

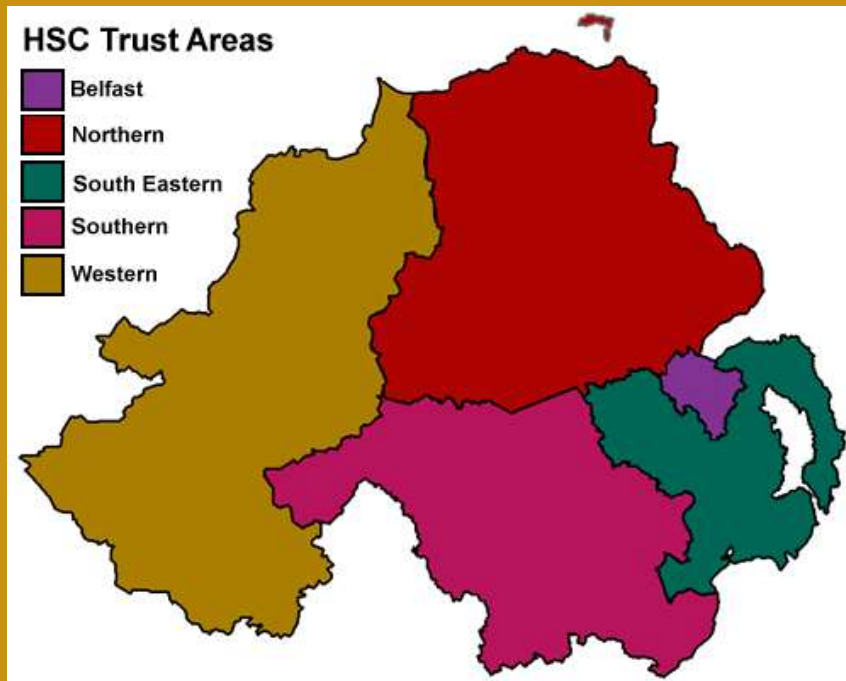
# WHST Older Kinship Carers and their Experiences

Queen's University, Belfast  
7<sup>th</sup> June 2017

# Western Trust (Population Approx 300000)

LIMAVADY - ENNISKILLEN

Derry/Londonderry



# Structure in Western Trust Fostercare Teams

## ● Kinship

- HEAD OF SERVICES – PAT ARMSTRONG, FOSTERCARE/ADOPTION
- SERVICE MANAGER – CLARE MCCALLION, FOSTERCARE
- SWM – DYMPNA BROGAN
- SWM – MARK COCKS, KINSHIP TEAM

## ● Other Foster Care Services

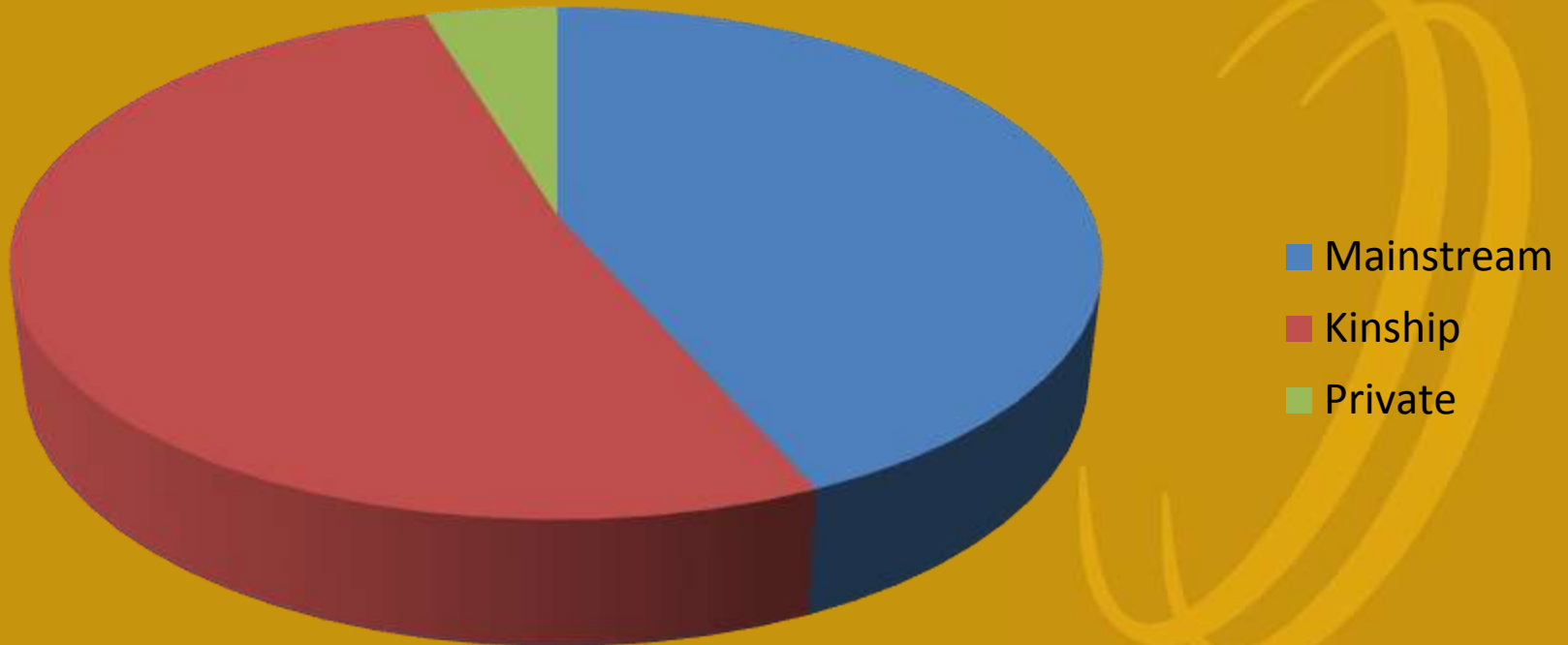
- HEAD OF SERVICES – PAT ARMSTRONG, FOSTERCARE/ADOPTION
- SERVICE MANAGER – CLARE MCCALLION, FOSTERCARE
- FOSTERING RECRUITMENT AND ASSESSMENT, SWM – DYMPNA BROGAN
- FOSTERCARE SUPPORT & DEVELOPMENT, SWM – CAROLINE BRADLEY & WENDY MAGUIRE
- SPECIALIST FOSTERCARE SCHEME - CHARLENE O'CONNOR
- SENIOR PRACTITIONERS (TRAINING) – SHARON MCELENEY & SARAH MEGAHEY

# LEGISLATIVE FRAMEWORK

- CHILDREN (NI) ORDER 1995 & VOLUME 3 guidance and regulations  
FAMILY PLACEMENTS AND PRIVATE FOSTERING
- MINIMUM KINSHIP CARE STANDARDS (2012)
- CARE MATTERS (2012)
- UNITED NATIONS CONVENTION ON THE RIGHTS OF THE CHILD (1991)
- EUROPEAN CONVENTION ON HUMAN RIGHTS – RIGHT TO FAMILY LIFE (1998) ART 8

# WHSCCT - Statistics

## Fostercare Population



# BREAKDOWN OF LOOKED AFTER POPULATION AS OF 31ST MARCH 17

- 490 CHILDREN CURRENTLY IN FOSTERCARE SERVICES
- 213 CHILDREN IN MAINSTREAM FOSTERCARE
- 254 IN KINSHIP CARE
- 23 PRIVATE FOSTERCARE

# KINSHIPCARE

## BREAKDOWN OF AGE GROUPS

### AGE OF CARERS

18 - 30 YRS = 18

30 - 40 YRS = 34

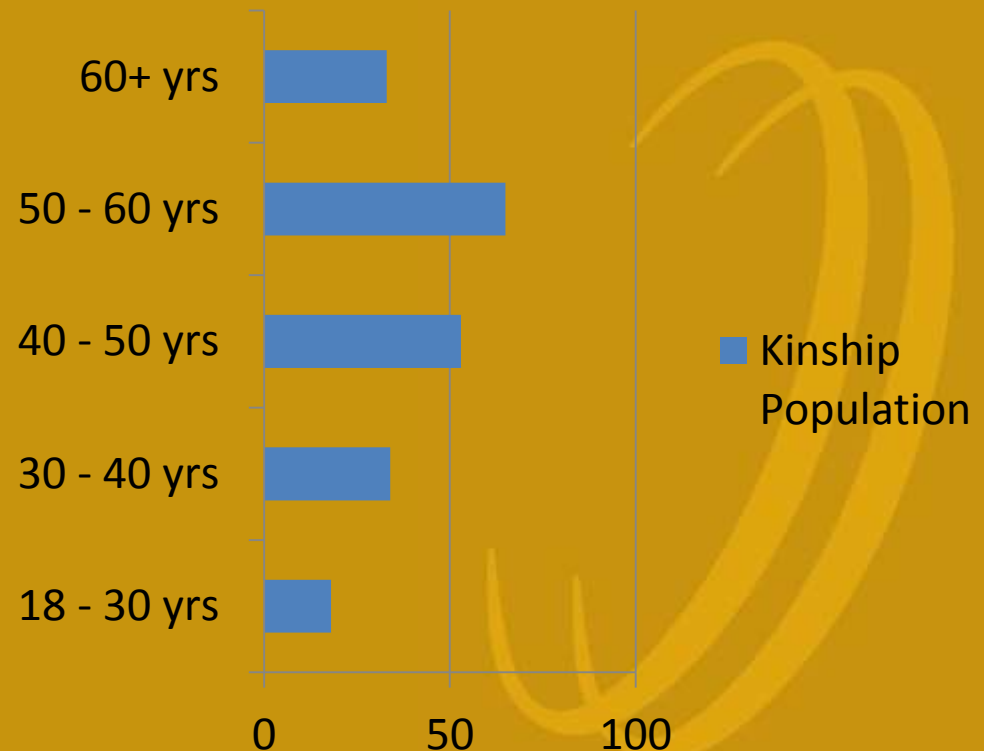
40 - 50 YRS = 53

50 - 60 YRS = 65

60 + YRS = 33

(98 OF OUR KINSHIP CARERS ARE  
OVER 50 YEARS OF AGE = 48%)

Kinship Population



# CHALLENGES FACING OLDER KINSHIP CARERS IN THE WHSCT

## KINSHIP ASSESSMENT FRAMEWORK

- INITIAL SW CONTACT
- WORKING WITHIN A SYSTEM
- VIABILITY ASSESSMENT WITHIN 48 HOURS IF CHILD PLACED ON AN 'IMMEDIATE BASIS'
- WEEKLY ASSESSMENT SESSIONS (12 – 16 WEEKS)
- PRESENTATION TO PANEL
- MONTHLY VISITS BY SUPPORTING KINSHIP WORKER
- ANNUAL REVIEWS



# CARERS FEEDBACK

- “I HAVE ALWAYS CARED FOR MY GRANDCHILD, WHAT HAPPENS IF I FAIL THIS ASSESSMENT”
- “I AM NOW IN THE ROLE OF GRANNY, MAMMY AND DADDY, IM WEARING THREE HATS”
- “I HAVE NEVER HAD TO HAVE A SOCIAL WORKER IN MY LIFE BEFORE, THERE ARE SO MANY PROFESSIONALS AND MEETINGS. CAN I NOT JUST GET ON WITH IT”
- “I KNOW THE KIDS NEEDS ARE NOW THE PRIORITY BUT I CANT STOP WORRYING ABOUT MY DAUGHTER, I LOVE HER EVEN THOUGH SHE CANT STOP....”

# AGE AND HEALTH OF KINSHIP CARERS

- “THE CHILDREN KEEP ME FEELING YOUNG”
- “I WORRY ABOUT MY FINANCES WHEN I REACH PENSION AGE AND HOW THIS WILL AFFECT US”
- “JUST BECAUSE MY SIGHT IS NOT GOOD DOESN'T MEAN I CAN'T LOOK AFTER MY GRANDCHILD”
- “EVEN THOUGH WE DO NOT KEEP THE BEST WE WANT TO KEEP THE CHILDREN IN THE FAMILY WHERE THEY BEONG. NOBODY CAN LOVE THEM LIKE WE DO”
- “I DON'T UNDERSTAND SELF EMPLOYED THAT HMRC KEEP SAYING, IM CARING FOR MY GRANDKIDS”

# HOME CONDITIONS – ACCOMMODATION/SPACE

- “MY HOUSING IS BEST SUITED TO US AS PENSIONERS AND WE REALLY DON’T HAVE ENOUGH ROOM, BUT WE DON’T WANT TO BE REHOUSED TO KEEP THE CHILDREN”
- “I HAVE AGREED TO SLEEP ON MY SOFA IN THIS EMERGENCY”
- “I HAVE LIVED HERE ALL MY LIFE, NOW I HAVE TO MOVE TO A NEW AREA THAT I DONT KNOW”



**WAS I READY FOR THIS?**

# WHAT CARERS SAY

- “I’M THEIR GRANDAD, I HAVE TO DO THIS”
- “THIS WASN’T WHAT WE WERE PLANNING BUT IT’S THE RIGHT THING TO DO”
- “WHAT HAPPENS IF I DONT, THEY WILL END UP WITH STRANGERS”

# DILEMMAS

- WE NEED TO TAKE INTO CONSIDERATION HOW KINSHIP CARE OCCURS, UNDERSTAND OUR KINSHIP CARERS AND THEIR STORIES TO HELP US SUPPORT AND MAKE THE RIGHT DECISIONS FOR CHILDREN.

# WHST – WHAT CAN WE DO?

- WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH KINSHIP CARE NI
- UNDERSTAND THE DIFFICULTIES KINSHIP CARERS FACE
- SIGNPOST
- LISTEN & ADVOCATE – WORKING WITH THE TRUST CAN BE DAUNTING
- VISIT MONTHLY OR MORE FREQUENTLY IF REQUIRED
- SUPPORT IF RESIDENCY ORDER IS AN OPTION
- MONTHLY SUPPORT GROUP
- TRAINING

# Family

like branches on a tree

we may grow in different directions

yet our roots remain as one