

NATIONAL FOSTER CARE REVIEW

Analysis of Survey Responses

01 November 2013



ANALYSIS OF SURVEY RESPONSES

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INTRODUCTION

1. This paper presents **an analysis of responses to the online survey** run by the Foster Care Review between 04 September and 25 October 2013. The survey was **organised to help gather the views of: (a) children and young people in foster care; (b) foster carers; and (c) the sons and daughters of foster carers.**

2. Survey questions were developed by a sub-group of the Foster Care Review, with assistance from fostering service managers, children's rights officers and researchers from the Centre for Excellence for Looked After Children in Scotland (CELCIS). **Questions related directly to the interim recommendations agreed by the Foster Care Review** (detailed in the Progress Report of July 2013).¹ Individual survey questions were tailored for each stakeholder group (i.e. children in foster care). However the content of the questions was the same across all three groups. (For further details of the survey questions, please see Appendix A.)

3. Members of the Foster Care Review were responsible for distributing information about the survey to the target groups, and assisting (where necessary) with the submission of responses. The survey was run through Qualtrics, an online platform, and was set up and monitored by CELCIS. **Researchers from CELCIS assisted in carrying out this analysis of responses.**

SURVEY RESPONDENTS

4. A total of **159 individuals completed the questionnaire, including 121 foster carers, 26 foster children and young people, and 12 sons and daughters** of foster carers. Of the 26 foster children and young people (herein referred to as 'foster children') who took part in this survey, 13 classified themselves as in 'permanent foster care' and 11 in 'long term foster care'. Only one foster child identified themselves as in 'task centred placement'. None were in respite care. One young person chose not to answer this question. No other demographic characterises of the sample were collected.

¹ Foster Care Review (July 2013) [Progress Report](#)

ANALYSIS OF RESPONSES

Placement Descriptors

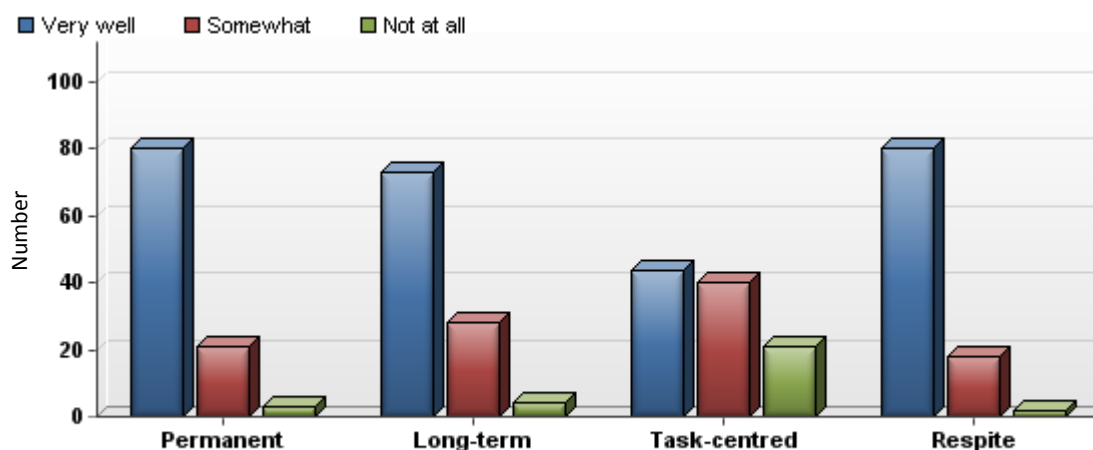
5. To help children, carers and professionals to have a better understanding about the purpose of particular foster placements, the Review is considering a recommendation to the effect that *'the Scottish Government should develop a set of clearly defined descriptions for the types of placement that should be available across Scotland'*. This national typology would relate to the type of placement (i.e. how it is described in a child's care plan) not the carer. The intention of these descriptors is not to establish categories for different kinds of carers, but rather to assist in care planning and monitoring.

6. To encourage discussion the Chair of the Foster Care Review drew up some suggestions for what these placement descriptions might be:

- i. **Permanent:** A placement secured by means of a court order (excluding Adoption Orders).
- ii. **Long-Term:** A placement longer than two years not secured by a court order.
- iii. **Task-Centred:** A placement of any duration up to two years. The child's care plan identified the placement (and carer) with delivery of certain objectives (or 'tasks').
- iv. **Respite:** A placement which forms part of a planned series of short term breaks for children and young people.

7. The majority of foster carers responding to the survey felt that these terms accurately described what they offer to children and young people. Amongst those who answered the question (N=100) nearly 100% thought that the terms 'permanent', 'long term' and 'respite' described what foster carers do *very well* or *somewhat well*. Over three quarters thought that the term 'task-centred' described what foster carers offer *very well* or *somewhat well* (Figure 1).

Figure 1: **Foster Carers: How well do these labels describe what foster carers do?**



8. Foster carers were also asked to indicate whether there was anything they did which fell outside these descriptions. Most (82%) thought that these labels covered all of the aspects of the work they do – although this number might be higher as some respondents misinterpreted this question as indicated in their answers to the follow up question ('please describe what you do currently that falls outside these descriptions'). For example, of the twenty foster carers that indicated that what they do falls out with the four descriptions provided five indicated that they only provided one type of placement such as 'long term', 'short term' and 'temporary'. From the information provided these could be included under the 'long term' and 'task centred' descriptions proposed. Another respondent did not indicate what type of placement she offered, but noted that some placements lasted longer than two years.

9. As Figure 1 above illustrates, the term 'task-centred' was not as well perceived (or understood) as the other three. Seven respondents who offered short-term placements were adamant that 'task-centred' did not reflect what they provided to children and young people. Two out of these six felt that 'task-centred' was an unhelpful label that the public would not understand, and looked after children and young people may not appreciate. One respondent suggested that this descriptor should be substituted by 'emergency care'. Another suggested that respite should be substituted by 'short break', as this was more child friendly.

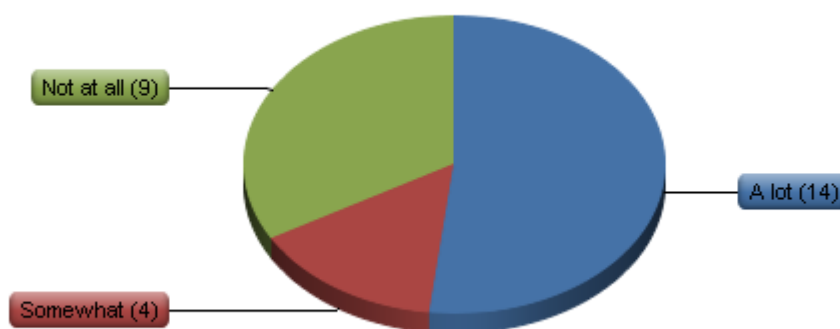
10. Six respondents indicated that they offer a variety of placements such as ‘home base’, ‘emergency’, ‘day care’, ‘and disability ’and ‘mature’. It was not made clear how these types of placements fail to fit in with the suggested descriptors. Two other foster carers reflected on the difficulty of trying to establish clear and specific descriptions of the types of placement that foster carers should provide.

11. When asked what type of placement they would like their parents to offer most **sons and daughters of foster carers** (N=9) preferred their parents to offer permanent placements. The other three types of placement (long term, respite and task centred) were each chosen only once as the preferred type of placement.

Impact of type of placement on relationships

12. The majority of **foster children** (N=26) agreed that the type of placement affects their relationship with their foster carers a lot (52%) or somewhat (15%). Nine foster children (33%) thought that the type of placement they are in had no impact on the relationship they build with their foster carers.

Figure 2: Foster Children: How much does the type of placement you are in (i.e. permanence, long term, respite) affect your relationship with your foster carer?



13. Similarly, most **sons and daughters of foster carers** (N=12) thought that the type of placement offered by their parents impacted on the relationships they were able to build with foster children a lot (50%) or somewhat (17%). Four were of the

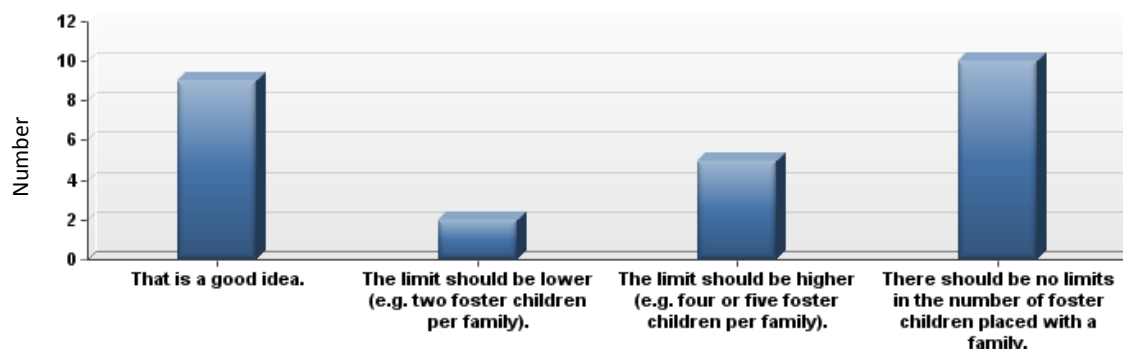
view that the type of placement had no impact on the relationships they formed with foster children.

Placement Limits

14. The Review has been asked to consider the benefits of introducing a maximum limit on the number of children who can be accommodated together within the same foster care household. This limit, it is claimed, would help reduce the burden placed on some carers and improve the quality of care given to individual children. The Review is considering a recommendation to Scottish Government that **a limit of three unrelated children be introduced**. The survey questions below relate to this recommendation, and whether there could /should be exemptions to the limit.

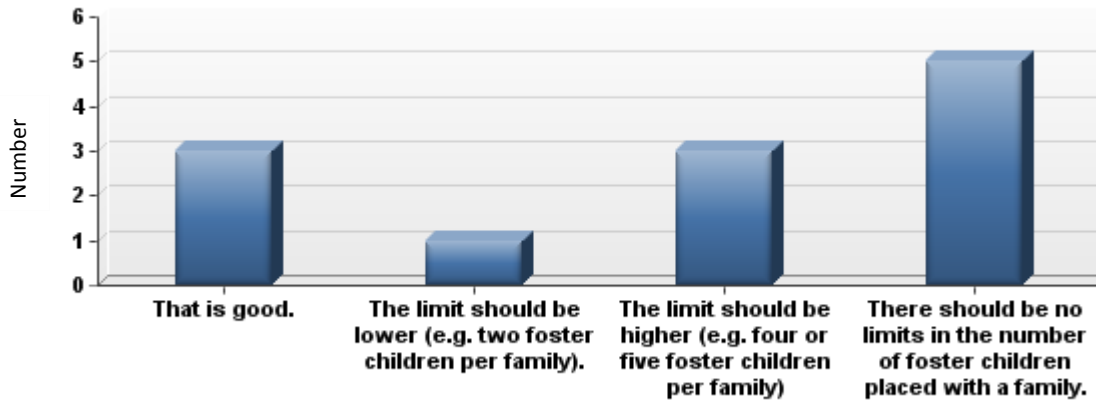
15. When asked whether the number of children placed in the care of a foster family should be limited to three, just over a third (35%) of **foster children** (N=26) thought that it was a good idea. However 38% thought there should be no limit. Only two thought that the limit should be lower and five were of the view that the limit should be higher.

Figure 3: Foster Children: What do you think about the proposal to introduce a maximum limit of three foster children in the care of a foster family at any one time?



16. Similarly, nearly half of **sons and daughters of foster carers** were of the view that there should be no limit in the number of foster children placed with a family. Three thought that the limit should be higher and one that it should be lower. Three sons and daughters agreed with the proposal.

Figure 4: Sons and Daughter of Foster Carers: What do you think about the proposal to introduce a maximum limit of three foster children in the care of a foster family at any one time?



17. Two foster children and two sons and daughters of foster carers took the opportunity to leave a comment at the end of the questionnaire to voice their disapproval of this proposal.

18. In response to a separate question, most foster children (77%), sons and daughters of foster carers (75%) and foster carers (82%) agreed with the idea that a foster family should be able to look after more than three children if the children are part of a sibling group. (Figure 5, 6 and 7).

Figure 5: Foster Children: Do you agree or disagree that a foster family can look after more than three children if the children are part of a sibling group?

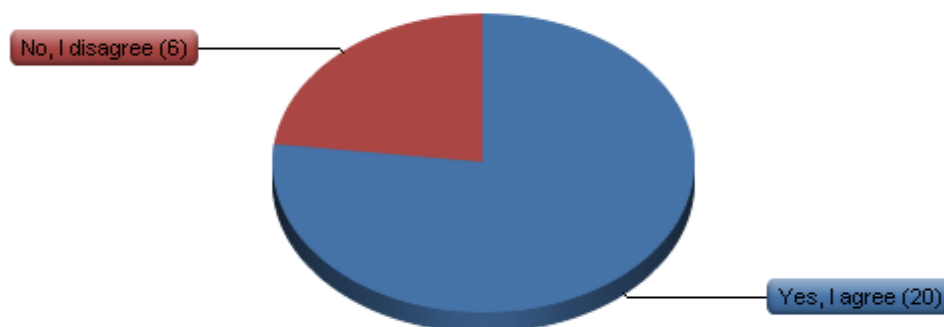


Figure 6: Sons and Daughters: Do you agree or disagree that a foster family can look after more than three children if the children are part of a sibling group?

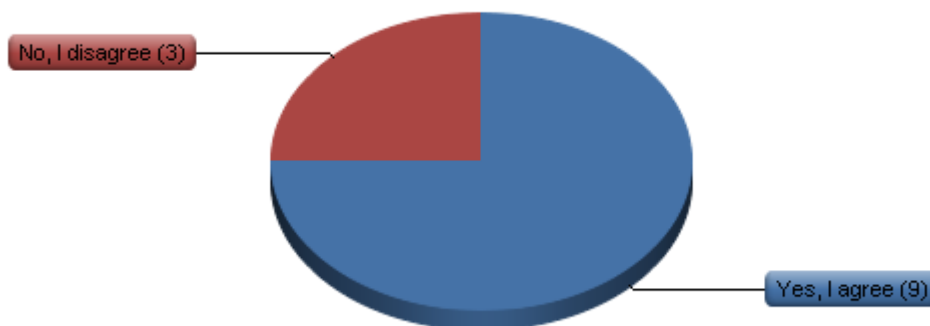
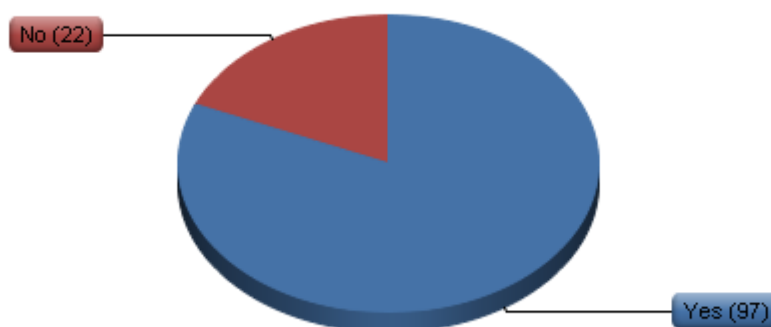


Figure 7: Foster Carers: Do you agree or disagree that a foster family can look after more than three children if the children are part of a sibling group?



19. Of the 22 foster carers who disagreed with this idea that sibling groups be exempt from the limit, 19 offered their reasons for doing so. A third noted that children are likely to come into placement with a number of behavioural and emotional issues and a high level of needs. These respondents were of the view that it would be better to limit the number of all children per placement (not just unrelated) so that they can all get the individual care and attention they need. Three respondents noted that to look after more than three children (related or unrelated) can be challenging and stressful to foster carers and should therefore be avoided.

20. Six **foster carer** respondents left comments to argue that the number of children placed with a foster carer should be based on the carer's experience, characteristics and their ability to offer care. The number of children placed with foster carers should therefore be agreed on a case by case basis.

21. Four **foster carers** wanted further clarification as to whether the limit of children was per *carer* or per *household*. As the following passage illustrates there were concerns with regards to the impact a limit could have on households where there are two registered carers:

“My wife and I are both registered carers (...) We made a decision to make this our career. (...) We feel the proposal to limit the number to 3 would not be financially viable for us and would mean we would have to reconsider our choice to make this our career. We also feel a proposal to allow more than 3 as long as this is a sibling group would again limit us as children are not always in sibling groups.”

22. A further three **foster carer** respondents noted that if a foster carer can look after more than three children when these are part of a sibling group then they should be able to look after more than three non-related children. Another respondent thought that it was unrealistic to impose limits when social workers were eager to find a placement for children as soon as possible.

23. Survey participants were also asked whether they agreed with the proposal that the maximum limit of three should exclude birth or adopted children, or children who were formerly looked after. Most **foster children** (53%) and **sons and daughters of foster carers** (58%) disagreed with the proposal. However a large majority of **foster carers** (74%) agreed with this proposal.² (See Figure 8, 9 & 10 below.)

² It seems that some respondents misunderstood this question – which may explain the different responses given by foster children/sons and daughters and foster carers.

Figure 8: Foster Children: Do you agree or disagree that the maximum limit of three children per family should not include birth or adopter children, or children who were formerly looked after?

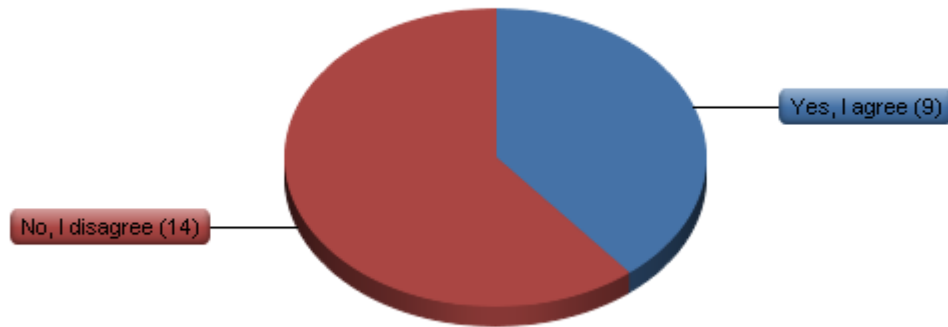


Figure 9: Sons and Daughters: Do you agree or disagree that the maximum limit of three children per family should not include birth or adopter children, or children who were formerly looked after?

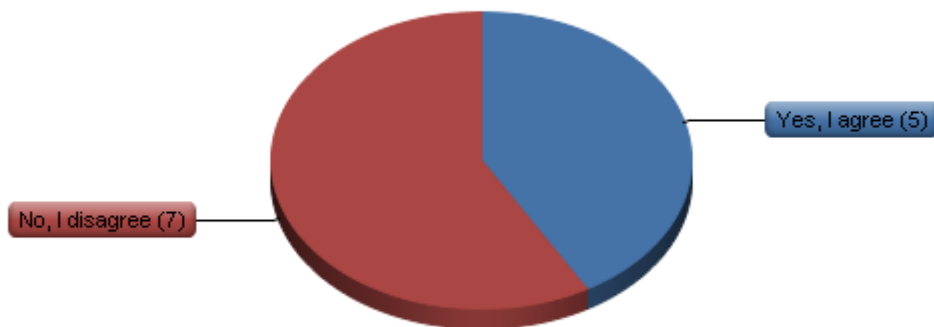
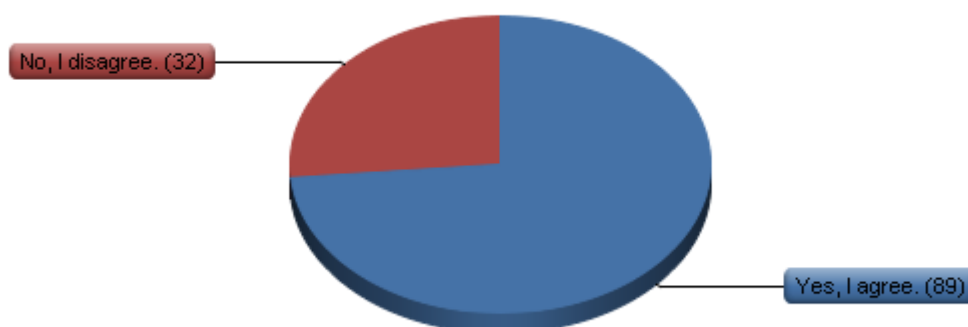


Figure 10: Foster Carers: Do you agree or disagree that the maximum limit of three children per family should not include birth or adopted children, or children who were formerly looked after?



24. The reasons for disagreeing with the proposal to exclude birth, adopted and formerly looked after children from the limit were largely of two types. Firstly, **foster carers** were concerned that if birth or adopted children, or children who were formerly looked after, were not included in the maximum limit that might result in too many children/individuals within the one household. This would impact on the quality of care provided to foster children, as well as to other children and young people. Respondents felt that this would be particularly detrimental to foster children as they come into placement with a number of unmet needs and require one to one care.

“Some foster placements seem to be mini residential homes rather than family placements. I think it detracts from the purpose of foster care to have lots of children [in a family placement]...”

25. Secondly, **foster carers** felt that the number of children a carer can look after will depend on a number of factors such as the characteristics of foster children, the ages of foster, birth and adopted children or formerly looked after young people, foster carer’s experience and ability to care, the availability of support and so on. The number of placements should therefore be decided on a case by case basis. Moreover, as the circumstances of families are not static, foster carers should be assessed on an on-going basis. Some foster carers noted that this would be a more child centred model as it acknowledges that some children will enjoy and thrive in the

company of a large group of people; whilst others will prefer a quieter setting with fewer children (and adults).

Learning and Development

26. The Review has been asked to put forward ideas about how to ensure all foster carers in Scotland have access to high quality learning and development opportunities. The Review plans to recommend that the Scottish Government commissions a *National Learning and Development Framework for Foster Care*, which will include two mandatory courses (at preparatory and induction stages) for new carers, and a mandatory programme of continuous skills and knowledge development for experienced carers. The questions in the survey related to this specific recommendation; in particular they sought views on how learning and development should be organised at: (a) the application/assessment stage (i.e. prospective carers); (b) post-approval stage (i.e. newly approved carers); (c) on-going (i.e. beyond the carers' first year of experience).

27. When asked '*what learning and development do you think would help your foster carer to look after you?*' 11 out of 26 **foster children** noted that they would like foster carers to learn more about their feelings. Eight were of the opinion that foster carers should have a better understanding of how to keep them safe. Six would like foster carers to know more about educational issues. Five thought that foster carers should have a better knowledge of their families. One young person suggested that foster carers should know more about listening to children and young people and another would like foster carers to learn about "fun time and loads of TLC".

Table 1: Foster children: What further learning and development would help foster carer(s)?³

Answer	Responses
Stuff about my school	6
Stuff about my family	5
Stuff about my feelings	11
Stuff about keeping me safe	8
Other	2
Total	32

³ Please note that the number of responses is higher than the total sample (N=26) because respondents could choose as many options as they wanted.

28. Most **sons and daughters of foster carers** (10 of 12 respondents) would like their parents to have further training and development about foster children's feelings. A significant number (7 of 12) would also like to see further training and development about 'keeping safe'. Stuff about school and families were chosen as areas for further development by six respondents. The sons and daughters of foster carers would also like to see foster carers receiving training on issues related to attachment, resilience, health, and after care. One young person observed that the training provided to foster carers now is good and what required further consideration is how to further develop individuals' abilities to work together as a team. This young person also noted that professionals should have a better understanding of how foster home works.

Table 2: Sons and Daughters: What further learning and development would help foster carer(s)?⁴

Answer	Response
Stuff about school.	6
Stuff about families.	6
Stuff about feelings.	10
Stuff about keeping safe.	9
Other	4
Total	35

29. The **sons and daughters of foster carers** were also asked what training topics would be helpful to them. Eight (out of 12) participants provided an answer to this question. Four would like to gain a better understanding of behavioural issues, particularly of how foster children's previous experiences may impact upon their development and behaviour. One respondent was interested in learning more about GIRFEC and another would like to see some training on how to keep oneself safe. Two respondents were of the view that no training was required and another one observed that she had no time or interest in doing any training. It was her view that the fostering task pertains to the foster parents and thus sons and daughters should not be requested or required to attend training.

⁴ Please note that the number of responses is higher than the total sample (N=12) because respondents could choose as many options as they wanted.

30. Two **foster carers** observed (in the general comments section) that other members of their family should not be expected to attend training as they had not sign up to become foster carers. The expectation of attending training should be solely on the foster carer(s).

31. Participants were asked whether they thought it was a good idea to have children and young people in foster care helping to train foster carers. Sixteen **foster children** agreed and 10 disagreed with this proposal. All but one of the **sons and daughters of foster carers** agree with this proposal (11 out of 12).

Figure 11: **Foster Children**: Should children and young people in foster care help to train foster carers?

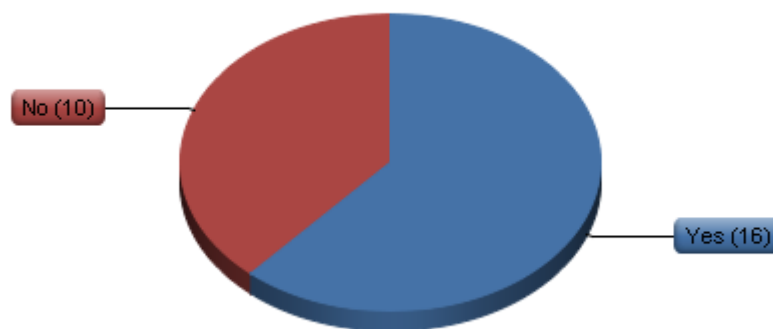
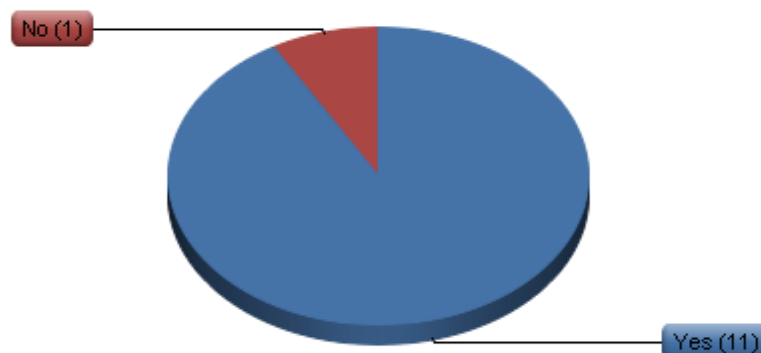


Figure 12: **Sons and daughters**: Should children and young people in foster care help to train foster carers?



32. **Foster carers** were asked whether they agree with the proposal that:

- All prospective foster carers receive the same preparatory course before being considered by their agency foster panel.
- All newly approved foster carers in Scotland receive the same learning and development courses in their first year following approval.
- There should be specific knowledge and skills required by foster carers at the various stages of their development.

33. As Figures 12 – 15 illustrate, the majority of foster carers agreed with these proposals.

Figure 13: Foster Carers: Should all prospective foster carers receive the same preparatory course before being considered by their agency fostering panel?

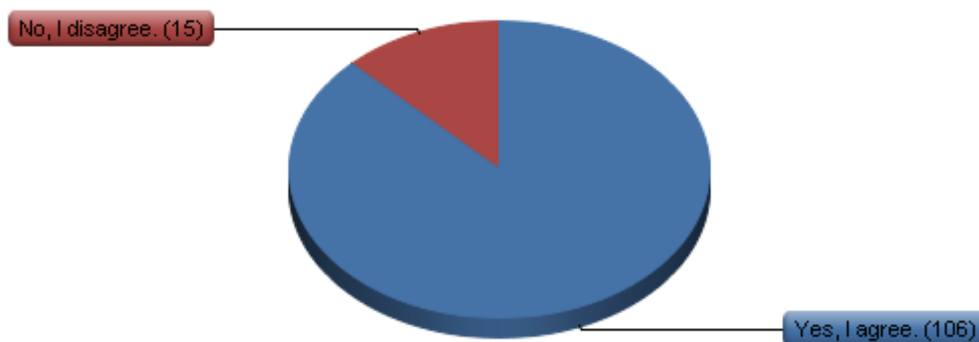


Figure 14: **Foster Carers**: Should all newly approved foster carers receive the same learning and development courses in the first year following approval?

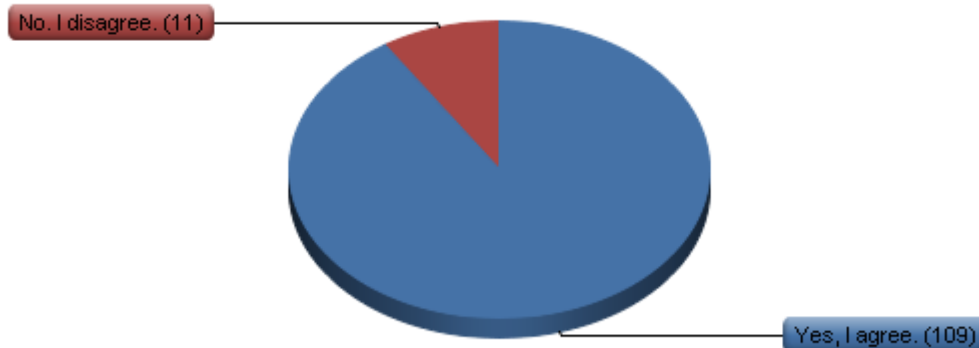
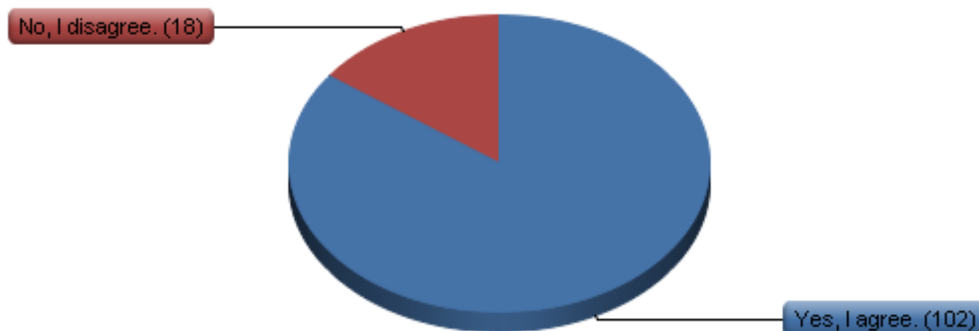


Figure 15: **Foster Carers**: Should there be specific knowledge and skills required by foster carers at the various stages of their development?



34. A small minority of **foster carers** disagreed with these proposals. Reasons for disagreeing with these proposals were fairly similar. Firstly, some foster carers were against the idea of introducing standardised learning and development to prospective and current foster carers because this did not take into account the different levels of experience and knowledge individuals have. Training should therefore be individualised in order to address any gaps in knowledge or particular issues that a foster carer may be facing with a child when and if required.

35. Secondly, some carers held the view that the skills required to look after children cannot be taught, but are instead intuitive and learned through experience.

“...I think the entire proposal that caring should become a profession is entirely wrong. We should be focusing on personal attributes that a carer has that make them suitable to raise a child who has had a difficult start in life, not training or qualifications. Some things just can’t be taught and parenthood is one of them.”

36. Participants also noted that whilst some foster carers are very good at the task of looking after children, they may not be as good at formal learning / education, so if specific qualifications are required some good foster carers will be lost (as they are unable to complete the course work).⁵

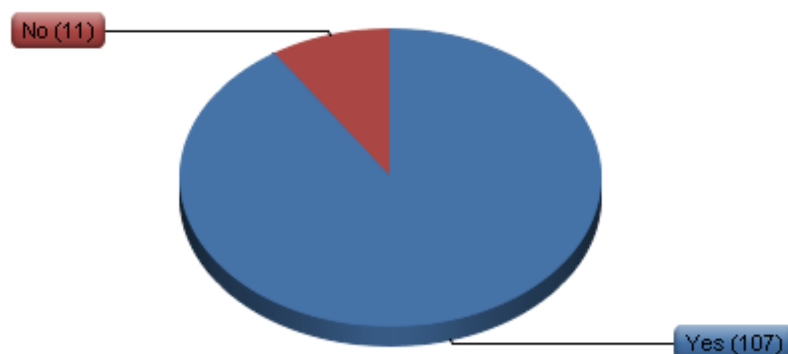
37. Foster carer respondents also observed that some foster carers may be unable to attend learning and development sessions due to work or caring commitments. Some were concerned that if the learning and development required is too onerous prospective and current foster carers may abandon fostering all together.

38. Finally, as some respondents observed, the opposition to the introduction of standardised and compulsory learning and development often stems from a fear that this would be a step too far towards the professionalization of foster care. Some observed that prospective and current foster carers may be put off by the increased professionalization of fostering, resulting in fewer foster carers being recruited and retained.

39. Despite these reservations, most (91%) foster carers agreed that the proposed learning and development framework should be ‘accredited’ so that carers can obtain recognised qualifications (Figure 16), with some observing that there had been few opportunities for further learning and development and they would welcome all such opportunities.

⁵ Please note the Review’s interim recommendation does not state that every foster carer should have to obtain qualifications, but rather it proposes to introduce ‘accredited’ sections of a national learning and development framework so that those carers who wish to gain qualifications can do so.

Figure 16: Foster Carers: Should the proposed learning and development framework be 'accredited' thereby allowing carers to obtain recognised qualifications if they and/or their fostering agency wish to?



40. Foster carers made numerous suggestions as to what should constitute 'essential training' for prospective foster carers. These are listed below, with the frequency they mentioned reflecting where they sit on the list (1 = mentioned the most times):

1. An understanding of child protection legislation, policies and procedures, including key documents and principles such as GIRFEC and SHANARI and how to prepare for reviews, hearings and courts.
2. Safe Caring (no description given of what this describes)
3. Understanding and managing behavioural issues, including strategies as how to best deal with these.
4. Attachment theory.
5. Recognising the signs of neglect, abuse, loss and separation and trauma; understanding its impact on children; and learning how to respond appropriately.
6. Child development.
7. Health and safety including first aid; child's well-being, emotional and sexual health; foster carer [and their families'] emotional health and well-being; and complexities around medical consent for foster children.
8. Appropriate recording and reporting of information, data protection and online safety.

9. Working with birth parents and extended families; including an understanding of the impact of contact on children and families.
10. Learning about the realities of fostering from experienced foster carers (rather than being overwhelmed with theoretical knowledge).

41. A number of topics were mentioned less than 5 times each. These included: role and responsibilities of foster carers (vis-à-vis that of other professionals); awareness of support and resources available and how to access these; and complaints procedures; knowledge and understanding of children's and young people's needs – particularly of children with a learning and/or physical disability, or foetal alcohol syndrome; financial issues for foster carers, particularly tax and benefits; communication skills with children, their families and professionals; working as part of a team; resilience; pedagogy; substance misuse and addiction; educational issues – how to support children and young people and liaise with schools; life story; games and activities – the importance of play and physical exercise; equality and diversity.

42. One foster carer respondent noted that rather than creating a new course for prospective foster carers further consideration should be given to the 'Skills to Foster' training offered by the Fostering Network. It was her view that this course provides all the knowledge new foster carers require.

43. When asked what ***on-going learning and development*** foster carers should have, **foster carers** suggested similar topics to the ones listed above. In general, foster carers are of the view that on-going training should provide a 'refresher' of what had been covered during the initial training, and ensure that they are up to date with child protection legislation, policies and procedures and aware of the support and resources available to them and the children in their care, and how to access these. Respondents also highlighted that training should be tailored to the particular needs of the foster carer and the children in their care, and that it should be made available if and when required.

44. In addition, the following topics were identified as possible areas for further learning and development (the topics most often mentioned are at the top of the list):

1. Understanding and coping with risk taking behaviour (i.e. sexualised behaviour, eating disorders, drug and alcohol misuse); attachment disorder; and aggression. Keeping children safe from harm and abuse.
2. SVQ3 and HNC courses (i.e. child care, social pedagogy, psychology and so on).
3. Being emotionally ready for when children move on, learning how to deal with loss and grief.
4. Crisis management
5. Strategies to aid child development.
6. Brain based parenting.
7. Computer literacy and online safety.
8. Food hygiene.

45. **Foster carers** were also asked to identify any barriers that they face in accessing training, and possible solution to these.

BARRIERS	SOLUTION(S)
Lack of childcare facilities or places for young people to hang around whilst foster carer is in training.	Arrange and/or pay for childcare facilities/person for duration of course and to allow for home learning/studying.
Time constraints due to demands of looking after foster children, family and other work commitments.	<p>Training provided at suitable times – unfortunately there is not agreement as to when it is the most 'suitable time. Some would prefer during school, others over the holidays with the provision of childcare.</p> <p>Having different options of time and flexibility as to the times individuals can attend sessions.</p> <p>Flexible/distant learning.</p> <p>More on-line training and forums.</p> <p>Drop-in sessions.</p> <p>Having short, concise and practical courses available.</p> <p>Make material available on an online portal.</p> <p>Arrange sessions well in advance.</p> <p>Having more respite care so foster carers have</p>

	time to study.
Location of and transport to/from venues	Training provided locally.
Lack of accreditation	Accrediting courses would be an incentive to participation. Developing a qualification in foster care.
Learning and development perceived as superfluous and unnecessary, or being of inadequate level (i.e. too basic)	Minimal mandatory training. Mandatory SVQ3 completion. Consultation with foster carers with regards the content of courses.
Lack of information about what training is available, where and when. Foster carers not being informed of what training is available.	Regular updates from supervising workers. Information with details of all learning and development available sent regularly to all foster carers. Better communication skills. Provide better description of learning and development aims, objectives and benefits to carers and children.
Lack of support from fostering agencies.	Agencies should advise and encourage further learning and development.
Little or no computer literacy and no computer access	Offer courses on computer literacy skills. IT support.
Lack of confidence in ability to learn – particularly for those carers who have been out of education for a long time and who are unsure whether they have the necessary skills	Recognition of carers' knowledge and experience. Foster carers' views being valued by professionals. Peer support. Building confidence of foster carers.

	<p>Help with study skills.</p> <p>Small groups.</p>
<p>Lack of funding and resources for training and financial incentives for attendance. Financial constraints.</p>	<p>Funding for foster carers to do SVQ 3 and 4.</p> <p>Scottish Government allocating more funds for learning and development.</p> <p>Higher fees for foster carers.</p> <p>Payment for course completion.</p> <p>Shared training with other agencies.</p>
<p>Apathy, lack of energy</p>	<p>More experienced carers can be partnered with new ones in order to encourage them to attend learning and development.</p>

46. Some participants expressed the view that there were no barriers to accessing learning and development – if a carer was sufficiently interested in the topic then she would ensure to attend it.

General Comments

47. At the end of the questionnaire participants were invited to leave further comments and suggestions. Many took this opportunity to reiterate their views about the proposals being put forward. Three participants commented on the labels being proposed to describe the types of placements foster carers offer and the difficulties around trying to impose fixed boundaries around an activity which is very complex and fluid.

48. Ten emphasised the view that the number of children placed with a carer should not be decided a priori, but on a case by case basis as some carers are very capable at looking after large groups of children; and some children will prefer a placement where there are many other individuals in the household. A couple of foster carers expressed the opposite view, noting that limiting the number of placements would result in better care.

49. Twelve foster carers made observations with regards to the proposals around training and development for foster carers. Half of these were of the view that learning and development is an essential part of the foster care role and welcomed the proposals for a national learning and development framework and accredited qualifications. One of these noted that further training was always welcome, but that it had to be supported by agencies so that foster carers were given the time to be able to take part in such activities. Another noted that learning and development has to be targeted at the foster carer's needs.

“It is important that carers all have a basic level of training and understanding of key issues relating to fostering with all the complexities it brings. Carers should have the opportunity to update these skills and build on them ... This will help foster carers in their task of looking after, supporting, advocating and championing children within a complex system. Foster care should be seen as a profession and foster carers should be able to access training opportunities which reflect this.”

50. The other half of carers who left general comments on learning and development were of the view that the proposals were aiming to professionalise foster care and that this was an unwelcome step, since the ability to look after children is not something that one learns, but is an innate skill, developed through experience. One respondent was also keen to find out whether the requirement for further learning and development and accreditation would be accompanied by an increase in their fees and allowances in recognition of their level of skills. Another noted that it was unrealistic to require other people in the household (i.e. sons and daughters, spouses) to attend learning and development.

“Raising children is a vocation and nothing should be placed in the way of people who have suitable personal attributes to be foster parents. Becoming a foster carer is already a thorough, time consuming process – and rightly so. Adding professional/formal qualifications to this process will put people who are non-academic/adverse to formal training of any sort off ... It should be remembered that human beings are complex, diverse creatures and all the

formal qualifications/training in the world cannot possibly cover all aspects of raising a child.”

51. Five respondents questioned the lack of formal engagement with foster carers and foster children during the process of the Foster Care Review. Two felt this showed little respect for foster carers' views. There was criticism of the questionnaire's content and design, as well as the language used. One carer felt that it did not cover all the important issues to foster carers, and assumed a level of pre-existing knowledge that many carers did not have.

“No foster carers were part of the decision making/recommendation process. That appears to be displaying a lack of respect and undervaluing foster carers.”

52. However five foster carers were positive about the consultation process.

“It is to be commended and a step in the right direction that foster carers and children are being asked for their input. Thank you.”

53. Four foster carers were disappointed that the idea for a National Foster Care Database was not being taken forward and would like this to be reconsidered. Two of these noted that the Fostering Network already has a register of all carers which, for a small fee, could be shared.

54. Three respondents were also disappointed to learn that the Review did not discuss issues related to the fees and allowances foster carers receive. *(Please note that the Review will be addressing the issues of fees and allowances; unfortunately recommendations had not been agreed before the survey was made available.)*

55. Others mentioned issues related to their day-to-day practice which they would like addressed such as:

- lack of support and respect from child care professionals
- timescales (i.e. drifting in care; lengthy decision making processes);

- when and how much information about a child's background and reasons for being taken into care is shared with foster carers;
- parents' rights – v – children's rights
- contact with birth family

APPENDIX A

SURVEY QUESTIONS FOR CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE IN FOSTER CARE

Part 1: Placement Descriptors

To help children, carers and professionals to have a better understanding about the purpose of particular foster placements, the Review will recommend that the Scottish Government develop a set of clearly defined descriptions for the types of placement that should be available across Scotland. The Chair of the Foster Care Review had drawn up some suggestions for what these might be. Please note that these are designed to describe the 'placement' and not the carers. It is expected that these descriptions would be used in the children's Care Plan. The proposed descriptions are as follow:

PERMANENT: A placement secured by means of a court order (excluding Adoption Orders).

LONG-TERM: A placement longer than two years not secured by a court order.

TASK-CENTRED: A placement of any duration up to two years. The child's care plan identified the placement (and carer) with delivery of certain objectives (or 'tasks').

RESPITE: A placement which forms part of a planned series of short term breaks for children and young people.

Q.1. How would you describe your current placement?

- Permanent
- Long term
- Task centred
- Respite
- None of the above. Please briefly describe your current placement.

Q.2. How much does the type of placement you are in (i.e. permanent, long term, respite) affect your relationship with your foster carer?

- A lot
- Somewhat
- Not at all

Part 2: Placement Limits

The Scottish Government has been asked to introduce a maximum limit on the number of children who can be accommodated together within the same foster care household. This limit, it is claimed, would help reduce the burden placed on some carers and improve the quality of care given to individual children.

Q.3. The Review is proposing that there should be a maximum limit of three foster children in the care of a foster family at any one time. What do you think about this proposal?

- That is a good idea.
- The limit should be lower (e.g. two foster children per family).
- The limit should be higher (e.g. four or five foster children per family).
- There should be no limits in the number of foster children placed with a family.

Q.4. We are proposing that a foster family can look after more than three children if the children are part of a sibling group. Do you agree or disagree with this proposal?

- Yes, I agree
- No, I disagree

Q.5. We are proposing that the maximum limit of three children per family should not include birth or adopted children, or children who were formerly looked after. Do you agree or disagree with this proposal

- Yes, I agree
- No, I disagree

Part 3: Learning and Development

The Review has been asked to put forward ideas about how to ensure all foster carers in Scotland have access to a wide range of high quality training and development opportunities.

Q.6. What learning and development do you think would help your foster carer(s) to look after you? (Select all that apply)

- Stuff about my school
- Stuff about my family
- Stuff about my feelings
- Stuff about keeping me safe
- Other. Please specify:

Q.7. Do you think it is a good idea for children and young people in foster care to help to train foster carers?

- Yes
- No

SURVEY QUESTIONS FOR FOSTER CARERS

Part 1: Placement Descriptors

To help children, carers and professionals to have a better understanding about the purpose of particular foster placements, the Review will recommend that the Scottish Government develop a set of clearly defined descriptions for the types of placement that should be available across Scotland. The Chair of the Foster Care Review had drawn up some suggestions for what these might be. Please note that these are designed to describe the 'placement' and not the carers. It is expected that these descriptions would be used in the children's Care Plan. The proposed descriptions are as follow:

PERMANENT: A placement secured by means of a court order (excluding Adoption Orders).

LONG-TERM: A placement longer than two years not secured by a court order.

TASK-CENTRED: A placement of any duration up to two years. The child's care plan identified the placement (and carer) with delivery of certain objectives (or 'tasks').

RESPITE: A placement which forms part of a planned series of short term breaks for children and young people.

Q.1. How well do these labels describe what foster carers do?

- Very well
- Somewhat
- Not at all

Q.2. Does anything you do currently fall outside these descriptions?

- Yes
- No

Part 2: Placement Limits

The Scottish Government has been asked to introduce a maximum limit on the number of children who can be accommodated together within the same foster care household. This limit, it is claimed, would help reduce the burden placed on some carers and improve the quality of care given to individual children.

Q.3. The Children and Young People's Bill proposes that there should be a limit of three foster children in the care of one foster family at any one time. We are proposing that a foster carer can care for more than three children if they are part of a sibling group. Do you agree or disagree with our proposal?

- Agree
- Disagree

Q.4. We are proposing that the maximum limit should not include birth and adopted children, or children who were formerly looked after. Do you agree or disagree with this proposal?

- Yes, I agree
- No, I disagree

Part 3: Learning and Development

The Review has been asked to put forward ideas about how to ensure all foster carers in Scotland have access to a wide range of high quality training and learning opportunities. We plan to recommend that the Scottish Government commissions a National Learning and Development Framework for Foster Care, underwritten by new National Care Standards (Fostering) or Regulations. The Framework would include two mandatory courses (at preparatory and induction stages) for new carers, and a mandatory programme of continuous skills and knowledge development for experienced carers.

Q.5. We are proposing that all prospective foster carers in Scotland receive the same preparatory course before they are considered by their agency Fostering Panel. Do you agree or disagree with this proposal?

- Yes, I agree.
- No, I disagree.

Q.6. We are proposing that all newly approved foster carers in Scotland receive the same learning and development courses in their first year (after being approved). Do you agree or disagree with this proposal?

- Yes, I agree.
- No, I disagree.

Q.7. We are proposing that there should be specific knowledge and skills required by foster carers at the various stages of their development. Do you agree or disagree with this proposal?

- Yes, I agree.
- No, I disagree.

Q.8. What do you consider to be essential course content for prospective foster carers?

Q.9. What do you consider to be essential course content as part of on-going learning and development (after your first year as a carer)?

Q.10. Do you agree that the proposed learning and development framework should be 'accredited' thereby allowing carers to obtain recognised qualifications if they and/or their fostering agency wish to?

- Yes, I agree.
- No, I disagree

Q.11. What barriers do you think there are to enabling carers to access learning and development opportunities?

Q.12. What suggestions do you have as to how these barriers could be overcome?

SURVEY QUESTIONS FOR SONS & DAUGHTERS OF FOSTER CARERS

Part 1: Placement Descriptors

To help children, carers and professionals to have a better understanding about the purpose of particular foster placements, the Review will recommend that the Scottish Government develop a set of clearly defined descriptions for the types of placement that should be available across Scotland. The Chair of the Foster Care Review had drawn up some suggestions for what these might be. Please note that these are designed to describe the 'placement' and not the carers. It is expected that these descriptions would be used in the children's Care Plan. The proposed descriptions are as follow:

PERMANENT: A placement secured by means of a court order (excluding Adoption Orders).

LONG-TERM: A placement longer than two years not secured by a court order.

TASK-CENTRED: A placement of any duration up to two years. The child's care plan identified the placement (and carer) with delivery of certain objectives (or 'tasks').

RESPIRE: A placement which forms part of a planned series of short term breaks for children and young people.

Q.1. What type of placement would you like your parent(s) to offer?

- Permanent
- Long term
- Task centred
- Respite

Q.2. In your experience how much would you say the type of foster placement offered by your parent(s) (i.e. permanent, long term, respite) affect your relationship with the foster child?

- A lot
- Somewhat
- Not at all

Part 2: Placement Limits

The Scottish Government has been asked to introduce a legal limit on the number of children who can be accommodated together within the same foster care household. This limit, it is claimed, would help reduce the burden placed on some carers and improve the quality of care given to individual children.

Q.3. The Review is proposing that there should be a maximum limit of three foster children in the care of a foster family at any one time. What do you think about this proposal?

- That is good.
- The limit should be lower (e.g. two foster children per family).
- The limit should be higher (e.g. four or five foster children per family)
- There should be no limits in the number of foster children placed with a family.

Q.4. We are proposing that a foster family can look after more than three children if the children are part of a sibling group. Do you agree or disagree with this proposal?

- Yes, I agree
- No, I disagree

Q.5. We are proposing that the maximum limit of three children per family should not include birth or adopted children, or children who were formerly looked after. Do you agree or disagree with this proposal

- Yes, I agree
- No, I disagree

Part 3: Learning and Development

The Review has been asked to put forward ideas about how to ensure all foster carers in Scotland have access to a wide range of high quality training.

Q.6. What training do you think would be helpful for your parents as foster carers? (Select all that apply)

- Stuff about school.
- Stuff about families.
- Stuff about feelings.
- Stuff about keeping safe.

Q.7. What training topics would be helpful for you as the son/daughter of foster carer(s)?

Q.8. Do you think it is a good idea for young people to help to train foster carers?

- Yes
- No