in their care.



Unfortunately 61% of carers who responded felt that support and assistance for children in their care was only provided sometimes or never provided.

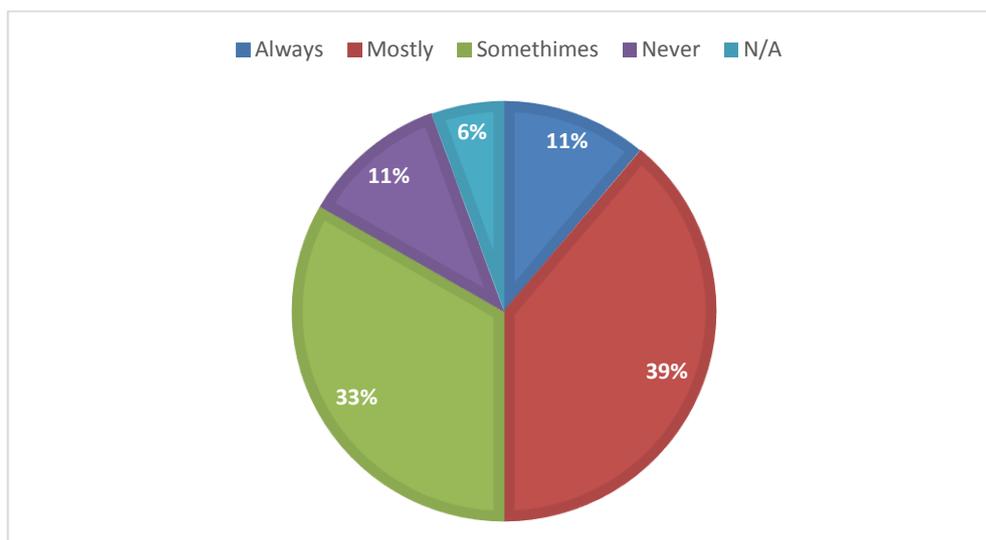
Carers were asked whether they were respected to advocate on behalf of the children in their care for resources, goods and services.



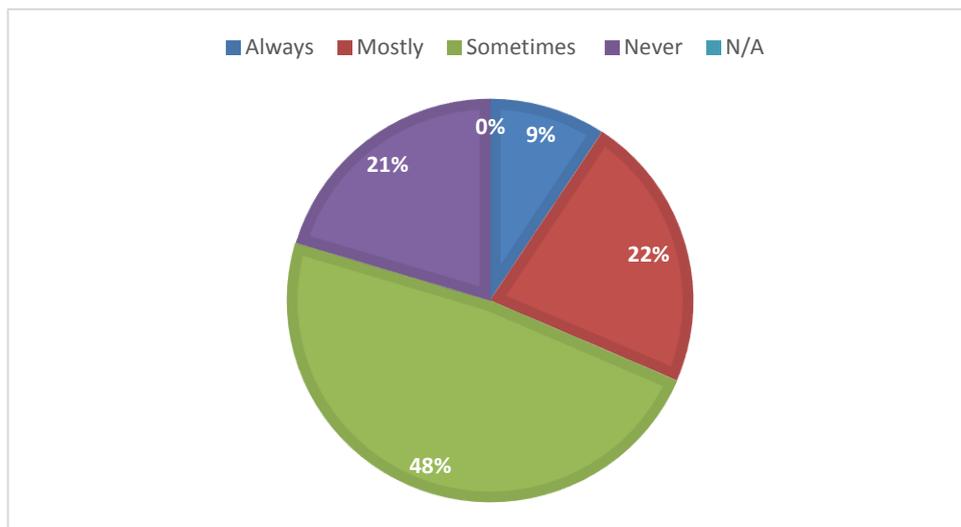
41% of carers reported feeling they felt supported to advocate for the child always or mostly and 57% reported feeling they were not respected to advocate for the child sometimes or never. Advocacy for children and young people is a required skill for carers that is explored within their initial fostering assessment. Whilst members of the Safety and Support network may not always form the same view, all should have their views heard and respected.

### Child Safety Processes

Carers were asked whether they were satisfied with the approval and re-approval processes as carers.

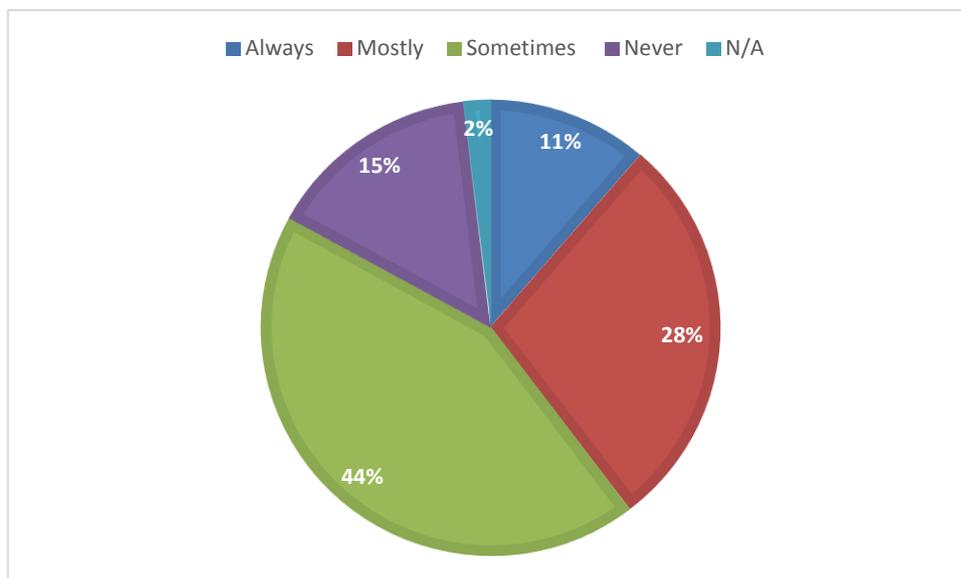


Carers were asked if they were satisfied with the completion of Placement Agreements.



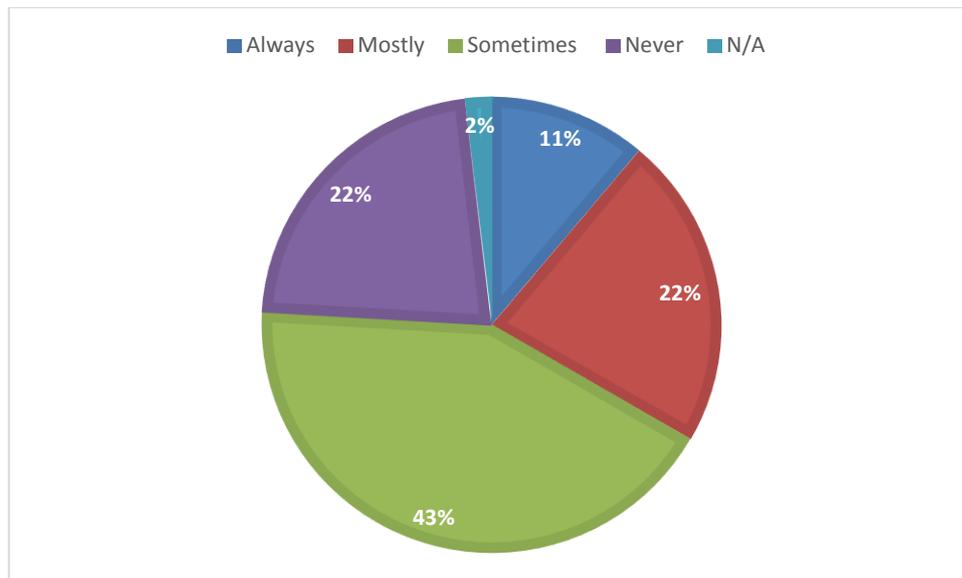
Given that Placement Agreements are a legislative requirement it is concerning that only 31% of carers reported feeling always or mostly satisfied in this area.

Carers were asked if they were satisfied with home visits being completed by Child Safety.



59% of carers reported feeling only sometimes or never satisfied with home visits being completed by Child Safety Officer. Further exploration would need to occur to identify if this is related to the frequency or quality of the home visits.

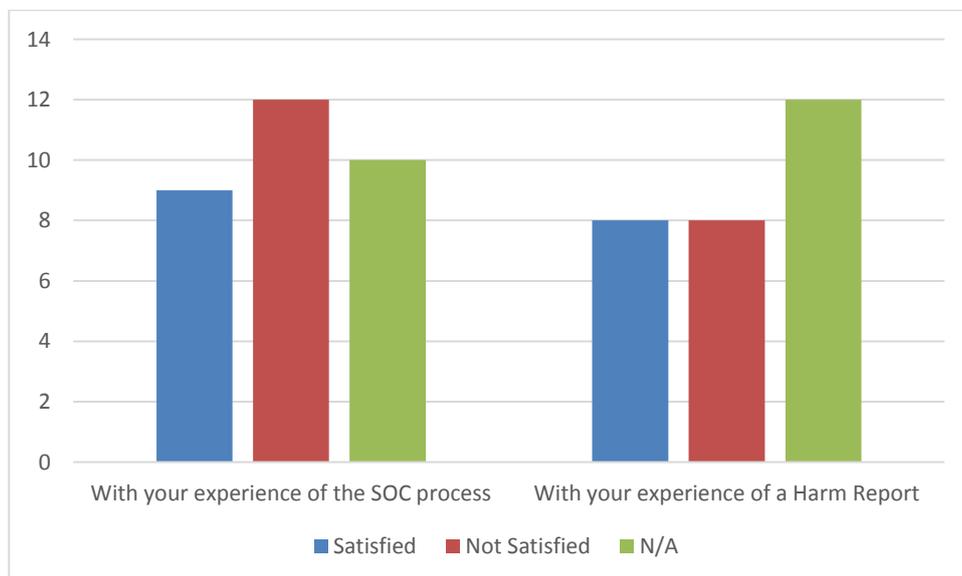
Carers were asked if they feel satisfied with their ability to engage in case planning for children in your care.



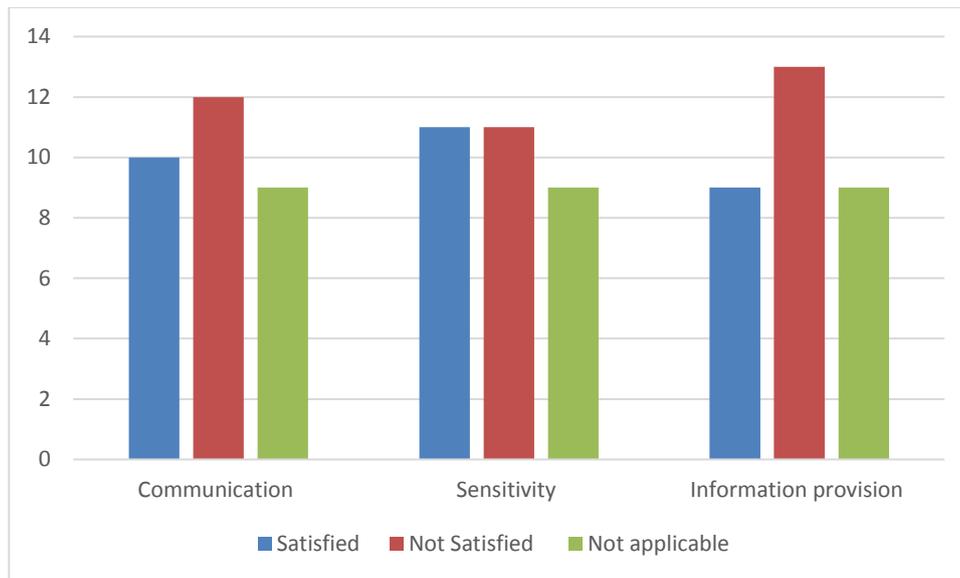
65% of carers reported feeling satisfied only sometimes or never with their ability to engage in case planning for children in their care.

### Standard of Care/Harm Processes

Carers were asked whether they were satisfied in respect to Standard of Care and Harm processes they had been through.



Carers were asked a range of questions around the process relating to the quality of communication, sensitivity and information provision.

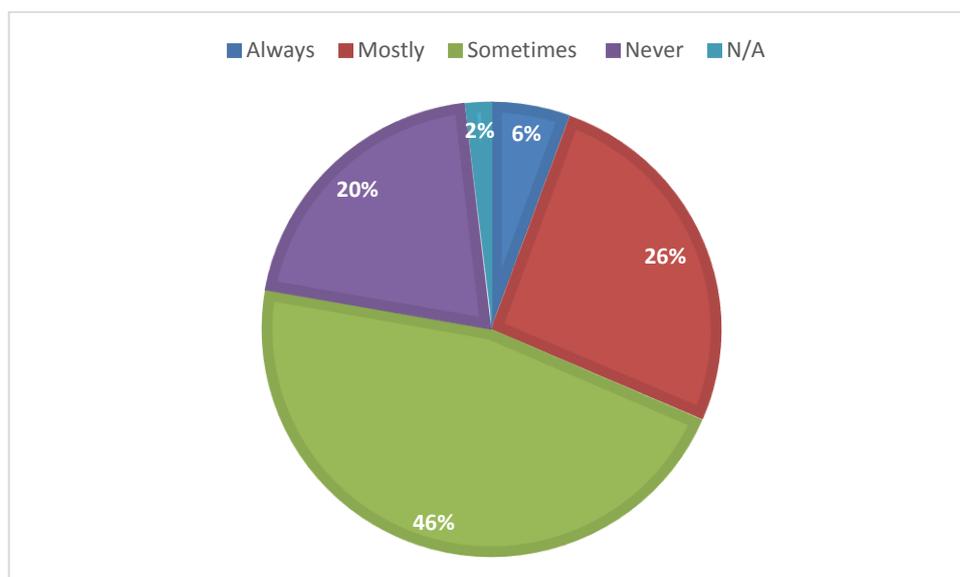


Carers were then asked if they were satisfied with the timeliness of the outcomes 40% reported feeling unsatisfied with the timeliness of the process and 33% reported feeling satisfied with the remaining percentage stating it was not applicable.

Carers were then asked if they were satisfied with the review process that took place if they were not happy with the outcome of the Standard of Care and/or Harm Report, of those who thought this question was applicable to them 56% reported not feeling satisfied with the review process.

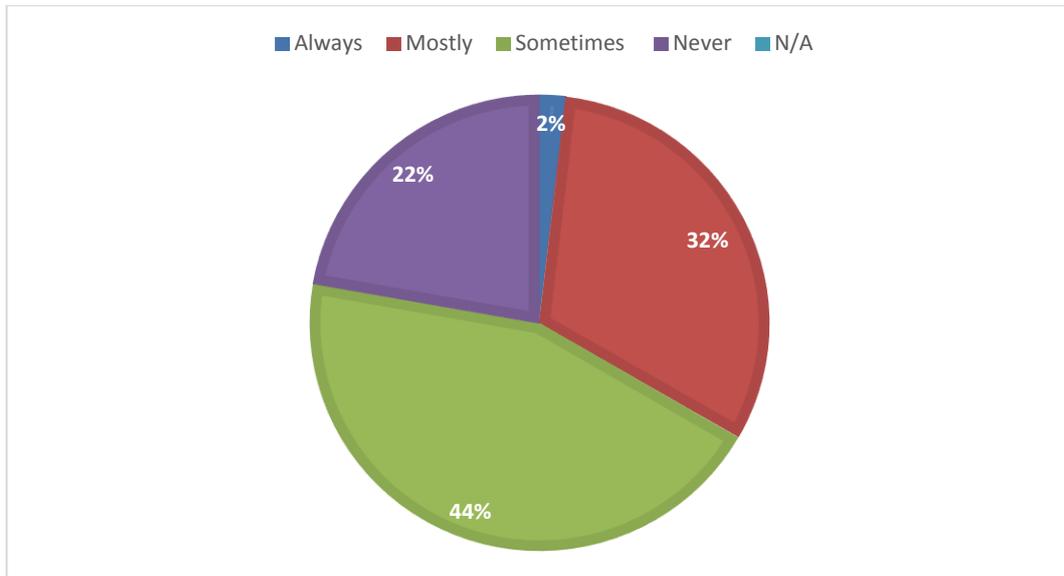
## Confidentiality

Carers were asked if they were satisfied with information provision provided to them about the children in their care.



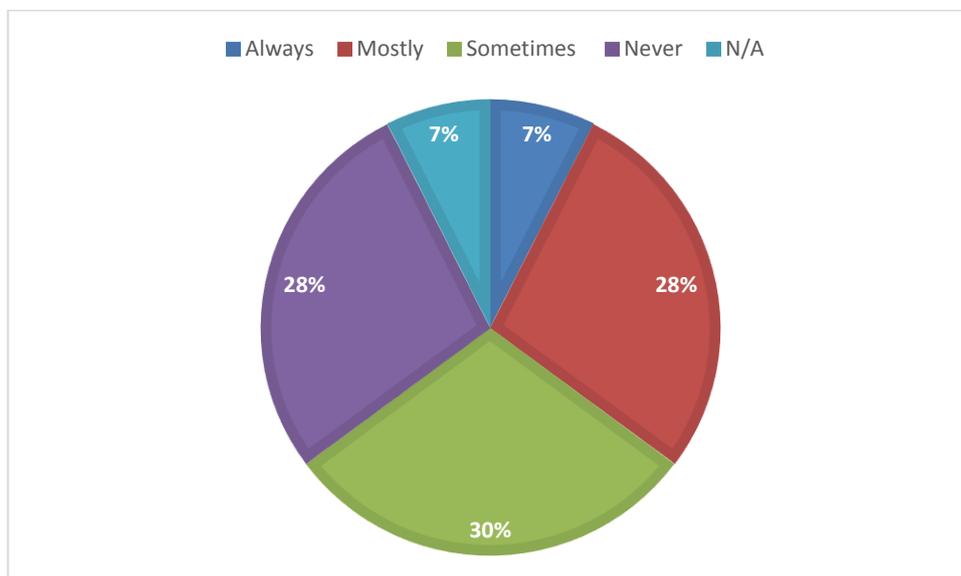
66% of carers reported they are only satisfied sometimes or never.

Carers were then asked if they were satisfied that information was provided to them about the child as it became available to Child Safety.

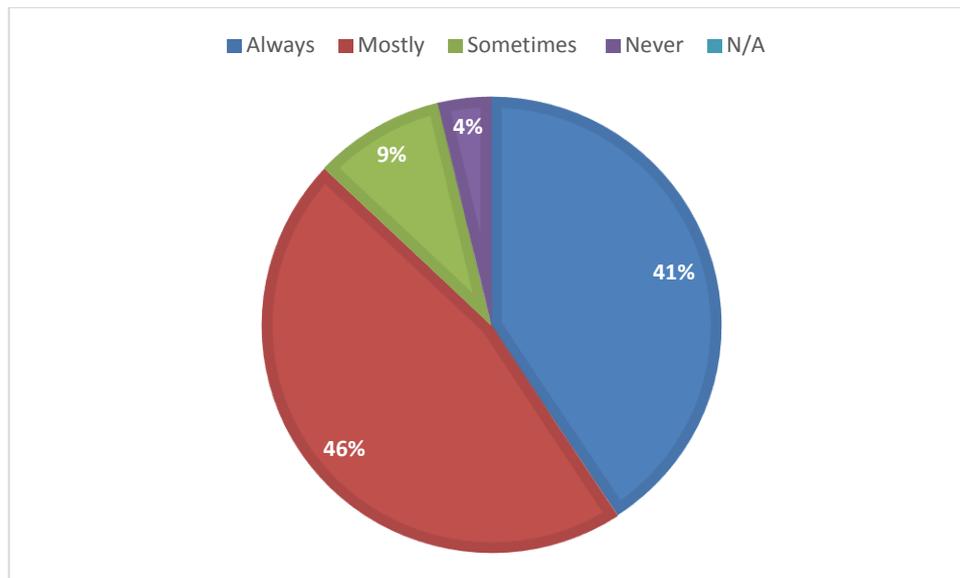


66% of carers felt satisfied sometimes or never that information was passed onto them when it became available.

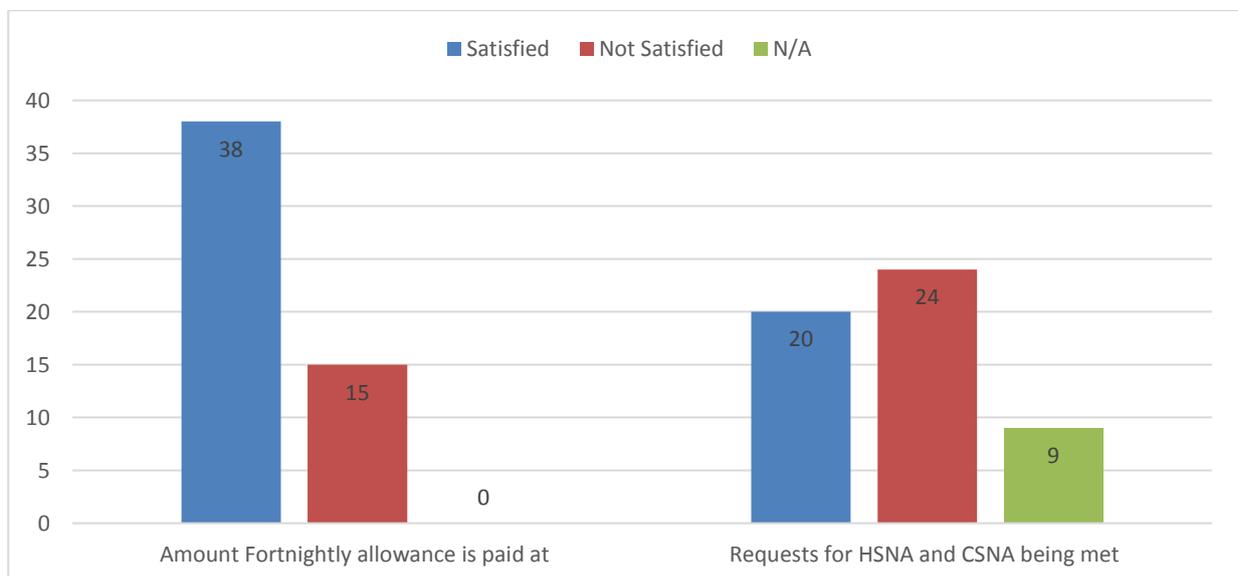
Carers were asked whether they were satisfied with the information provided to them in respect to the Safety checks being completed prior to identifying information being given out.



Carers were asked whether they were satisfied with their understanding of confidentiality provisions and how this relates to them as carers.



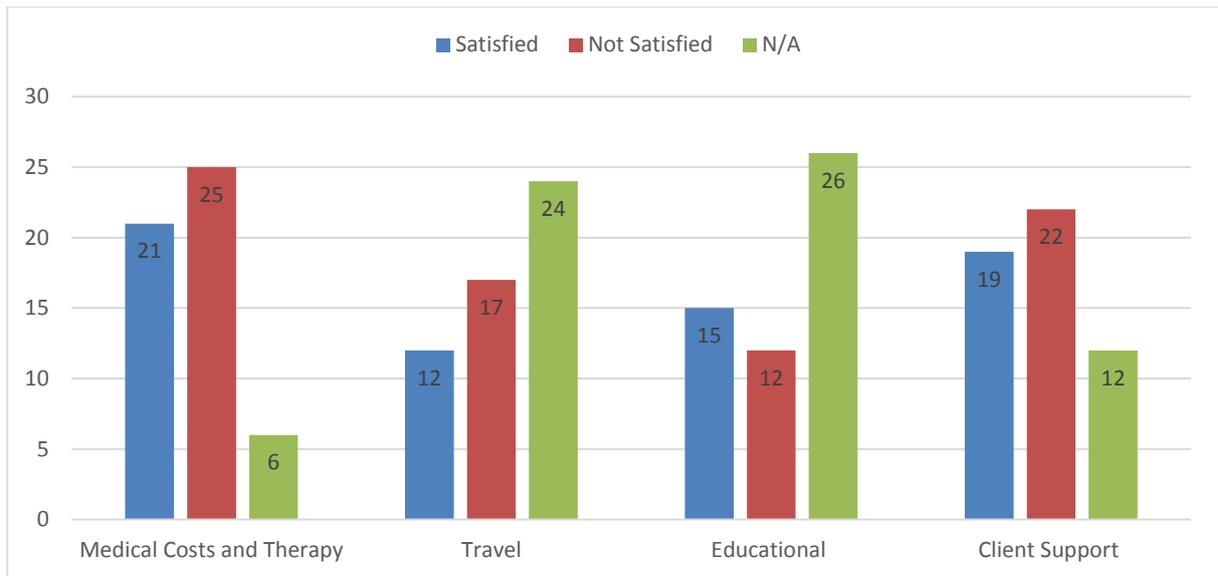
## Financial



72% of carers reported feeling satisfied with the amount at which the fostering allowance is paid at.

Of those carers who felt that the question relating to requests for HSNA and CSNA was applicable, 45% reported not feeling satisfied with their requests being met in this area.

Carers were asked about a number of Child Related Costs that sit outside of the fostering allowance and whether they felt satisfied in relation to the payment of them.



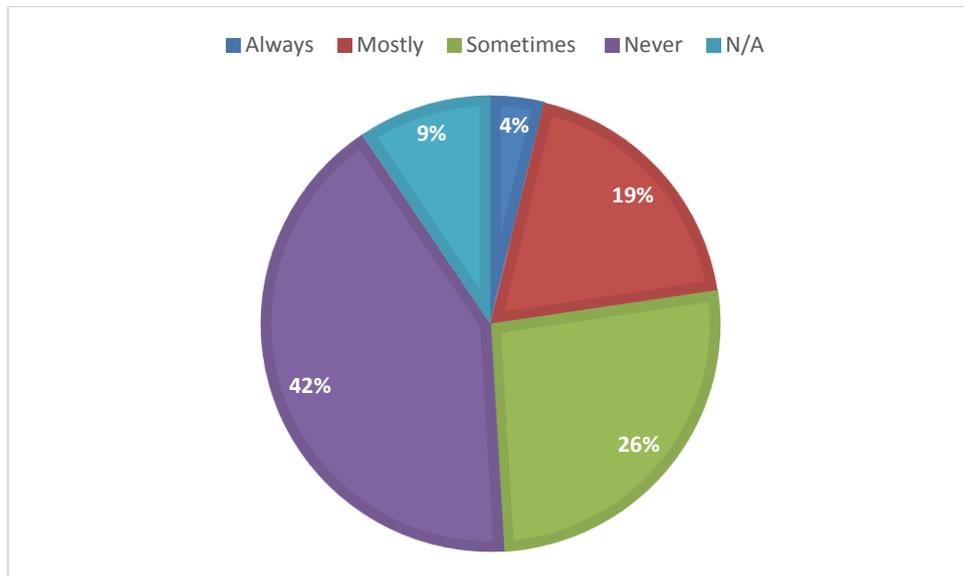
On 2<sup>nd</sup> July 2018, children in care across Australia became eligible for the Australian Child Care Subsidy at Risk through the Department of Education and Training. This was a significant accomplishment for Child Protection systems right across Australia. In order to access, carers must be informed and have access to the appropriate documentation through Child Safety. FCQ asked carers in the survey whether they were satisfied with their provision of required documents to access the free child care through the Australian Child Care Subsidy for children in care. Only 32 carers answered this question or thought it was applicable to them (this may be an indication of lack of understanding) of those who answered 58% reported feeling not satisfied. This is an area that requires a lot of education through the sector to help not only carers understand the changes, but also Department staff and fostering and Kinship Care staff.

Carers were asked about their knowledge to apply for ex-gratia (special payments) and whether they were encouraged to apply for these when applicable. 15% of carers reported having knowledge and being encouraged to apply for special payments. 56% reported not feeling satisfied in this area with the remaining feeling the question was not applicable to them.

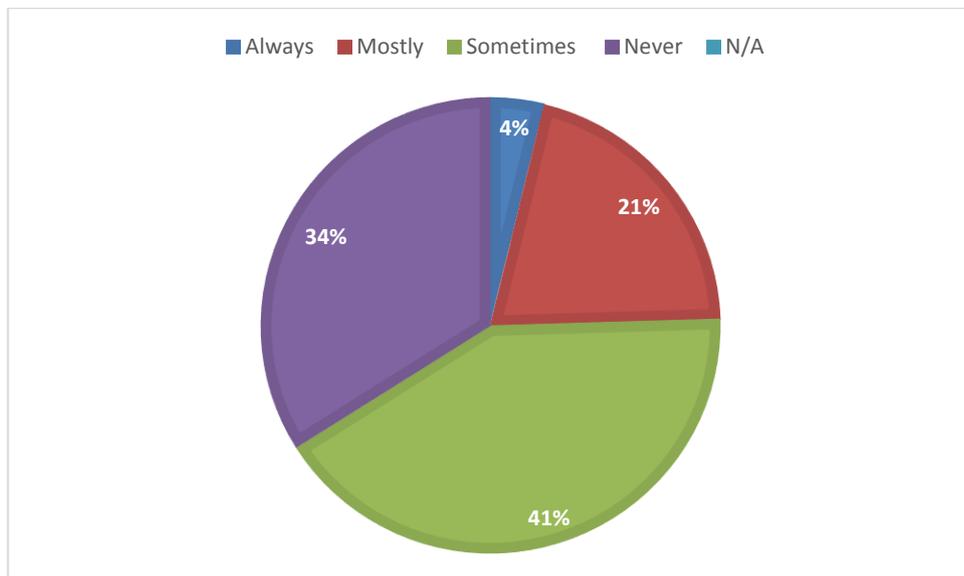
Finally carers were asked if they were satisfied about information provision relating to Child Related costs. 42% of carers reported they did not feel satisfied in this area, 50% reported feeling satisfied and 7% reported that this question was not applicable to them.

## How satisfied are you with local practices of CSSC

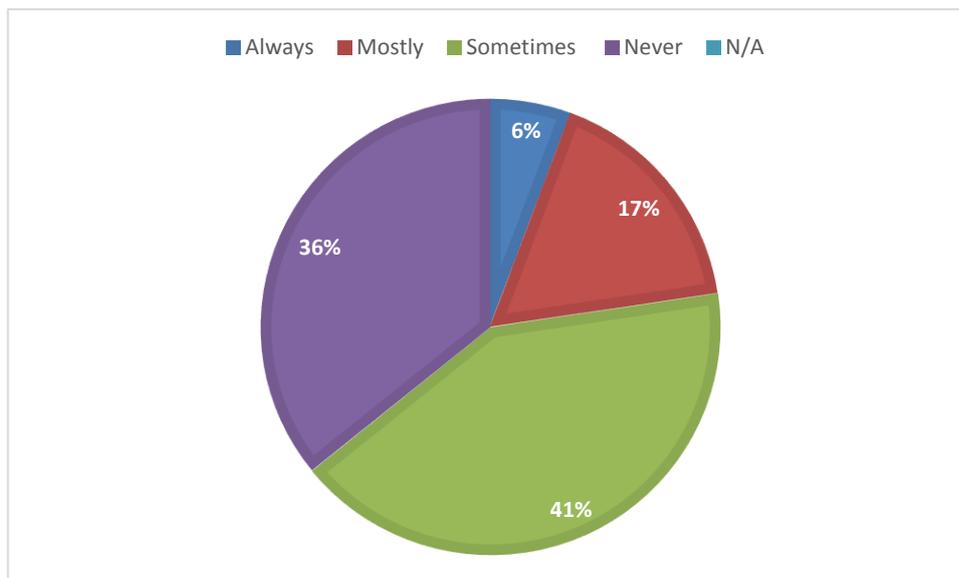
Carers were asked how satisfied they were regarding information in relation to changeover CSO.



Carers were asked whether they were satisfied with the knowledge of history regarding the child/ren in their care.

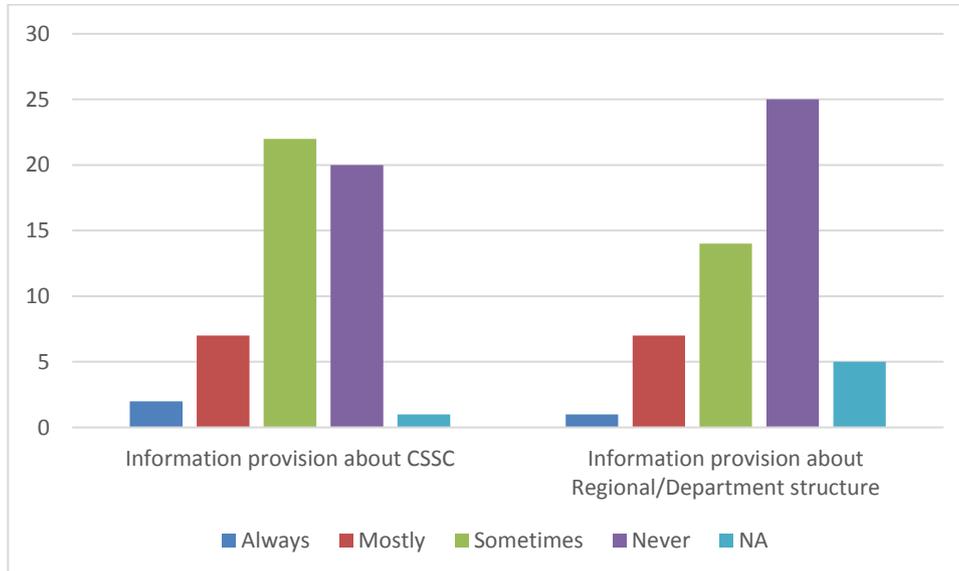


Carers were asked if they were satisfied with the timeliness and provision of Case Plans.



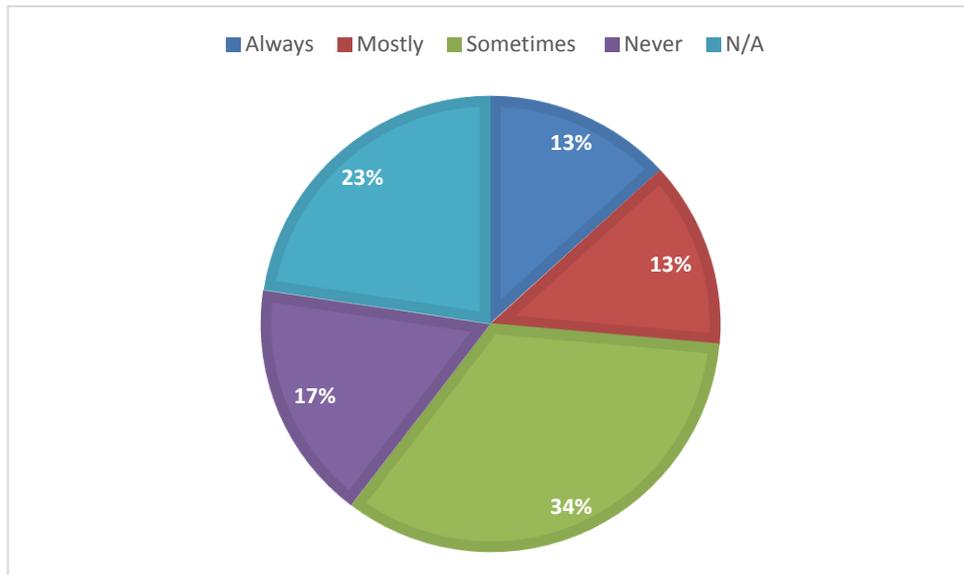
Only 23% of carers reported that they were always satisfied or mostly satisfied in this area, leaving 77% of carers in Northern Region feeling that Case Plans were only done in a timely manner some of the time or never.

Carers were asked if they were satisfied about provision of information provided by the CSSC and Region.

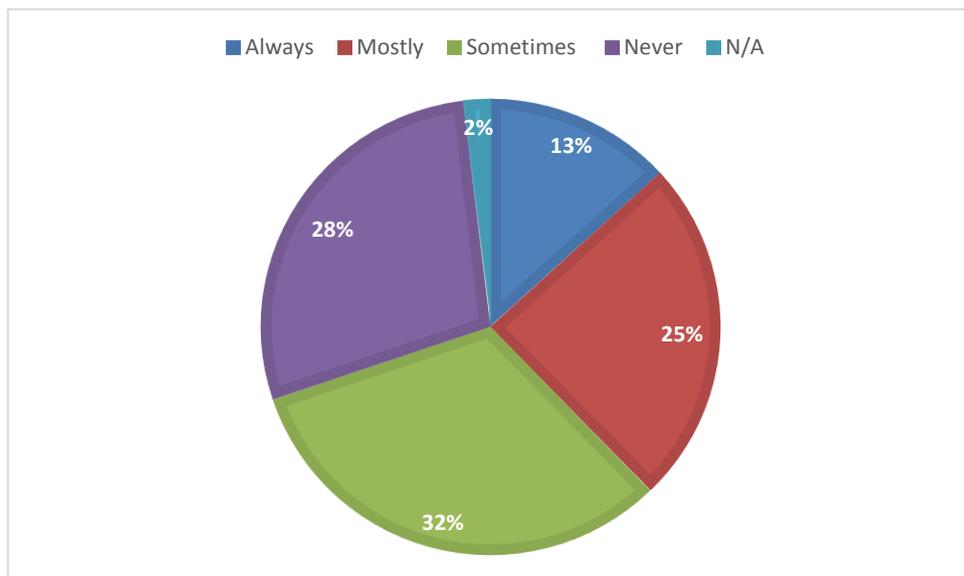


As demonstrated in above graph, carers expressed overwhelmingly that they are not kept up to date about changes in either their CSSC or Region. Whilst the Sector may think that through the use of email, all carers will be kept updated, it must be acknowledged that all carers are individuals and should be communicated with in a way that meets their needs. For some this will be via email, for some this will be via phone or sometimes face to face. It is hoped that in two years' time, this area will be vastly improved with the introduction of the new Carer Connect App and through carers becoming more familiar with the newly introduced carer website. FCQ acknowledges Child Safety's efforts to improve this area from the previous survey through Partners in Care and subsequent recommendations.

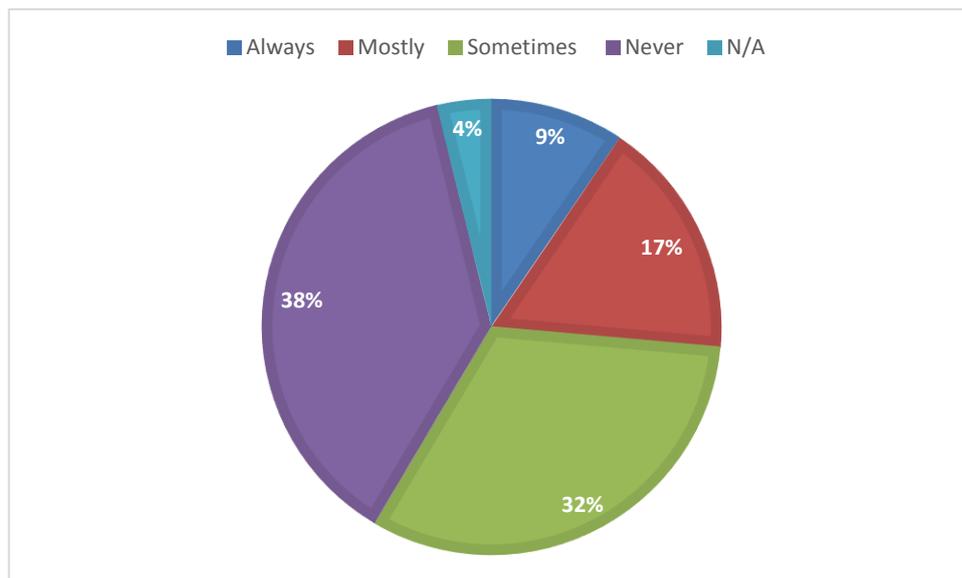
Carers were asked if they were satisfied with their ability to access respite.



Carers were asked whether they were satisfied in respect to being consulted regarding Family Contact.



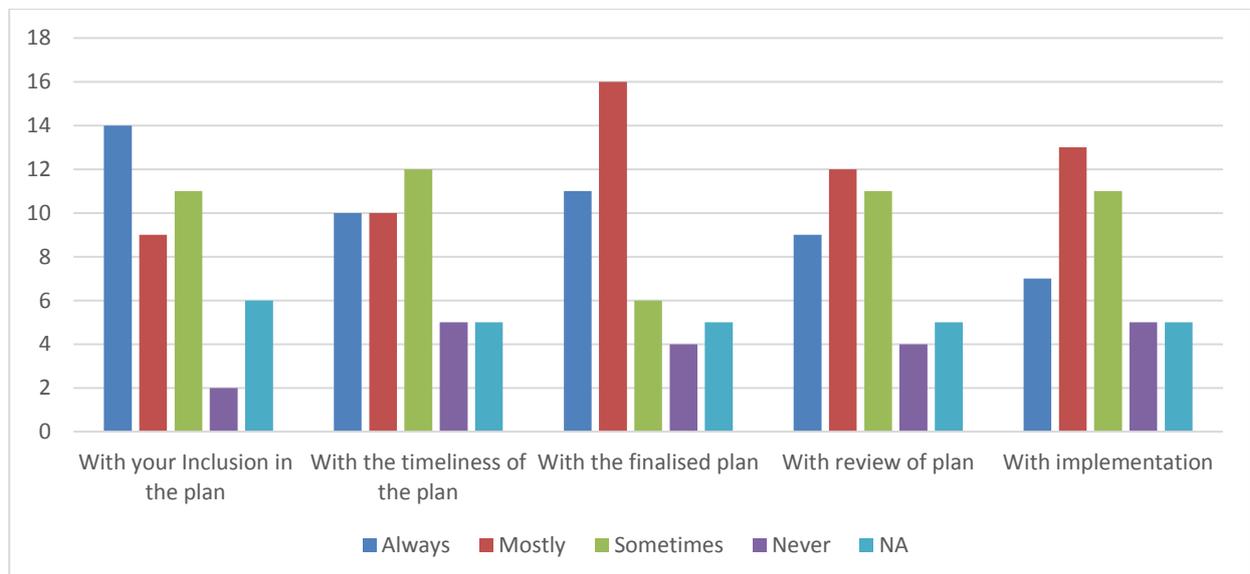
Carers were asked whether they felt they were supported to meet their own family commitments.



### Education Support Plans

Carers were asked if they had a current ESP plan in place for the child/ren in their care, 70% reported having an ESP plan.

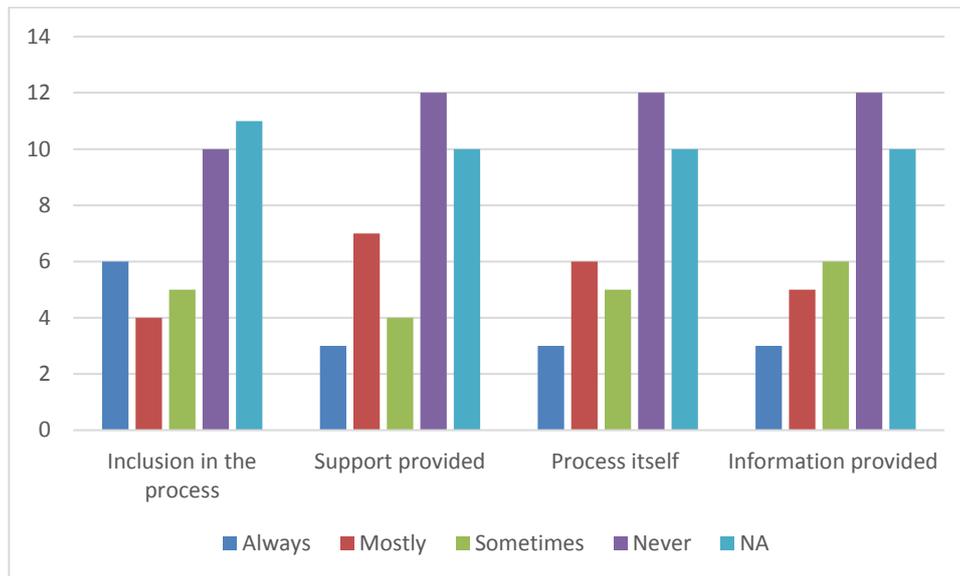
Carers were then asked a range of questions relating to the ESP process and their satisfaction with this as follows.



## Child Health Passports

Carers were asked if the child/ren in their care had a current Child Health Passport, only 41% of carers reported having a Child Health Passport in the Northern Region.

Carers were then asked a range of questions relating to the processes of Child Health passports and how satisfied they were, carers reported as follows.

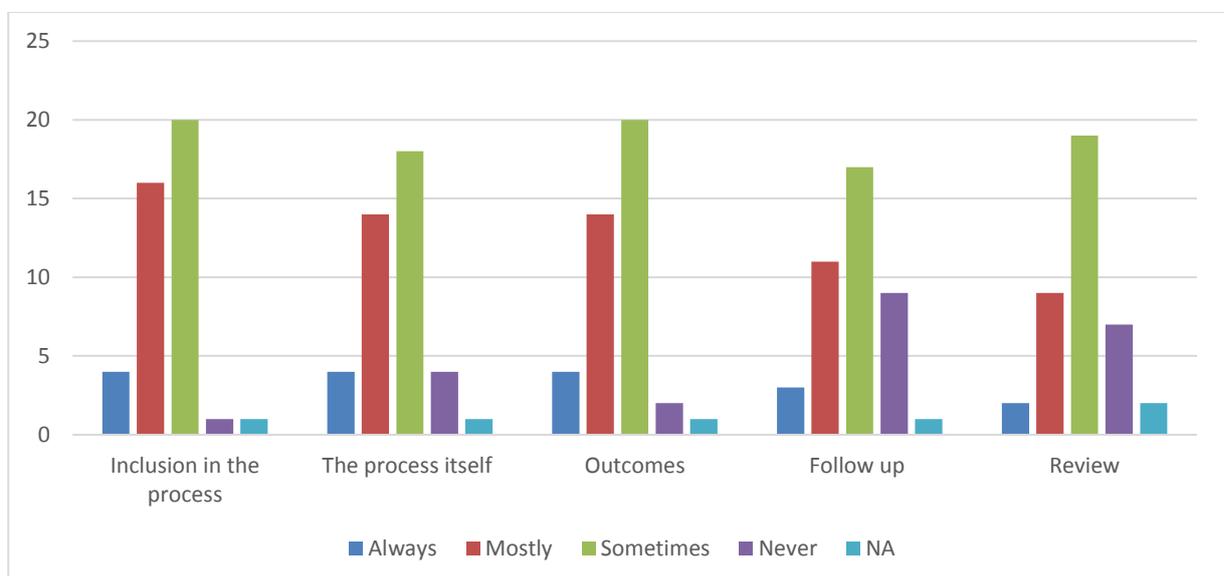


Carers reported high levels of dissatisfaction in respect to a number of processes relating to Child Health Passports. It is hoped that the Strengthening Health Framework will provide a much higher degree of service delivery to children in care that is meaningful.

## Placement Agreements

Carers were asked if they had a current placement agreement generated from a placement meeting, 71% said they do.

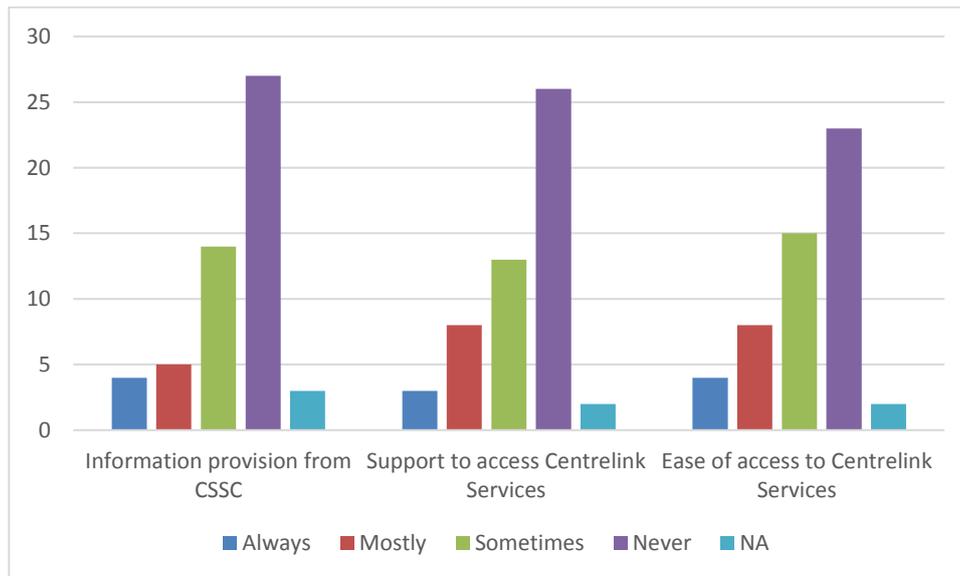
Carers were asked a range of questions relating to their satisfaction around the processes of Placement Agreements with the following responses.



Carers were then asked whether they received a copy of the placement meeting minutes, unfortunately an overwhelming amount of carers reported they did not at 82%.

## 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.

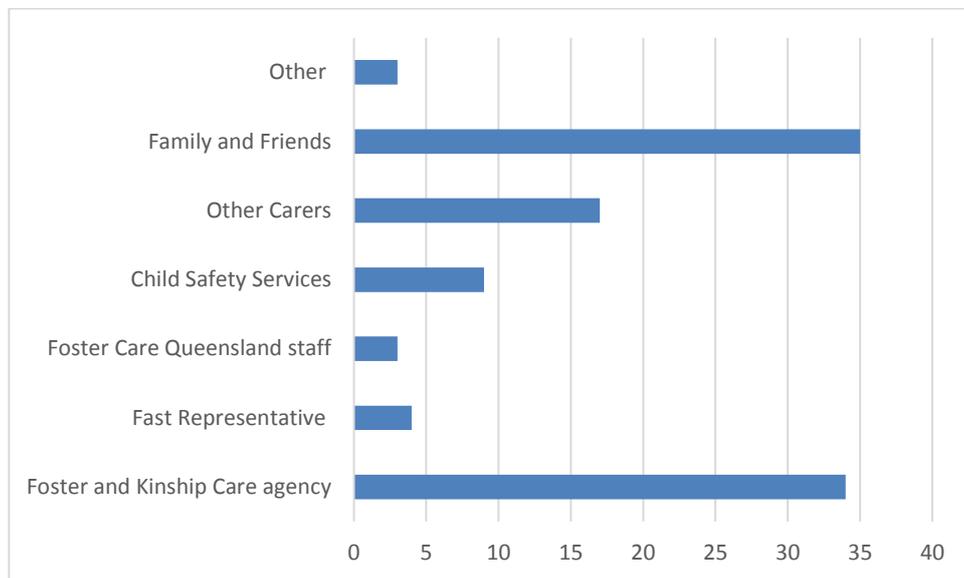


It is evident through this data that carers are feeling a high level of dissatisfaction in this area with the majority of carers feeling that they never receive information or support from their CSSC in relation to how and what they can access from Centrelink.

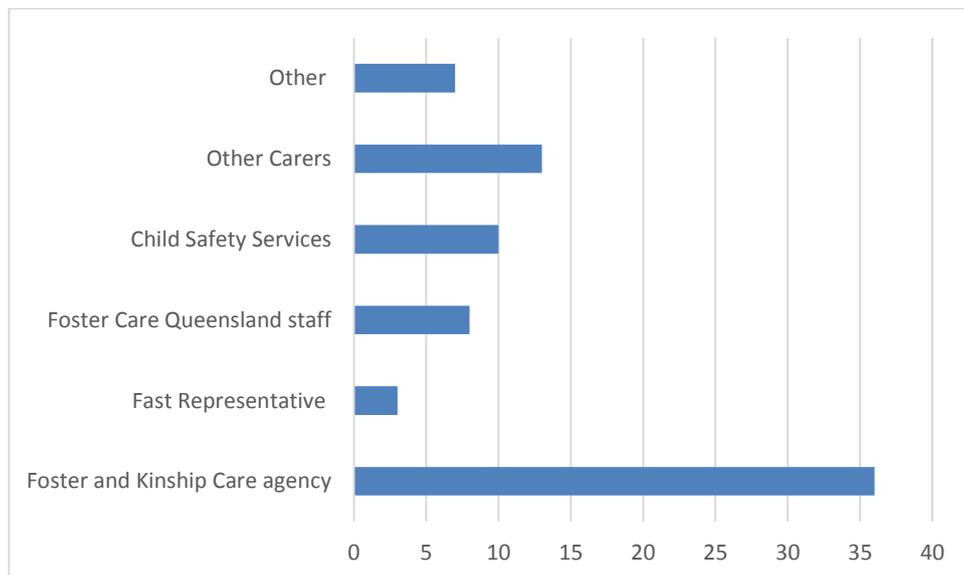
Carers were then asked question relating to ease of access to Medicare Cards for the children in their care and Health Care Cards. 80% of carers reported only sometimes or never feeling satisfied with the timeframes associated with accessing Medicare Cards. 60% of carers reported feeling only sometimes or never satisfied with time frames associated with accessing Health Care Cards.

## Support

Carers were asked where they accessed the majority of their support from, carers were able to tick more than one box.



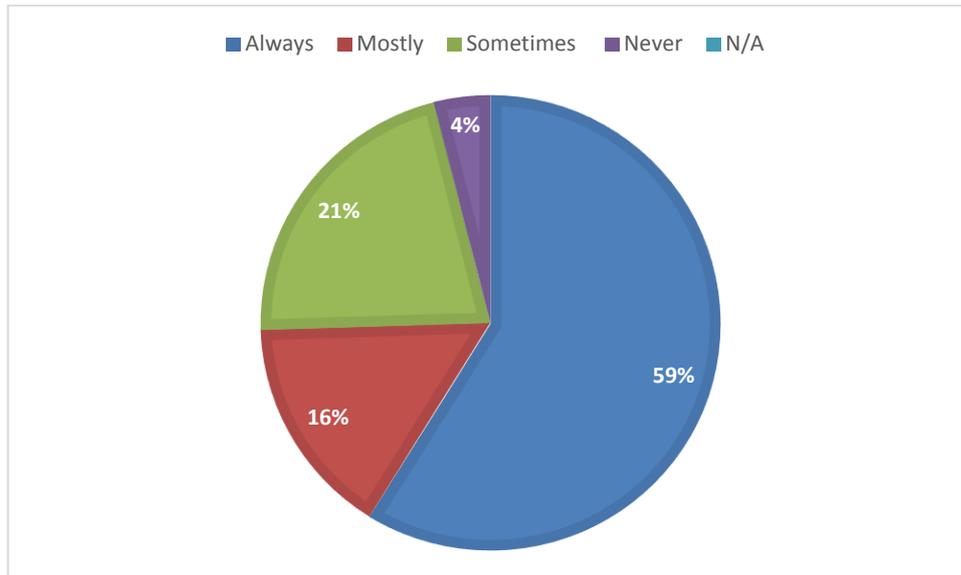
Carers were asked where they access the majority of their information from as carers.



## Foster and Kinship Care Services

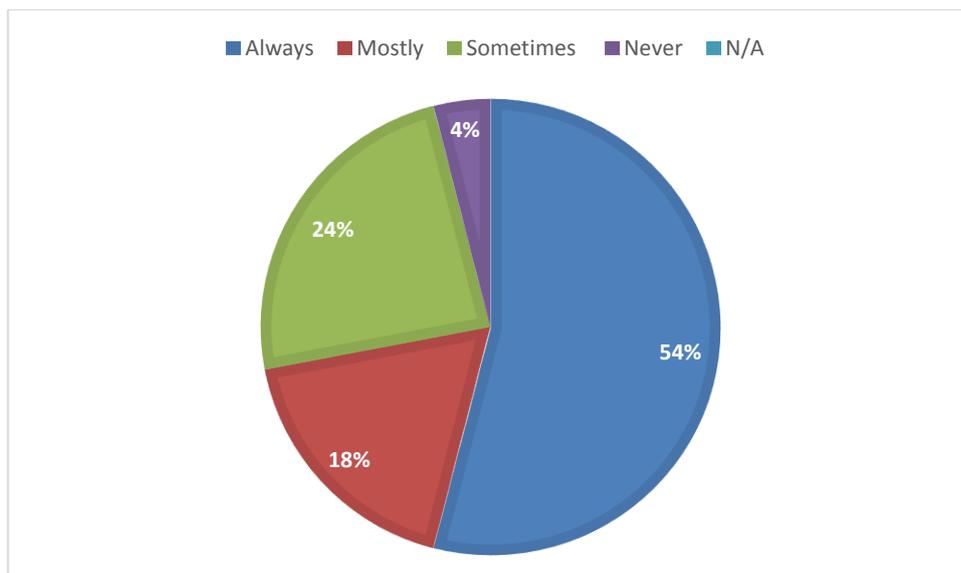
Carers were asked a range of questions relating to the support provided by Fostering and Kinship Care agencies. Firstly carers were asked if they were attached to a Fostering and Kinship Care Agency, only 1 carer in Northern Region who completed the survey identified that they were not with a fostering and kinship care agency.

Carers were asked if they were satisfied in respect to regular support visits occurring (at least monthly).

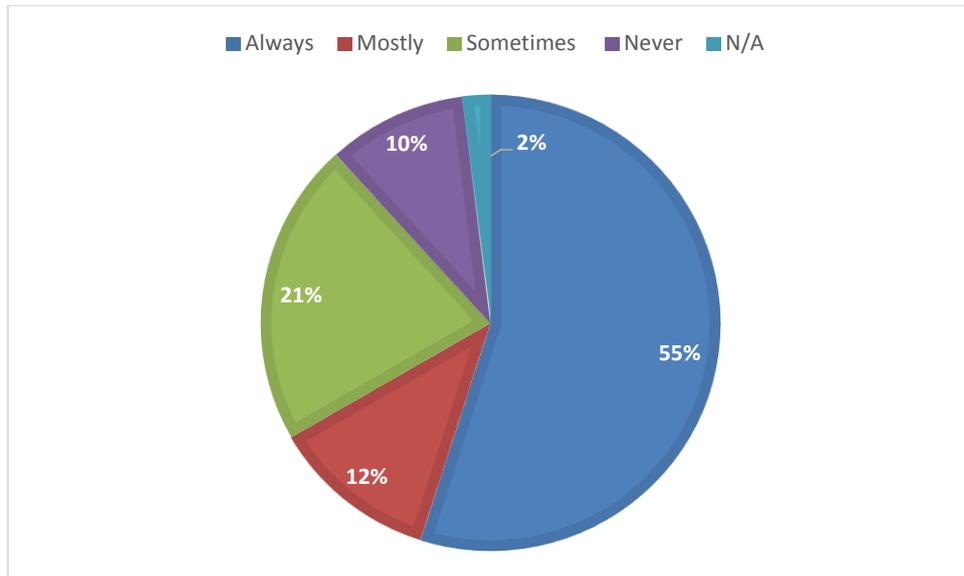


It is very positive to see that 75% of carers reported always or mostly always feeling satisfied with the regular support visits occurring with only 4% of carers identifying they are never satisfied in this area.

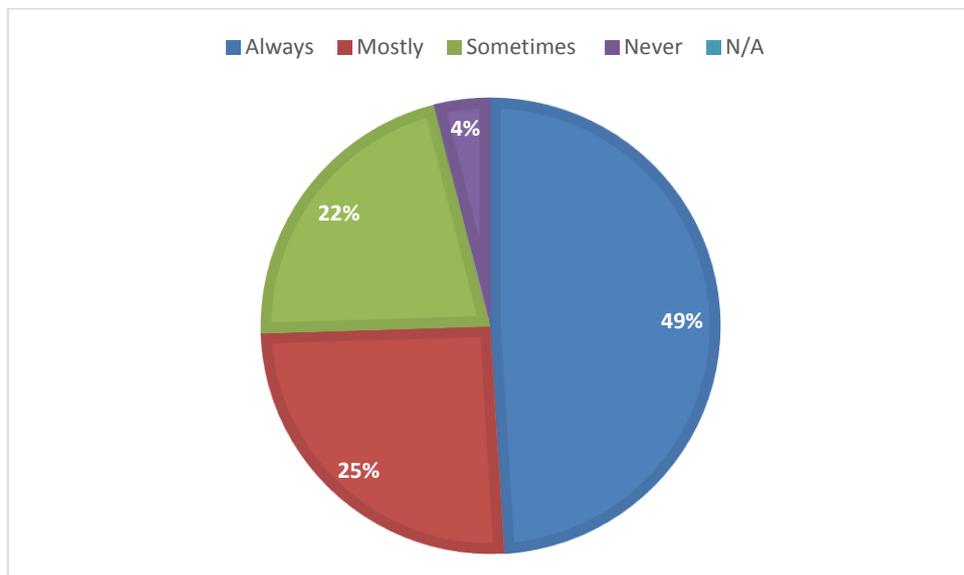
Carers were asked whether they were satisfied with response to contact with their agency.



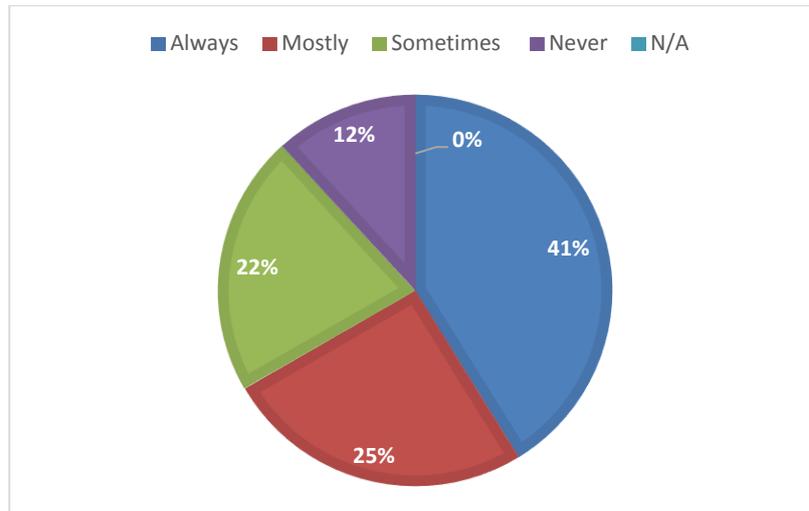
Carers were asked whether they were satisfied with assistance provided by their agency to complete paperwork.



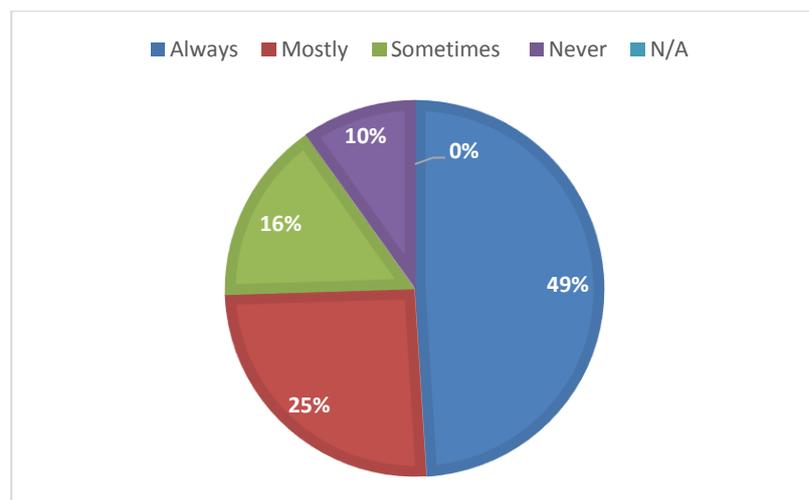
Carers were asked whether they were satisfied with their workers knowledge of current policy and procedure.



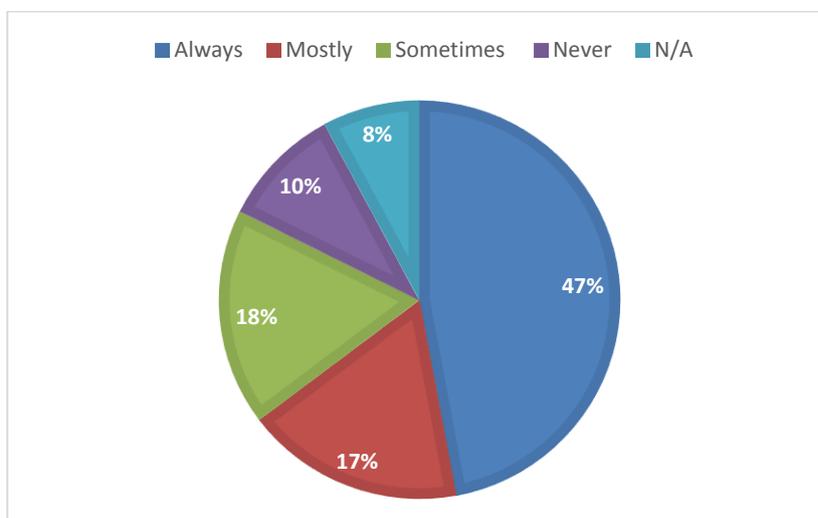
Carers were asked whether they were satisfied with their access to support networks through their agency.



Carers were asked if they were satisfied with their access to training.



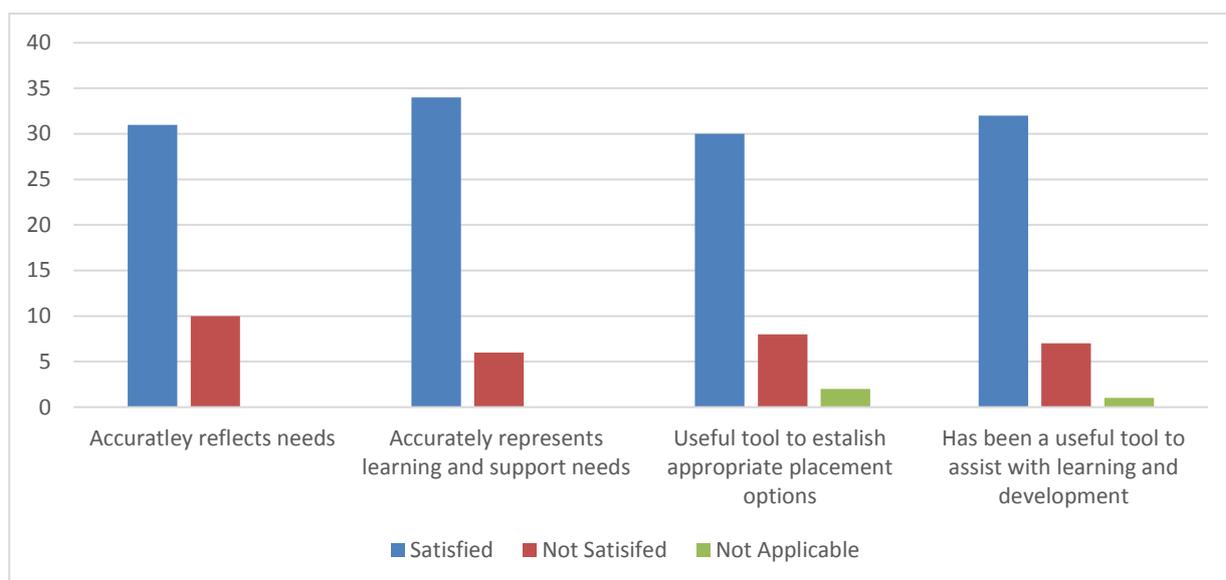
Carers were asked if they were satisfied with the on call service provided by their agency.



## Foster Care Agreements

Carers were asked if they had a current foster care agreement, 85% reported they have one, 6% reported they did not and 9% reported they did not know what one was. Given that Kinship carers do not have to have a foster care agreement, it is probable that those who reported not having one or not knowing what one was are in fact kinship carers.

Carers were then asked a range of questions relating to the usefulness of the Foster Care Agreement as follows.



Carers have reported high levels of satisfaction across the board in relation to the Foster Care Agreement.

## Training

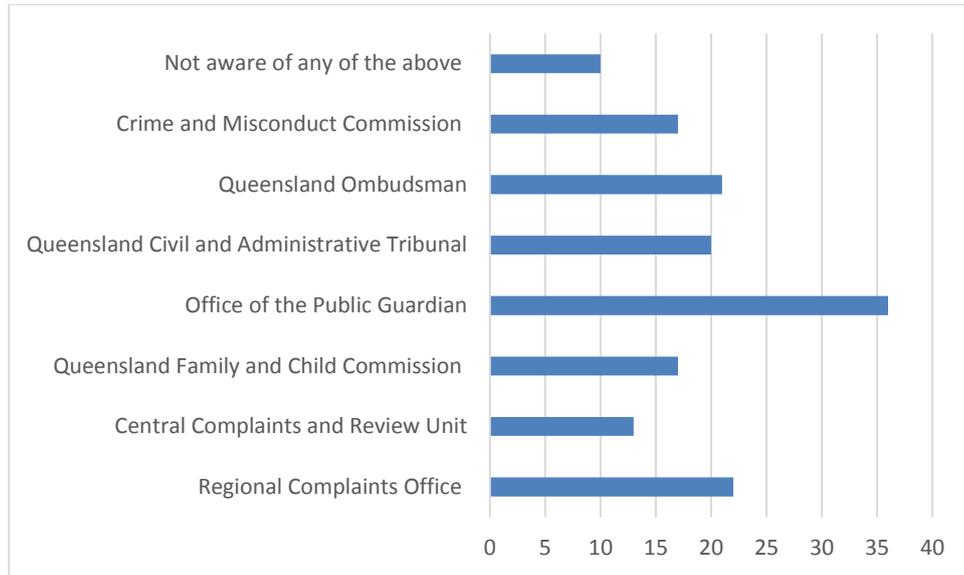
Carers were asked a range of questions relating to their training experiences as follows.

- 75% of carers reported feeling always or mostly satisfied with the amount of training offered
- 70% of carers reported feeling always or mostly satisfied with the relevance of the training offered
- 49% of carers reported feeling always or mostly satisfied with the time of day/night the training is offered
- 71% of carers reported feeling always or mostly satisfied with the timeframes they were notified about the training
- 88% of carers reported feeling always or mostly satisfied with the information provision about training content.

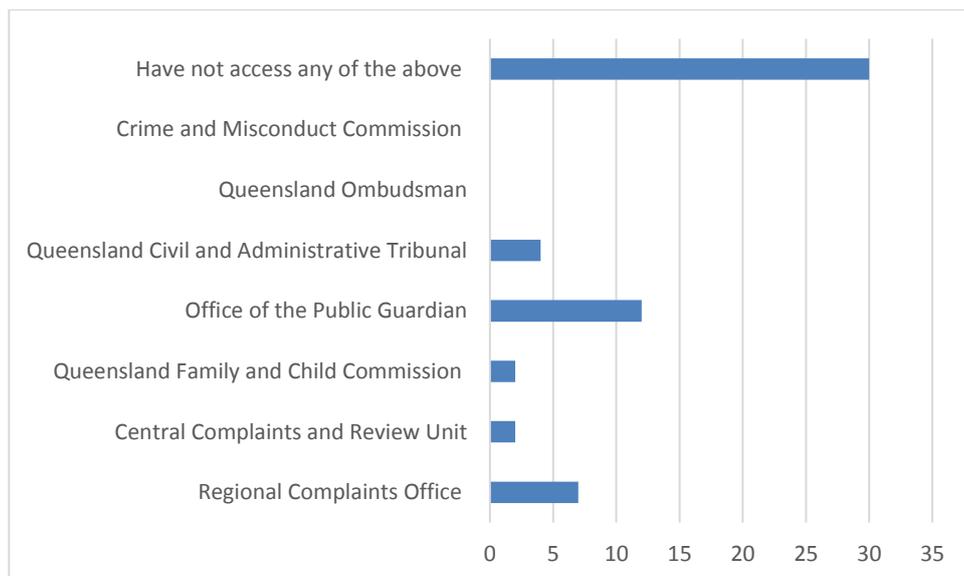
Carers were also asked whether they were satisfied with provisions of or support to access child care during training. 53% of carers reported they were only sometimes or never satisfied with this area.

## Complaint/Concerns Processes

Carers were asked to identify which complaint/appeal processes they were aware of.



Carers were then asked if they had accessed any of the above processes.

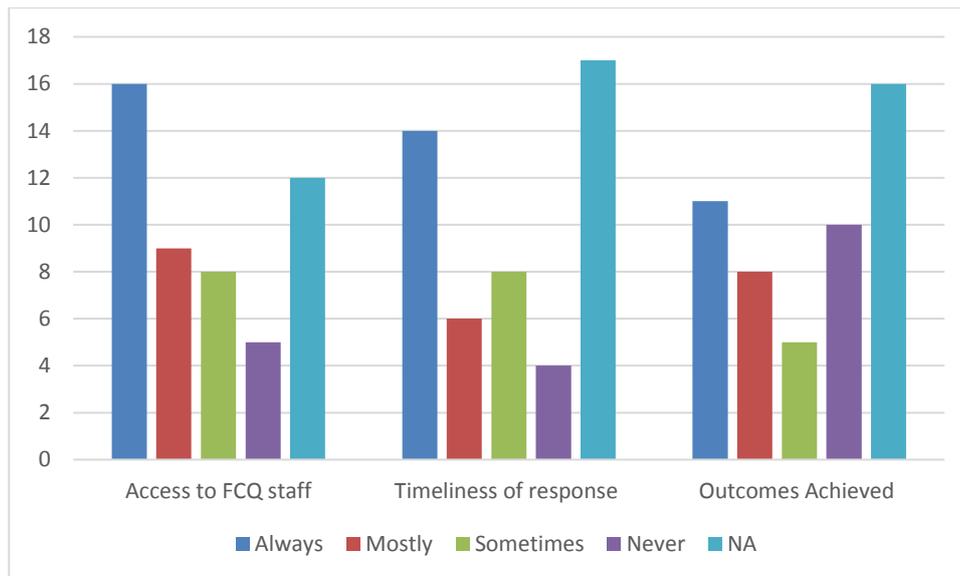


Carers were asked if they felt heard and were satisfied with the outcome regarding their contact with the above services. 68% of carers reported they felt heard and 55% of carers felt satisfied with the outcome achieved.

## Foster Care Queensland

Carers were asked a range of questions relating to Foster Care Queensland (FCQ). Firstly carers were asked if they were satisfied in respect to information provision regarding FCQ, 59% of carers reported satisfaction. In respect to knowledge and understanding of services provided 65% of carers reported feeling satisfied.

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



- 66% of carers who felt question was relevant to them reported feeling either always or mostly satisfied with access to staff
- 63% of carers who felt question was relevant to them reported feeling satisfied with timeliness of responses
- 56% of carers who felt question was relevant to them reported feeling satisfied either mostly or always with outcomes achieved.

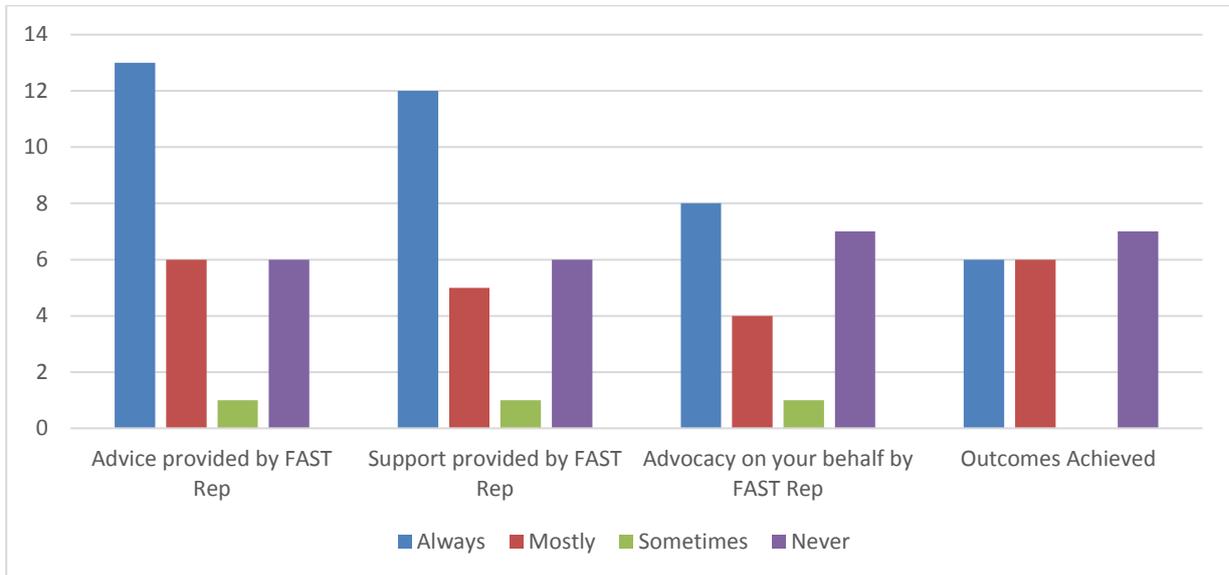
## FAST Program

Carers were asked a range of questions relating to the FAST program attached to FCQ.

Carers were asked if they were satisfied with provision of information about FAST, of those carers who felt the question was applicable to them 67% reported feeling satisfied. In terms of knowledge of local FAST Rep, of those who felt the question was applicable to them 68% reported feeling satisfied.

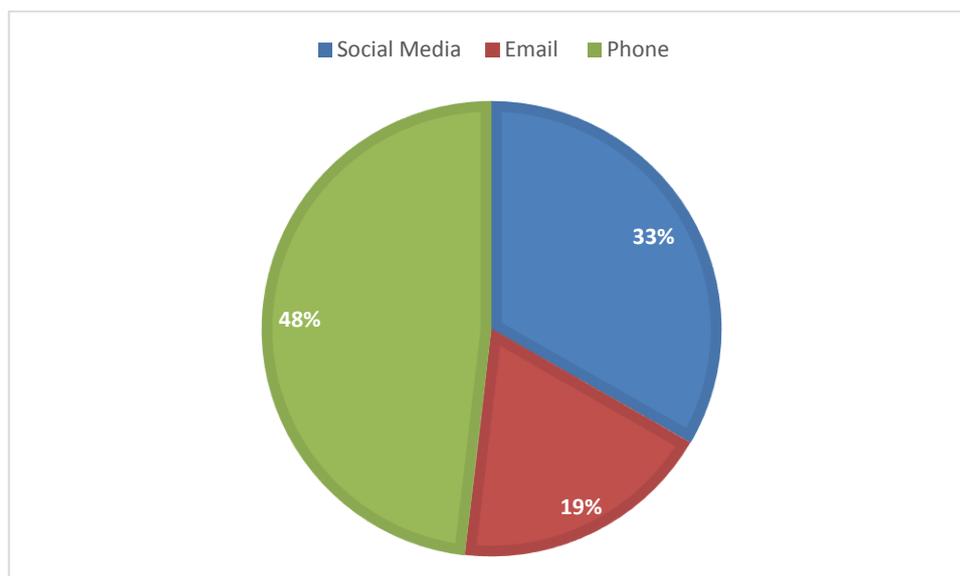
Carers were then asked if they felt supported to access their local FAST delegate from Child Safety and from their Fostering and Kinship Care Service. Of those that thought the question as relevant to them 52% of carers reported feeling satisfied with support to access their FAST Rep from Child Safety and 62% reported feeling satisfied with support to access their FAST delegate from their Fostering and Kinship Care Service.

Carers were asked a range of questions relating to their experiences of accessing a FAST Representative – please note only those carers who felt this question was relevant to them has been included in this data.



- 73% reported feeling always or mostly satisfied with advice provided by their FAST Rep
- 74% reported feeling always or mostly satisfied with support provided by their FAST Rep
- 60% reported feeling always or mostly satisfied with advocacy on behalf of carer with Child Safety
- 63% reported feeling always or mostly satisfied with outcomes achieved.

Carers were asked how they mostly access their FAST Rep.



## Partners in Care

FCQ included a section in this year's survey on Partners in Care, the following results were received:

- 11 of the carers who completed the survey from Northern Region attend a Partners in Care Workshop
- 13 of the carers who completed the survey reported they have seen/received communication about Partners in Care
- 6 of the carers who completed the survey reported noticing a positive difference since Partners in Care
- 27 of the carers who completed the survey reported they would participate in future forums similar to the Partners in Care Workshops (please note 27 skipped this question and 13 said no they would not).

## Looking Forward

During this section of the report, carers were asked a range of questions relating to their future as carers and what they would like to see change.

Firstly carers were asked how long they intended on continuing to provide care for 89% of carers reported they intended on caring for more than 3 years. 9% stated they only intended on caring for another year and the remaining 2% stated they intend on caring for another two years.

**Carers were then asked if there was support that would influence that decision – 39% of carers stated that the support they received would influence this decision. The following comments were provided:**

1. *Stability of the child's placement. We would love to have a long term placement. Having a plan. Also juggling with work. Getting day care for some children is difficult. And unfortunately we cannot just stop work as we have bills etc. ideally I would love to stop work and be at home with my bio and foster children but we just financially can't.*
2. *CSO and other staff need to be trained how to treat carers with respect not like rubbish to be kicked aside for their agendas.*
3. *Listen to the carer and work with them not around all carers want what is best for the child, and sometimes our opinions may not be right it should be still listened to.*
4. *Ongoing lack of medical supports for a Medical High Needs child. Ongoing issues with acknowledgment of our extensive 4.5yr roll in lives of child in care. Our wish to LTG-O.*
5. *Well matched placement of a child/ren with care needs and educational needs with are compatible with carer household. Accurate information which reflects part time school attendance over an indefinite period.*
6. *If the department made dealings with them much harder yes we will cease being carers it's just not worth the hassles stress and hardship.*
7. *More support, inclusion, and respect from DOCS.*
8. *If a serious issue presented itself in relation to the child in care and we were not appropriately supported by the Department in relation to the needs of the placement.*
9. *Family dynamics, work life.*
10. *There has been a couple of times when I felt I could no longer go on. Only support from other carers and outside training /counselling got me through. Child Safety is NOT supportive. They are obviously grossly understaffed and mostly have no time for carers who do not immediately comply with their*

*demands regardless of the practicality of them. All carers know it is not in their best interests to 'annoy' their CSO by advocating too strongly for the children in their care.*

- 11. Better communication understanding and involvement needed with all, department, agencies, FCQ and carer.*
- 12. Better team inclusion management by the Department, to be treated with respect, after all we are the people 'on the ground' daily, just ask 'us'!*
- 13. My recent placement broke down as result of NO communication with the CSO. Last minute decisions were always made without consultation, that didn't fit in with my work. When discussed I was told "it's not about you". She struggled to understand without ME or other carers these kids have nowhere to go, so being included in decisions, particularly ones that affected my life is very important. I am on the verge of exiting. I am struggling to find a positive experience in two years of caring.*
- 14. I'm hoping that the current anti carer culture at {CSSC de-identified} Child Safety will change with the senior CSO and Team Leader staff. Without carers there will be nobody to look after and love the children. {CSSC de-identified} needs to value and respect their carers.*
- 15. Love doing what I am doing, however there needs to be open and transparent communication.*
- 16. It has been a very challenging year of interacting with the department - there was no CSO for five months for two of our foster-children and we were unable to progress with a number of important like schooling and healthcare without this input. Placement with a third child broke down after nine months of attempting to advocate for the required supports from the department to progress with NDIA. I worry that if the current shortage of Child Safety staff and lack of following through on requested supports continues then the cumulative stress and impacts will make it difficult to continue.*

**Carers were asked if they had any suggestions to improve services for Foster and Kinship Carers. The following comments were provided:**

- 1. My partner and I both work for {organisation de-identified}. We would love to see them get on board with a leave type program for staff that are carers so they can accept placements and still know their work is safe.*
- 2. Carers have reservations to this matter.*
- 3. The more support the better. Need more carers.*
- 4. Retraining.*
- 5. Give Child Safety a good shake up and make sure they are aware of the importance of carers, and are as much entitled to their allowance as they are their wages without being given lectures about their transparency to the government of all that is spent on carers and the children.*
- 6. Pushing for more supports for carers in the northern region to be considered partners in care. Putting ideas to physical working relationships.*
- 7. Focus more on the child and not bending over backwards for parents who don't and won't do the right thing to the detriment of the child and the carer/family.*
- 8. More information on placement of kids, to ensure we are able to care for them the best we can and under what they need right away.*
- 9. In house respite with approved persons to care for children for several hours or days if the carers need to go away.*

10. *Get more departmental staff stop putting more work on foster carers as we are volunteers remember it's not our actual job.*
11. *The Department and Support Agencies need to improve their communication around (organisation De Identified) and (program DE Identified) to improve support services. They also need to work on the areas/staff who still don't accept and treat carers as important components of the child's Care Team. Effective and timely communication still needs to be improved in some areas.*
12. *Too many to list.*
13. *More communication from child services would be beneficial.*
14. *Involving the carer's children more. There's all these activities for children in care to do through support groups but the carer's children, in my case the child in care's cousins can't attend.*
15. *Immediately double the number of Child Safety Officers and give them effective ongoing training and make them accountable for their actions. Access to Quality free weekly counselling for foster carers if/when needed.*
16. *As above, need to listen to carers with understanding and empathy and follow up on carers concerns and personal understanding of the child.*
17. *Treat us with respect please.*
18. *We need more transparency about a child's case.*
19. *Retraining of staff.*
20. *More communication and less blame around carers. More child focused opposed to family focused.*
21. *Treat carers with respect and listen to them - they know the children they are caring for more than any CSO does.*

**Carers were then asked if they could change two things about the Child Protection System tomorrow, what would they be. Carers left the following comments:**

1. *Children need long term stability, they shouldn't be in order after and shipped from house to house. We all know that it doesn't work. And these children then turn into adults with issues etc.*
2. *Make all decisions from the Department reviewable in the court; Reviewable decisions should not be restricted to in whose care the children are in and what contact they have.*
3. *Stop sending kids back to the parents that let them be destroyed.*
4. *Being allowed to have relationships with the child's family without any interference from DOC's. Families who have kids removed don't trust DOCS workers but they will trust the carer who looks after their kids. The power that Child Safety has to wield over people is too much.... Take some power off them and outsource it to independent organizations like {agency de-identified}.*
5. *Make all Child Safety Officers spend a week with these children and not be so judgemental. Give carers more opportunities to mix and socialise with other carers, not just within the agencies but with their support.*
6. *The roll carers play in supporting children and their families. There is a lot wrong in the northern region. Being active in carers supporting decision making.*
7. *Time limit on parents who don't meet department guidelines for reunification so that children can have a normal life.*
8. *More information provided efficiently after contacts are held, to know more information about what the family is need to do to improve.*
9. *Early intervention or daily support for families in crisis. Children at risk to be removed as soon as possible and stabilised while keeping family connections.*
10. *Get better staff training for case workers not everything is black and white and get more funding in support for children.*

11. *Scrap Agencies and have all carers come together as a united force. Strip {organisation de-identified} back as a local group that truly supports carers in meetings to discuss issues and work out solutions.*
12. *Child first and foremost.*
13. *Information provided and inclusion.*
14. *Communication between services. Reinforce that Child Safety services are there to protect and ensure the best outcomes for the children.*
15. *Respect and value of carers for the role they play in understanding the needs of the children we care for. Consistency in the application of policies/procedures, ensuring they are applied to achieve positive outcomes for children in our care.*
16. *Too many to list.*
17. *Child Safety Officer to not lie about situations and to be accountable for their actions.*
18. *Not to rush reunification so much.*
19. *Communication and openness.*
20. *That reunification was a lot more difficult. I understand that if the children are fed and clothed and not physically harmed then it's ok for them to go home but when a parent is still emotionally and mentally abusing a child surely that's grounds for not being reunited. All this is doing is continuing the cycle. That there were more staff so the ones that are there now don't get worn to the bone because they do amazing work.*
21. *More trained caring Child Safety staff & mandatory participation in ongoing training for all foster carers.*
22. *As above.*
23. *No month to month orders, this is traumatic for both children and carers, better funding.*
24. *Communication valuing the carers.*
25. *Timelier court processes. Improve placement process. It's not respectful to carers to offer a placement, let us spend time rearranging our schedules to accommodate the child/ren, then tell the carer at the last minute that you've got another (better) placement.*
26. *Permanency for children. Contacts suiting children not parents.*
27. *Remove the majority of power from Child Safety and outsourcing to the foster care agencies.*
28. *Put the child first! Stop pandering to these parents that continually hurt the kids even during supervised contacts!! Try to stop the change of CSOs so much.*
29. *Child focused - the best interest of the child and communication by CSOs. What is the best interest of the child not what is in the best interest of the parents. CSO actually listen to the carers and show them respect.*
30. *Support for foster children would continue till 21 years. More support when damages occur.*
31. *I've had very mean and unpleasant experiences.*
32. *Parental rights - why should those who sexually and/or physically abuse their children, have more say over kinship carers? Once a guilty plea has been entered, or the parent/s has been found guilty, all contact should be cancelled unless the child indicates they want to see their parent/s.*

Comments with any identifying or sensitive information about a child or young person in care, names of workers and/or locations have been removed from the public copy of this report to ensure confidentiality of children, young people and their carers are maintained. However comments have been included in a version submitted to the Department of Child Safety, Youth and Women to ensure that carers' voices are heard.

**Finally – carers were asked if they would recommend fostering to a friend.**

