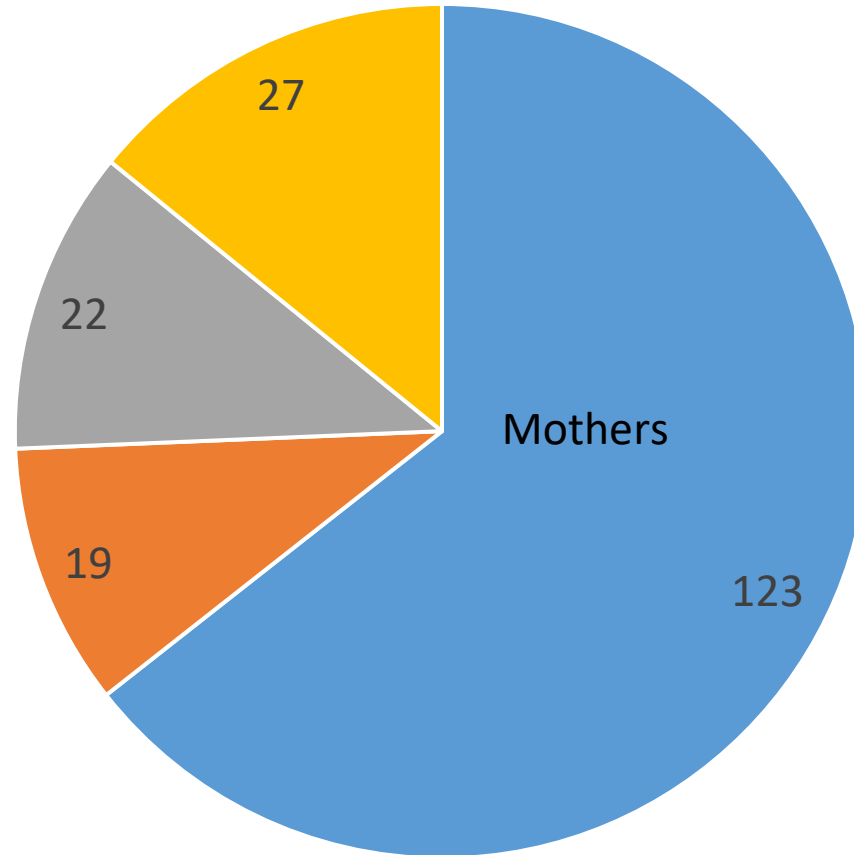


# PAR

Parent Advocacy and Rights

Parent experience of the  
children's care system In  
Scotland

# Who Took Part? (n=191)



■ Mothers ■ Fathers ■ Grandparents ■ Others (aunts, siblings)

# Themes of the survey

- Decisions and how these are made
- The importance of trust, dignity and respect for parents and families
- The impact of child protection interventions on parents and families, practically and emotionally
- The experience of child's removal into care, their 'placement', separation from brothers and sisters
- 'Contact' with children in care
- Legal proceedings – support and advocacy

# Summary

## **Decisions**

76% (of 129) reported they were rarely or never involved in decisions about their child

77% (of 129) rarely or never given opportunity to share their views before or during meetings

## **Trust and respect**

81% (of 128) on a scale of 1-10 said they had no or little trust in the social worker

## **Impact of child protection investigation on family**

Reports of negative impacts on health, income and earnings, self esteem

# Summary

## **Experiences of removal**

Of 96 responses, 63 reported children separated from each other and that only 22 children were placed with a family member as first option, in 46 cases family not considered

## **Reasons for removal**

64 out of 102 responses reported that they were not given clear reasons for removal

63% out of 100 reported “risk of emotional harm” as official reason given and 37% “poor engagement or cooperation”

25% reported medical/disability/educational needs and Fabricated and induced illness

Only 3 out of 101 reported getting any support after child/ren removed

# Summary

## **Contact**

81 out of 101 had contact with children in care, and only 43% felt that contact did not meet their children's needs

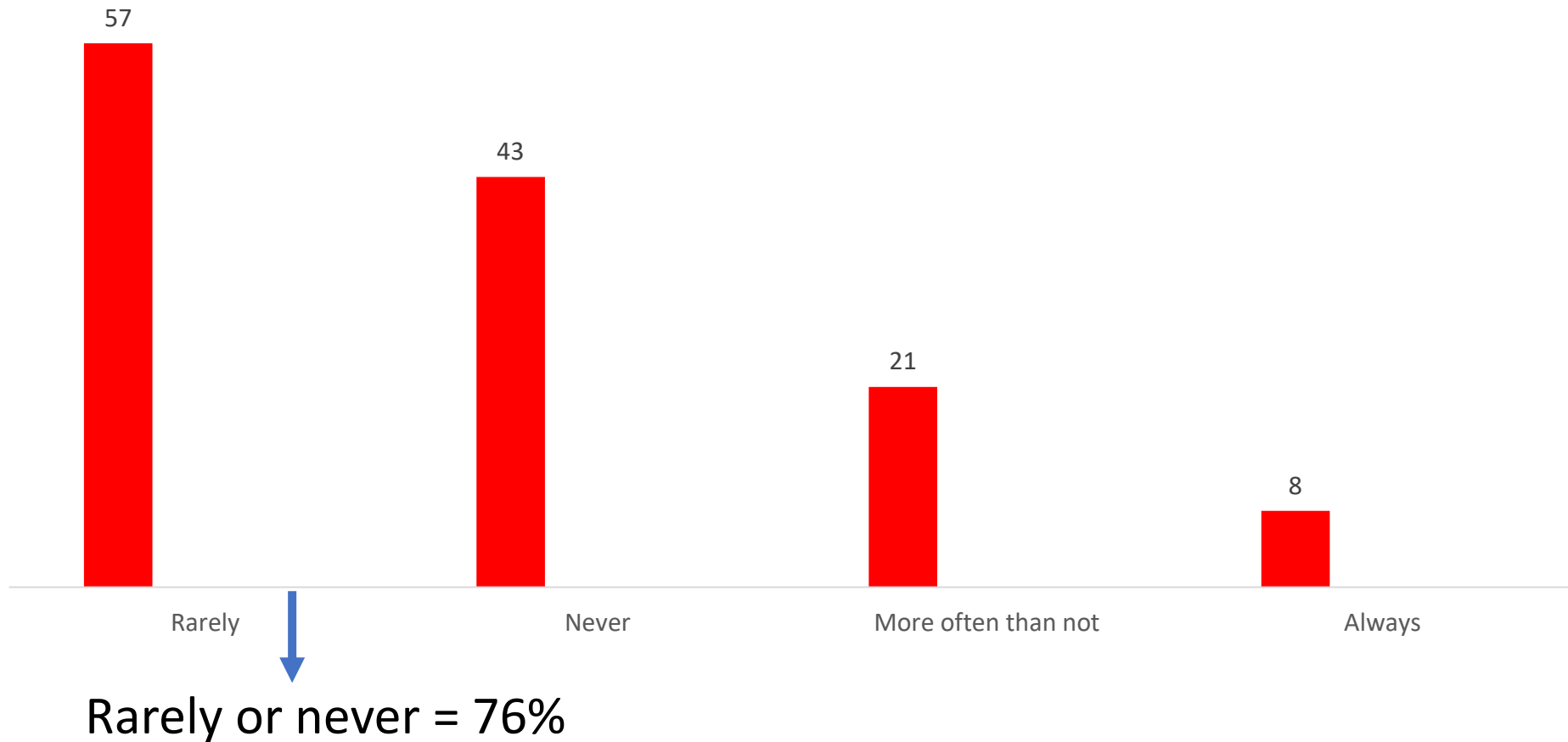
49% reported that facilities for contact were unsuitable

80 out of 94 reported only supervised contact and most reported that contact was decreased over time, More than half 48/91 reported no contact between brothers and sisters

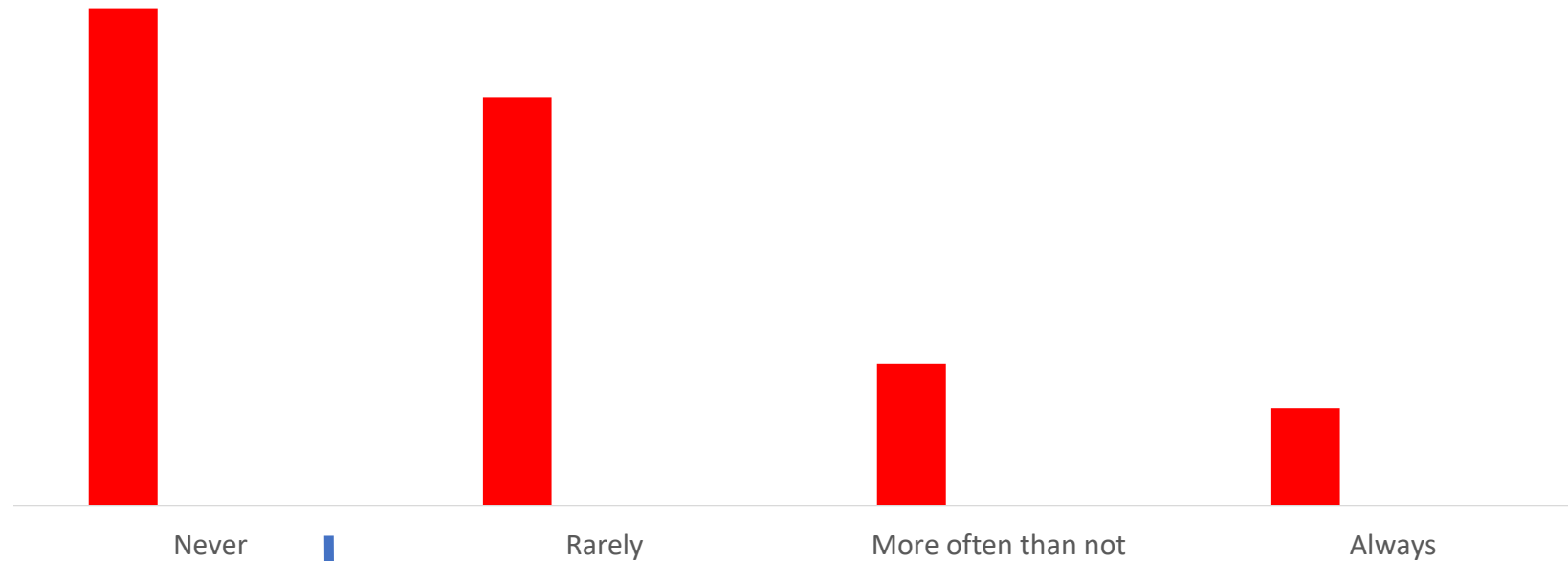
## **Law and advocacy**

56 out of 99 did not have legal advice and representation before children removed. 82 out of 104 felt legal support they did get was inadequate and 94 out of 100 felt that they would have benefitted from legal support earlier in the process

# Child Protection processes. Included in decisions made about your child? (n=129)



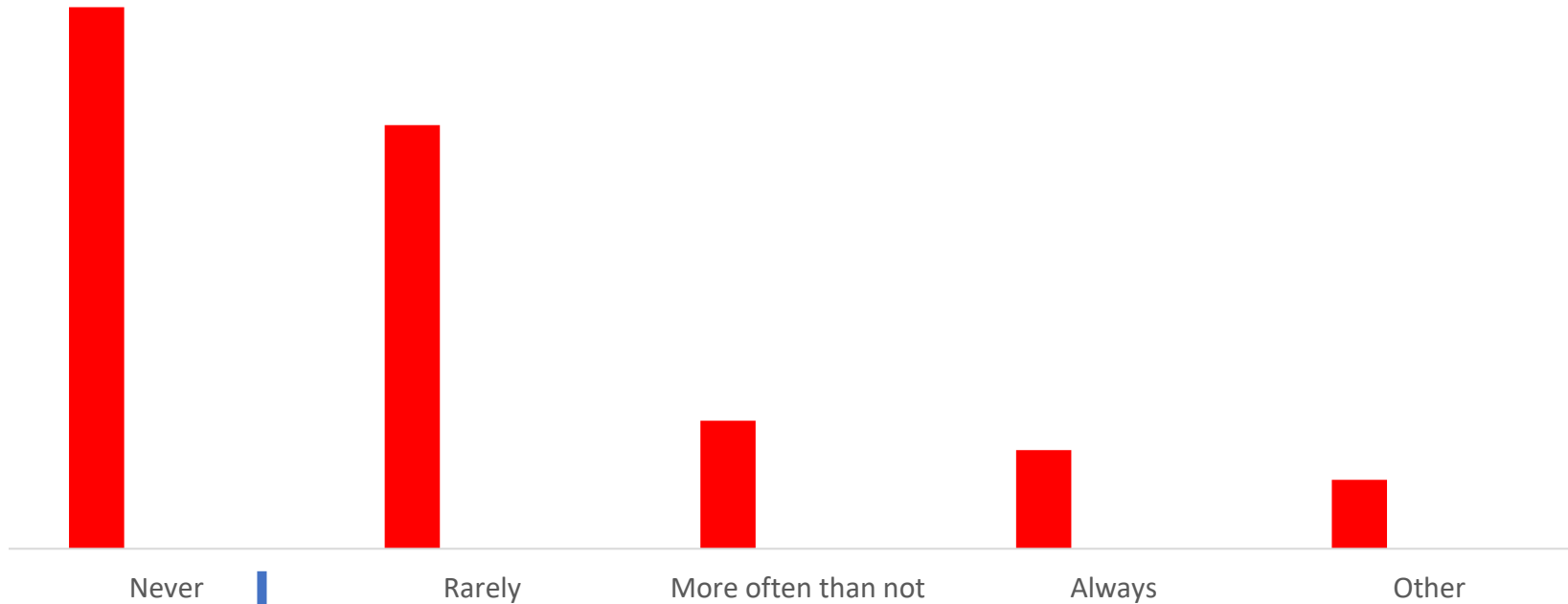
# Reports and invitations to meetings at least 7 days in advance? (n=129)



Never or rarely = 79%

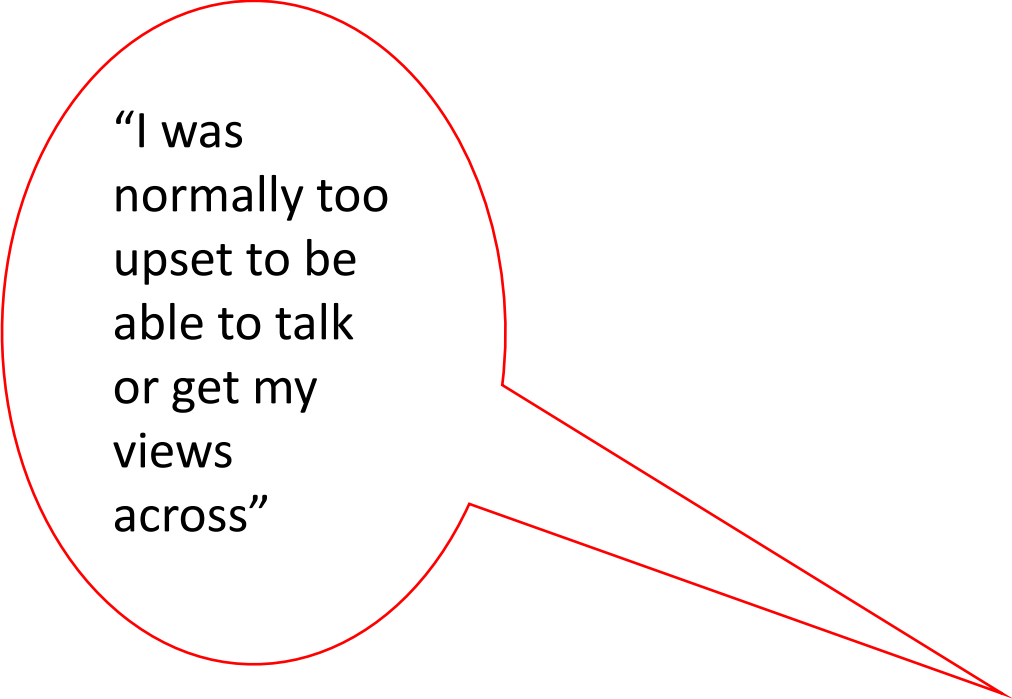


# Given opportunity to share views before and during key meetings? (n=128)




Never or rarely= 77%

Given opportunity to share views before and during key meetings?

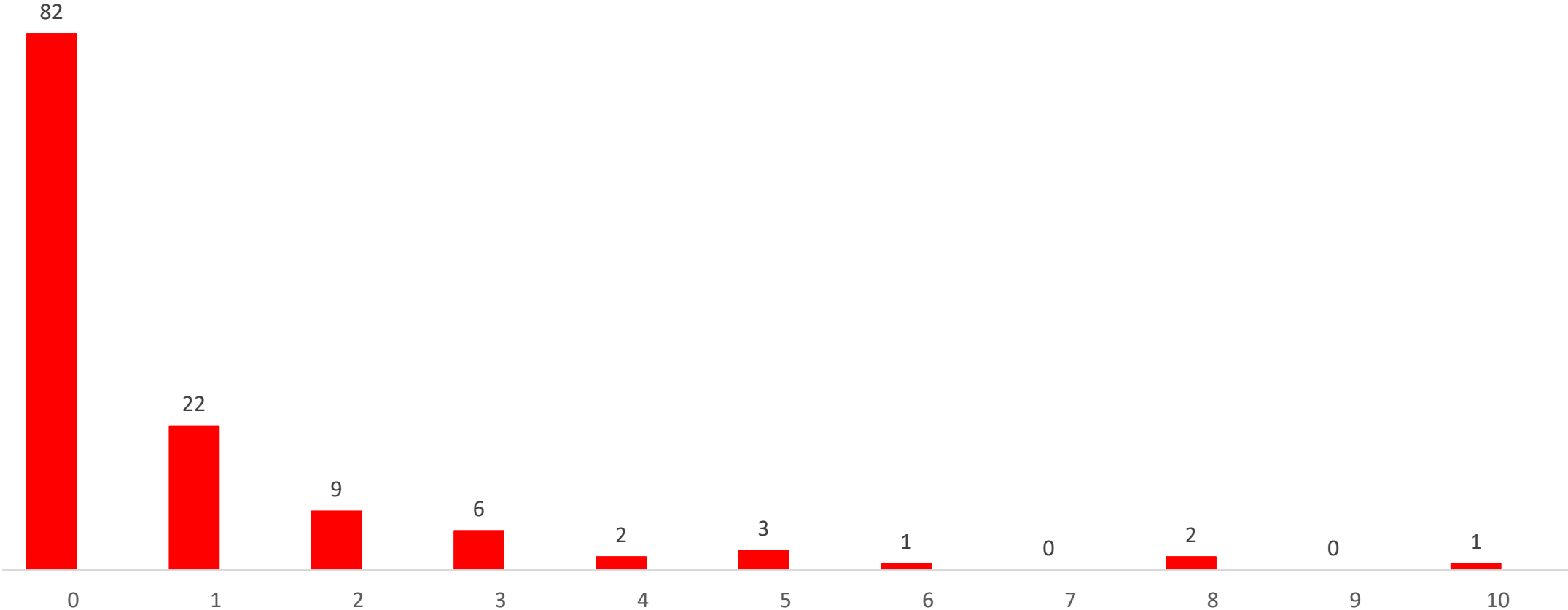


“I was normally too upset to be able to talk or get my views across”



“I felt talked over and ignored”

On a scale of 1 to 10 (1 being not at all, 10 being completely) how much did you feel you could trust the social worker working with your family? (n= 128)



Not at all – 81%

Completely

Any further comments regarding your experiences? For instance did the child protection investigation affect your feelings of self-worth? Did the investigation affect your health? Is there enough support for parents during such investigations? What could be different?

“They said my house décor was outdated, and in disrepair...”

“If there was support for parents, someone who could be on the parents side and speak for them if necessary that would make a big difference”

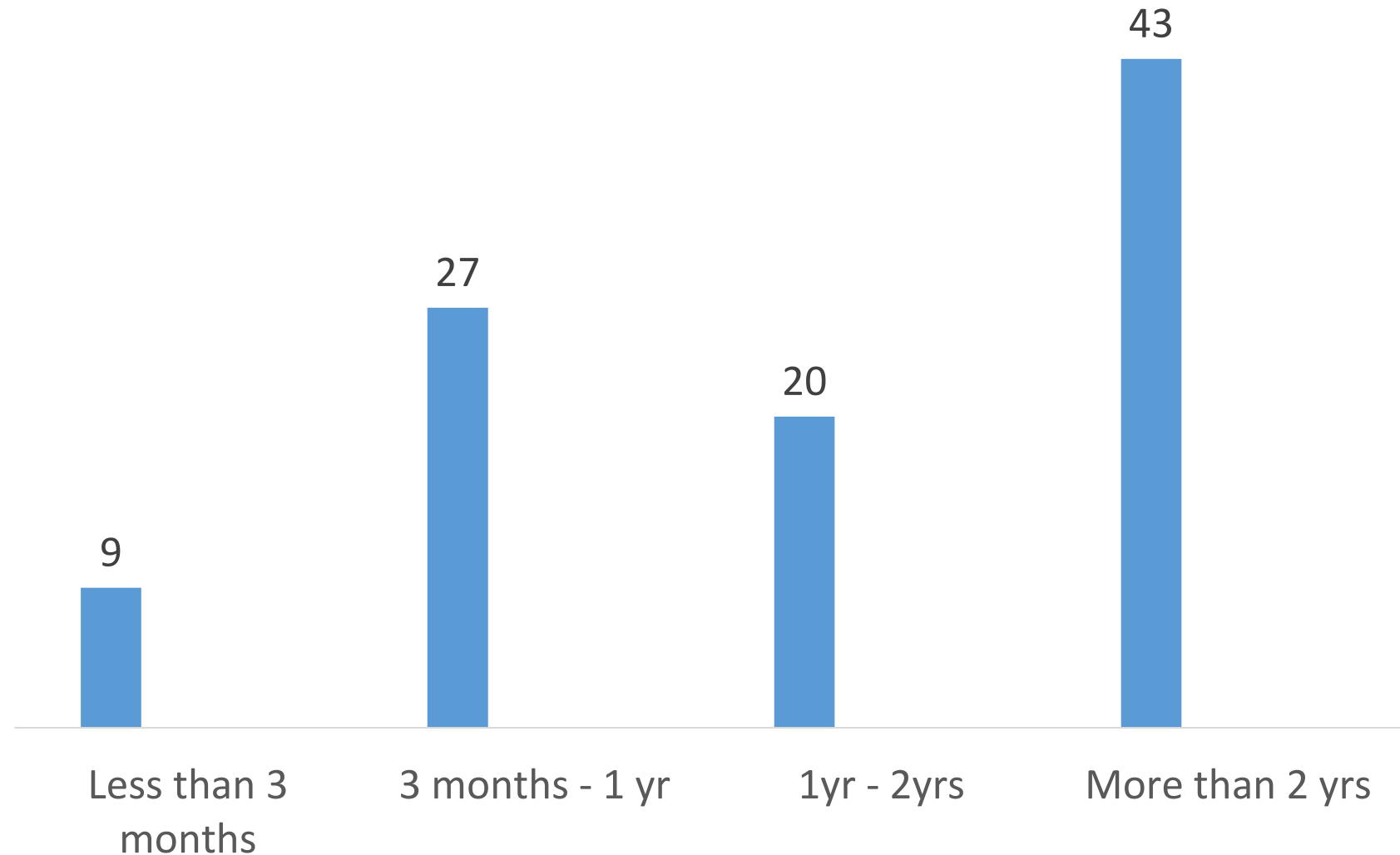
# Removal to Care.

Has your child(ren) been removed? (n=119)

Yes 94

No 25

How long has or was  
your child in care?

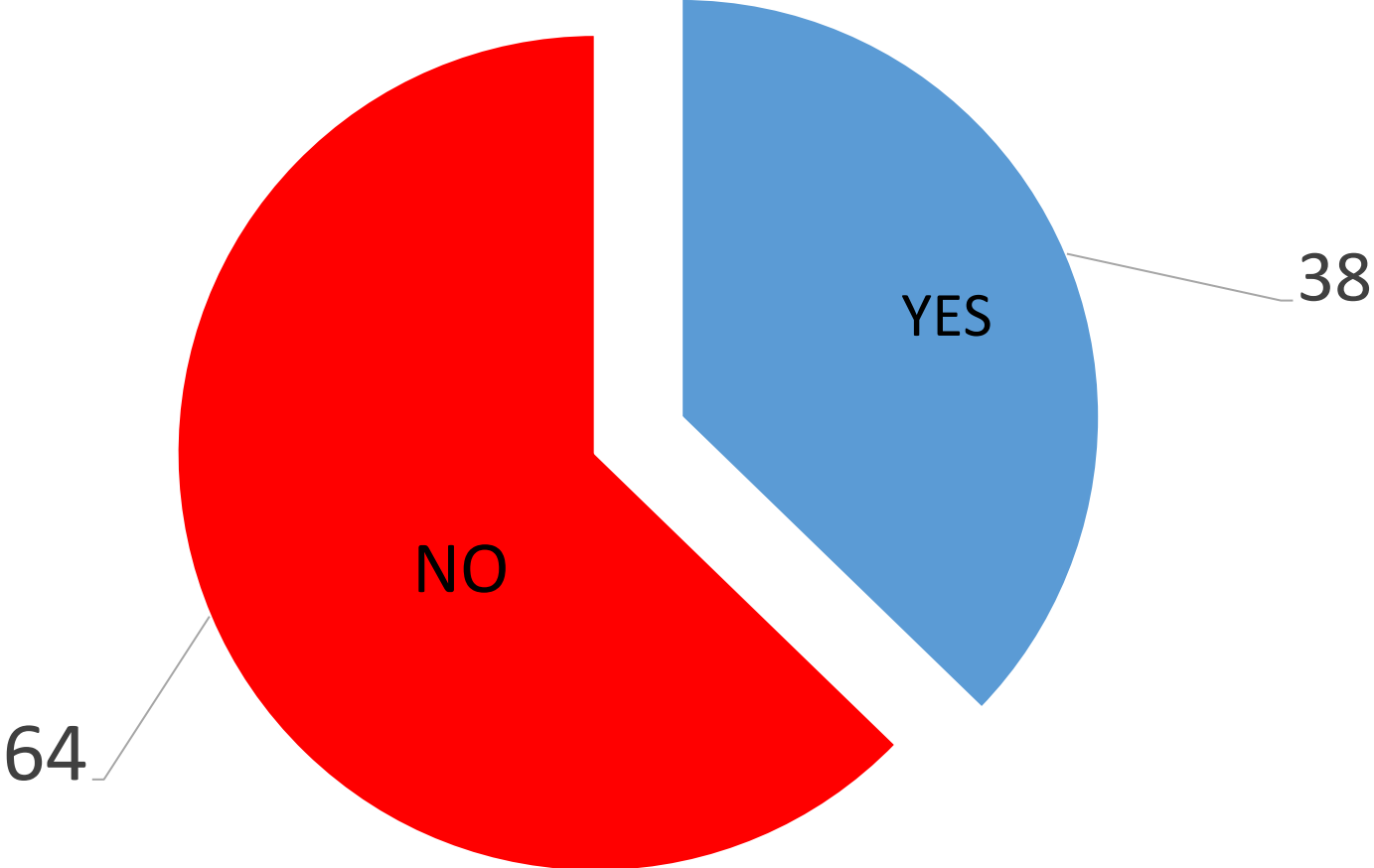


Were your children placed with a family member? (n=96)

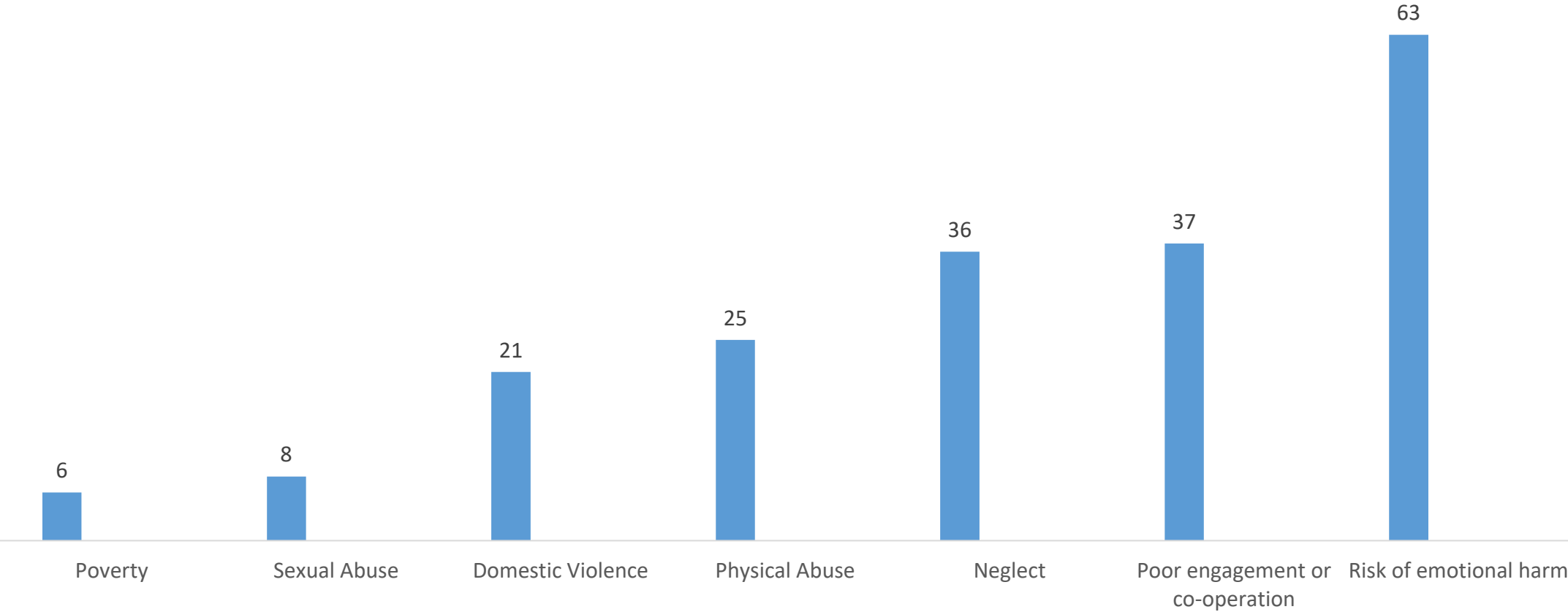
Yes and they continue to be	22
Yes but only after a period in foster care	9
Family was not approved	19
Family was never considered	46

Have your children been separated	Yes = 63
from each other? (n=103)	No = 40

# Were you given clear reasons for removal? (n=102)

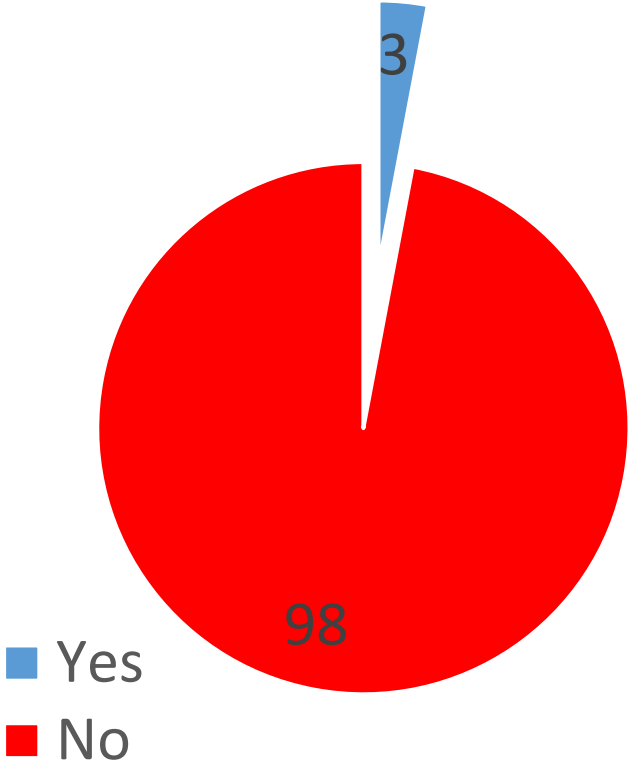


# Official reasons for removal that were given (n=100)

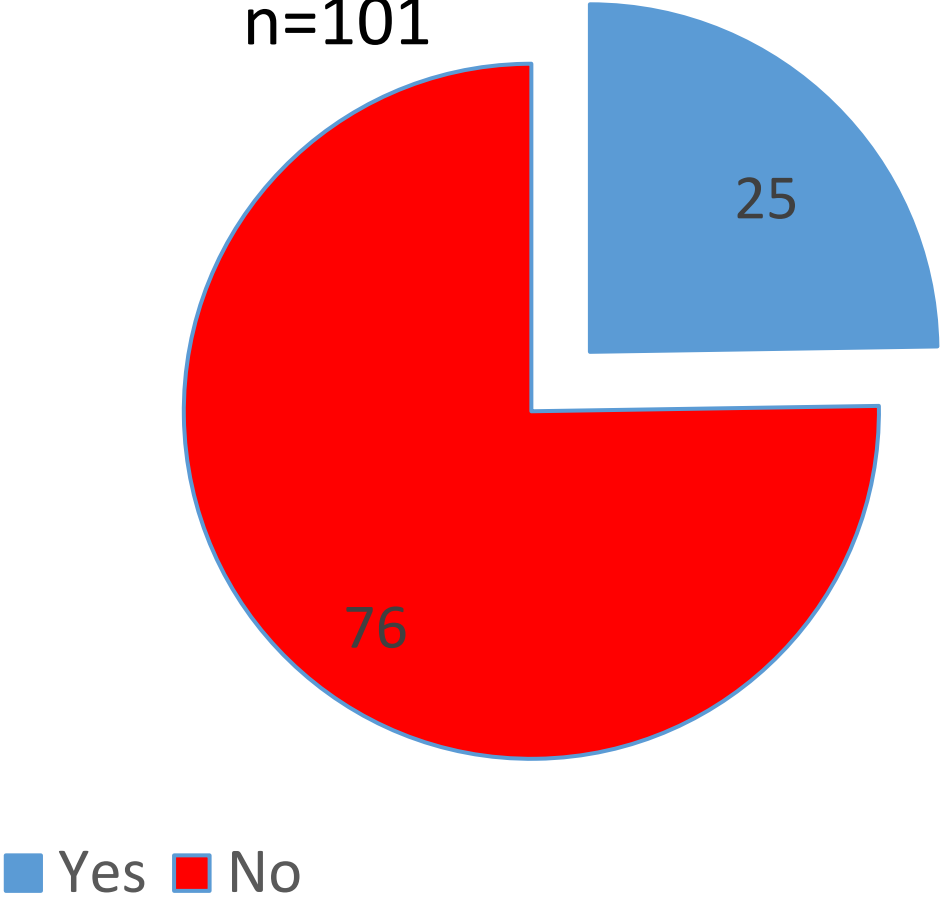




Was there any support after removal of your child? n=101



Has Your Child Been Returned To You? n=101



# Contact 1

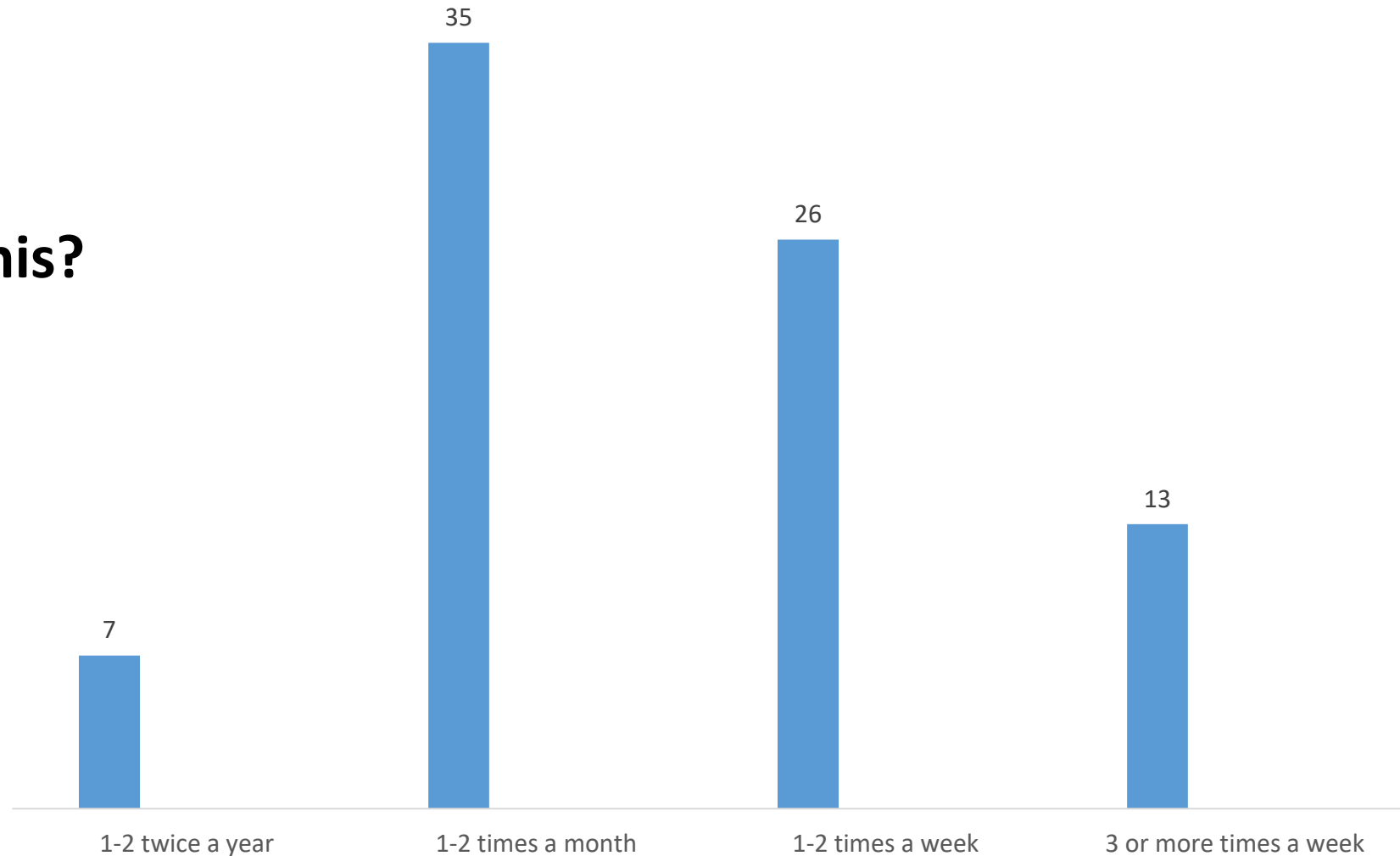
**Do you have/ did you have contact with your 'looked after child'?**

**Yes – 81**

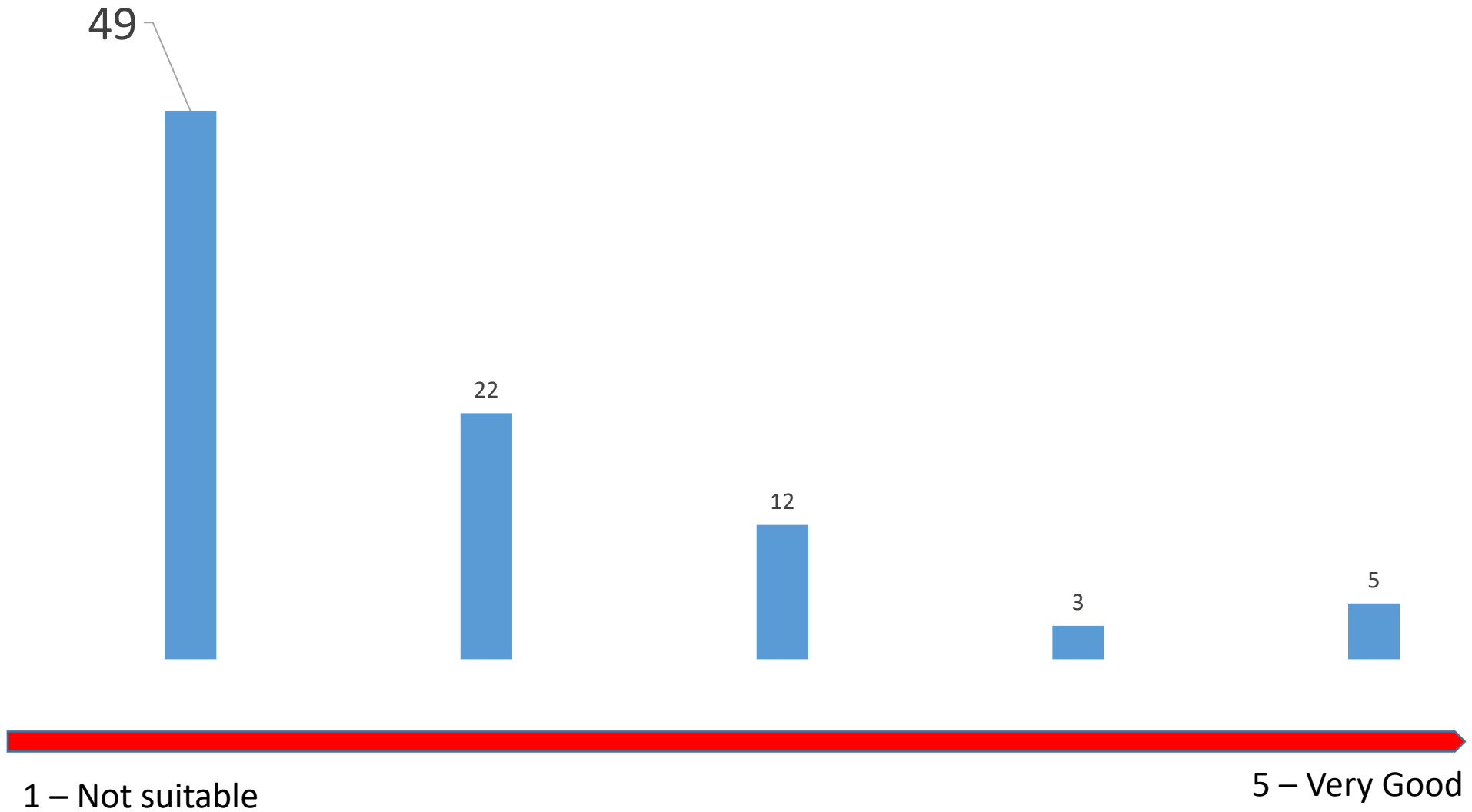
**No – 20**

**How frequent is/was this?**

**(n=81)**



# Contact 2: Facilities (n=91)



# Contact 3

Supervised? (n=94)

Yes - 80

No - 14

Did your contact change over time? Increase or decrease? (n=88)

Increased – 21

Decreased – 67

Was contact cancelled regularly by the local authority or regularly disrupted?  
(n=91)

Yes – 60

No – 31

## Contact 4 (n=95)

Do you have 'indirect contact', that is not face-to-face?

Yes – 28

No – 67

Does your child have contact with any siblings from whom they are separated? (n=91)

Yes – 43

No - 48

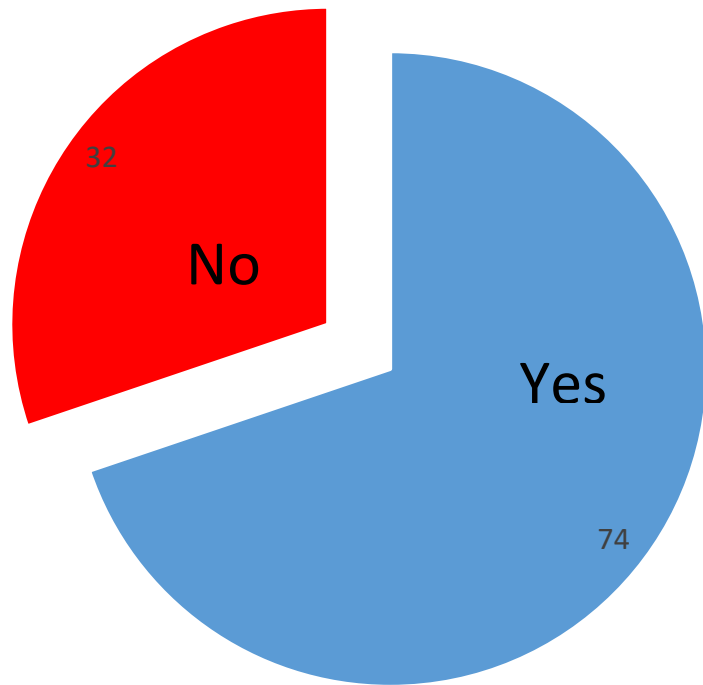
Any further comments regarding your experiences of contact?  
What would you change? Keep, or want more of?

“I have never seen  
him, got no  
telephone/FaceTime...  
the carer got to agree  
that to get him used to  
her”

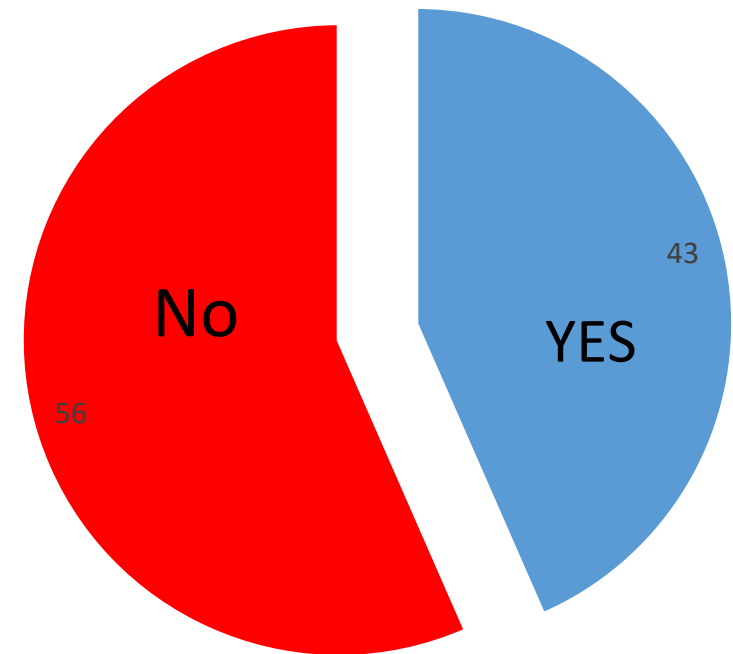
“She doesn't  
know I'm her  
mum and that  
the child with  
me is her sister”

# The Law 1

Have you had legal advice and support?  
(n=106)

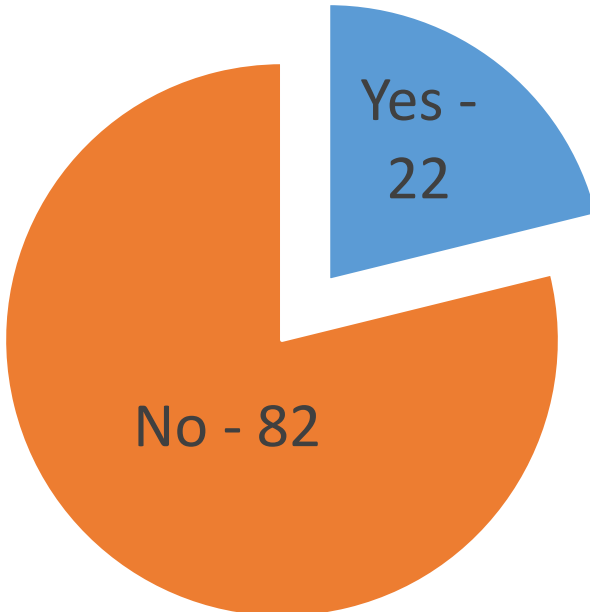


Did you have legal advice and representation pre-removal proceedings (court)? (n=99)

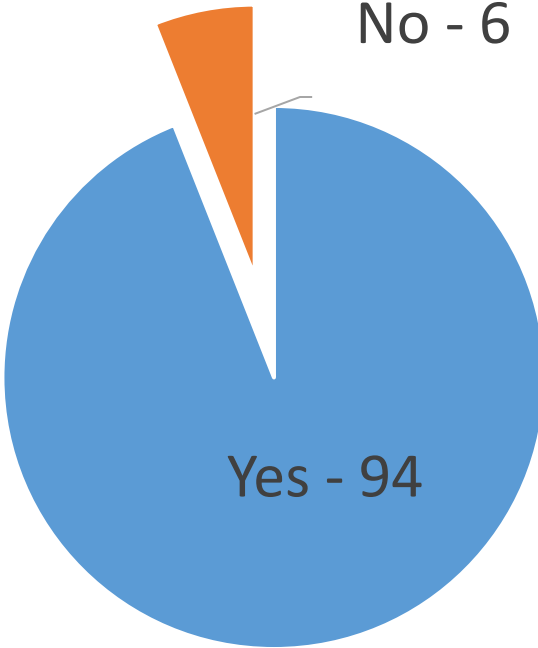


# The Law 2

Do you feel you had adequate and effective legal support?



Would you have benefited from legal support earlier?





# The Law 3: Any further comments regarding your experiences of support, or lack of it?

“Solicitors should be able to intervene prior to case escalating to Children's Hearing”.

“The local authority did not once tell the children they were allowed to have an advocate or give them any information on how to secure an advocate.”

“Advocacy were and are amazing but SW will hardly respond to them. I had no support at all for the first 6months and that's when they crushed me to death and did everything at the speed of knots”.

# Anything else?

Risk of future harm is not a good enough reason to remove a kid...

Social workers have no training/knowledge of learning disabilities/difficulties, mental health in parents and the children. They have a dual and conflicting roles in that they should support families while at the same time they have created the role of child protector...

I believe more work should be done to support children living within their family in terms of support and financial help for kinship carers. It's appalling as opposed to foster care help and fees.

My children have now been returned, but the years of parental deprivation, neglect, physical and psychological abuse have taken a significant toll on their physical and emotional health as well as on their educational performance and self-esteem, while my career and general wellbeing has taken a significant hit from the impact of these events.

If there was more support from social workers and they weren't so judgemental then that would make such a difference, also if they genuinely wanted to work with families that would make a big difference...I really hope the care system is totally overhauled.

Thank You

<https://parparentsadvocacyrights.com/>