



**The
Fostering
Network**

Kinship care

Kathleen Toner, Director, The Fostering Network

Mark Smith, Kinship Foster Carer

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The Fostering Network

- 100% membership – 2341 members
- All approved foster carers
- All approved kinship carers
- All trusts and independent fostering providers
- Advice and support helpline & legal protection insurance



The Fostering Network

- Information
- Connections
- Influence
- Access to projects
 - Fostering Attainment and Achievement
 - Step Up Step Down
 - Fostering Kinship Support

Context

- 3,109 looked after children and young people
- Increase of almost 20% since 2011
- **2, 454 fostered** – 79% of looked after children
- Of these children, 45% in kinship (n1080) 55% non-relative (n1374)

Context

- 800+ kinship foster carers with membership
- Programme for government priority
- Joint draft strategy from Department of Health and Department of Education

Context

- Regulatory framework/ standards and inspection
- Pressure on care system:
 - Increasing need for placements
 - Foster carer recruitment
 - Support required
 - Assessment processes

New regional initiatives: Signs of Safety/ ACE/Trauma informed practice

Key challenges

What is kinship foster care?

Who are kinship foster carers?

What supports and resources are available?

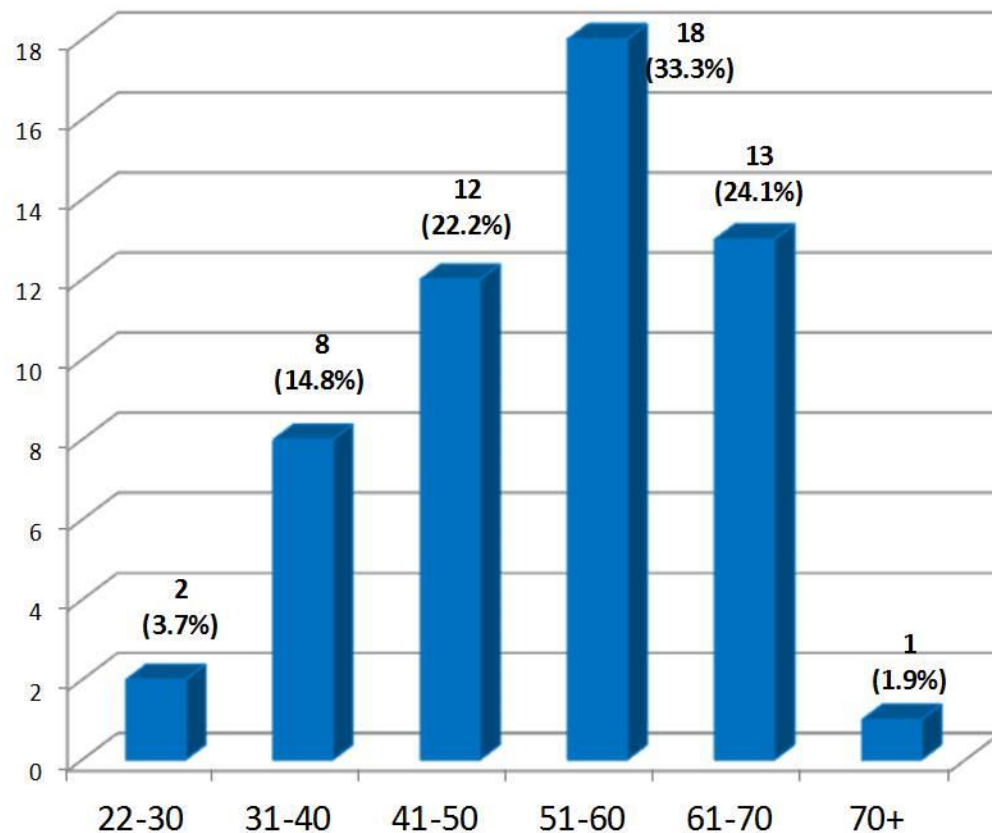
Hearing the Voice of the Kinship Foster Carer

AN INQUIRY INTO CHARACTERISTICS, NEEDS AND EXPERIENCES

THE FOSTERING NETWORK, HSC BOARD AND QUEEN'S
UNIVERSITY

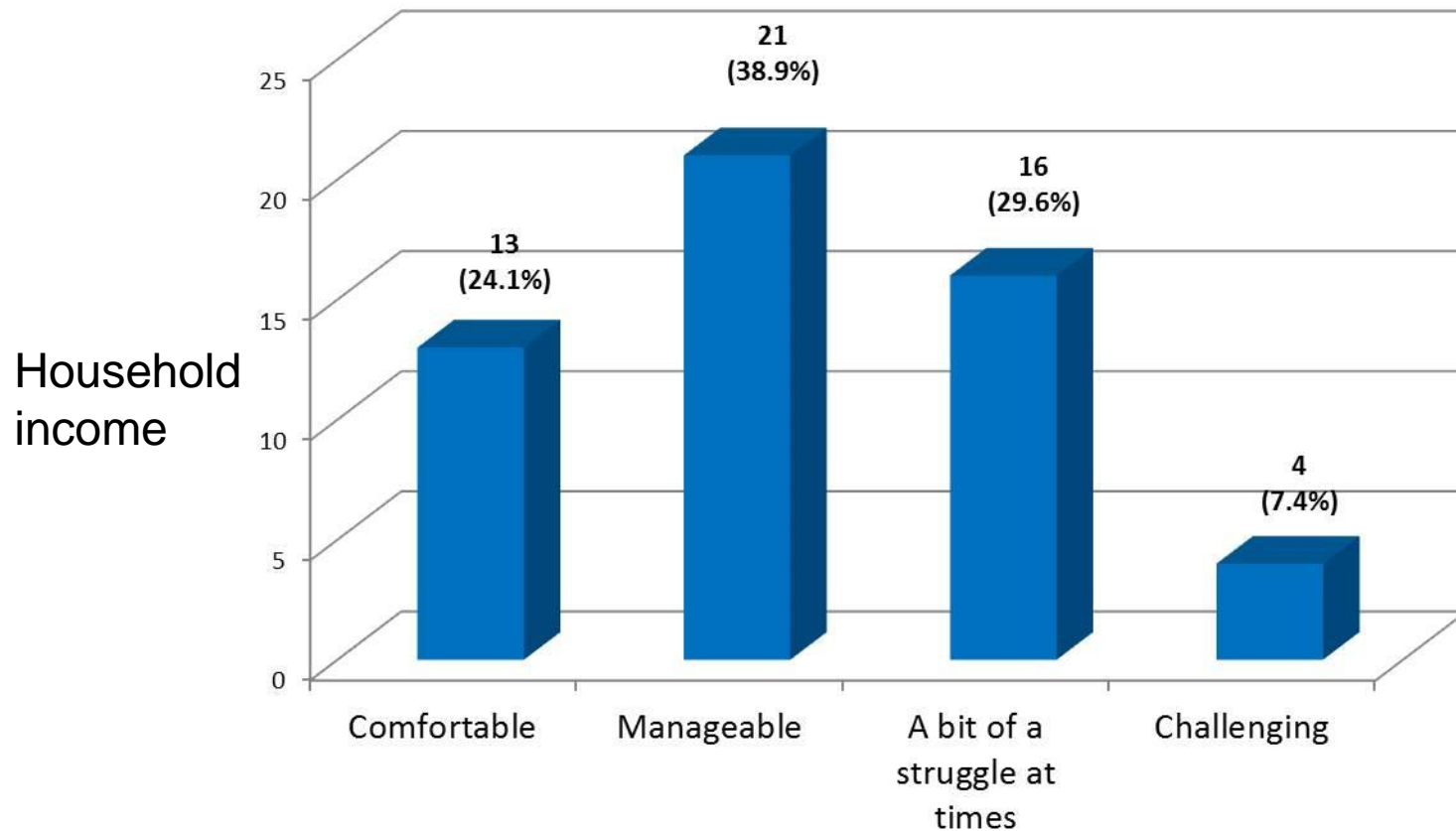
Carer and their households

Carer Age



Income and Finances

Self described financial position




Support needs identified

Priorities

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%

Key themes emerging

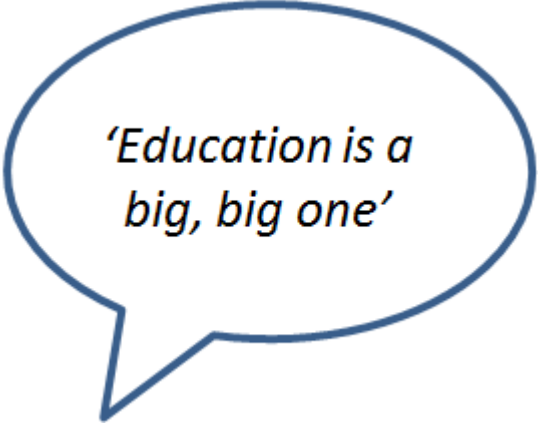
- Initial placement – timeliness of financial support
- Quick decisions and slow processes
- Contact arrangements
- Support needs
- Different experiences of professionals
- Changing faces



*'Everything
changed from then'*

Key themes emerging

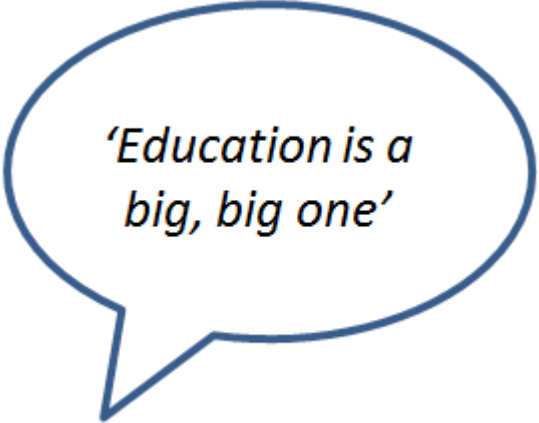
- The impact of being in care – grandparents as kinship foster carers
- Education as a priority support need
- The positive impact of kinship care
- Impact on kinship foster carers birth children
- Lack of access to respite
- Keep going



'Education is a big, big one'

Key themes emerging

- The impact of being in care – grandparents as kinship foster carers
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'Education is a big, big one'

Summary and conclusions

- Significance of grandparents
- Health – related issues within cohort
- Need for a wide range of supports - practical information and advice
- High levels of stress

Summary and conclusions

- Building relationships in social work
- Salience of educational issues
- Complex nature of contact
- Challenging needs and behaviours in some children

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Thank you

Kathleen.toner@fostering.net
thefosteringnetwork.org.uk



/thefosteringnetwork



@fosteringnet