

Fostering in Wales: Who cares and why?



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For further information please contact:

James Foyle, recruitment and retention consultant, the Fostering Network
t 020 7620 6443 e james.foyle@fostering.net

The Fostering Network Wales
1 Caspian Point
Pierhead Street
Cardiff Bay
CF10 4DQ
www.fostering.net

Registered charity no 280852 in England and Wales and no SC039338 in Scotland. Registered in England and Wales as a limited company no 1507277

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Attracting, recruiting and retaining foster carers is one of the toughest challenges faced by fostering services throughout the country.

In Wales there are now 5,200 children in care looked after away from home, a figure which has risen annually for each of the past 10 years. Eighty five per cent of these children – 4,440 – are in foster care, living with approximately 3,350 foster families.

This year alone, the Fostering Network estimates the need for a further 550 foster carers in Wales to meet the diverse requirements of children coming into care who need a foster family.

Fostering services cannot afford to rest on the good work they already do to find and approve foster carers each year. But what motivates a potential foster carer with the right skills and qualities to come forward? Is there a set of values that all foster carers share that can help fostering services attract more?

I am delighted to present this report, funded by the Welsh Government, which goes some way to help answer these questions and support fostering services across Wales to recruit the foster carers they need to meet the needs of children in their care.

Not only do these findings provide insight into the recruitment of foster carers, the principles and practices we identify have significant implications for foster carer retention. They can also have wider repercussions for how fostering services are structured given that the values of fostering service staff are likely to be not too dissimilar to those of their foster carers.

This work forms an integral part of the support and development provided by the Fostering Network Wales in the recruitment and retention of foster carers. It has fantastic potential to lead to further work on how we identify people who have what it takes to foster, and how we support them to do the incredible job they do nurturing some of our country's most vulnerable children.

Freda Lewis

Director, the Fostering Network Wales

Summary of key findings

- The survey reveals many foster carers share a specific set of common values.
- Foster carer values are significantly different from those of the wider population.
- Foster carer values are characterised by the confidence and need to help and make a difference in the local community.
- The values cut across the demographic spectrum.
- The findings provide an opportunity for values-based targeting and service development strategies.
- The findings also have powerful implications for fostering services' relationships with their current foster carers.

Executive summary

This research was commissioned by the Welsh Government and undertaken by the Fostering Network and delivery partners iMPower Consulting.

The objective of this work is to support fostering services to recruit sufficient foster carers according to the current and future needs of their looked after children population by providing new intelligence on the values - the intrinsic motivations - of current foster carers.

The decision to foster is one of the most life-changing a person can make. Based on the premise that it is an individual's core values that underpin and drive such decisions, this research allows fostering services to shape their recruitment and retention offer around the specific values of foster carers, or those likely to consider fostering in the future, by better anticipating and responding to their needs and motivations.

This report sets out the key findings from a national survey of 249 foster carers in Wales, with responses from foster carers across all regions and 22 local authority services, as well as those registered with independent fostering providers (IFPs).

The findings provide a new and innovative perspective on the ongoing challenge of foster carer recruitment while complementing the existing body of best practice evidence, including the Fostering Network's The Motivations to Foster toolkit¹ and the Understanding Attitudes, Motivations and Barriers to Adoption and Fostering marketing proposal² commissioned by the Department for Education in England. This evidence is the first of its kind to provide a framework for understanding who fosters and why and how services can be shaped to better respond to those values. The insight it provides has important practice implications.

1 www.fostering.net/motivations-foster-toolkit-fostering-services

2 www.education.gov.uk/childrenandyoungpeople/families/fostercare/a00209484/research-about-fostering

How understanding values can transform relationships and improve services

The key findings from this survey are:

Most current foster carers share a common set of values – ‘Pioneers’. They are principally motivated by an intrinsic desire to ‘do the right thing’ and to contribute to improving society.

These motivations hold true across the demographic spectrum and for foster carers registered with different fostering services. They have powerful consequences for how the ‘service offer’ is targeted, developed and positioned.

To recruit more foster carers with Pioneer characteristics, and develop capacity for those children whose needs are currently not being met, fostering services should use this insight to:

- Re-work communications with foster carers, both in terms of message content and channels;
- Involve foster carers more in recruitment and support activities to enhance their commitment and positive engagement;
- Mobilise the potential of the foster carer team to access community groups;
- Work collaboratively across fostering services locally and regionally to co-ordinate messaging to maximise impact.

Many of the actions suggested by this report are low cost and low risk yet offer high returns, both in terms of enhancing services’ recruitment capabilities, and improving the value for money invested in the service. It is hoped that these findings will help fostering services take positive steps to realise the full potential to develop a values-based culture and transform their foster carer recruitment and retention provision.



Looked after children

The number of looked after children in Wales has increased by 24 per cent in the past five years.

A total of 5,743 children were looked after on 31 March 2013, 91 per 10,000 population aged under 18 years. Of these, around 5,200 are looked after away from home with around 85 per cent in foster care, a proportion higher than any other UK country.

The majority (92 per cent) of looked after children in Wales are white. Three per cent are of mixed ethnicity, with less than one per cent of children from Asian, black or other ethnic groups.

Slightly more boys (54 per cent) than girls (46 per cent) are looked after, with children aged 10 to 15 the most common age at around 36 per cent of those in care. Abuse or neglect was the reason given for 1,190 of the 1,980 children coming into care in the year to 31 March 2013.

Nine per cent of children had three or more placement moves in the past year, with 20 per cent having two placement moves.

Foster carers

For the approximately 4,440 looked after children in foster care, there are around 3,350 fostering households in Wales. Local authorities currently have over 2,500 foster carers approved, collectively providing more than 4,400 places.

Independent fostering providers provided 1,325 (30 per cent) of placements in the year to 31 March 2013, 60 per cent of which were provided outside of the purchasing local authority's boundary.

The Fostering Network's The Age of Foster Care report in 2009 found that the mean average age of foster carers in Wales was 54 years, one year older than the overall UK and England average and the same as that in Scotland. The report also found that at the time only eight per cent of foster carers in Wales were in their 30s and three per cent were over 70 years old.

The Fostering Network Wales

For over 10 years, the Fostering Network Wales has supported its members to effectively recruit and retain the foster carers they need.

In 2003, we surveyed foster carers for their opinions on the top three ways to recruit new foster carers:

1. Adverts and information
2. Improved allowances
3. Better support and training

We performed the same exercise in 2012 with the following responses:

1. Improved pay and professionalism
2. Use foster carers as ambassadors
3. Honesty about the negative aspects of fostering

From the generic suggestions in 2003 of adverts and information, foster carers now increasingly see their role as integrated into the whole process and being rightly treated as professionals in the team around the child.

Improved allowances has also evolved to improved pay, again connected to professionalism but potentially also in reference to honesty about negative aspects of fostering such as gaps between placements and empty beds. While we recognise the need to recruit more foster carers in Wales to meet the requirements and provide sufficient placement choice for looked after children needing foster care, it is essential for all fostering services to assess local need to ensure that only foster carers who can offer the right skills and qualities are recruited to prevent excessive placement vacancies.

Partnership working – South East Wales Improvement Collaborative

Recruiting and retaining foster carers is a shared aim for fostering services throughout Wales. This is often viewed as competition for a limited resource, but there are many benefits to working collaboratively to achieve local objectives. Sharing expertise, knowledge and achieving economies of scale through joint campaigning are just some of the benefits being pursued by the group of 10 authorities that form the South East Wales Improvement Collaboration (SEWIC).

Reporting to the 10 directors of social services of the participating authorities, the project has identified three areas which could benefit local and regional foster carer recruitment:

- Develop a best practice model for managing enquiries
- Scope and implement a single regional marketing strategy
- Identify a shared foster carer payment structure

The project identified the potential to improve the way fostering services manage enquiries to enhance the enquirer's experience by adopting a customer-orientated approach. Through a series of workshops and existing resources, best practice standards have been developed focusing on 11 key steps of the enquiry process which have since been disseminated to each authority.

With competing recruitment campaigns – each displaying differing messaging and branding and financed by individual services, but with shared desired outcomes – there is clear scope to harmonise this function.

By developing a single recruitment strategy SEWIC can realise efficiencies in their marketing functions and achieve economies of scale. Their efforts will also benefit the customer who will have a clearer understanding of the expectation of becoming a foster carer and the requirements of the children who need to be fostered.

As the project identified, a joined-up recruitment strategy will potentially lead to greater transparency of the support packages provided by each authority. This has led to the third strand of the project to identify a shared foster carer payment model so as not to disadvantage any of the participating authorities.

Work on this project is set to continue during 2014 and beyond to realise the benefits proposed.

The following sections report on and analyse the findings of the Values Modes and motivations survey which was carried out in August and September 2013.

Method

To segment the foster carer population by intrinsic motivations, a system called Values Modes was used. Values Modes is a proprietary system¹, which categorises people into 12 discrete psychographic types, each group representing between 7 per cent and 12 per cent of the population aged 15 years and over. The categorisation is based on responses to a short questionnaire which was included within the national survey. Values Modes is based on the psychological theory of motivation developed by Abraham Maslow and summarised in his Hierarchy of Needs. Within Maslow's hierarchy, three primary motivational levels are recognised - the Settler (Sustenance Driven), the Prospector (Outer Directed) and the Pioneer (Inner Directed).

The driving Settler (Sustenance Driven) needs are core physiological needs, safety and security and belonging. Some typical Settler characteristics are:

- Family and home, and caring for them, tend to be at the centre.
- For those living alone, friends take the place of family.
- Tradition and family structure are important.
- Prefer things to be 'normal'.
- Naturally conservative (with a small 'c').
- Security conscious - wary of crime, violence and terrorism.
- Supportive of tough punishment for criminals.
- Wary of change, especially for its own sake.
- More comfortable with regular and routine situations.
- Concerned about what the future holds.

This manifests in behaviours which are concerned with looking for rules with which to comply and normality with which to conform in order to acquire safety and security.

The driving Prospector (Outer Directed) needs are the esteem of others and self-esteem. Some typical Prospector characteristics are:

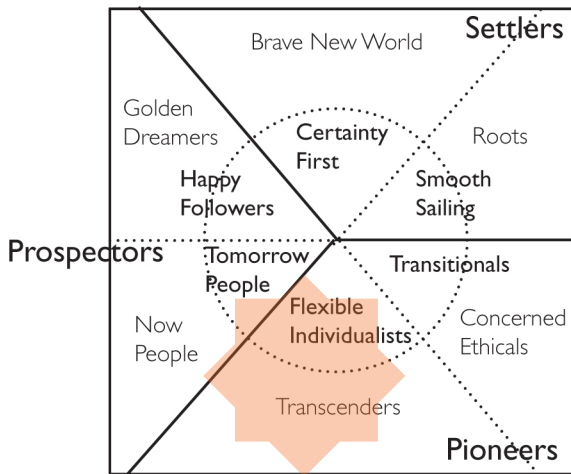
- Success oriented.
- Always want to 'be the best' at what they are doing.
- Welcome opportunities to show their abilities.
- Take great pleasure in recognition and reward.
- Look to maximise opportunities.
- Will take opportunities for advancement and professional networking.
- Trend and fashion conscious.
- Like new ideas and new ways.
- Generally optimistic about the future.

This manifests in behaviours which are concerned with competing successfully within a system in order to acquire reward, recognition and ultimately external affirmation.

The Pioneer (Inner Directed) needs are aesthetic cognitive and self-actualisation. Some typical Pioneer characteristics are:

- Trying to put things together and understand the big picture.
- Concerned about the environment, society, world poverty, and so on
- Always looking for new questions and answers.
- Strong internal sense of what is right and what is wrong.
- Strong desire for fairness, justice and equality.
- Self-assured and sense of self-agency.
- Generally positive about change, if it seems worthwhile.
- Cautiously optimistic about the future.

This manifests in behaviours which are concerned with breaking down (or putting up) barriers to realise what is perceived as 'the right thing'.



Within each of the three Values Modes, the system ascertains four different sub-groups'. These provide a spectrum to identify individuals' character traits within each values segment identifying the subtle differences within each Values Mode.

Foster carers' values are clustered around one very specific area (Pioneers – Transcenders).

For more information visit cultdyn.co.uk.

The online survey was publicised widely to foster carers. It was sent electronically to just under 1,000 foster carer members of the Fostering Network Wales (25 per cent of the foster carer population) throughout August and September 2013. It was also advertised through newsletters, social media, emails and the Fostering Network's website. Fostering services were encouraged to promote the survey locally.

Based on a Welsh foster carer population of around 3,350 households, the response level received provides a confidence level of 95 per cent with a confidence interval of six. The sample is therefore taken to be representative and robust in statistical terms.

The significant majority of foster carers in Wales are Pioneers – 73 per cent against a UK national adult population average of 39 per cent, representing one of the most significant concentrations found in the history of Values Modes research.

Of the remaining 27 per cent of foster carers who are not Pioneers, 22 per cent are Prospectors and just five per cent are Settlers. Sixteen per cent have a Prospector Values Mode which is located on the Pioneer 'border' in terms of the values spectrum as illustrated on the 'Value Modes attributes map' on the previous page.

Pioneers have an intrinsic set of characteristics that include a concern about the world and societal issues, a strong internal sense of what is right and wrong and a strong desire for fairness, justice and equality. They also have high levels of self-efficacy and carry a strong belief that, whatever happens, they will manage.

Do you recognise this description of your foster carers?

Pioneers are therefore the first to respond to a call to action in the local community on the basis of a moral imperative – something that must happen because it is the right thing. The most common Values Modes attributes among foster carers are also prevalent among charitable activists (as opposed to passive donors). These people are more likely to be concerned with, and active in, the local community and not surprisingly match the profile of those targeted by a number of national charities for voluntary work.

What might this mean for your recruitment strategy?

This finding – that a particular value set represents the most common ground among current foster carers– begs two immediate questions. The first is whether there are many more Pioneers with the skills to foster or whether a 'saturation point' has been reached. Fostering services are successful in recruiting sufficient foster carers to mitigate the average 12 per cent who leave fostering annually. This finding suggests around 73 per cent are likely to be Pioneers, proportionately around double the national average (39%). While not all of this cohort will be well placed to take up fostering, it does give a sense of the opportunity.

Second is whether there are opportunities to recruit from the pool of other values cohorts. Prospectors and Settlers together make up the remaining 61 per cent of the national adult population, compared to only 27 per cent of the foster carer population.

Does this representation gap indicate more could and should be done by services to speak to these values?

Should your engagement approach be focused upon a particular values set?

A recruitment strategy which aims to attract people with Settler or Prospector values will certainly be very different from one shaped around those of Pioneers. Whichever strategy is

employed locally, this finding therefore highlights the opportunities for values-based targeting. This in turn has powerful implications for the service 'proposition' and how prospective foster carers are engaged – from marketing activity and recruitment methods, through the journey to approval.

Pioneers

Service level projects based on Values Modes to date have also revealed a significant majority of existing foster carers with Pioneer values and have generally used this finding to focus on the first opportunity – targeting Pioneers. These projects have shown that the value of the insight to attract more Pioneer foster carers will be most fully realised if it is applied locally and faithfully, with the teams responsible for delivering the service co-producing and implementing ideas, ideally alongside foster carers.

One of the clearest reasons why many existing foster carers have Pioneer values is the Pioneer desire to help and do the 'right' thing for the good of their environment. The breakdown of family relationships, destabilising the environment for the child, will resonate strongly with Pioneers and therefore encourage them to act.

Fostering services are likely to have had great success to date in recruiting foster carers with Pioneer values by including this persuasive message as part of their recruitment campaigns and the associated understanding of foster care from personal experiences.

To attract more foster carers with Pioneer values, consider how you can tailor your message further, to maximise the call to action to this group.

Many fostering services issue recruitment information packs as a first action following an enquiry from a prospective foster carer. Pioneers however will value the opportunity to have an open conversation to discuss and ask questions on what fostering entails in order to decide if fostering is the 'right' thing for them to do. Clearly it is not practical or a good use of resource to provide a home visit to every enquirer, but you may reconsider the structure of your information sessions to make best use of the opportunity for two-way dialogue.



As well as a desire to be communicated with directly, Pioneers also have a need to feel part of and contribute to the wider service. Consider therefore how your fostering service is introduced in your recruitment information, and the scope for how, when approved, foster carers can be involved in shaping the offer in order to attract more Pioneers to come forward.

How is your service set up to attract, recruit and retain foster carers with Pioneer values? Is your strategy to attract more Pioneer foster carers?

Prospectors

A Prospector-centred strategy on the other hand would have different features. As the findings have shown, just over one in five current foster carers are Prospectors, a sizeable minority. Evidently there are characteristics of being a foster carer that can attract people with this values set could be developed.

For instance the service might aim to focus on the success orientation of Prospectors by positioning the foster care role differently. In 2001, the Welsh Government's Children First programme set a target of 50 per cent for the proportion of care leavers achieving at least two GCSE/GNVQ in 2002 and 75 per cent by 2003 to date. Although continuously improving throughout this time, the achievement level in 2010/11 was around 57 per cent, almost 20 per cent below the target.

A foster carer with Prospector values may be in a strong position to help children in foster care, particularly teenagers, achieve academically, for example by lobbying harder for them to secure a place in the best local state school. Prospectors' desire to 'be the best' and maximise opportunities might make them the perfect role model for a teenage fostered child.

To attract potential foster carers with Prospector values the offer might centre upon remuneration, the reputational benefits of a role model and opportunities for peer recognition and affirmation.

If a Prospector values recruitment strategy is considered, the service would need to understand how the needs of foster carers with this values set would differ, and therefore require change in the existing support provided. Additionally a framework could be required to ensure the wellbeing of the fostered child, as opposed to the aspirations of the foster carer, remains central.

Settlers

A Settler-orientated recruitment strategy would differ still. Individuals who value stability and routine could be well placed to foster a child who would also value and benefit from these situations. Their values of placing such importance on family and home could provide the safe and supportive environment for a fostered child to thrive.

To attract potential foster carers with Settler values the offer might centre upon stability, and providing a secure family environment for long-term fostering placements.

If this type of recruitment strategy is considered, the service would need to decide if it can accommodate the needs and requirements of foster carers with Settler values to ensure they can fulfil all foster carer roles, including for example facilitating contact or managing challenging behaviour.

Could different values suit different placement requirements?

These are just some examples but it can be seen how this simple and shared view of the foster carer can help build a 'customer culture' and a targeted and consistent offer.

The nature of the relationship with foster carers is almost unique, particularly in the public sector.

To what extent do you see foster carers as 'customers'?

Retention

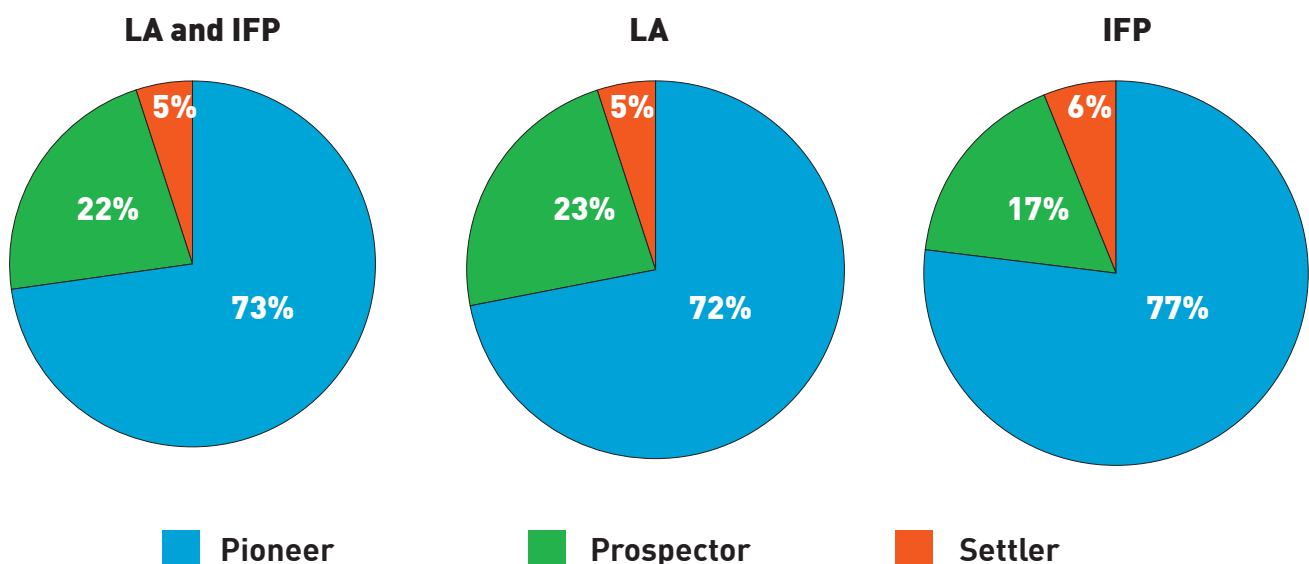
Finding that the significant majority of existing foster carers share Pioneer values also provides powerful insight and implications for the retention of foster carers.

Pioneers desire to be consulted and contribute to the wider development of the fostering service, and the additional insight presented above, will also empower fostering services to better retain and develop their existing foster carer workforce through post-approval supervision and support.

Ultimately, this finding provides a new lens through which fostering services can better understand foster carers and their feedback, and a framework to help act on this improved understanding.

Values comparison across different cohorts

Pioneers are the dominant Maslow Group in all services and agencies (both LA and IFP).



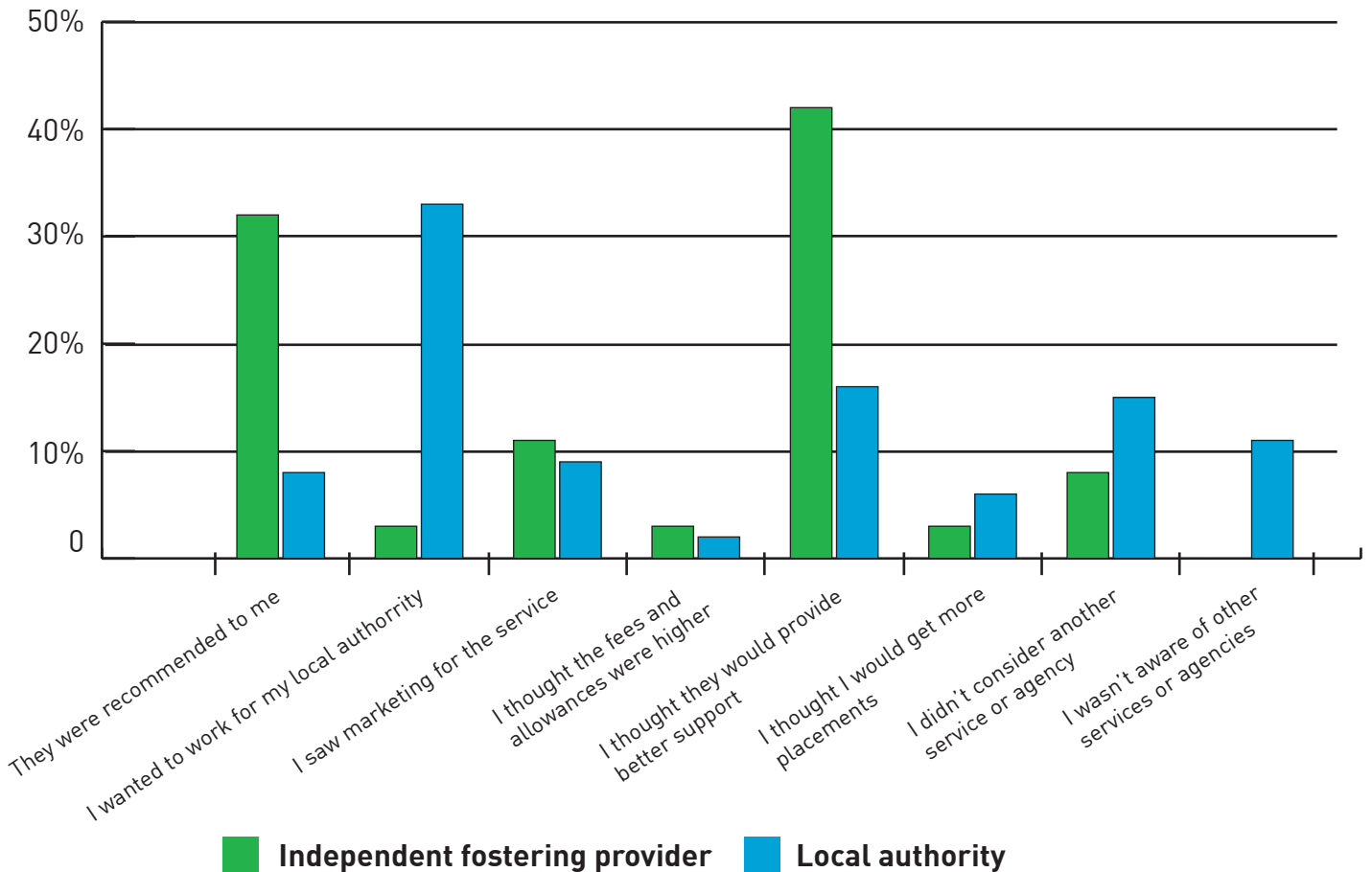
As we will go on to demonstrate, there are factors that influence a foster carer’s choice of fostering service. However, this confirms that foster carers with Pioneer values are attracted by the moral imperative to foster across all sectors. LAs and IFPs attract the same small proportion of foster carers with Settler values. LAs attract proportionately more foster carers with Prospector values, a five per cent greater population, than IFPs. It is often hypothesised that financial incentives are among the key reasons why foster carers choose an IFP over and LA. The results though show that IFPs have an even greater proportion of Pioneer foster carers than LAs.

Local values projects have aimed to tease out the role and importance of financial incentives among Pioneers. In this work, for Pioneers, the financial package is typically cited as both relatively unimportant and insufficient, illustrating the level of goodwill invested. Remuneration does become an issue however when Pioneers consider it ‘unfair’ - much like any other aspect of the service – as this offends more acutely their sense of ‘right’. While for Prospectors, ‘fair’ is more likely to be defined by reference to market rates, the Pioneer perception appears more related to factors such as annual increases in allowances.

How do your foster carers define ‘fair’ remuneration?

For Pioneers, a much more important factor is the outcome they are able to achieve. This motivation underpins what they value in a service or agency, what they look for and who they join.

This was borne out in a number of ways when the survey asked why foster carers chose their service or agency over alternatives.



First, foster carers' views of the support on offer is significant, more so than fees and allowances (further analysis confirms this is true across the demographic spectrum). Again, this follows from the values insight which anticipates prospective Pioneer foster carers to be primarily concerned with delivering positive outcomes. It is crucial though to be clear this is not the same as stating money is not important in a person's decision and ability to foster.

Second, the value of the council 'brand' is clear. The desire to work for the LA is also consistent with Pioneer values, which associate the council with public good, the delivery of which is a central motivation behind their coming forward. Pioneers are though also attracted to work for IFPs, indicating the moral imperative to deliver public good through fostering applies across all sectors.

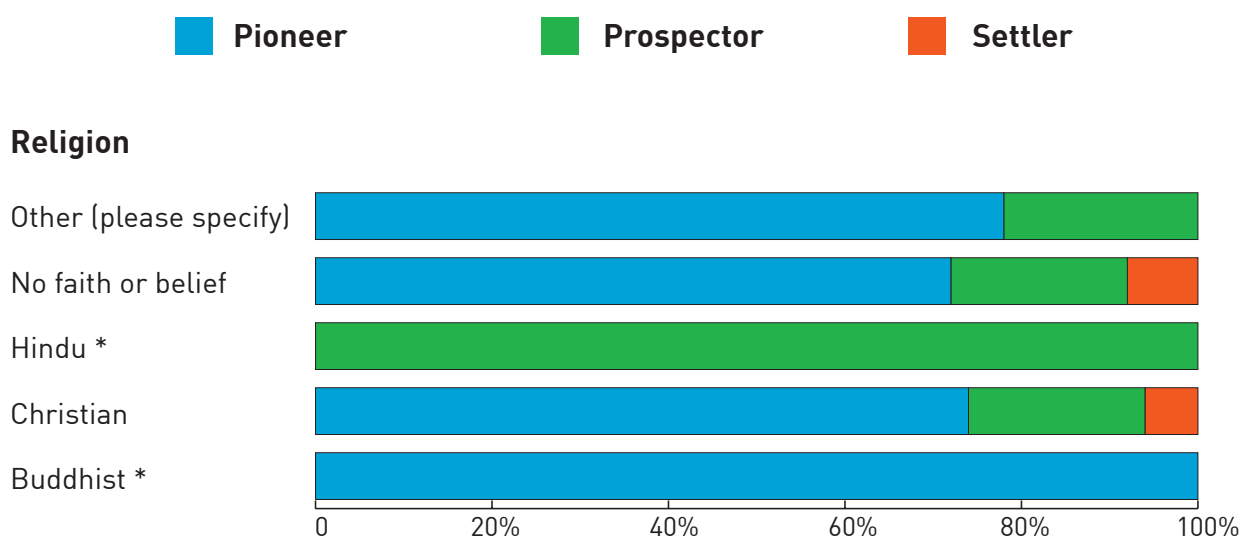
Third, word of mouth is seen as a key tool for recruiting more foster carers. The findings show that foster carers with IFPs are more likely to advocate for and recommend their fostering service to a prospective foster carer. Seventy seven per cent of all foster carers who have referred at least one person to become a foster carer are Pioneers.

Across demographic markers

In addition to a consistent skew of Pioneers across the public and private sector cohorts, the evidence also suggests the values mix remains broadly consistent across religion, age, gender, income, education and region (see following graphs). That means that foster carers of all age groups are likely to be Pioneers, as are foster carers of all religions and in every income bracket, whatever region or locality they live in.

The importance of this finding is that it allows the values profiles of foster carer populations from different localities and in a variety of settings to be meaningfully compared. It also means that the methods used to target a particular values set in one council or area are likely to be successful when used elsewhere.

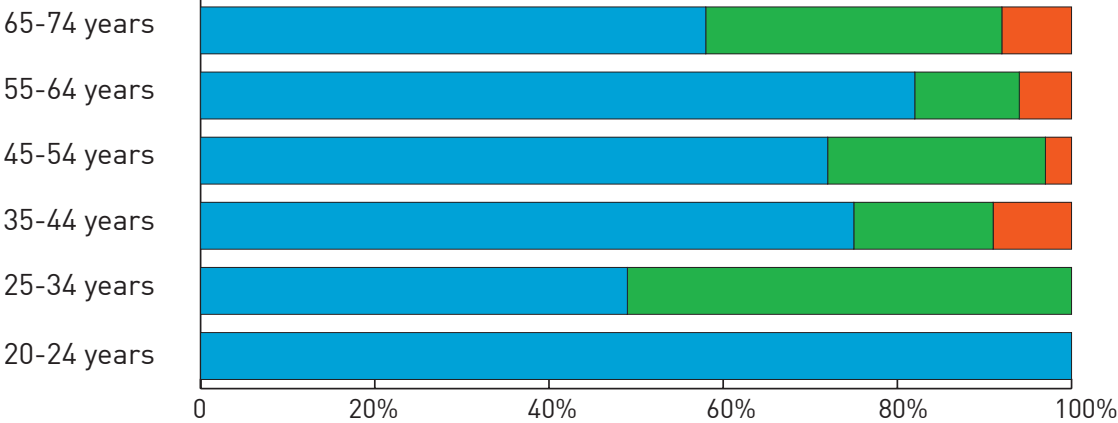
Whether the service targets higher or lower socio-economic populations, whether the setting is urban or rural, a values-centred service development strategy will follow the same principles and realise the same opportunities.



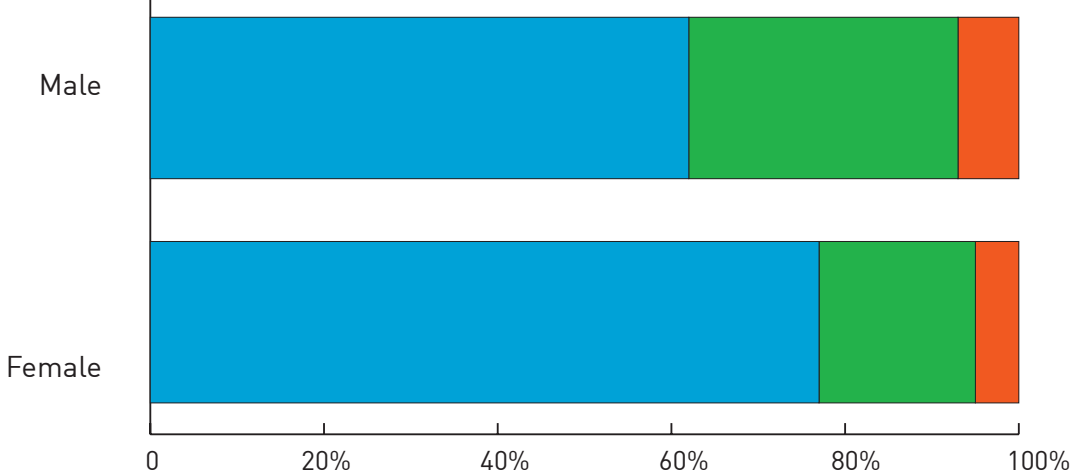
* Please note that these religions were under-represented in the research to be able to draw statistical significance from the findings, but have been included to demonstrate the religions selected.

■ Pioneer ■ Prospector ■ Settler

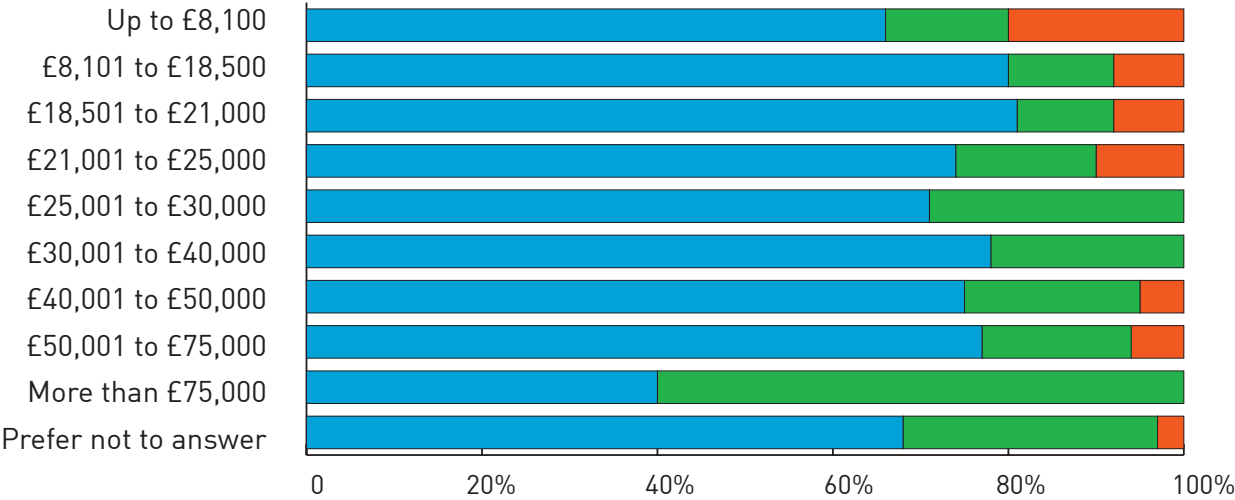
Age



Gender

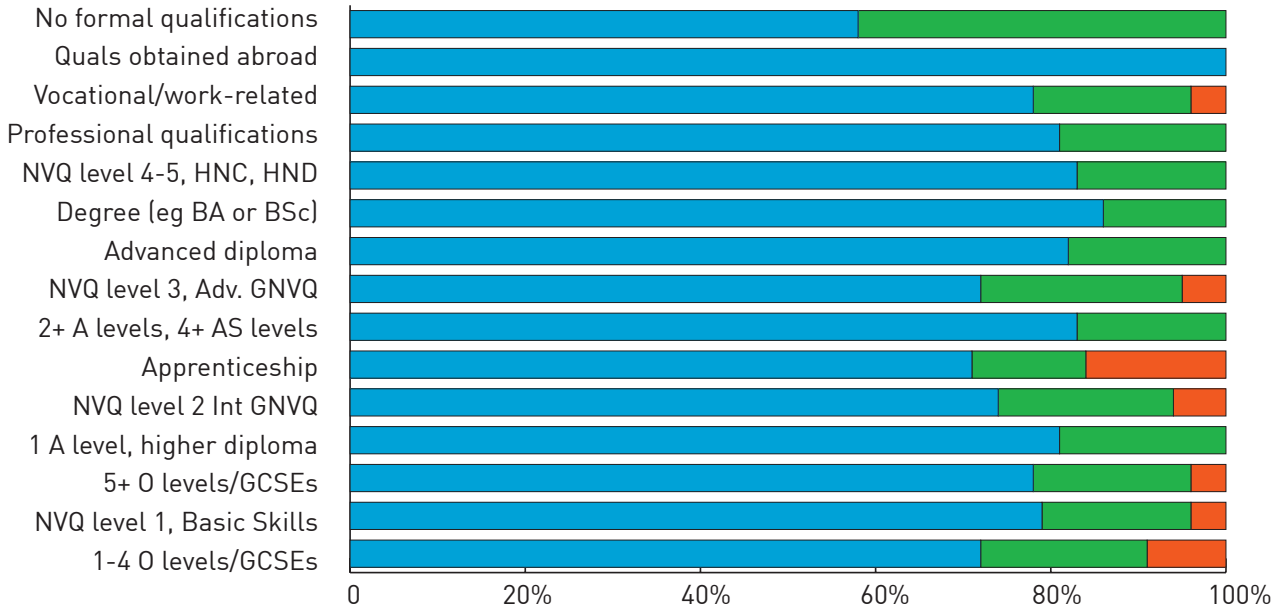


Income

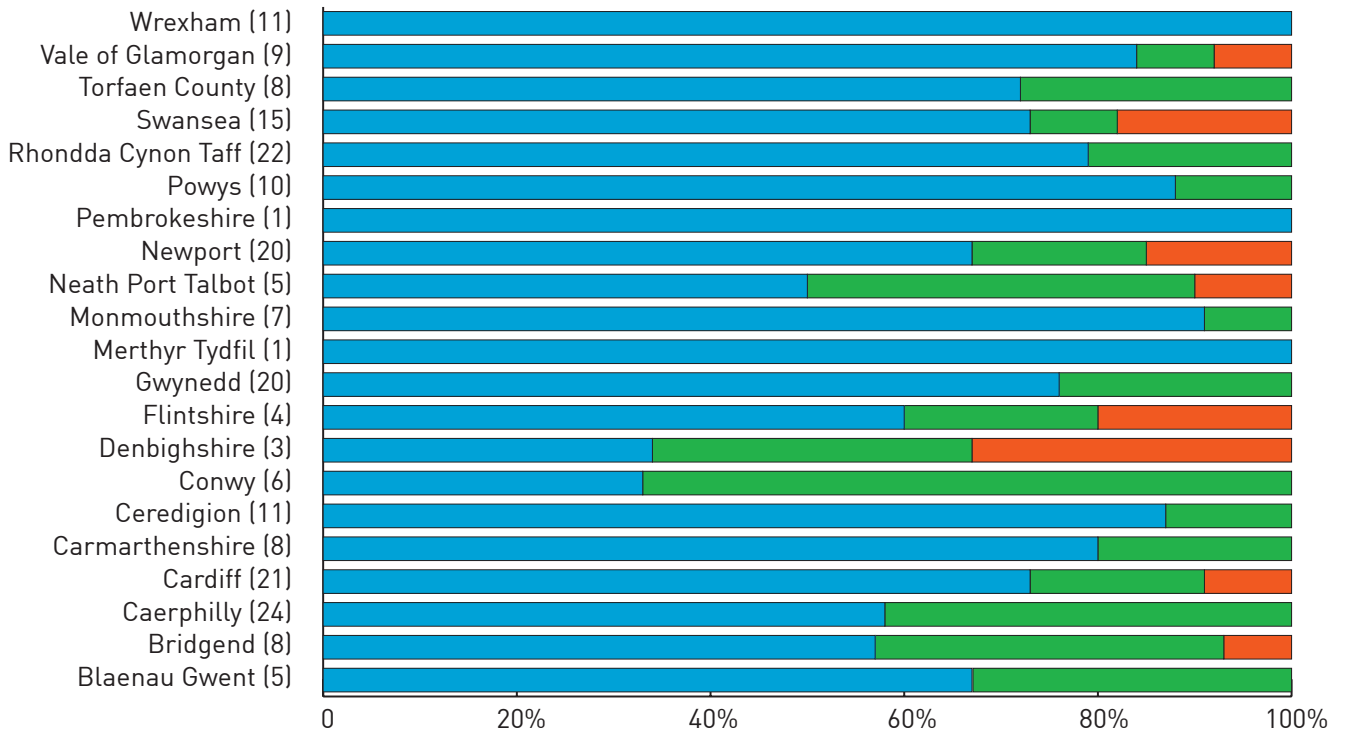




Education



Region



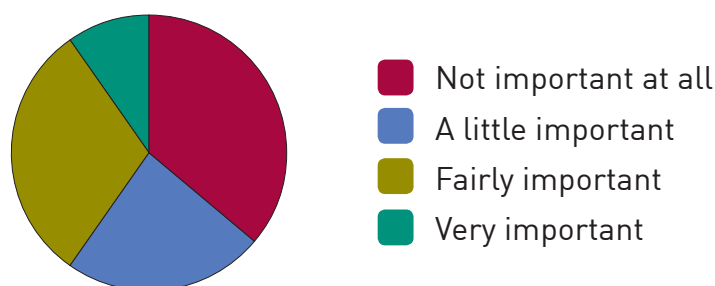
* Responses per local authority in brackets

In addition to the Values Modes, the survey included questions for participants to feedback their experience as foster carers, their wider motivations for coming forward and whether they have encouraged anyone else to do so, which are reported on in the following section.

Financial support

It is often cited that foster carers are not principally motivated by the financial support provided, and this is supported by the evidence that only seven per cent of foster carers said that when choosing who to foster with money was a very important factor.

As the chart below illustrates, almost 75 per cent of foster carers say that money is not important or only a little important in their decision to foster with their fostering service. Indeed, if money was a primary motivator, prospective applicants are unlikely to proceed through to approval in many current service structures.



This trend is evident in the value characteristics of Pioneers, for their concern for society and to ‘do the right thing’ is greater than their need for recognition and reward. However it is important not to discount the significance of sufficient remuneration to not only recognise their role in the team around the child, but enable them to effectively deliver the level of support required as a foster carer.

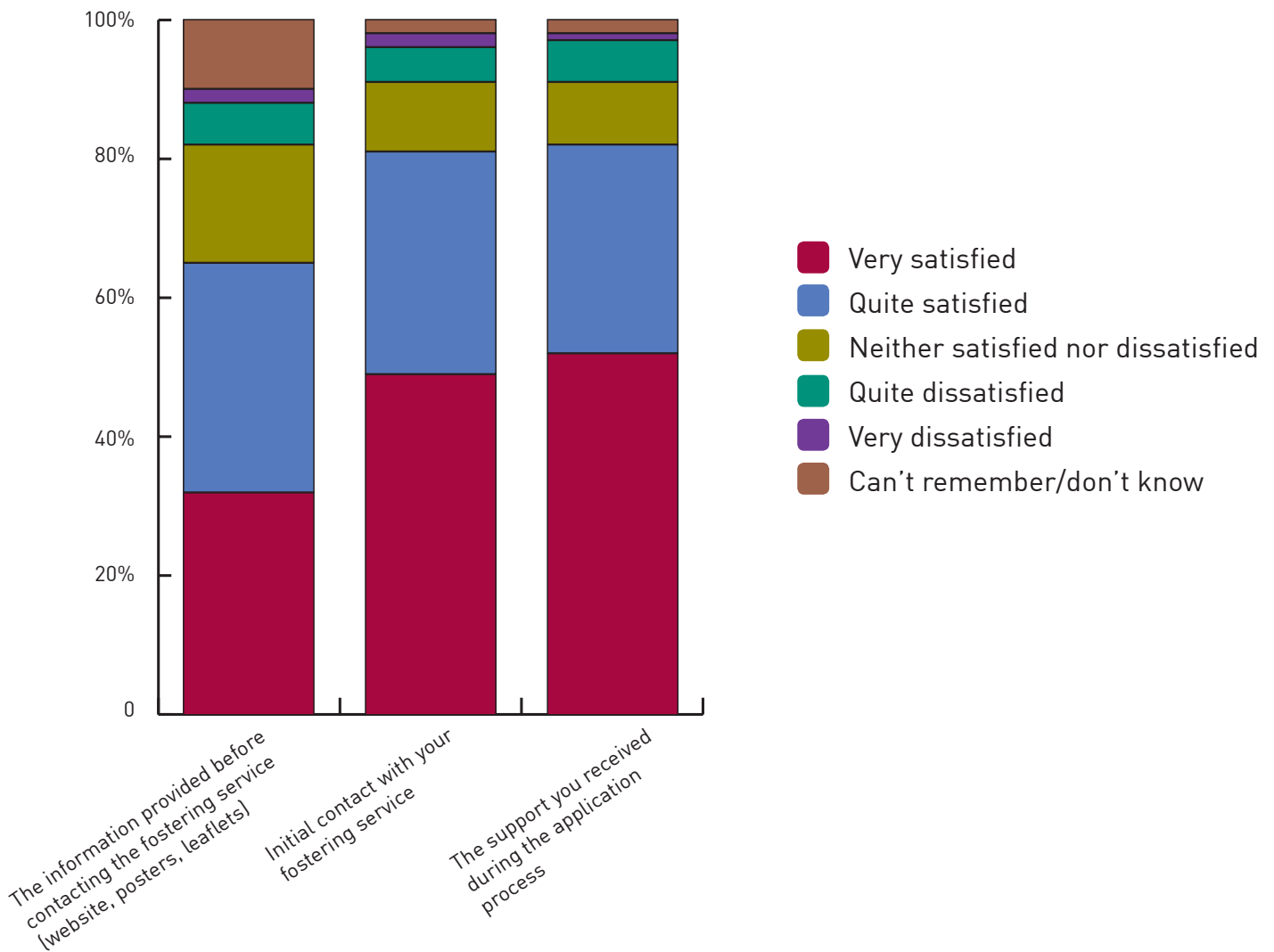
Has your fostering service turned applicants away who initially ask about money, prior to assessing the skills and qualities they possess to be foster carers?

Journey to approval

The process for recruiting foster carers to your service begins from the moment a prospective foster carer ‘discovers’ your service’s offering.

From first point of contact to the panel, the transition through the various stages of the process needs to be ‘customer-focused’, not only to support the applicant on their journey but also to enhance the likelihood that they, if approved, will be an advocate for your service.

Existing foster carers in Wales are equally satisfied with the initial contact with their fostering service and the support they receive during the application. They are though more ambivalent and unsure about the information they receive prior to contacting the service, as depicted in the chart below.



Breaking this information down to compare local authority fostering services with independent fostering providers we find that for each of the three questions, foster carers for IFPs answered either very satisfied, quite satisfied or neither satisfied nor dissatisfied. Therefore all instances of either quite dissatisfied, very dissatisfied, can't remember or don't know can be directly attributable to local authority foster carers. Clearly this is an issue to address and an opportunity for local authorities to improve their performance. This evidence also points to the will of local authority foster carers that despite being dissatisfied with various elements of the process, they chose to follow through and foster for their chosen fostering service. This could possibly positively correlate with the findings reported of a strong desire to foster for the local authority.

A key attribute of people with Pioneer values is a desire to be communicated with directly, often through a conversation as opposed to gaining knowledge through reading information material.

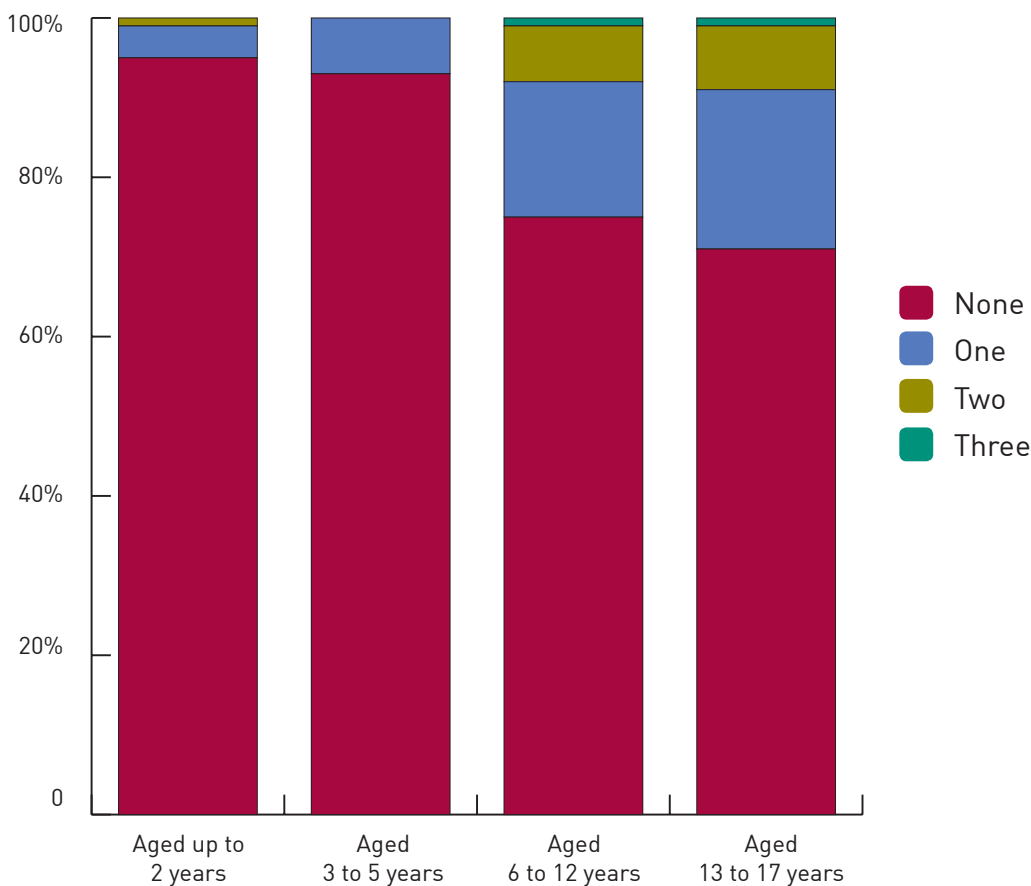
How do you communicate the value of becoming a foster carer for your service? How do you support the 'customer journey'? To what levels and at which stages do you directly communicate with applicants?

Birth children in the household

A spare room is a basic requirement in order to become a foster carer. Having experience of own children is not essential, but often can be beneficial for applicants. The two though are often mutually exclusive as there is not often space for a fostered child as well as having birth children in the household. Consequently the average age of current foster carers tends to be around 50 years of age, possibly correlating to when birth children have grown up and moved on. This is supported by the findings from the survey with 42 percent of foster carers completing it aged 45-54 years .

The findings however show that only 30 per cent of foster carers in Wales have at least one birth child in their household aged 13 to 17 years and almost 25 per cent have at least one child aged 6 to 12 years.

Excluding fostered children, how many children aged up to 18 years live in your household



Providing support for and involving sons and daughters is a critical element to any fostering service’s offer and can have a significant impact on recruitment as it is often perceived as a barrier.

Do we encourage people with their own children to come forward? How do we communicate the support we provide to sons and daughters and answer questions on the impact of fostered children on birth children in the household?

Referring others

Word of mouth is often recorded as the primary source of enquiries to fostering services. The findings from the research however suggest that only 55 per cent of foster carers in Wales (77 per cent of whom are Pioneers as described previously) have referred someone they know to apply directly to their service.

Many fostering services in Wales offer a financial incentive in the form of a 'recommend a friend' scheme. Offering financial incentives can be one method to encourage word-of-mouth, particularly if your fostering service is seeking to recruit foster carers with Prospector values. This though is only one factor for why a foster carer may feel compelled to act on a fostering service's behalf to suggest more people step forward.

Your current foster carers can be powerful advocates for your service, and a useful resource in recruitment activity. Foster carers with Pioneer values will welcome the opportunity to be involved, particularly in the planning stages, with their thirst for new questions and answers. They can also have a substantial negative impact if they feel neglected, particularly when a fostering service is recruiting when they have vacancies, and if they are not supported and involved effectively. Communication for all foster carers is critical to enable them to be foster carers as well as ambassadors for the service.



Implications for fostering services' recruitment strategies

This work highlights that the majority of existing foster carers in Wales have a common set of Pioneer values, a more significant skew than in any area analysed with Values Modes to date.

Values cut across all demographic profiles including age, ethnicity, religion and household income. This finding has significant and positive implications for all fostering services.

Fostering services can use the values insight to develop a 'customer-focused' recruitment strategy that attracts more foster carers with Pioneer values.

Fostering services can also use this intelligence to develop recruitment campaigns that would attract prospective foster carers with a Prospector or Settler values set that is not locally or indeed nationally prevalent, but could provide foster care for children with specific need.

In addition to recruitment, fostering services can shape their service in terms of messaging, communications and support provision to meet the needs of and develop existing foster carers.

Values insight can be utilised to increase the impact of local intelligence such as service-specific feedback by current foster carers or demographic targeting opportunities. It addresses the fundamental question of why foster carers care and applies irrespective of the demographic.

By completing local 'customer insight' work using this values method and assessing the needs of local looked after children, fostering services can quickly validate these findings and develop toolkits to translate them into practical initiatives.



Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs and Values Modes

The Maslow Groups and Values Modes defined by Cultural Dynamics Strategy and Marketing Limited ('CDSM') are derived from the British Values Survey which began in 1973 and, at the time of writing, were being conducted and updated by CDSM worldwide.

The British Values Survey is the largest and longest established survey of the values, beliefs and motivations of the British population – currently over 600 questions are measured in the survey of 3,000 to 5,000 nationally representative adults.

Decades of empirical research have demonstrated that Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs best explains the values segments independently derived by CDSM from the extensive data sets. The theory provides for a dynamic understanding of the way national populations change their values over time – the changes measured by the British Values Survey.

The Maslow Groups and Values Modes are used in a wide range of countries and by a variety of companies and NGOs. International research, covering over 45 per cent of the world's population, has been conducted in nine countries in the last two years.

An introduction to the development and use of Maslow Groups is contained in the book *What Makes People Tick* by Chris Rose (2011).

