

# 'Hearing the Voice of the Kinship Foster Carer'

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*AN INQUIRY INTO CHARACTERISTICS, NEEDS AND EXPERIENCES*

THE FOSTERING NETWORK, HSC BOARD AND QUEEN'S UNIVERSITY



# Structure of Presentation

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Aims

Method

Findings –Quantitative/Qualitative

Messages for Practice

Summary and Conclusion

# Aims

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- Acquire a demographic profile of the carers;
- Ascertain carers' perceptions of the children;
- Describe key aspects of the placement;
- Understand the needs of the carers;
- Explore the caregivers' experience of agencies;
- Gain insights for policy and practice.

# Method

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Sampling procedure

Data collection

Data analysis

Theory



# Findings from the Questionnaire

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Background

Questions asked

Responses



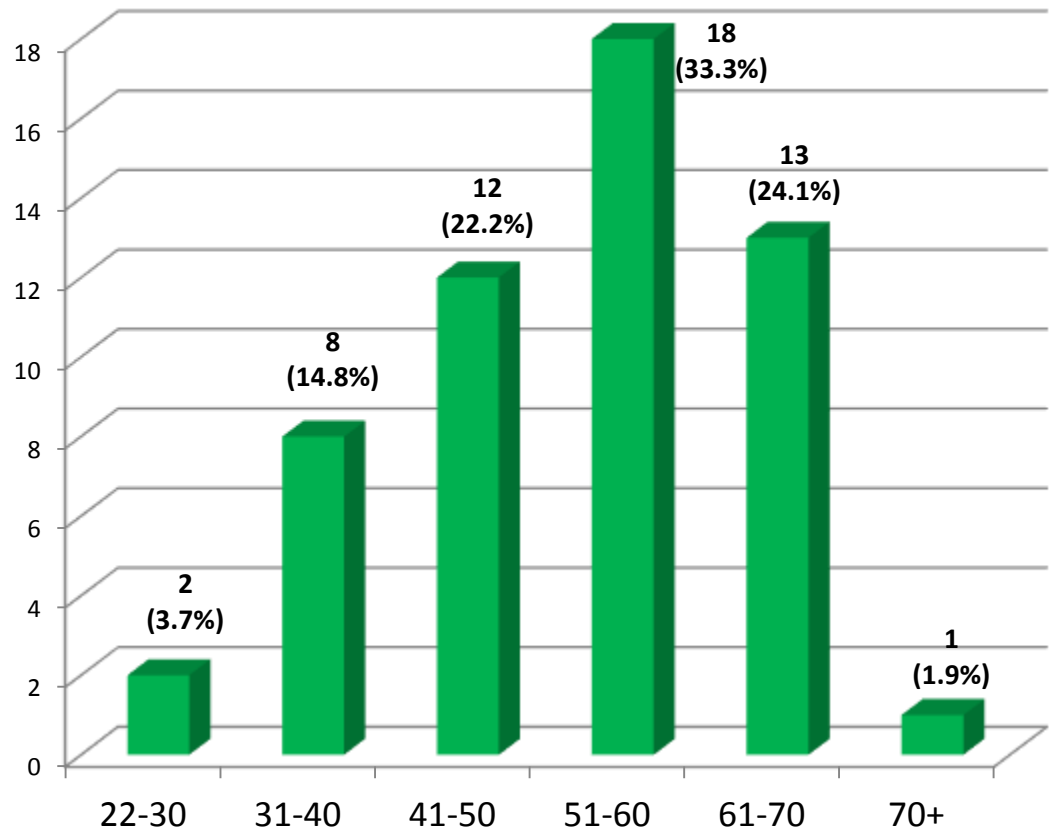
# Carers and their households

Profile of carers

Relationship to children

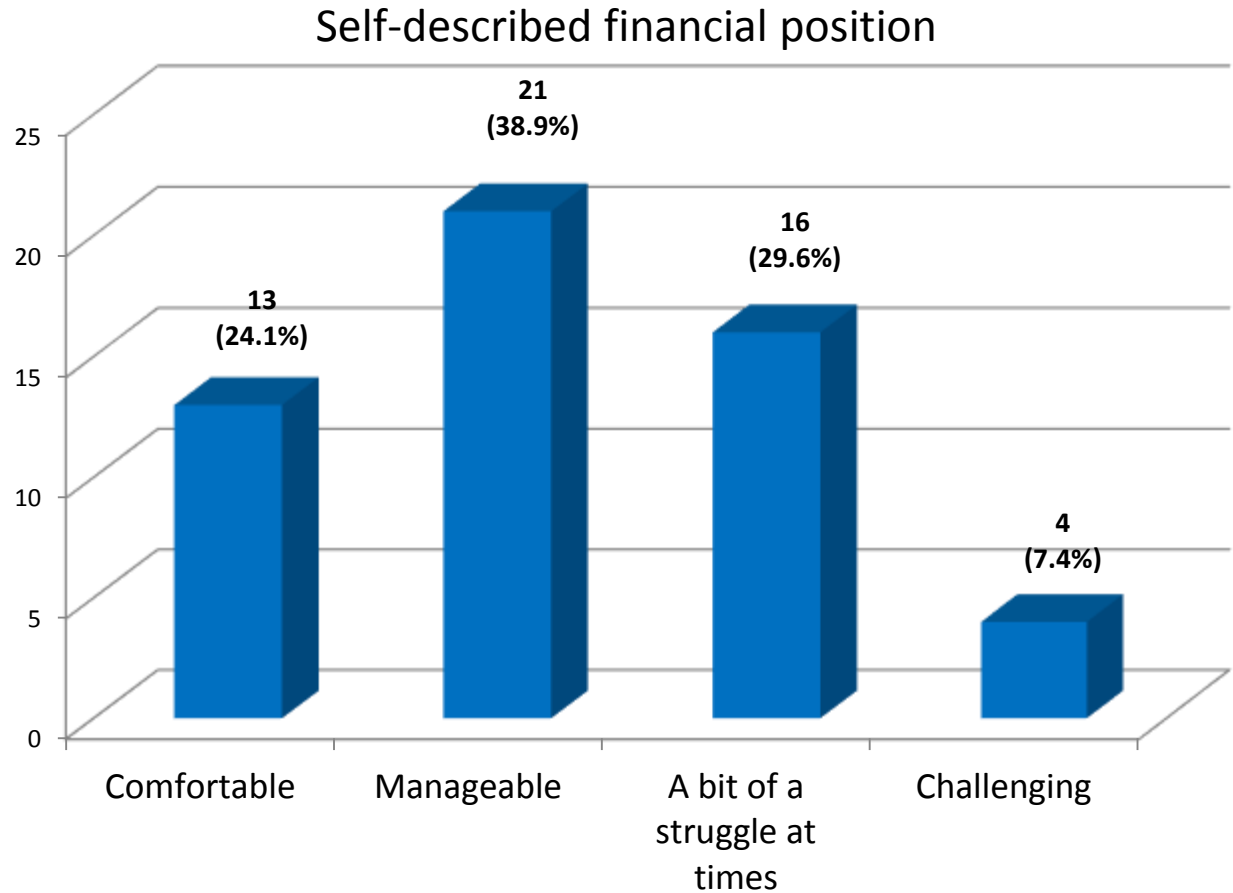
Household composition

Age of Carers



# Income and finances

Household income  
Employment status  
Link between age  
and finances



# Support needs

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## Priorities

Age and illness /  
disability

Evaluation of  
support services

Type of Support Need (Family)	Number	Percent
Education	15	20.5%
Special Educational Needs	10	13.7%
Finances	10	13.7%
Counselling	9	12.3%
Parenting	9	12.3%
Mental Health	9	12.3%
Employment	6	8.2%
Total	73	100%



# Findings from the Interview

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Background

Areas covered

Themes



# Theme 1

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1. Initial placement
2. Quick decisions and slow processes
3. Contact arrangements
4. Support needs



# Theme 2

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1. Different experiences of professionals
2. Changing faces
3. Support needs

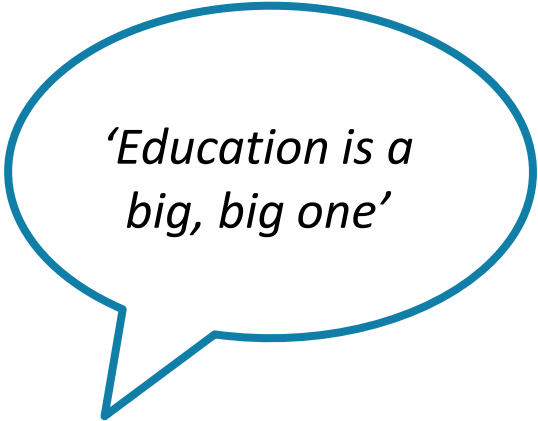


*'It's hard to  
trust people  
now'*

# Theme 3

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1. The impact of being in care
2. Education as a priority support need
3. The positive impact of kinship care
4. Impact on kinship foster carers' birth children

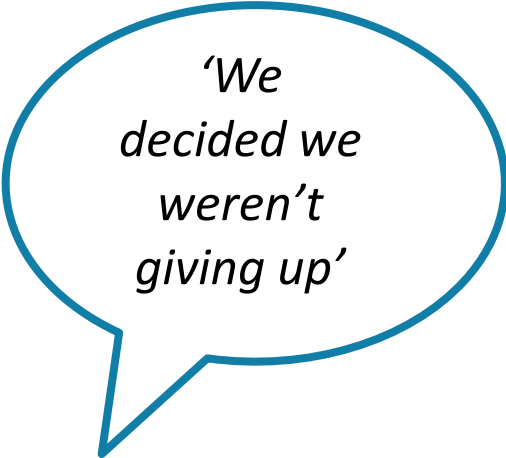


*'Education is a big, big one'*

# Theme 4

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1. Respite
2. Grandparents as kinship foster carers
3. Keeping going



*'We  
decided we  
weren't  
giving up'*

# Messages for Practice

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1. The immediacy of the placement
2. Social work processes
3. Training and peer support
4. Contact
5. Children's educational needs
6. Respite/family support
7. Relationship-based social work

# Summary and Conclusion

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Significance of grandparents

Health-related issues within cohort

Need for range of supports

High levels of stress

Building relationship in social work

Salience of educational issues

Complex nature of contact

Challenging needs and behaviours in some children

# Thank-you

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The carers

Fostering Network

HSC Board

