

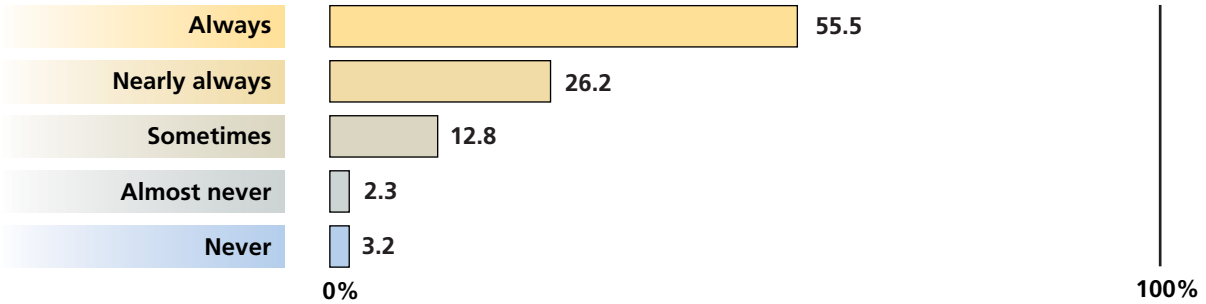


# Appendix C.1

## THE INFORMATION YOU RECEIVED

Question 1:

Were you told what was happening at each stage?

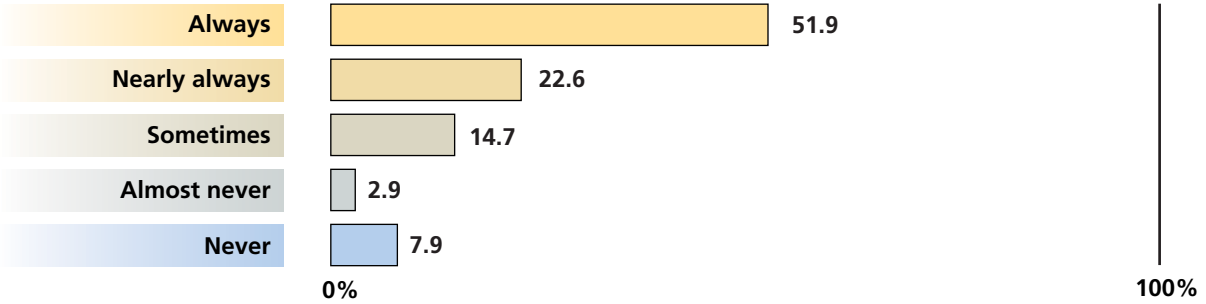


Just over 8 in 10 (81.7%) respondents reported that they were 'Always' or 'Nearly always' told what was happening at each stage of the adoption process.

By way of contrast, 1 in 20 (5.5%) indicated that they were 'Never' or 'Almost never' told what was happening during the different stages of the adoption process.

Question 2:

Were you given all the written information you needed?



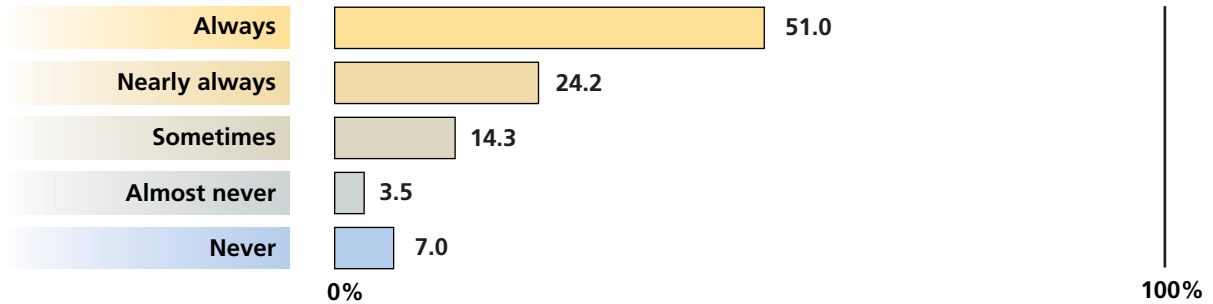
Compared with just over 7 in 10 (74.5%) respondents who indicated that they were 'Always' or 'Nearly always' given all the written information they needed, about 1 in 10 (10.8%) respondents reported the opposite, i.e. that they were 'Never' or 'Almost never' given all the written information they needed.

# Appendix C.1

## THE INFORMATION YOU RECEIVED

Question 3:

Were you given the information at the time you needed it?

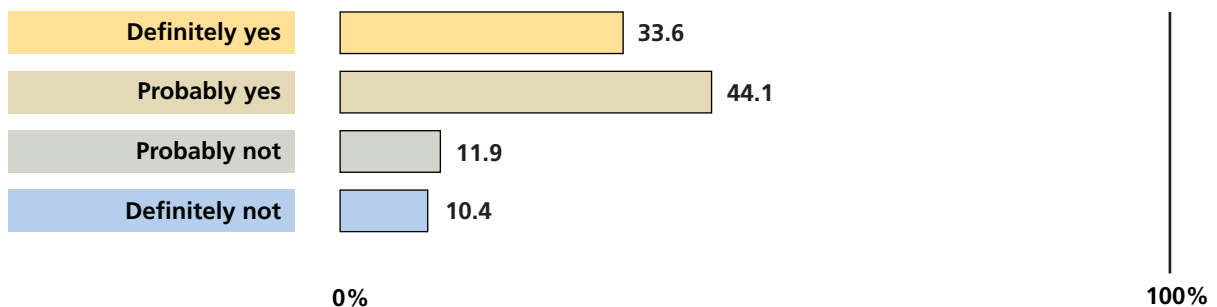


When asked if they were given the information they needed at the time they needed it, just over 1 in 10 (10.5%) respondents reported that this 'Never' or 'Almost never' happened.

This contrasted with the experience of 7 in 10 respondents (75.2%) who reported that they were 'Always' or 'Nearly always' provided with the information they needed at the time it was needed.

Question 4:

Were you told about all the ways that Social Services could help you?



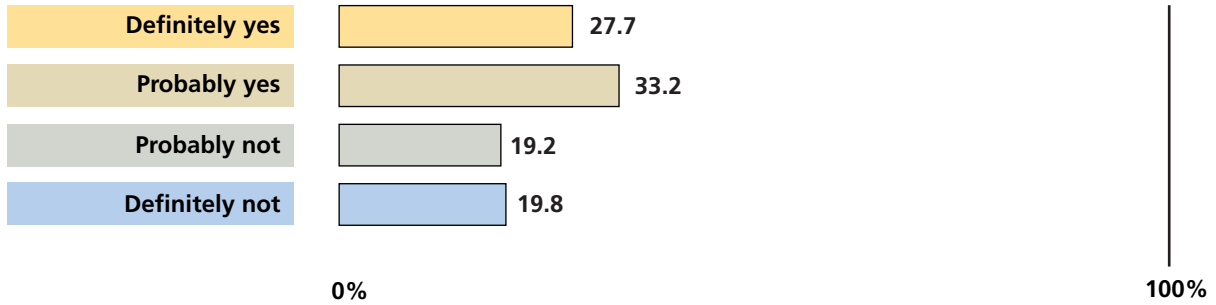
Almost 8 in 10 respondents (77.7%) indicated that they were 'Definitely' or 'Probably' told about all the ways that Social Services could help them. This compared with 2 in 10 respondents (22.3%) who reported that they were 'Definitely' or 'Probably not' told about all the ways that Social Services could help them.

# Appendix C.1

## THE INFORMATION YOU RECEIVED

Question 5:

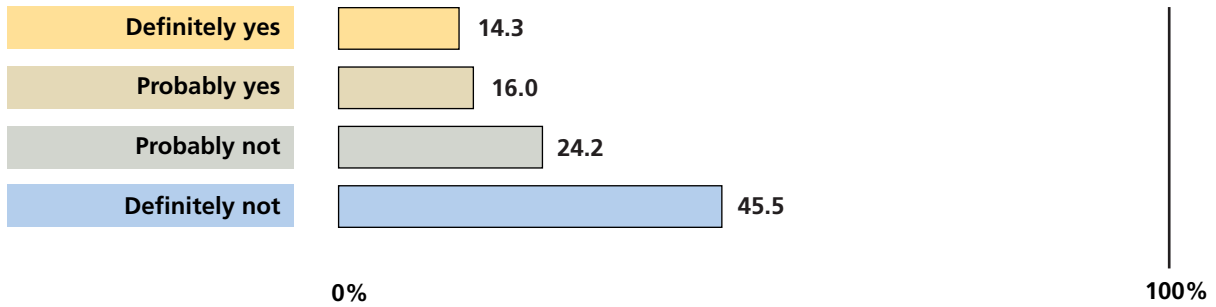
Were you told about other services or groups that would be of help to you?



Just under 4 in 10 respondents (39.0%) reported that they were 'Definitely' or 'Probably not' told about other services or groups which might have been able to help them. This contrasted with slightly more than 6 in 10 respondents (61%) who indicated that they were 'Definitely' or 'Probably' told about relevant services or groups.

Question 6:

Were you given information about how to complain if you weren't satisfied with the service you received?



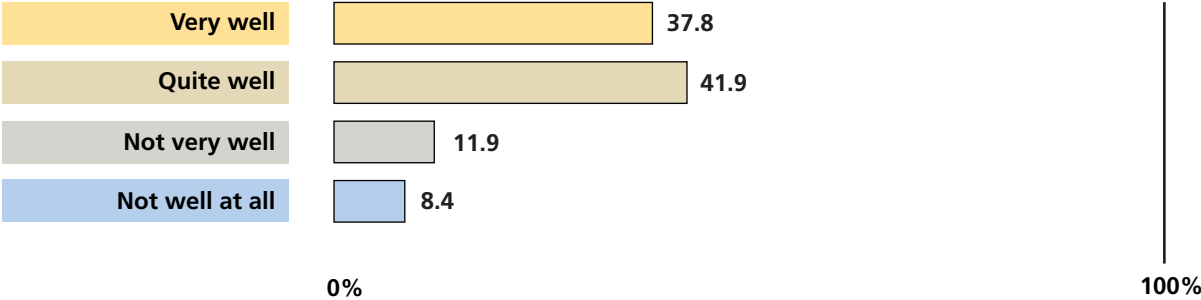
When asked about information regarding complaints, almost 7 in 10 respondents (69.7%) reported that they had 'Definitely' or 'Probably not' been given the information about making a complaint, compared with 3 in 10 respondents (30.3%) who indicated that they had 'Definitely' or 'Probably' been provided with information about how to make a complaint.

# Appendix C.1

## THE INFORMATION YOU RECEIVED

Question 7:

**Overall, how well do you feel Social Services kept you informed?**



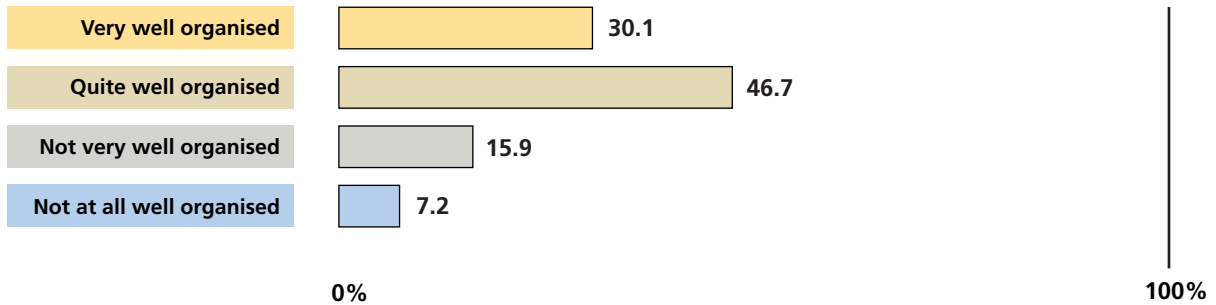
Nearly 8 in 10 respondents (79.7%) reported that Social Services had kept them 'Quite well' or 'Very well' informed, compared with 2 in 10 (20.3%) respondents who felt that they were 'Not very well' or 'Not well at all' informed by Social Services.

# Appendix C.1

## THE EFFICIENCY OF THE SERVICE

Question 8:

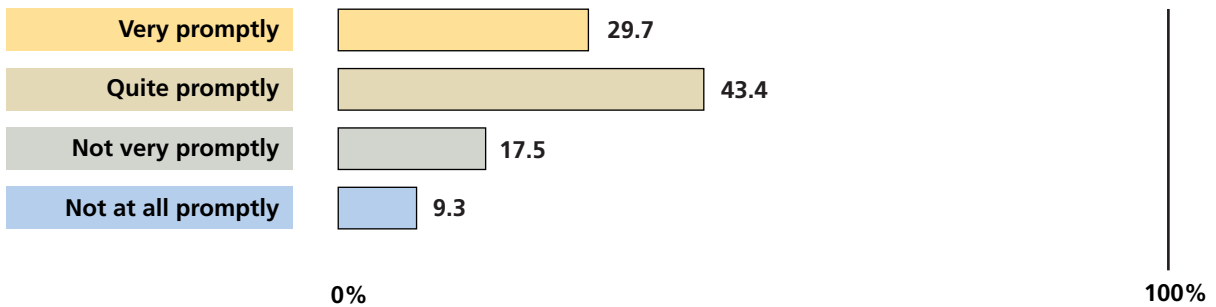
How well do you think the service was organised?



Just over 3 in 10 respondents (30.1%) reported that they thought the service was 'Very well' organised, with almost a further 5 in 10 (46.7%) indicating that they felt the service was 'Quite well' organised. This compared with slightly over 2 in 10 respondents (23.1%) who felt that the service was 'Not at all well' organised or 'Not very well' organised.

Question 9:

How promptly was help provided to you?



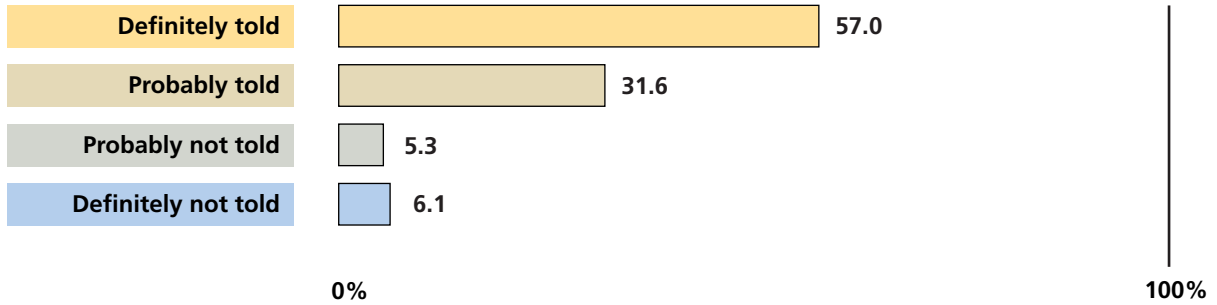
In terms of the help provided, almost 3 in 10 respondents (29.7%) reported that help was provided 'Very promptly'. This contrasted with nearly 3 in 10 respondents who felt that help was provided 'Not at all promptly' or 'Not very promptly'.

# Appendix C.1

## THE EFFICIENCY OF THE SERVICE

Question 10:

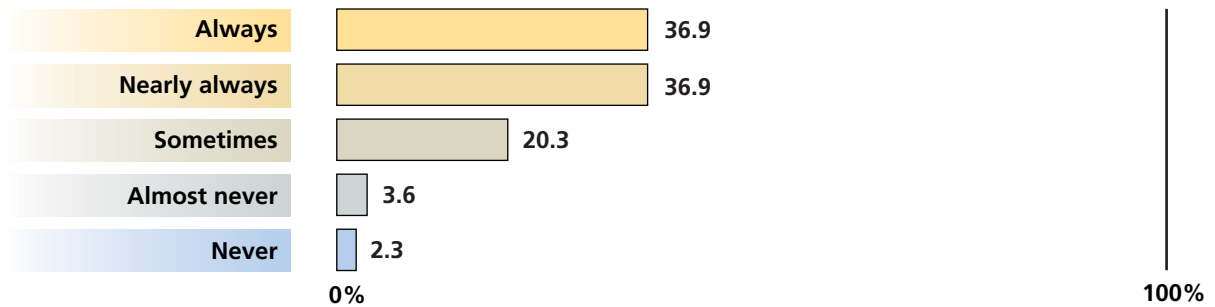
Were you told what to expect?



When asked if they were told what to expect, almost 6 in 10 respondents (57.0%) reported that they were 'Definitely told' what to expect, with a further 3 in 10 (31.6%) indicating that they were 'Probably told' what to expect. This compared with 1 in 10 respondents (11.4%) who reported that they were 'Definitely not told' or 'Probably not told' what to expect.

Question 11

Did this reflect what actually happened?



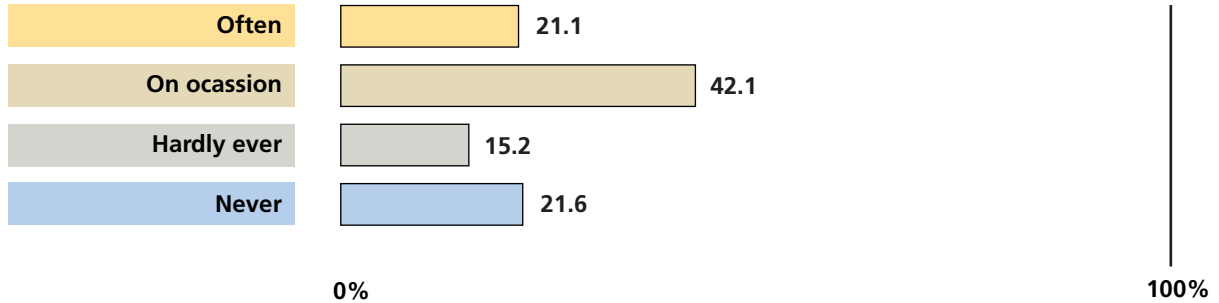
Over 3 in 10 (36.9%) respondents reported that what they were told would happen 'Always' happened, with a further 3 in 10 indicating that this was 'Nearly always' the case. By way of contrast, 1 in 20 respondents (5.9%) reported that what they were told would happen 'Never' or 'Almost never' happened.

# Appendix C.1

## THE EFFICIENCY OF THE SERVICE

Question 12:

Did you experience delay with any aspects of the service?

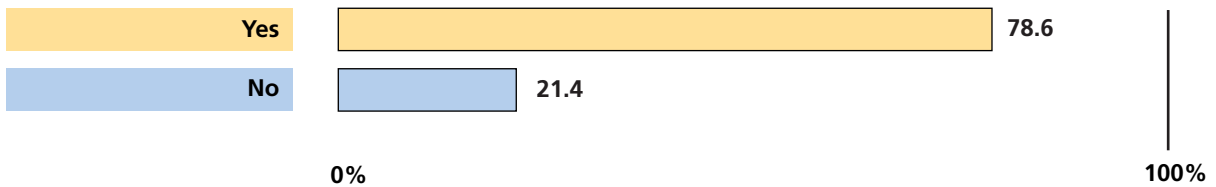


When asked if they had experienced delay with any aspect of the service, slightly more than 1 in 5 respondents (21.1%) replied that they had 'Often' experienced delay, with a further 2 in 5 respondents (42.1%) indicating that they had experienced delay 'On occasion'.

Just over 1 in 5 respondents (21.6%) reported that they had 'Never' experienced delay with any aspects of the service.

Question 13:

Was the reason for the delay explained to you?



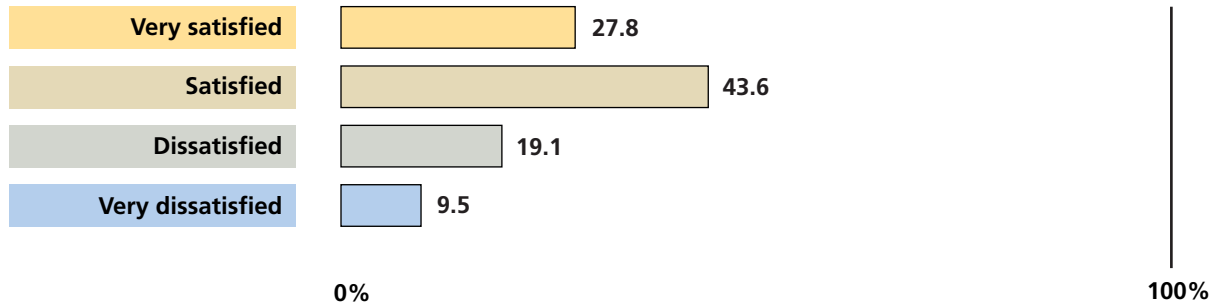
For those who reported having experienced delay with some aspect of service, almost 8 in 10 indicated that the reason for the delay had been explained.

# Appendix C.1

## THE EFFICIENCY OF THE SERVICE

Question 14:

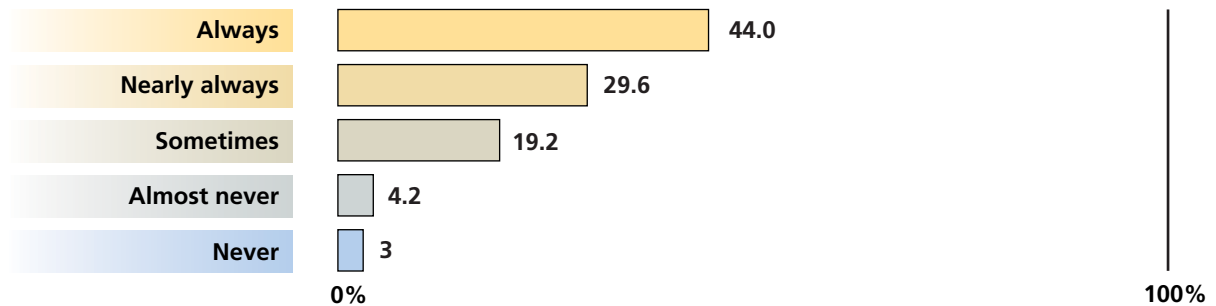
How satisfied were you with the explanation you were given?



Of those given a reason for delays in service, almost 3 in 10 (27.8%) reported that they were 'Very satisfied' with the explanation provided, with a further 4 in 10 (43.6%) indicating that they were 'Satisfied' with the reason given. Slightly less than 3 in 10 respondents reported being 'Very dissatisfied' or 'Dissatisfied' with the reason given to explain any delays.

Question 15:

Were any concerns or questions you had about the service answered to your satisfaction?



Over 4 in 10 respondents (44.0%) reported that they were 'Always' satisfied with the answers given to concerns or questions they had about the service provided, with almost a further 3 in 10 (29.6%) reporting that they were 'Nearly always' satisfied with the answers given.

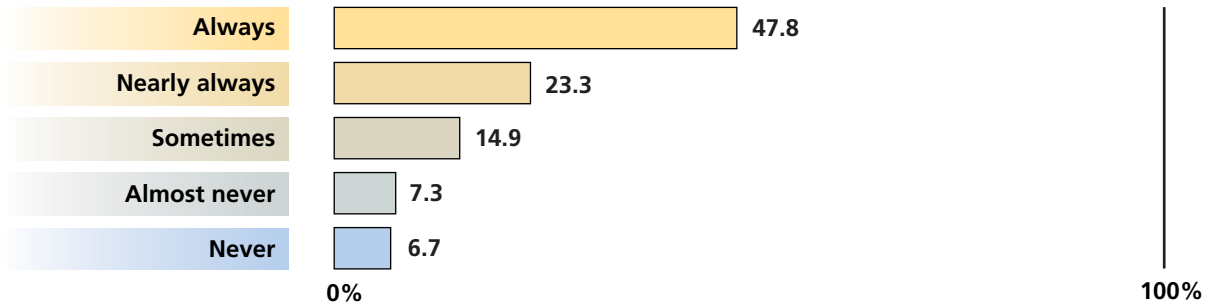
By way of contrast, slightly more than 1 in 20 respondents (7.2%) reported that they were 'Never' or 'Almost never' satisfied with the answers provided to concerns raised about service.

# Appendix C.1

## THE EFFICIENCY OF THE SERVICE

Question 16:

**Did you feel Social Services worked actively on you behalf?**

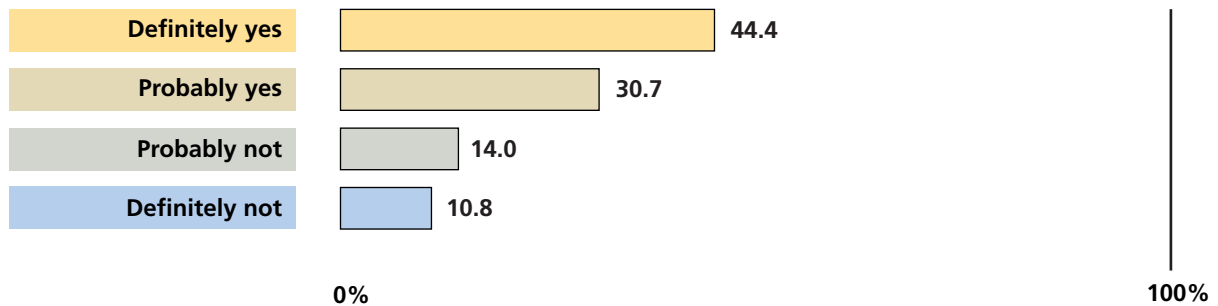


Asked if they felt Social Services worked actively on their behalf almost half the respondents (47.8%) replied that this was 'Always' the case, with almost a further 25% of respondents reporting that this was 'Nearly always' the case.

Just over 1 in 10 respondents (14.0%) indicated that they 'Never' or 'Almost Never' felt that Social Services worked actively on their behalf.

Question 17:

**Taking everything into account, did you get all the help you needed?**



Taking everything into account, when asked if they got all the help they needed, over 4 in 10 respondents (44.4%) reported that this was 'Definitely' the case, while another 3 in 10 (30.7%) reported that they 'Probably' got all the help they needed. In contrast, nearly 1 in 4 respondents (24.8%) reported that they 'Definitely' or 'Probably' did not get all the help they needed.

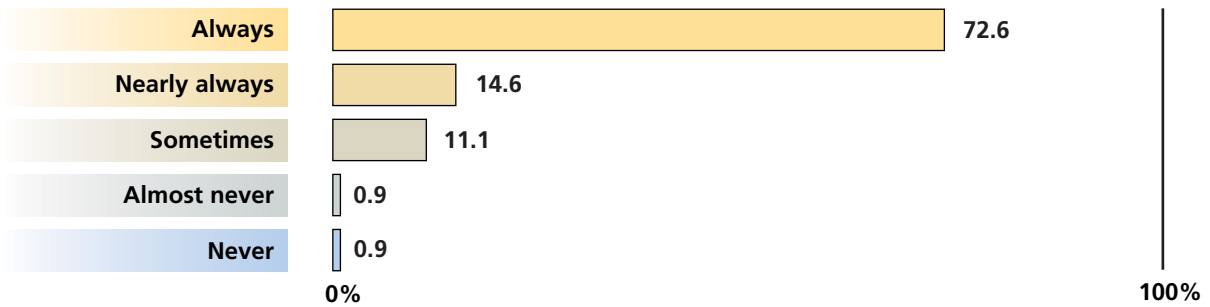
# Appendix C.1

## THE STAFF YOU WERE IN CONTACT WITH

Respondents were asked if they felt the staff they were in contact with were 'Approachable', 'Helpful', 'Sensitive to your needs', 'Easy to contact', 'Reliable in keeping appointments', 'Reliable in doing what they said they would do', 'Considerate', 'Good at their job' and 'Knowledgeable about the things you expect them to know'.

Question 18a:

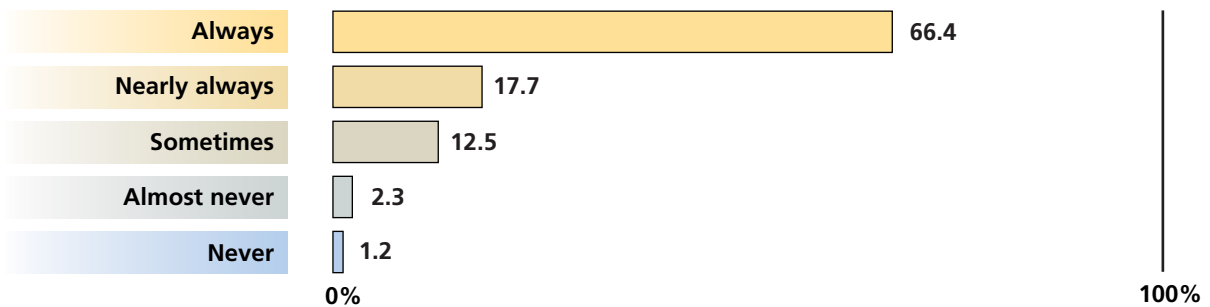
Were staff approachable?



Over 7 in 10 respondents (72.6%) reported that staff were 'Always' Approachable, compared with less than 1 in 100 respondents (0.9%) who indicated that staff were 'Never approachable'.

Question 18b:

Were staff helpful?



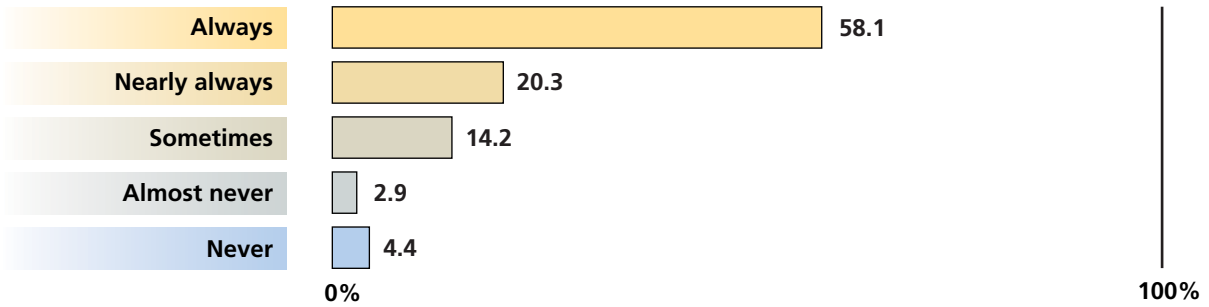
Almost 7 in 10 respondents (66.4%) reported that staff were 'Always' helpful, compared with just over 1 in 100 respondents (1.2%) who indicated that staff were 'Never' helpful.

# Appendix C.1

## THE STAFF YOU WERE IN CONTACT WITH

Question 18c:

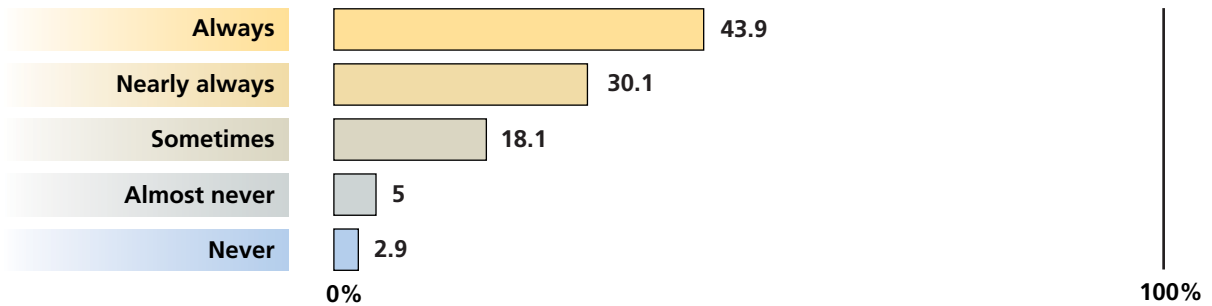
Were staff sensitive to your needs?



Nearly 6 in 10 respondents (58.1%) reported that staff were 'Always' sensitive to their needs, compared with just below 5 in 100 respondents (4.4%) who indicated that staff were 'Never' sensitive to their needs.

Question 18d:

Were staff easy to contact?



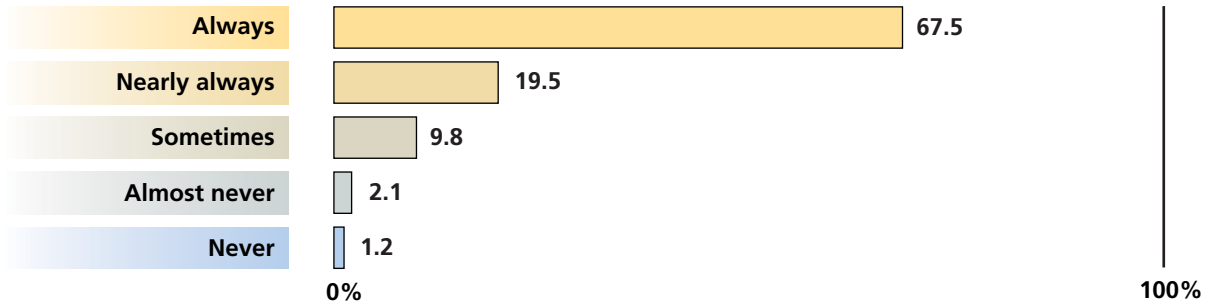
Just under half the respondents (43.9%) reported that staff were 'Always' easy to contact, compared with less than 3 in 100 respondents (2.9%) who indicated that staff were 'Never' easy to contact.

# Appendix C.1

## THE STAFF YOU WERE IN CONTACT WITH

Question 18e:

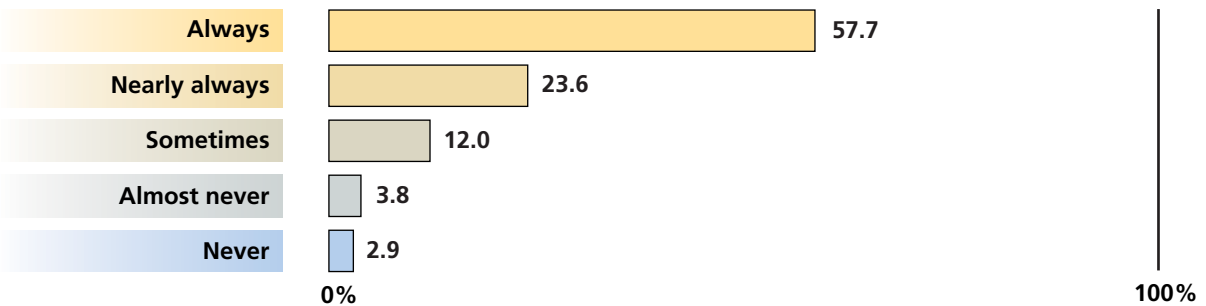
Were staff reliable in keeping appointments?



When asked about the reliability of staff in keeping appointments, almost 7 in 10 respondents (67.5%) reported that staff were 'Always' reliable in keeping appointments, compared with less than 2 in 100 respondents (1.2%) who indicated that staff were 'Never' reliable in keeping appointments.

Question 18f:

Were staff reliable in doing what they said they would do?



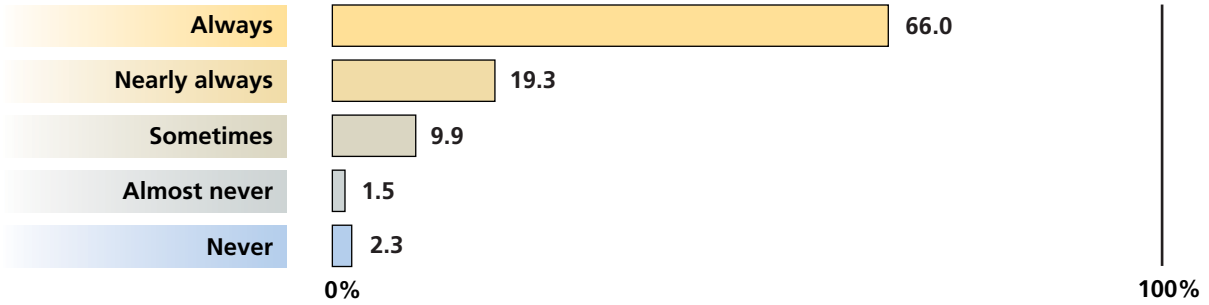
Just below 6 in 10 respondents (57.7%) reported that staff were 'Always' reliable in doing what they said they would do, whereas less than 3 in 100 respondents (2.9%) indicated that staff were 'Never' reliable in doing what they said they would do.

# Appendix C.1

## THE STAFF YOU WERE IN CONTACT WITH

Question 18g:

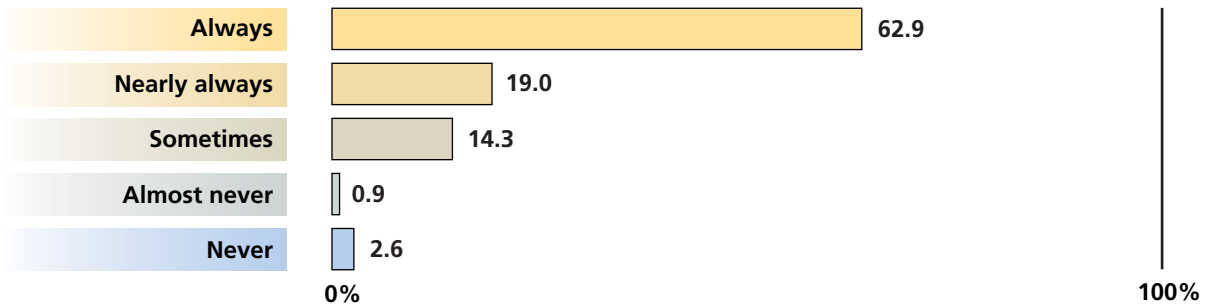
Were staff considerate?



Nearly 7 in 10 respondents (66.0%) reported that staff were 'Always' considerate, compared with less than 3 in 100 respondents (2.3%) who indicated that staff were 'Never' considerate.

Question 18h:

Were staff good at their job?



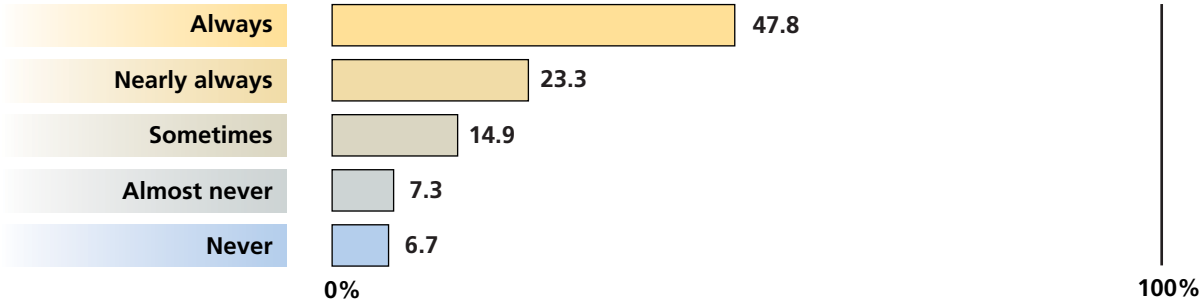
Asked if staff were good at their job, just over 6 in 10 respondents (62.9%) reported that staff were 'Always' good at their job, compared with almost 3 in 100 respondents (2.6%) who indicated that staff were 'Never' good at their job.

# Appendix C.1

## THE STAFF YOU WERE IN CONTACT WITH

Question 18i:

**Were staff knowledgeable about the things you expected them to know?**



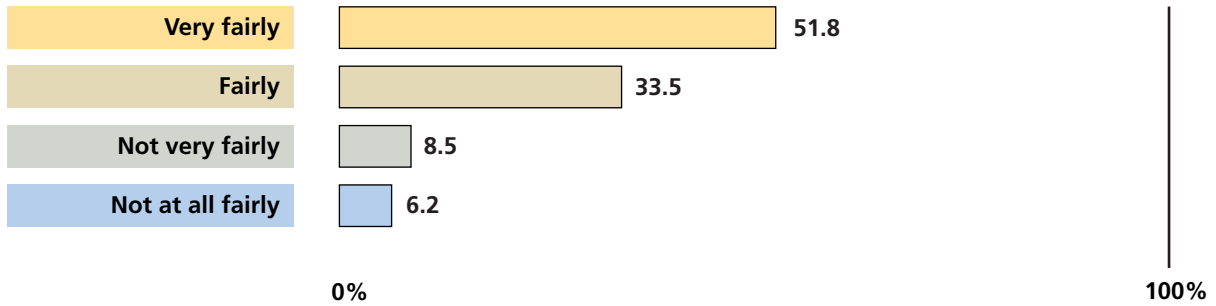
Slightly less than half the respondents (47.8%) reported that staff were 'Always' knowledgeable about the things you would expect them to know, whereas 6 in every 100 respondents (6.7%) indicated that staff were 'Never' knowledgeable about the things you would expect them to know.

# Appendix C.1

## YOUR SATISFACTION WITH THE SERVICE

Question 19:

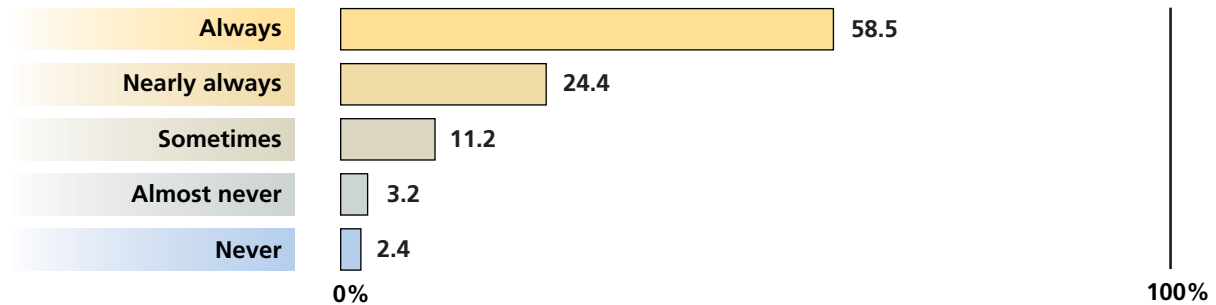
How fairly do you think you were treated?



Just over half the respondents (51.8%) reported that they were 'Very fairly' treated, with about 3 in 10 (33.5%) reporting that they were 'Fairly' treated. Slightly more than 1 in 10 respondents (14.7%) indicated that they were 'Not at all fairly' treated or 'Not very fairly' treated.

Question 20:

Do you feel that you were listened to?



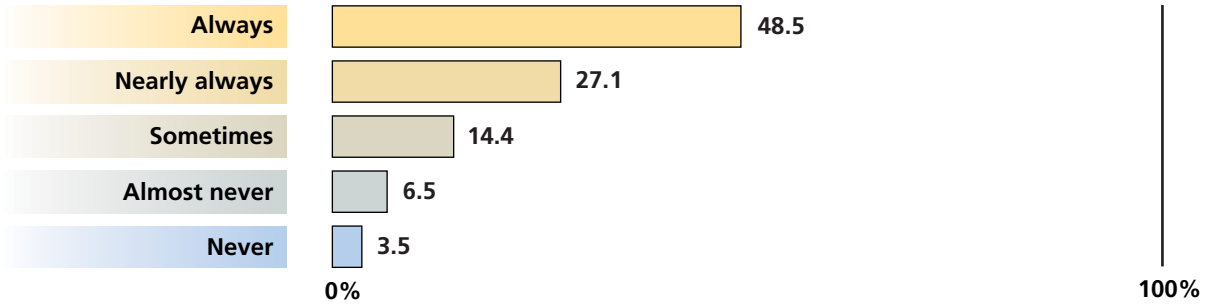
When asked if they felt they were listened to, almost 6 in 10 respondents (58.5%) reported that they felt they were 'Always' listened to, with about another quarter (24.4%) indicating that they 'Nearly always' felt they were listened to. This compared to just over 1 in 20 respondents (5.6%) who felt that they were 'Never' or 'Almost never' listened to.

# Appendix C.1

## YOUR SATISFACTION WITH THE SERVICE

Question 21:

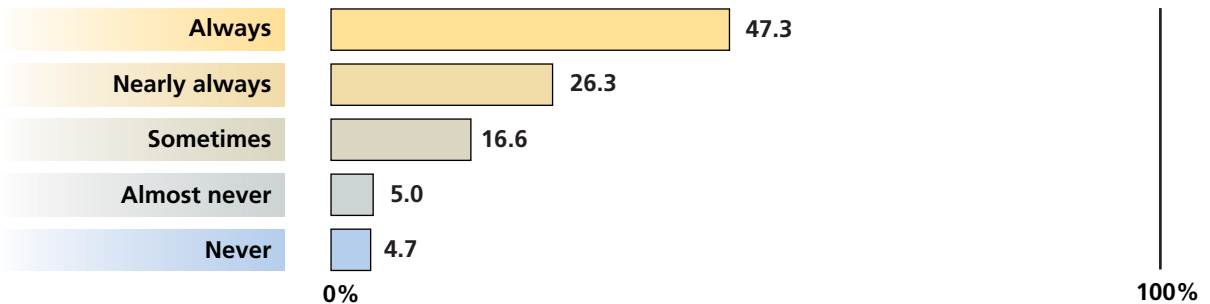
**Do you feel that your needs were recognised?**



Just over 75% of respondents reported that they 'Always' felt or 'Nearly always' felt that their needs were recognised, while 1 in 10 respondents (10.0%) indicated that their needs were 'Never' or 'Almost never' recognised.

Question 22:

**Do you feel that your needs were dealt with appropriately?**



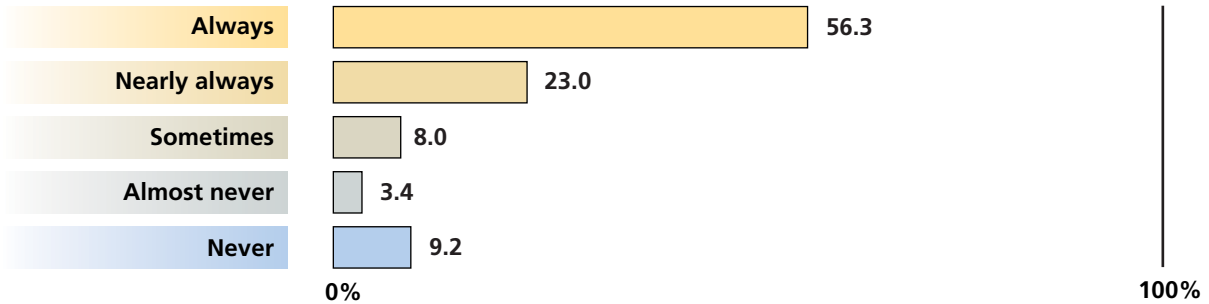
Nearly half the respondents (47.3%) 'Always' felt that their needs were dealt with appropriately and just over one quarter of respondents reported that they felt their needs were 'Nearly always' dealt with appropriately. This contrasted with almost 1 in 10 who indicated that they felt their needs were 'Never' or 'Almost never' dealt with appropriately.

# Appendix C.1

## YOUR SATISFACTION WITH THE SERVICE

Question 23:

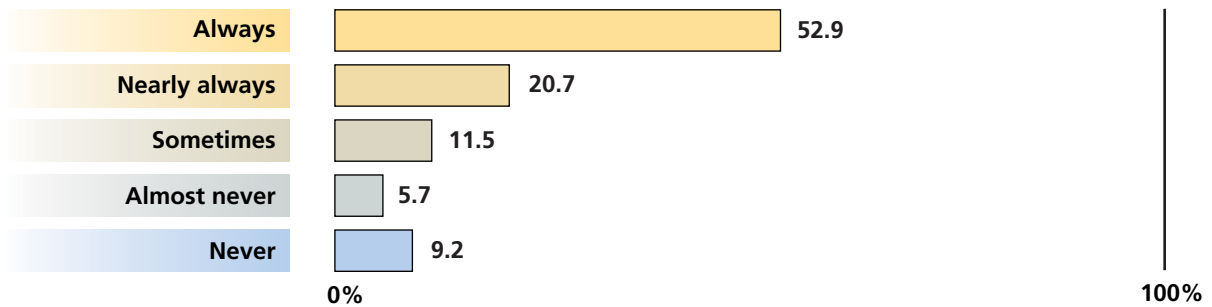
Were your family's needs recognised?



When asked if their families' needs were recognised, just under 6 in 10 respondents (56.3%) reported that their families needs were 'Always' recognised, with another 2 in 10 (23.0%) indicating that their families needs were 'Nearly always' recognised. This compared with over 1 in 10 respondents (12.6%) who reported that their families needs were 'Never' or 'Almost never' recognised.

Question 24:

Were your family's needs dealt with appropriately?



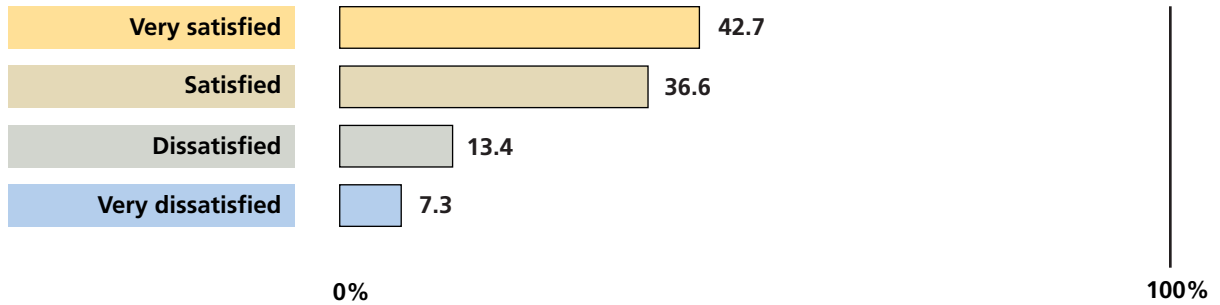
Just over 1 in 6 respondents indicated that their families' needs were 'Never' or 'Almost never' dealt with appropriately. This compared with over 7 in 10 respondents (73.6%) who reported that their families' needs were 'Always' or 'Nearly always' dealt with appropriately.

# Appendix C.1

## YOUR SATISFACTION WITH THE SERVICE

Question 25:

**Taking everything into account how satisfied were you with the service?**



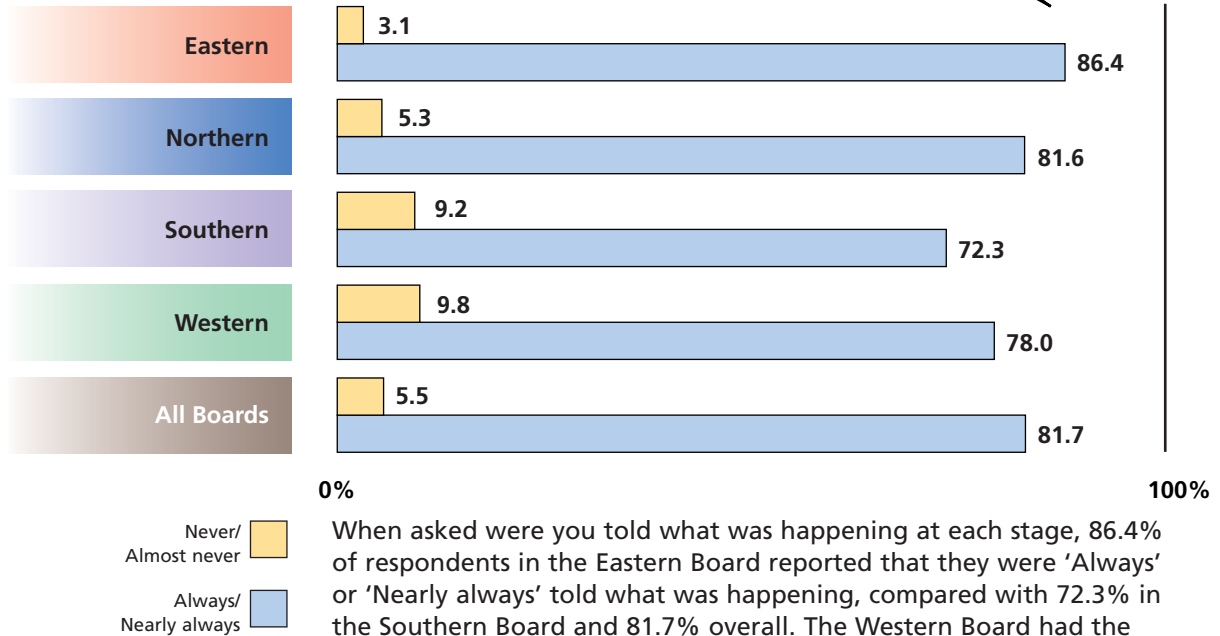
When asked to take everything into account, just over 1 in 5 respondents (20.7%) reported that they were 'Very dissatisfied' or 'Dissatisfied' with the service provided. By way of comparison, just under 43% indicated that they were 'Very satisfied' with the service, and almost 37% reported that they were 'Satisfied' with the service.

# Appendix C.2

## THE INFORMATION YOU RECEIVED

Question 1:

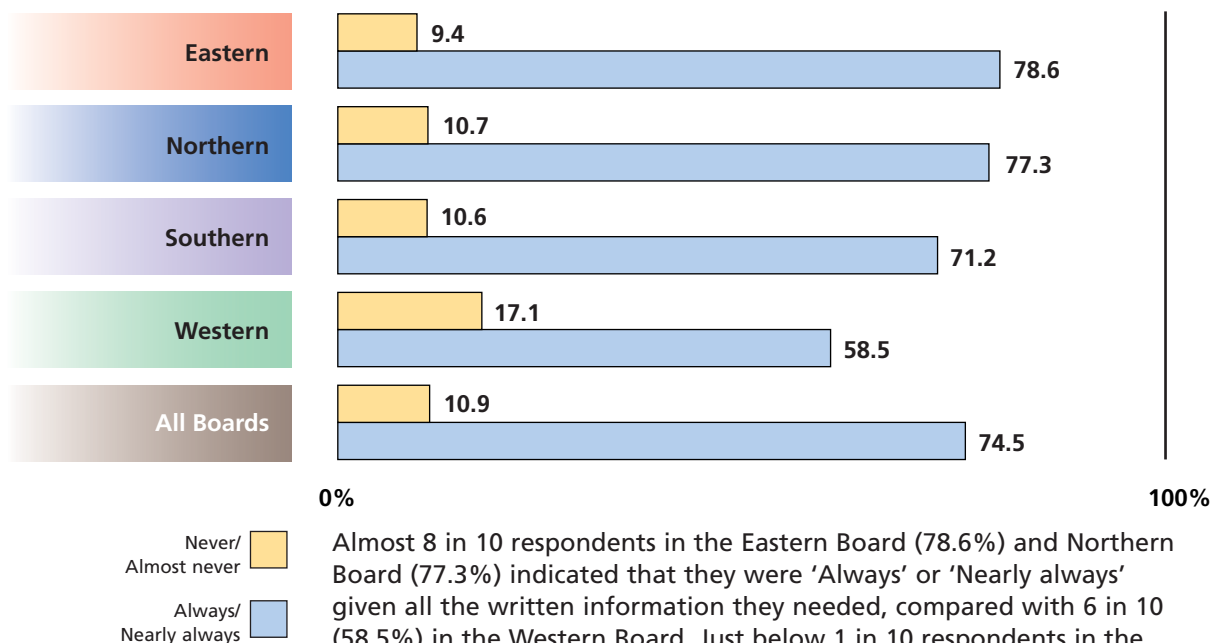
Were you told what was happening at each stage?



When asked were you told what was happening at each stage, 86.4% of respondents in the Eastern Board reported that they were 'Always' or 'Nearly always' told what was happening, compared with 72.3% in the Southern Board and 81.7% overall. The Western Board had the highest proportion of respondents (9.8%) who indicated that they were 'Never' or 'Almost never' told what was happening at each stage. By way of contrast the Eastern Board had the lowest proportion (3.1%) of respondents reporting that they were 'Never' or 'Almost never' told what was happening at each stage.

Question 2:

Were you given all the written information you needed?



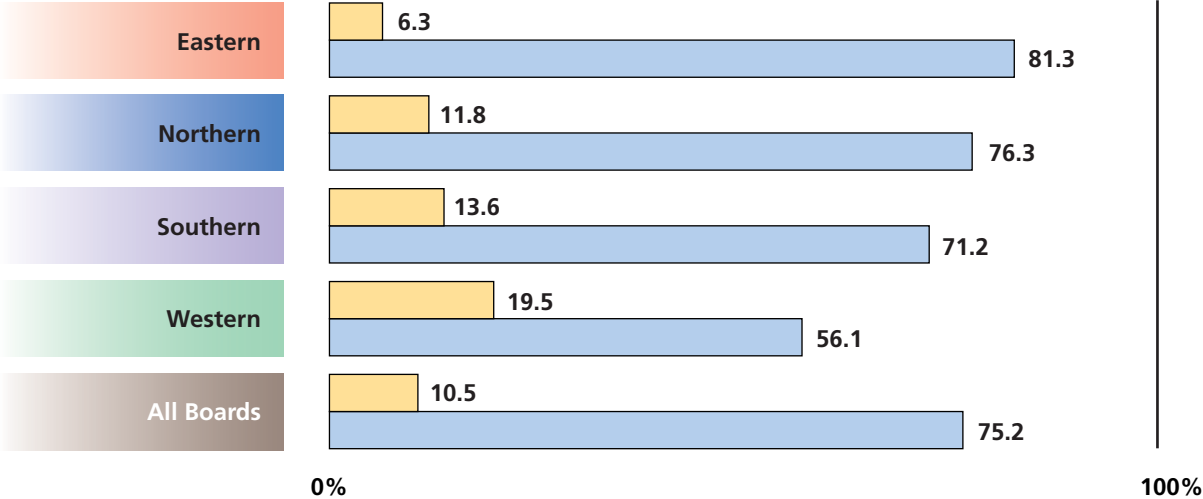
Almost 8 in 10 respondents in the Eastern Board (78.6%) and Northern Board (77.3%) indicated that they were 'Always' or 'Nearly always' given all the written information they needed, compared with 6 in 10 (58.5%) in the Western Board. Just below 1 in 10 respondents in the Eastern Board indicated they were 'Never' or 'Almost never' given all the written information they needed, compared with almost 2 in 10 respondents in the Western Board.

# Appendix C.2

## THE INFORMATION YOU RECIEVED

Question 3:

Were you given the information at the time you needed it?



Never/  
Almost never

Always/  
Nearly always

When asked if they were given all the information they needed at the time they needed it, 81.3% of respondents in the Eastern Board, 76.3% in the Northern Board, and 71.2% in the Southern Board reported that they were 'Always' or 'Nearly always' given the information they needed when they needed it. Less than 60% of respondents in the Western Board reported that they were 'Always' or 'Nearly always' given all the information they needed when they needed it.

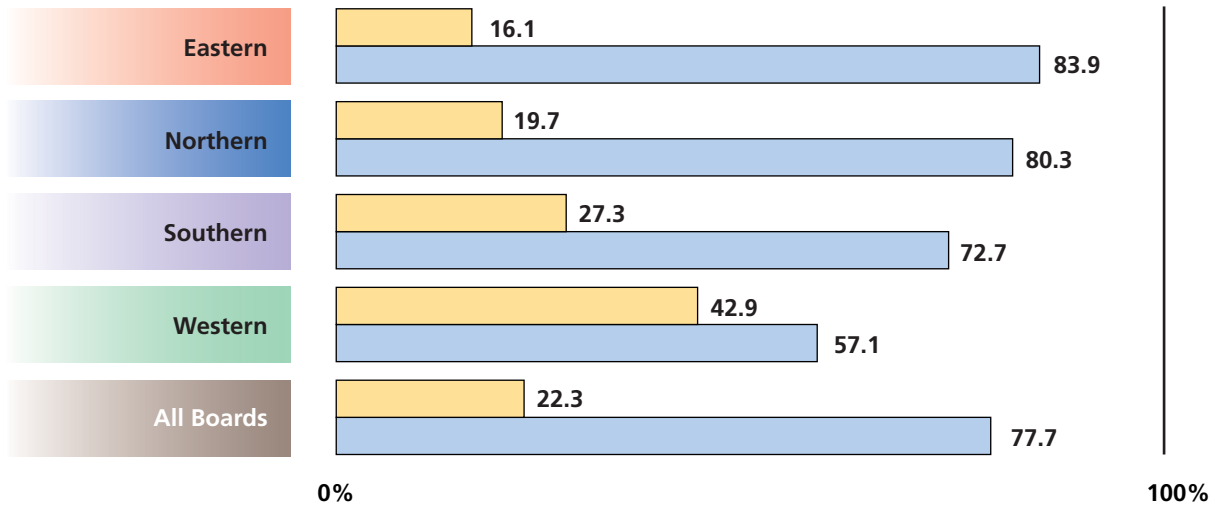
Almost 20% of respondents in the Western Board reported that they were 'Never' or 'Almost never' given the information they needed at the time they needed it, compared with 6.3% of respondents in the Eastern Board.

# Appendix C.2

## THE INFORMATION YOU RECEIVED

Question 4:

Were you told about all the ways that Social Services could help you?



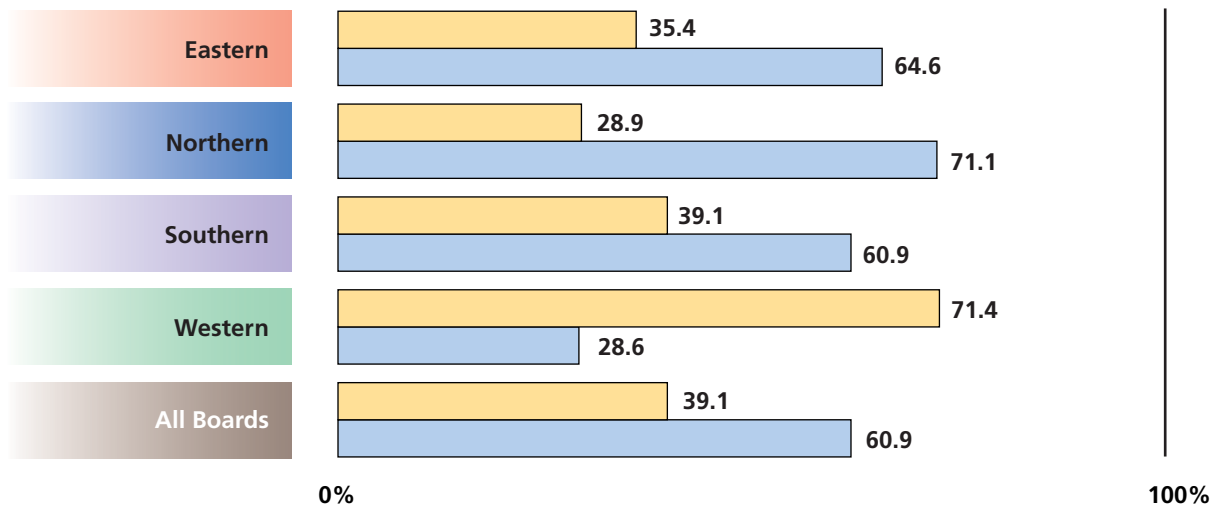
Definitely not/  
Probably not

Definitely yes/  
Probably yes

Over 80% of respondents in both the Eastern (83.9%) and Northern (80.3%) Boards indicated that they were 'Definitely told' or 'Probably told' about all the ways that Social Services could help them. This compared with below 60% of respondents in the Western Board.

Question 5:

Were you told about other services or groups that would be of help to you?



Definitely not/  
Probably not

Definitely yes/  
Probably yes

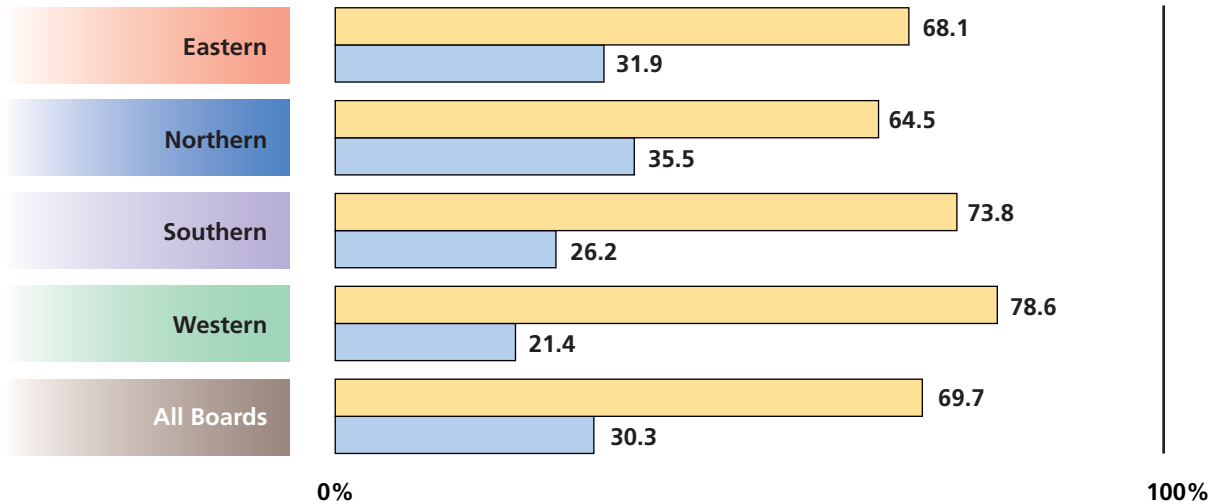
When asked had they been told about other services or groups which could help them, over 70% of respondents in the Western Board reported that they had 'Definitely not' or 'Probably not' been told, compared with under 30% in the Northern Board.

# Appendix C.2

## THE INFORMATION YOU RECEIVED

Question 6:

Were you given information about how to complain if you weren't satisfied with the service you received?



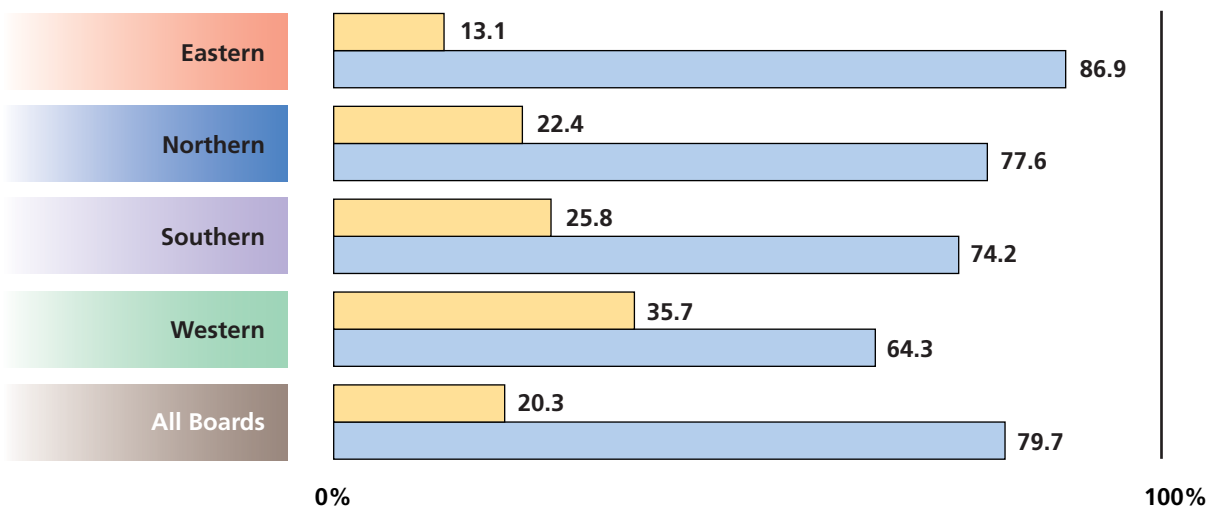
Definitely not/  
Probably not

Definitely yes/  
Probably yes

Almost 79% of respondents in the Western Board indicated that they were 'Definitely not' or 'Probably not' given the information they needed to make a complaint. This compared with 73.8% in the Southern Board, 68.1% in the Eastern Board and 64.5% in the Northern Board.

Question 7

Overall, how well do you feel Social Services kept you informed?



Not very well/  
Not well at all

Very well/  
Quite well

In the Eastern Board, about 87% of respondents indicated that they felt Social Services had kept them 'Very well' or 'Quite well' informed during the adoption process. This compared with 64% in the Western Board.

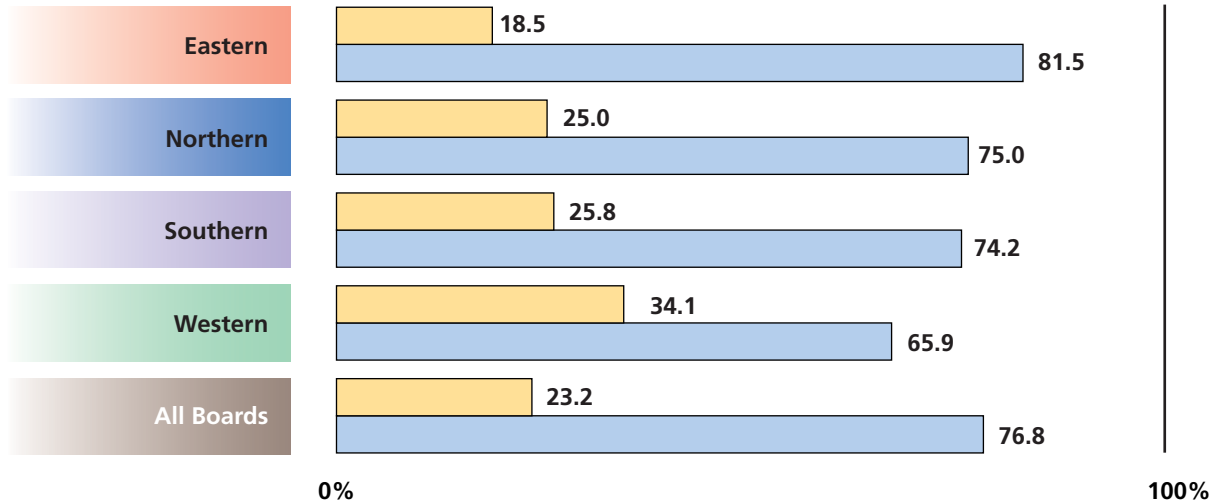
Some 36% of respondents in the Western Board indicated that they had been 'Not very well' or 'Not well at all' informed by Social Services during the adoption process. This compared with 13% of respondents in the Eastern Board.

## Appendix C.2

### THE EFFICIENCY OF THE SERVICE

Question 8:

How well do you think the service was organised?



Not very well organised/  
Not at all well organised

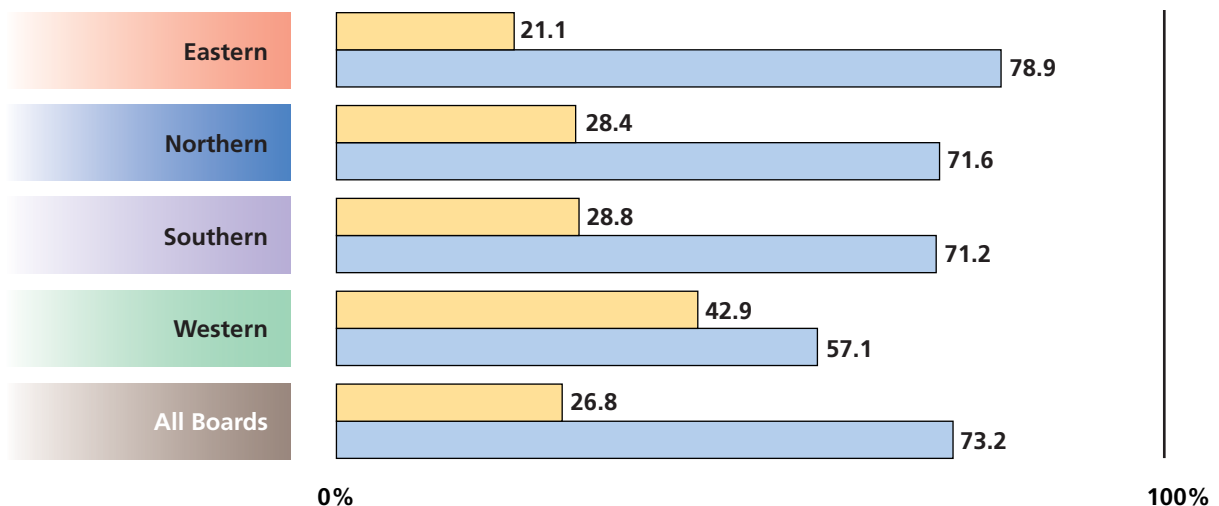
Very well organised/  
Quite well organised

When asked about how well the service was organised, 81.5% of respondents in the Eastern Board stated that they thought the service was 'Very well' or 'Quite well' organised, compared with 65.9% in the Western Board.

Over 3 in 10 (34.1%) respondents in the Western Board stated that they felt the service was 'Not very well' or 'Not at all well' organised.

Question 9:

How promptly was help provided to you?



Not very promptly/  
Not at all promptly

Very promptly/  
Quite promptly

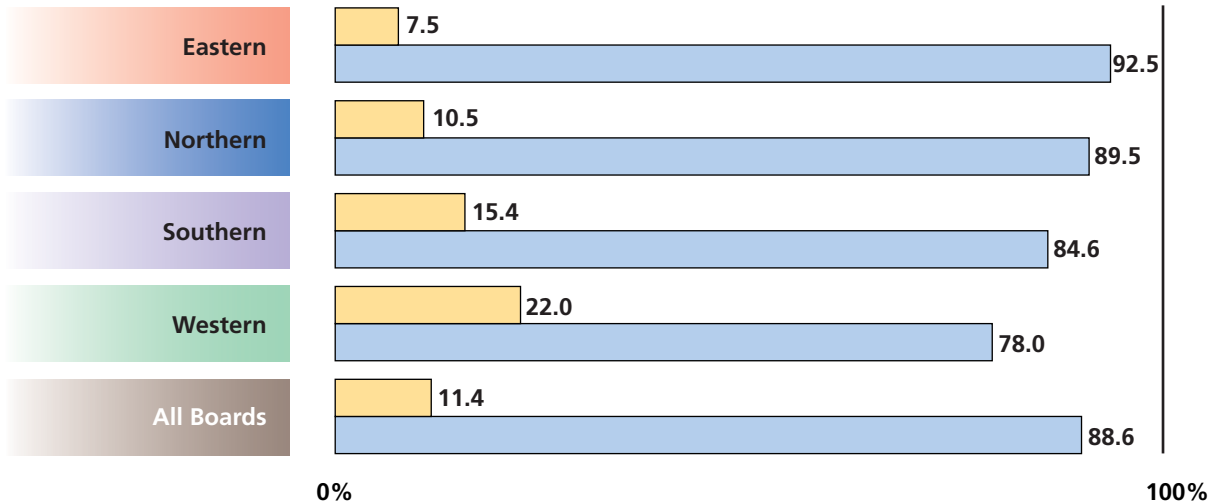
In terms of help provided, around 43% of respondents in the Western Board indicated that help was 'Not very promptly' or 'Not at all promptly' provided. This compared with about 79% of respondents in the Eastern Board who indicated that help was provided 'Very promptly' or 'Quite promptly'.

# Appendix C.2

## THE EFFICIENCY OF THE SERVICE

Question 10:

Were you told what to expect?



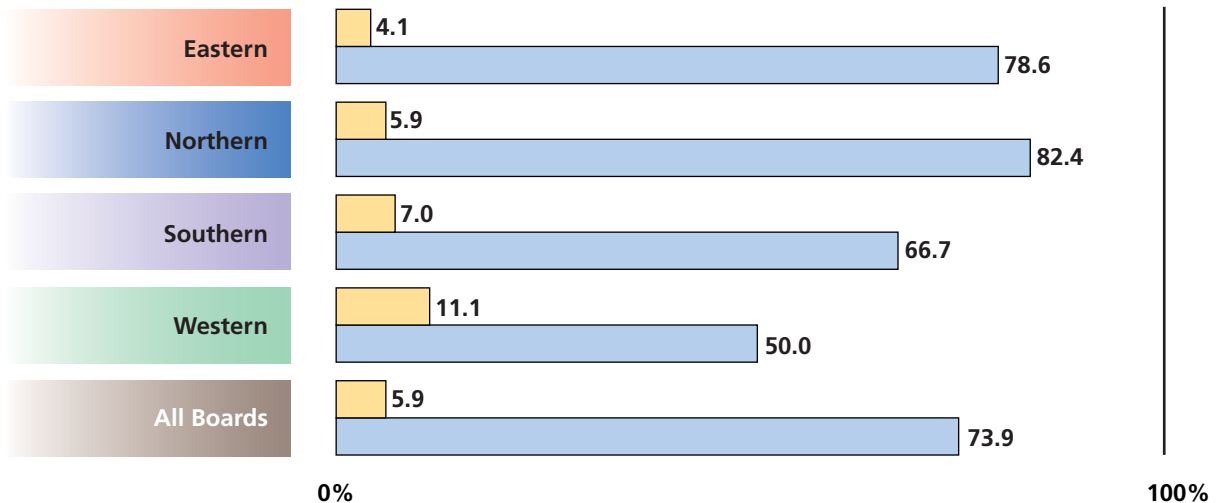
Probably not told/  
Definitely not told

Definitely told/  
Probably told

When asked if they were told what to expect, 92.5% of respondents in the Eastern Board reported that they were 'Definitely told' or 'Probably told' what to expect. This was similar across the other Boards, although, 22% of respondents in the Western Board reported that they were 'Definitely not' or 'Probably not' told what to expect.

Question 11:

Did this reflect what actually happened?



Never/  
Almost never

Always/  
Nearly always

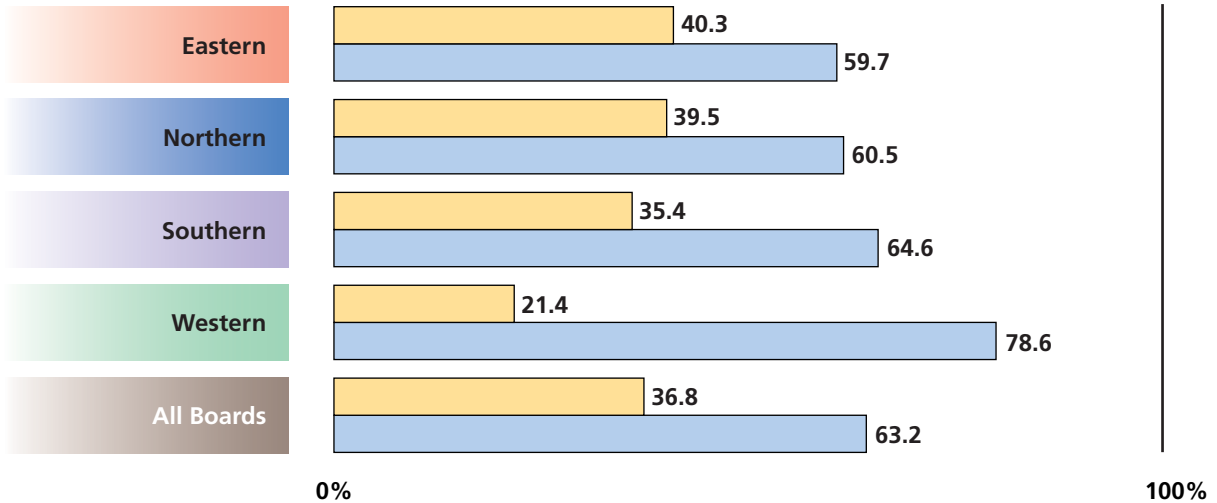
Only respondents who reported that they had 'Definitely' or 'Probably' been told what to expect were able to answer question 11. Of those who had been told what to expect, 82% of respondents in the Northern Board reported that what they were told would happen 'Always' or 'Nearly always' happened. This compared with 50% in the Western Board. Some 11% of respondents in the Western Board reported that what they were told would happen 'Never' or 'Almost Never' happened.

# Appendix C.2

## THE EFFICIENCY OF THE SERVICE

Question 12:

Did You experience delay with any aspects of the service?



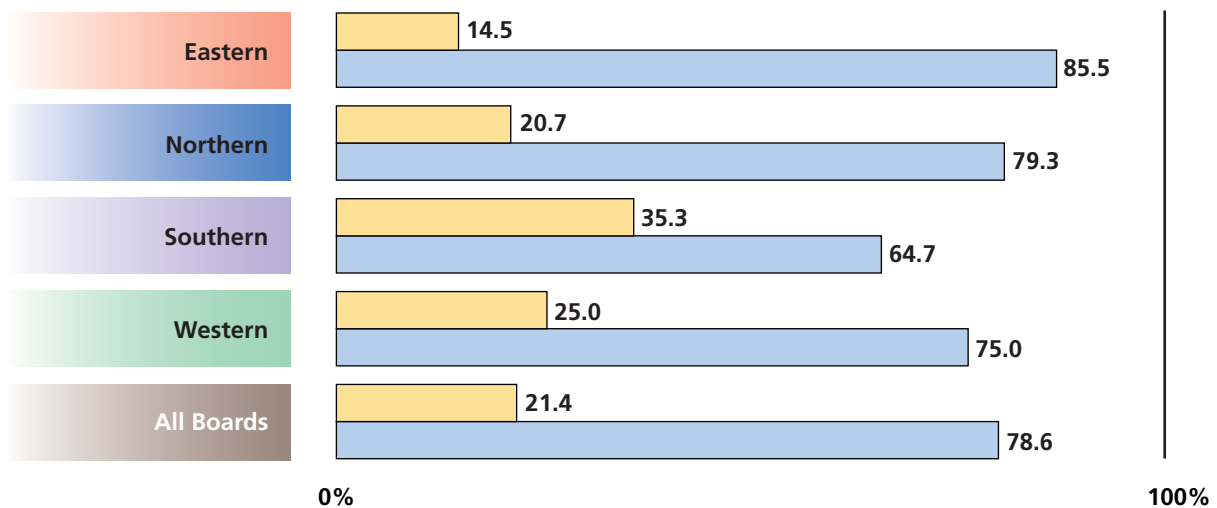
Hardly ever/  
Never

Often/  
On occasions

When asked if they had experienced delay with any aspect of the service, almost 8 in 10 (78.6%) respondents in the Western Board indicated that they had 'Often' or 'On occasion' experienced delay. Almost 4 in 10 respondents in the Eastern (40.3%) and Northern (39.5%) Boards indicated that they 'Hardly ever' or 'Never' experienced a delay with any aspect of the service.

Question 13:

Was the reason for the delay explained to you?



Reason for delay  
not explained

Reason for delay  
explained

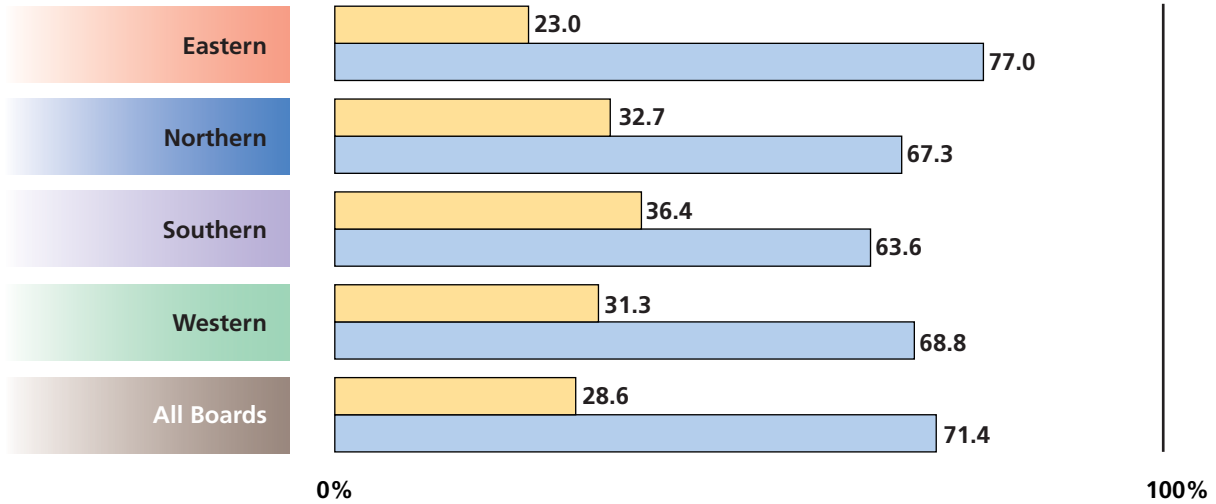
Only those respondents who indicated that they had experienced delay with any aspect of the service were able to comment on questions 13-14. Of those who experienced delay with the service, almost 4 in 10 (35.3%) respondents in the Southern Board had not been informed of the reason for the delay, compared with just over 1 in 10 (14.5%) in the Eastern Board.

# Appendix C.2

## THE EFFICIENCY OF THE SERVICE

Question 14:

How satisfied were you with the explanation you were given?



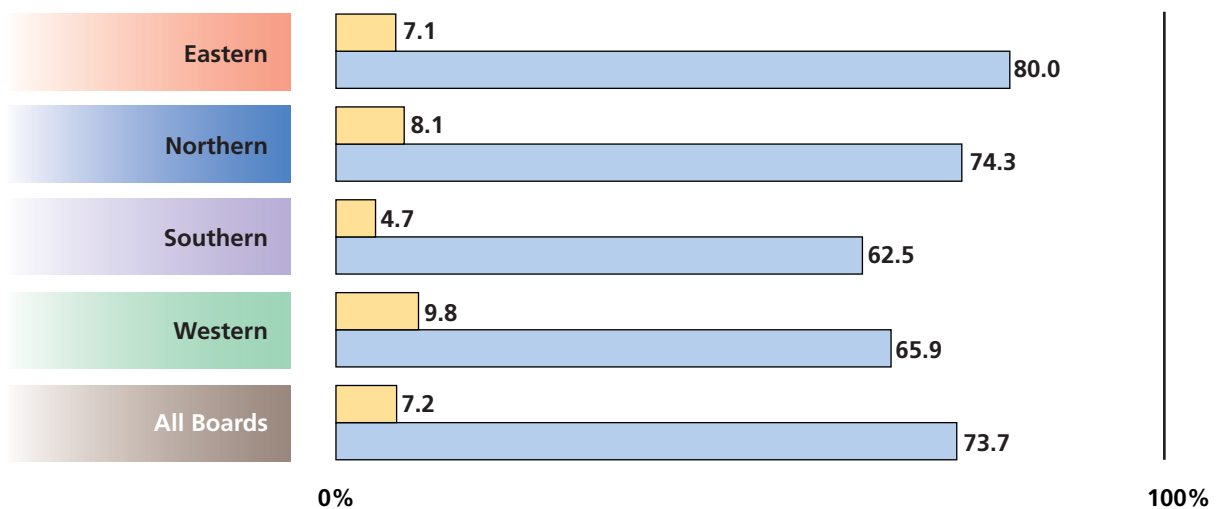
Dissatisfied/Very dissatisfied ■  
 Very satisfied/Satisfied ■

Of those given a reason for delays in service, almost 8 in 10 (77.0%) respondents in the Eastern Board stated that they were 'Satisfied' or 'Very satisfied' with the reason they were given.

However, around 36% of respondents in the Southern Board, 33% in the Northern Board, 31% in the Western Board and 23% in the Eastern Board indicated that they were 'Dissatisfied' or 'Very dissatisfied' with the explanation they were given.

Question 15:

Were any concerns or questions you had about the service answered to your satisfaction?



Never/Almost never ■  
 Always/Nearly always ■

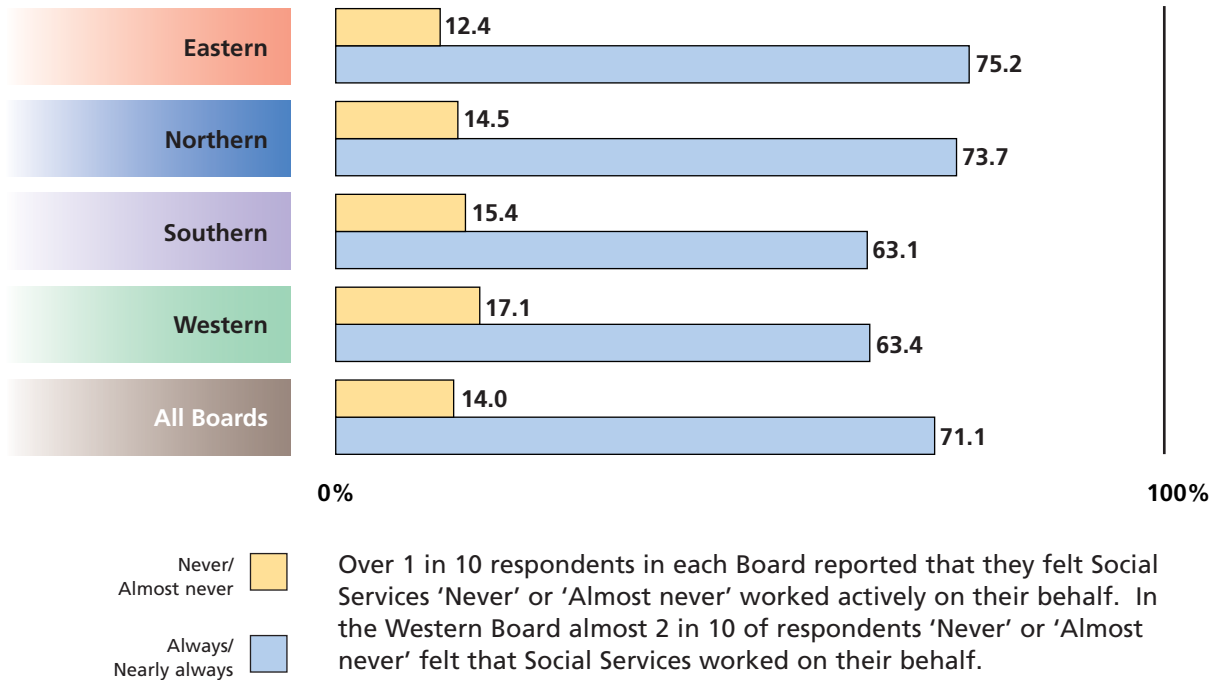
When asked had any concerns or questions they had about the service been answered to their satisfaction, less than 1 in 10 respondents in each Board indicated that they were 'Almost never' or 'Never' given a satisfactory answer.

# Appendix C.2

## THE EFFICIENCY OF THE SERVICE

In the Eastern Board, 8 in 10 (80.0%) respondents indicated that they were 'Always' or 'Nearly always' given a satisfactory answer to questions or concerns they had about the service, compared with 6 in 10 (62.5%) respondents in the Southern Board.

**Question 16:** Did you feel Social Services worked actively on your behalf?



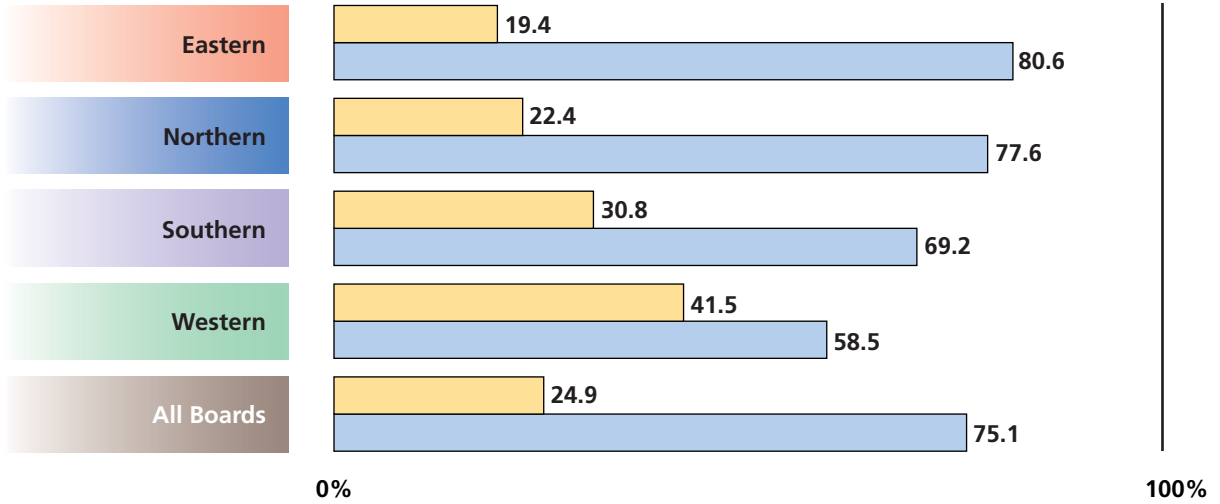
In the Eastern Board, 75.2% of respondents reported that they felt Social Services 'Always' or 'Nearly always' worked actively on their behalf, compared with 63.1% in the Southern Board and 63.4% in the Western Board.

# Appendix C.2

## THE EFFICIENCY OF THE SERVICE

Question 17:

Taking everything into account, did you get all the help you needed?



Definitely not/  
Probably not

Definitely yes/  
Probably yes

When asked to take everything into account just over 4 in 10 (41.5%) respondents in the Western Board indicated that they did 'Definitely not' or 'Probably not' get all the help they needed, compared with 19% of respondents in the Eastern Board and 22% in the Northern Board.

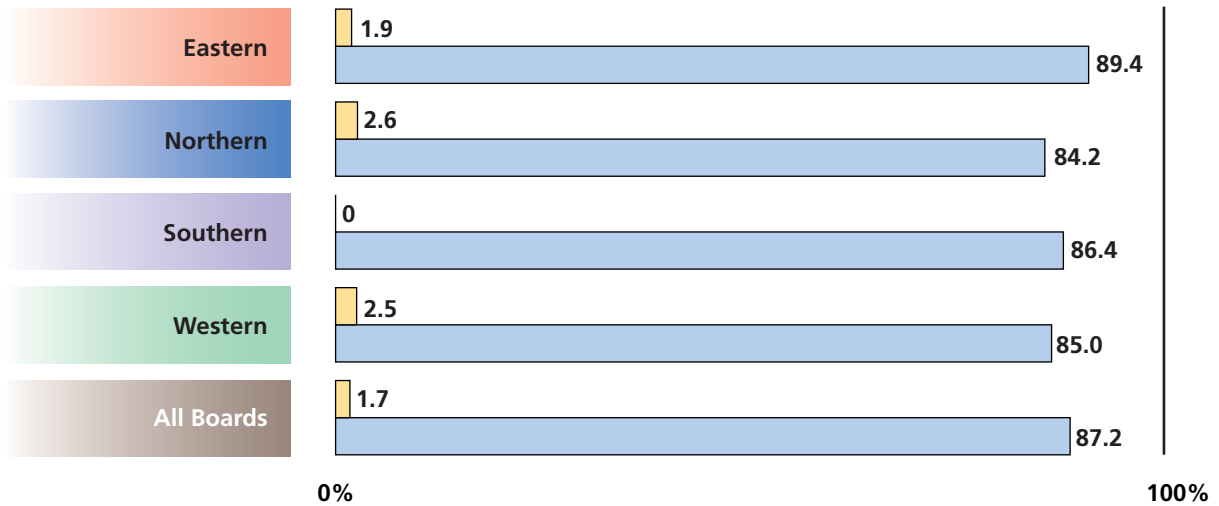
Eighty one percent of respondents in the Eastern Board, 78% in the Northern Board, 69% in the Southern Board indicated that they 'Definitely' or 'Probably' got all the help they needed.

## Appendix C.2

### THE STAFF YOU WERE IN CONTACT WITH

Question 18a:

Were staff approachable?

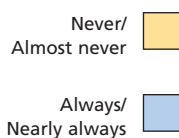
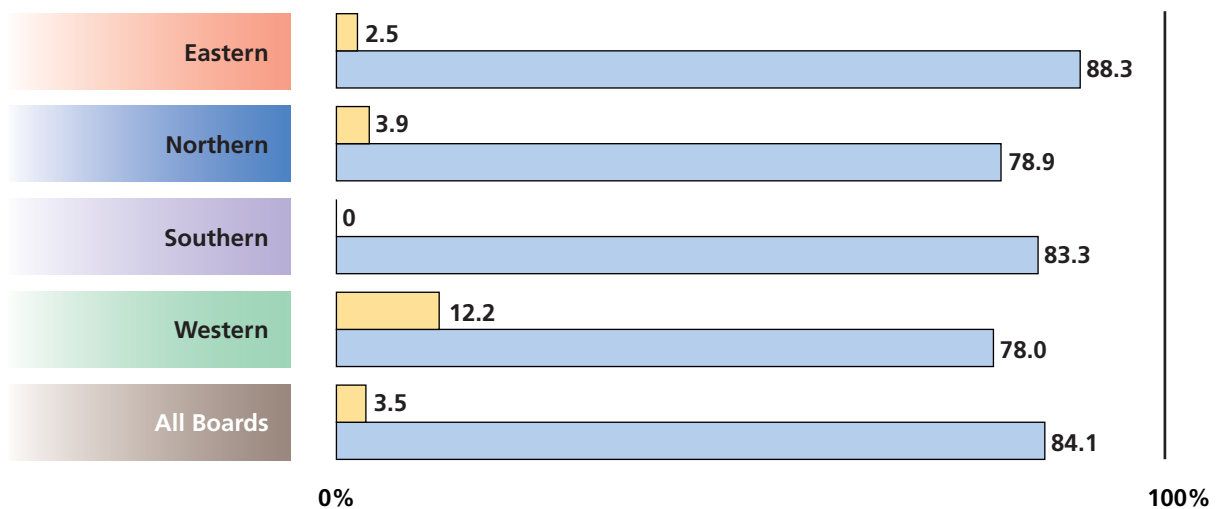


When asked if they felt staff were approachable, over 84% of respondents in each Board indicated that they felt staff were 'Always' or 'Nearly always' approachable.

Few respondents (1.7%) indicated that staff were 'Almost never' or 'Never' approachable.

Question 18b:

Were staff helpful?



Over 8 in 10 respondents in Eastern (88.3%) and Southern (83.3%) Boards reported that staff were 'Always' or 'Nearly always' helpful.

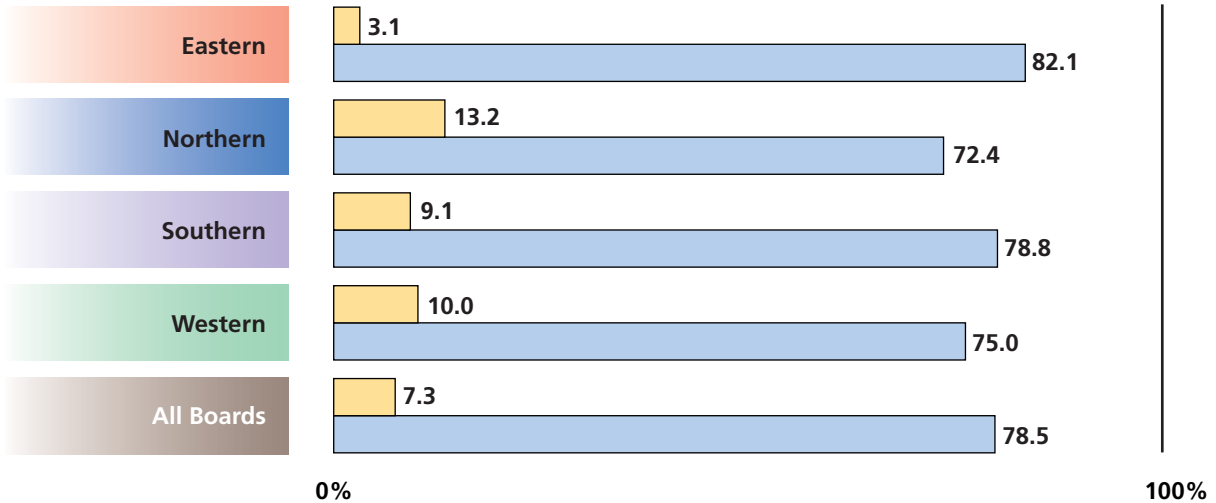
In the Western Board, over 1 in 10 (12.2%) respondents reported that staff were 'Never' or 'Almost never' helpful, compared with no respondents in the Southern Board.

# Appendix C.2

## THE STAFF YOU WERE IN CONTACT WITH

Question 18c:

Were staff sensitive to your needs?



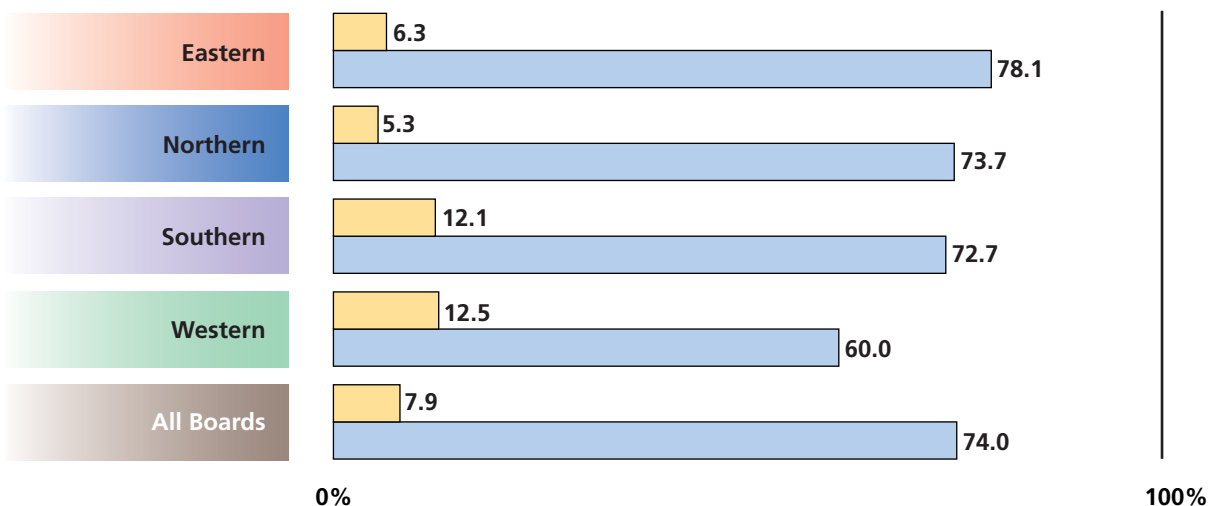
Never/  
Almost never

Always/  
Nearly always

Around 13% of respondents in the Northern Board indicated that staff were 'Never' or 'Almost never' sensitive to their needs, compared with 3% in the Eastern Board. Almost 8 in 10 respondents in the Eastern (82.1%) and Southern (78.8%) Boards indicated that staff were 'Always' or 'Nearly always' sensitive to their needs.

Question 18d:

Were staff easy to contact?



Never/  
Almost never

Always/  
Nearly always

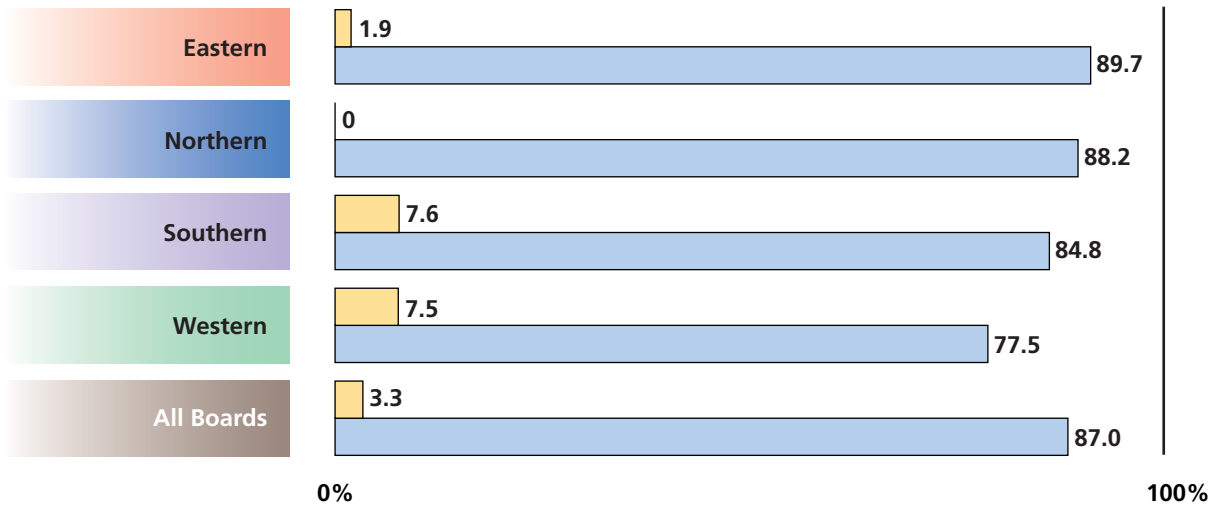
When asked if staff were easy to contact, 78.1% of respondents in the Eastern Board reported that staff were 'Always' or 'Nearly always' easy to contact, compared with 60.0% in the Western Board. Just over 1 in 10 respondents in the Southern (12.1%) and Western (12.5%) Boards reported that staff were 'Never' or 'Almost never' easy to contact.

# Appendix C.2

## THE STAFF YOU WERE IN CONTACT WITH

Question 18e:

Were staff reliable in keeping appointments?



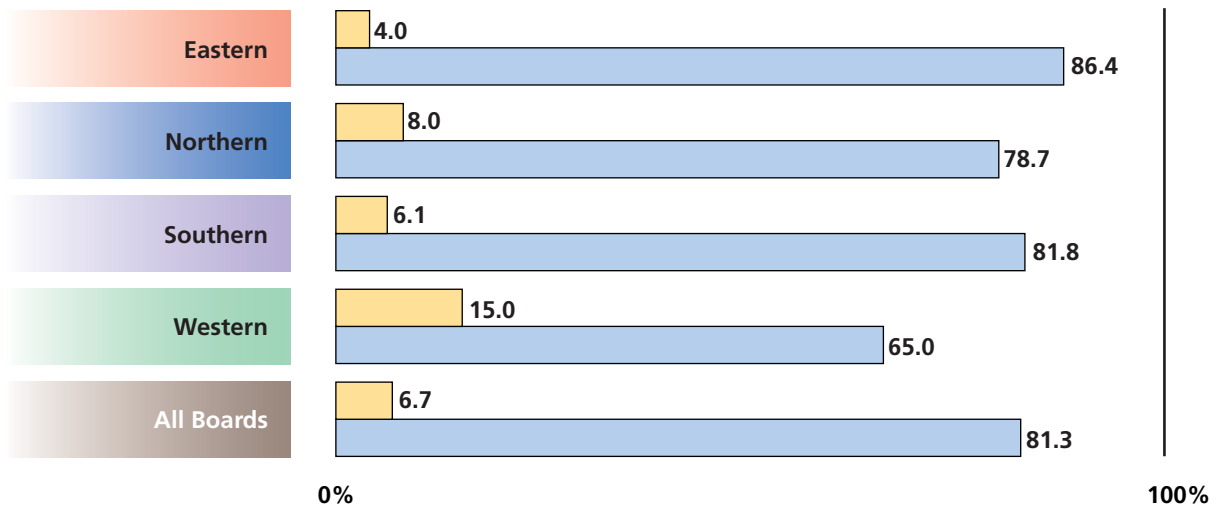
Never/  
Almost never

Always/  
Nearly always

No respondents in the Northern Board felt that staff were 'Never' or 'Almost never' reliable in keeping appointments. Almost 90% of respondents in the Eastern Board and 88% in the Northern Board felt that staff were 'Always' or 'Nearly always' reliable in keeping appointments.

Question 18f:

Were staff reliable in doing what they said they would do?



Never/  
Almost never

Always/  
Nearly always

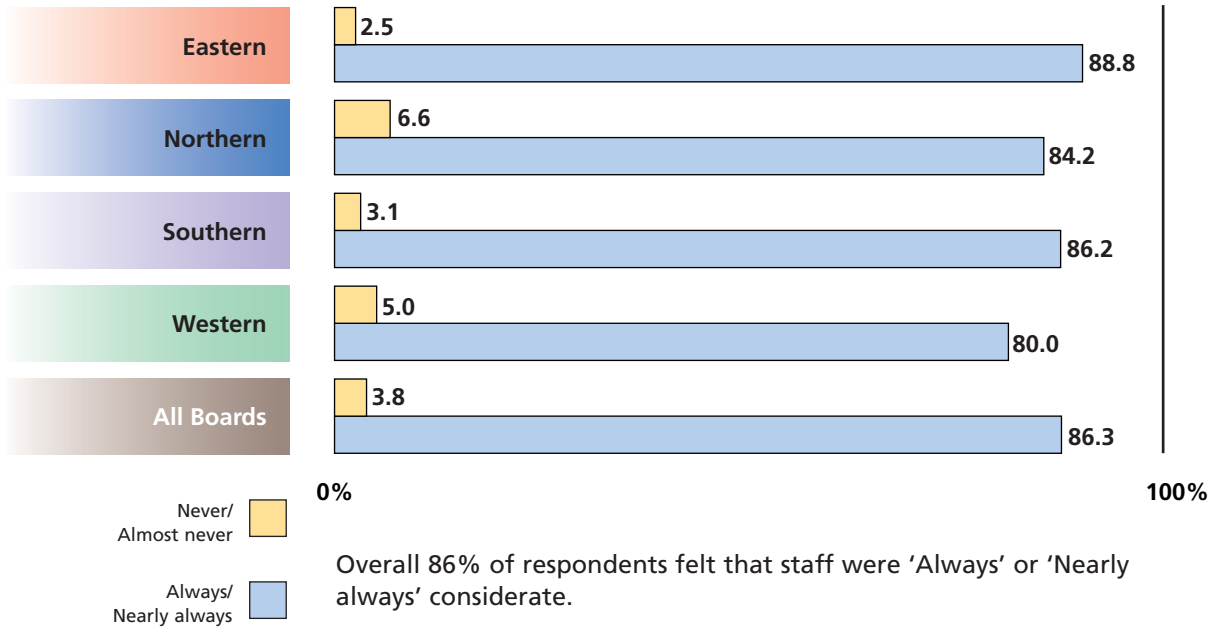
When asked how reliable staff were in doing what they said they would do over 1 in 10 (15.0%) respondents in the Western Board indicated that staff 'Never' or 'Almost never' did what they said they would do, compared with 1 in 25 (4%) in the Eastern Board. 86% of respondents in the Eastern Board, 79% in the Northern Board and 82% in the Southern Board felt that staff 'Always' or 'Nearly always' did what they said they would, compared with 65% in the Western Board.

# Appendix C.2

## THE STAFF YOU WERE IN CONTACT WITH

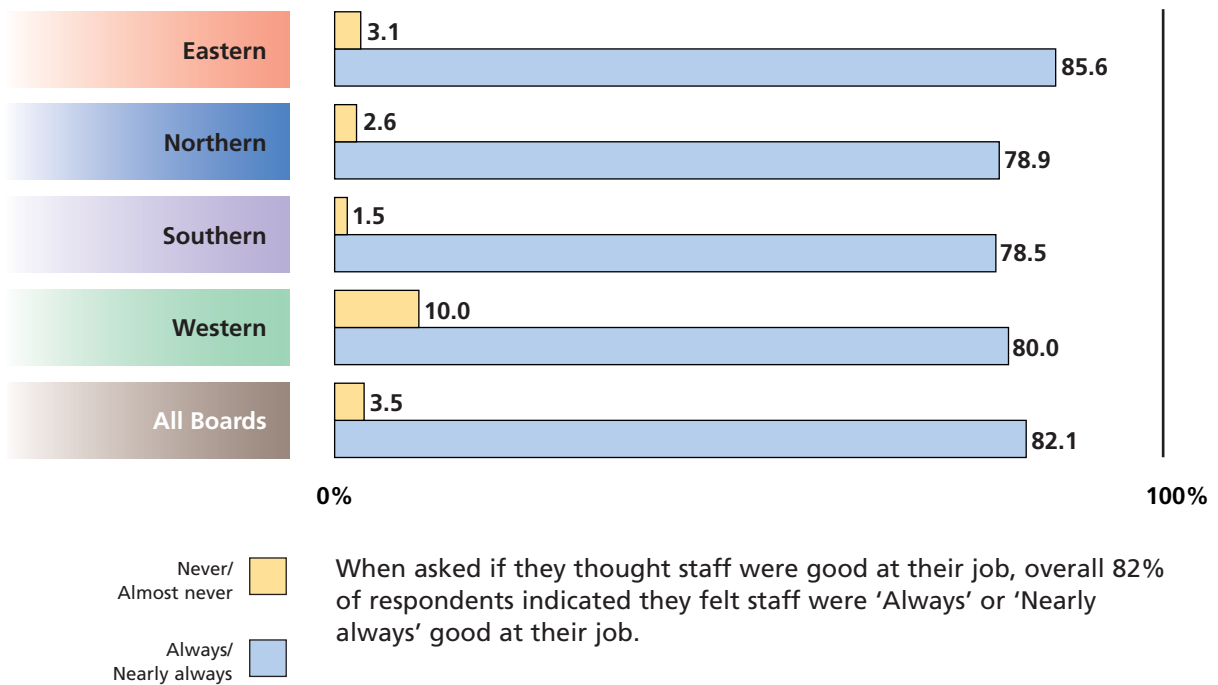
Question 18g:

Were staff considerate?



Question 18h:

Were staff good at their job?

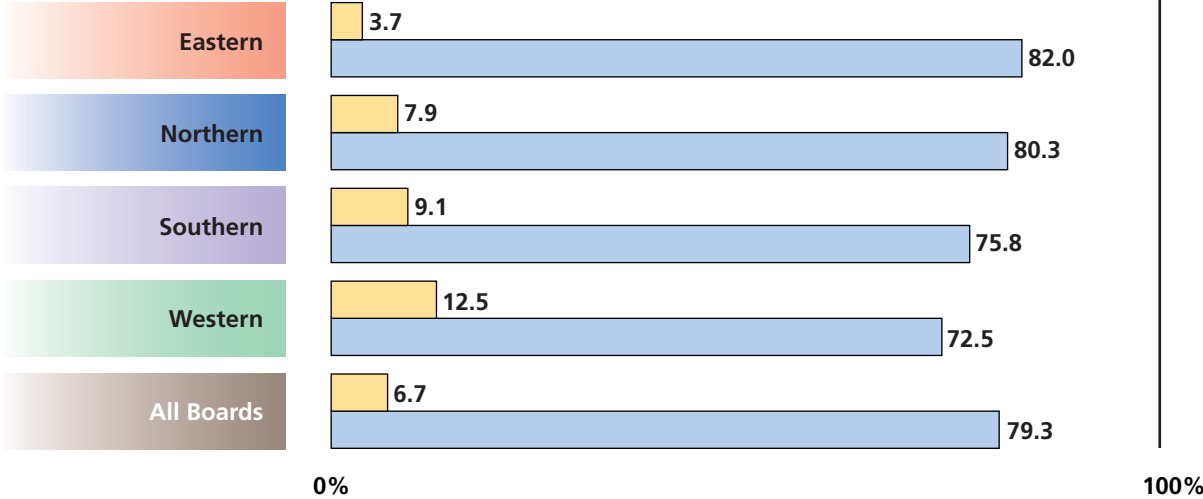


# Appendix C.2

## THE STAFF YOU WERE IN CONTACT WITH

Question 18i:

Were staff knowledgeable about the things you expected them to know?



Never/  
Almost never

Always/  
Nearly always

Just over 8 in 10 respondents in the Eastern (82.0%) and Northern (80.3%) Boards indicated that staff 'Always' or 'Nearly always' knew about the things they expected them to know about.

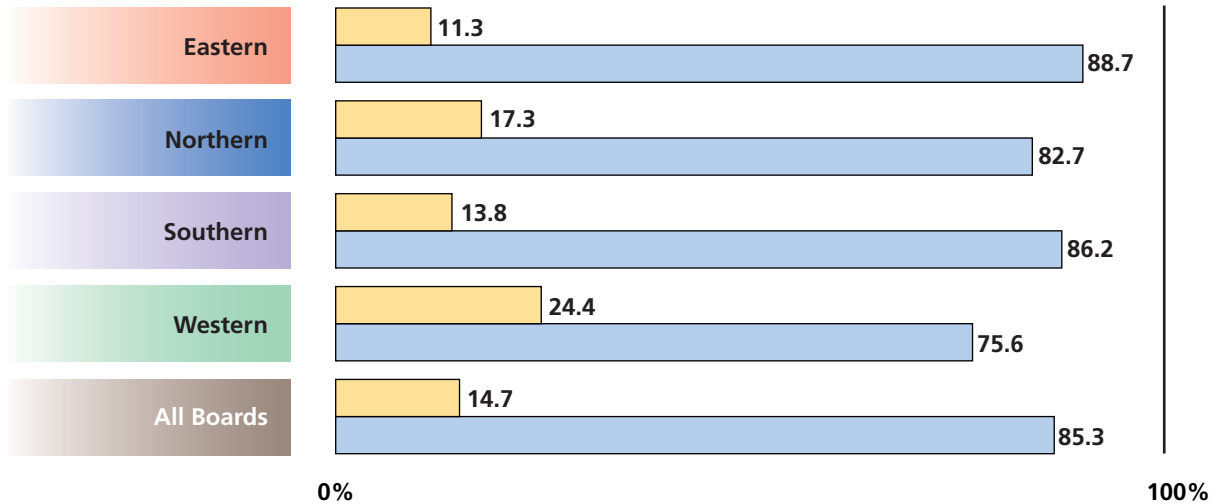
By contrast, over 1 in 10 (12.5%) respondents in the Western Board indicated that staff 'Never' or 'Almost never' knew about the things they expected them to know about.

## Appendix C.2

### YOUR SATISFACTION WITH THE SERVICE

Question 19:

How fairly do you think you were treated?



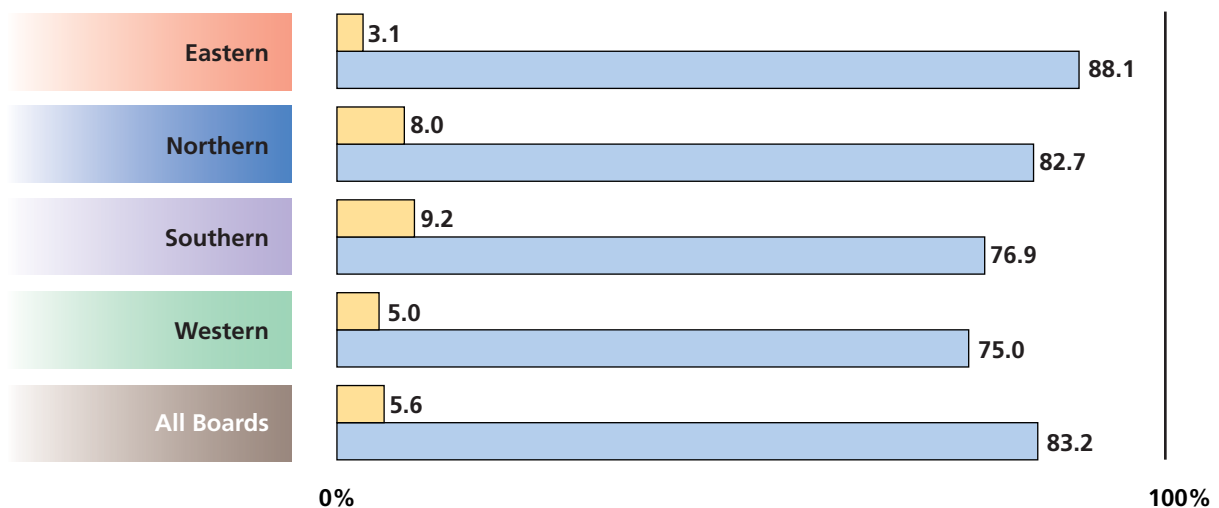
Not very fairly/  
Not at all fairly

Very fairly/  
fairly

When asked how fairly they thought they were treated, almost 9 in 10 respondents in the Eastern (88.7%) and Southern (86.2%) Boards indicated that they had been 'Fairly' or 'Very fairly' treated. However, just under a quarter of respondents in the Western Board indicated that they had been treated 'Not at all fairly' or 'Not very fairly'.

Question 20:

Do you feel that you were listened to?



Never/  
Almost never

Always/  
Nearly always

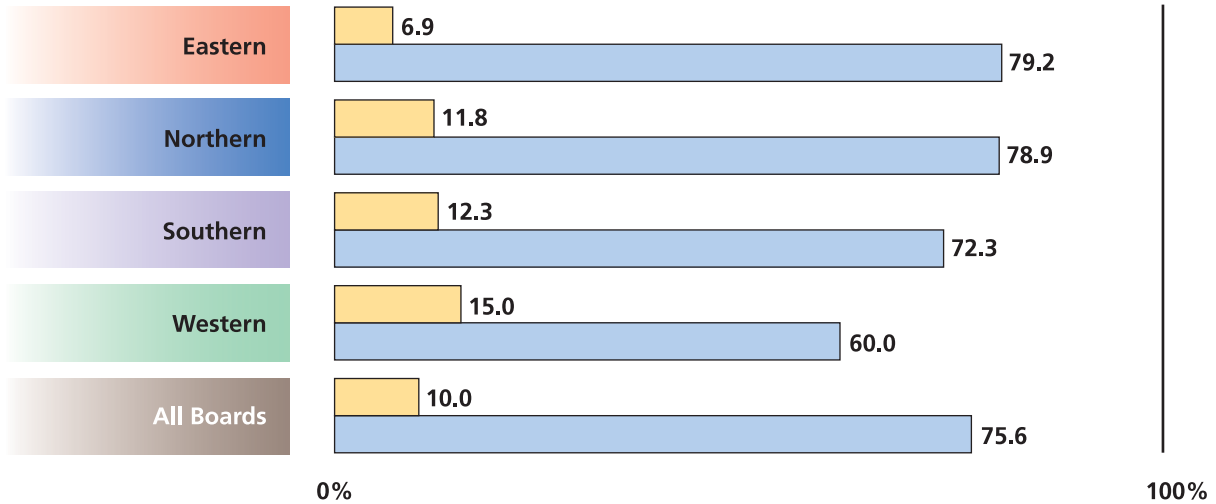
Three quarters (75.0%) of respondents in the Western Board felt that they had 'Always' or 'Nearly always' been listened to, compared with nearly 9 in 10 (88.1%) in the Eastern Board. By contrast, almost 1 in 10 (9.2%) respondents in the Southern Board felt that they had 'Never' or 'Almost never' been listened to.

# Appendix C.2

## YOUR SATISFACTION WITH THE SERVICE

Question 21:

**Do you feel that your needs were recognised?**



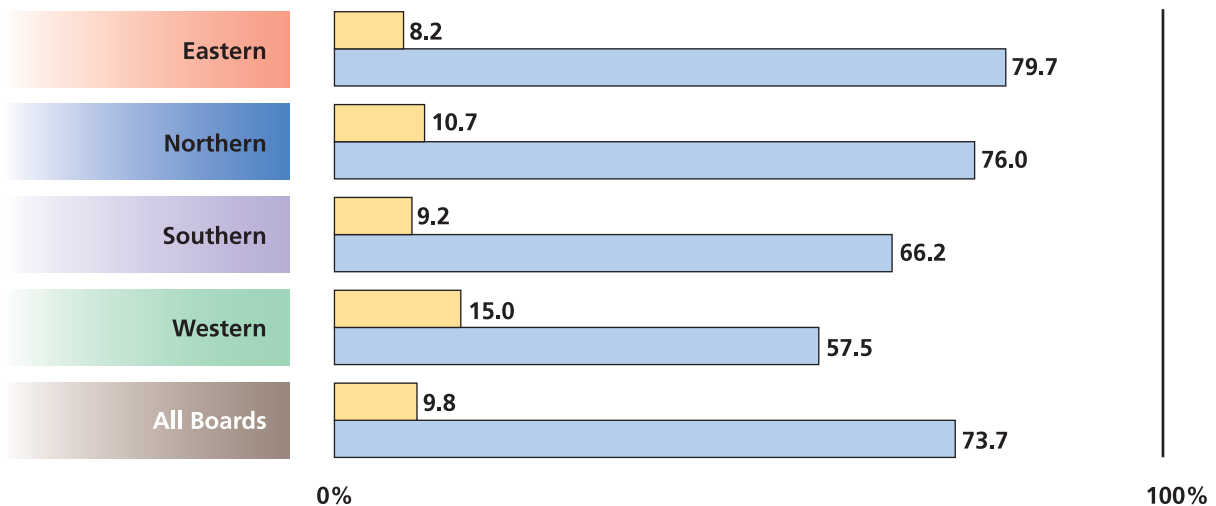
Never/  
Almost never

Always/  
Nearly always

Just under 80% of respondents in the Eastern and the Northern Boards felt that their needs had 'Always' or 'Nearly always' been recognised, compared with 60% in the Western Board. In the Eastern Board, less than 7% of respondents felt that their needs had 'Never' or 'Almost never' been recognised, compared with 15% in the Western Board.

Question 22:

**Do you feel that your needs were dealt with appropriately?**



Never/  
Almost never

Always/  
Nearly always

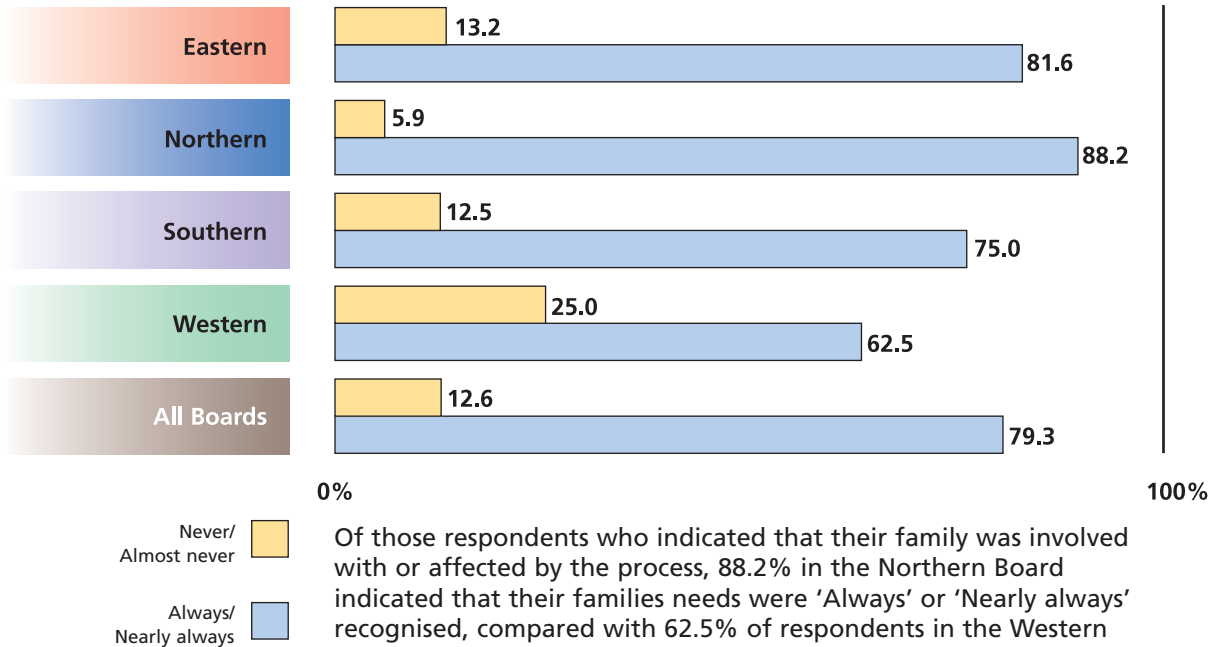
When asked if their needs had been dealt with appropriately, 57.5% of respondents in the Western Board felt that their needs were 'Always' or 'Nearly always' dealt with appropriately, compared with 80% in the Eastern Board. Fifteen per cent of respondents in the Western Board and 10% in the Northern Board felt that their needs were 'Never' or 'Almost never' appropriately dealt with.

## Appendix C.2

### YOUR SATISFACTION WITH THE SERVICE

Question 23:

Were your family's needs recognised?

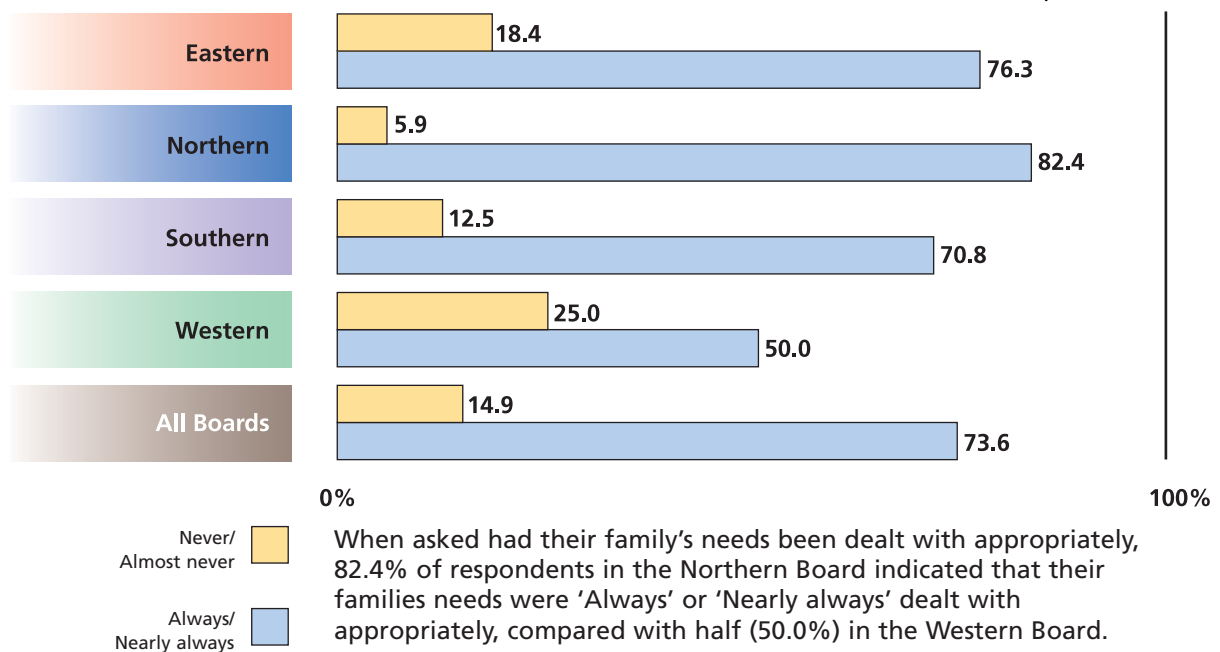


Of those respondents who indicated that their family was involved with or affected by the process, 88.2% in the Northern Board indicated that their families needs were 'Always' or 'Nearly always' recognised, compared with 62.5% of respondents in the Western Board.

One quarter of respondents in the Western Board indicated that their families' needs were 'Never' or 'Almost never' recognised.

Question 24:

Were your family's needs dealt with appropriately?



When asked had their family's needs been dealt with appropriately, 82.4% of respondents in the Northern Board indicated that their families needs were 'Always' or 'Nearly always' dealt with appropriately, compared with half (50.0%) in the Western Board.

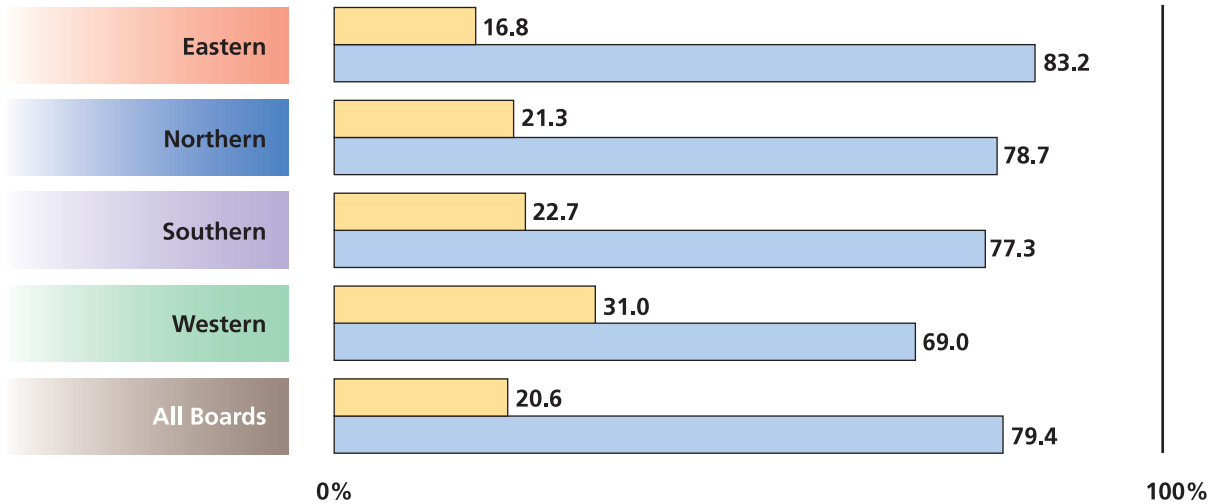
Around 25% of respondents in the Western Board and 18% in the Eastern Board felt that their families needs had 'Never' or 'Almost never' been dealt with appropriately.

# Appendix C.2

## YOUR SATISFACTION WITH THE SERVICE

Question 25:

Taking everything into account how satisfied were you with the service?



Dissatisfied/  
Very dissatisfied

Very satisfied/  
Satisfied

When asked to take everything into account and indicate how satisfied they were with the service, 83% of respondents in the Eastern Board, 79% in the Northern Board and 77% in the Southern Board reported that they were 'Satisfied' or 'Very satisfied' with the service. This compared with 69% in the Western Board. Thirty one per cent of respondents in the Western Board were 'Dissatisfied' or 'Very dissatisfied' with the service.

# Appendix C.3

## TABLES

### Question 1: Were you told what was happening at each stage?

		Always/Nearly Always	Sometimes	Almost Never/ Never	Total
Domestic Applicants	Count	146	21	11	178
	Row %	82.0%	11.8%	6.2%	100.0%
Inter Country Applicants	Count	21	9	1	31
	Row %	67.7%	29.0%	3.2%	100.0%
Adults who have been adopted	Count	66	11	3	80
	Row %	82.5%	13.8%	3.8%	100.0%
Step parent/ family applicants	Count	48	3	4	55
	Row %	87.3%	5.4%	7.3%	100.0%
Total	Count	281	44	19	344
	Row %	81.7%	12.8%	5.5%	100.0%

When asked if they were told what was happening at each stage of the adoption process over 80% of applicants reported that this was 'Always' or 'Nearly always' the case; the percentage of applicants reporting this ranged from 67.7% (21) of Inter Country applicants to 87.3% (48) of Step parent/family applicants. Overall, 5.5% (19) of applicants reported that they were 'Never' or 'Almost Never' told what was happening during the adoption process, 6.2% (11) of Domestic applicants and less than 5 applicants from each of the other applicant groups.

### Question 2: Were you given all the written information you needed?

		Always/Nearly Always	Sometimes	Almost Never/ Never	Total
Domestic Applicants	Count	130	29	18	177
	Row %	73.4%	16.4%	10.2%	100.0%
Inter Country Applicants	Count	21	6	4	31
	Row %	67.7%	19.4%	12.9%	100.0%
Adults who have been adopted	Count	60	10	8	78
	Row %	76.9%	12.8%	10.3%	100.0%
Step parent/ family applicants	Count	43	5	7	55
	Row %	78.2%	9.1%	12.7%	100.0%
Total	Count	254	50	37	341
	Row %	74.5%	14.7%	10.9%	100.0%

When asked if they had been given all the written information they needed, 78% (43) of Step parent/family applicants, 77% (60) of Adult Adoptions and 73% (130) of Domestic applicants indicated that they were 'Always' or 'Nearly always' given all the written information they needed. Overall, almost 11% (37) of applicants reported that they were 'Never' or 'Almost never' given all the written information they needed.

## Appendix C.3

### TABLES

#### Question 3: Were you given the information at the time you needed it?

		Always/Nearly Always	Sometimes	Almost Never/ Never	Total
Domestic Applicants	Count	133	28	17	178
	Row %	74.7%	15.7%	9.6%	100.0%
Inter Country Applicants	Count	21	6	4	31
	Row %	67.7%	19.4%	12.9%	100.0%
Adults who have been adopted	Count	57	13	9	79
	Row %	72.2%	16.5%	11.4%	100.0%
Step parent/ family applicants	Count	47	2	6	55
	Row %	85.5%	3.6%	10.9%	100.0%
Total	Count	258	49	36	343
	Row %	73.2%	14.3%	10.5%	100.0%

Overall 75% (258) of applicants indicated that they were given the information at the time they needed it, ranging from 85% (47) of Step parent/family applicants to 68% (21) of Inter Country applicants. Just less than 20% (6) of Inter Country applicants reported that they 'Sometimes' received the information at the time they needed it, compared with less than 4% (2) of Step parent/family applicants. About 13% (4) of Inter Country applicants indicated that they 'Never' or 'Almost never' received information at the time they needed it.

#### Question 4: Were you told about all the ways Social Services could help you?

		Definitely/ Probably Yes	Definitely/ Probably Not	Total
Domestic Applicants	Count	136	43	179
	Row %	76.0%	24.0%	100.0%
Inter Country Applicants	Count	20	11	31
	Row %	64.5%	35.5%	100.0%
Adults who have been adopted	Count	65	15	80
	Row %	81.3%	18.8%	100.0%
Step parent/ family applicants	Count	47	8	55
	Row %	85.5%	14.5%	100.0%
Total	Count	268	77	345
	Row %	77.7%	22.3%	100.0%

Overall, almost 78% (268) of applicants indicated that they were 'Definitely' or 'Probably' told the ways Social Services could help them, results ranged from 85% (47) of Step parent/family applicants to almost 65% (20) of Inter Country applicants.

## Appendix C.3

### TABLES

#### Question 5: **Were you told about other services or groups that would be of help to you?**

		Definitely/ Probably Yes	Definitely/ Probably Not	Total
Domestic Applicants	Count	104	74	178
	Row %	58.4%	41.6%	100.0%
Inter Country Applicants	Count	21	10	31
	Row %	67.7%	32.3%	100.0%
Adults who have been adopted	Count	51	29	80
	Row %	63.8%	36.3%	100.0%
Step parent/family applicants	Count	33	21	54
	Row %	61.1%	38.9%	100.0%
Total	Count	209	134	343
	Row %	60.9%	39.1%	100.0%

Overall, just over 60% (209) of applicants reported that they were 'Definitely' or 'Probably' told about other groups or services that would be of help to them, with almost 40% (134) not told about these services.

#### Question 6: **Were you given information about how to complain if you weren't satisfied with the service you received?**

		Definitely/ Probably Yes	Definitely/ Probably Not	Total
Domestic Applicants	Count	48	130	178
	Row %	27.0%	73.0%	100.0%
Inter Country Applicants	Count	10	21	31
	Row %	32.3%	67.7%	100.0%
Adults who have been adopted	Count	26	53	79
	Row %	32.9%	67.1%	100.0%
Step parent/family applicants	Count	20	35	55
	Row %	36.4%	63.6%	100.0%
Total	Count	104	239	343
	Row %	30.3%	69.7%	100.0%

In terms of complaints, the majority of applicants, almost 70% (239), reported that they were 'Definitely not' or 'Probably not' given the information they needed about how to complain if they weren't satisfied with the service they received. Some 73% (130) of Domestic Applicants indicated that they were 'Definitely not' or 'Probably not' given this information, compared with almost 64% (35) of Step parent/family applicants.

# Appendix C.3

## TABLES

**Question 7: Overall, how well do you feel Social Services kept you informed?**

		Very/Quite Well Organised	Not Very Well/Not at All Well Informed	Total
Domestic Applicants	Count	139	40	179
	Row %	77.7%	22.3%	100.0%
Inter Country Applicants	Count	20	11	31
	Row %	64.5%	35.5%	100.0%
Adults who have been adopted	Count	66	13	79
	Row %	83.5%	16.5%	100.0%
Step parent/family applicants	Count	49	6	55
	Row %	89.1%	10.9%	100.0%
Total	Count	274	70	344
	Row %	79.7%	20.3%	100.0%

When asked how well they felt Social Services had kept them informed, overall just less than 80% (274) of applicants indicated that they were kept 'Very well' or 'Quite well' informed. Just over 89% (49) of Step parent/family applicants indicated this to be the case, compared with just under 65% (20) of Inter Country applicants reported this.

**Question 8: How well do you think the service was organised?**

		Very Well/Quite Well Organised	Not Very Well/Not at All Well Organised	Total
Domestic Applicants	Count	132	47	179
	Row %	73.7%	26.3%	100.0%
Inter Country Applicants	Count	16	15	31
	Row %	51.6%	48.4%	100.0%
Adults who have been adopted	Count	68	12	80
	Row %	85.0%	15.0%	100.0%
Step parent/family applicants	Count	49	6	55
	Row %	89.1%	10.9%	100.0%
Total	Count	265	80	345
	Row %	76.8%	23.2%	100.0%

When asked how well the service was organised, nearly 50% (15) of Inter Country applicants reported that they felt the service was 'Not very well' or 'Not at all well' organised, compared with over 89% (49) of Step parent/family applicants who reported that the service was 'Very well' or 'Quite well' organised.

# Appendix C.3

## TABLES

### Question 9: How promptly was help provided to you?

		Very/Quite Promptly	Not Very/ Not at All promptly	Total
Domestic Applicants	Count	125	54	179
	Row %	69.8%	30.2%	100.0%
Inter Country Applicants	Count	15	16	31
	Row %	48.4%	51.6%	100.0%
Adults who have been adopted	Count	66	14	80
	Row %	82.5%	17.5%	100.0%
Step parent/ family applicants	Count	45	8	53
	Row %	84.9%	15.1%	100.0%
Total	Count	251	92	343
	Row %	73.2%	26.8%	100.0%

Over 51% (16) of Inter Country applicants reported that help was 'Not very' or 'Not at all' promptly provided. By way of contrast over 80% (45) of Adults who have been adopted and Step parent/family applicants indicated that help was 'Very' or 'Quite' promptly provided.

### Question 10: Were you told what to expect?

		Definitely/ Probably Told	Definitely/ Probably Not Told	Total
Domestic Applicants	Count	155	22	177
	Row %	87.6%	12.4%	100.0%
Inter Country Applicants	Count	24	7	31
	Row %	77.4%	22.6%	100.0%
Adults who have been adopted	Count	73	6	79
	Row %	92.4%	7.6%	100.0%
Step parent/ family applicants	Count	51	4	55
	Row %	92.7%	7.3%	100.0%
Total	Count	303	39	342
	Row %	88.6%	11.4%	100.0%

When asked if they were told what to expect, around 23% (7) of Inter Country applicants reported that they were 'Definitely' or 'Probably' not told what to expect. By way of contrast, some 93% (51) of Step parent/family applicants and Adults who were adopted (73) indicated that they were 'Definitely' or 'Probably' told what to expect.

# Appendix C.3

## TABLES

### Question 11: If you were told, did this reflect what actually happened?

		Always/ Nearly Always	Sometimes	Almost Never/ Never	Total
Domestic Applicants	Count	113	38	8	159
	Row %	71.1%	23.9%	5.0%	100.0%
Inter Country Applicants	Count	18	5	3	26
	Row %	69.2%	19.2%	11.5%	100.0%
Adults who have been adopted	Count	52	15	5	72
	Row %	72.2%	20.8%	6.9%	100.0%
Step parent/family applicants	Count	43	4	2	49
	Row %	87.8%	8.2%	4.1%	100.0%
Total	Count	226	62	18	306
	Row %	73.9%	20.3%	5.9%	100.0%

When asked if what they were told to expect actually happened, the majority of applicants (73.9%, 226) reported that this was 'Always' or 'Nearly always' the case, results ranged from 69.2% (18) of Inter Country applicants to 87.8% (43) of Step parent/family applicants. Fewer than 6% (18) of all applicants indicated that this was 'Never' or 'Almost never' the case.

### Question 12: Did you experience delay with any aspects of the service?

		Often/On Occasion	Hardly Ever/ Never	Total
Domestic Applicants	Count	121	56	177
	Row %	68.4%	31.6%	100.0%
Inter Country Applicants	Count	26	5	31
	Row %	83.9%	16.1%	100.0%
Adults who have been adopted	Count	48	31	79
	Row %	60.8%	39.2%	100.0%
Step parent/family applicants	Count	21	34	55
	Row %	38.2%	61.8%	100.0%
Total	Count	216	126	342
	Row %	63.2%	36.8%	100.0%

Nearly 70% (121) of Domestic applicants, 84% (26) of Inter Country applicants and 61% (48) of Adults who have been adopted reported that they had 'Often' or 'On occasions' experienced delay with the service. This compared with almost 62% (34) of Step parent/family applicants who reported that they 'Hardly ever' or 'Never' experienced any delay.

# Appendix C.3

## TABLES

**Question 14: How satisfied were you with explanation you were given for the delay?**

		Very Satisfied/ Satisfied	Very Dissatisfied/ Dissatisfied	Total
Domestic Applicants	Count	101	39	140
	Row %	72.1%	27.9%	100.0%
Inter Country Applicants	Count	9	17	26
	Row %	34.6%	65.4%	100.0%
Adults who have been adopted	Count	42	11	53
	Row %	79.2%	20.8%	100.0%
Step parent/family applicants	Count	20	2	22
	Row %	90.9%	9.1%	100.0%
Total	Count	172	69	241
	Row %	71.4%	28.6%	100.0%

Of those who had experienced delay with some aspect of the service, over 65% (17) of Inter Country applicants reported that they were 'Very dissatisfied' or 'Dissatisfied' with the explanation they were given for the delay. This contrasted with over 70% (172) of all applicants who reported that they were 'Very satisfied' or 'Satisfied' with the explanation provided.

**Question 15: Were any concerns or questions you had about the service answered to your satisfaction?**

		Always/Nearly Always	Sometimes	Almost Never/ Never	Total
Domestic Applicants	Count	129	35	11	175
	Row %	73.7%	20.0%	6.3%	100.0%
Inter Country Applicants	Count	13	11	5	29
	Row %	44.8%	37.9%	17.2%	100.0%
Adults who have been adopted	Count	58	11	6	75
	Row %	77.3%	14.7%	8.0%	100.0%
Step parent/family applicants	Count	46	7	2	55
	Row %	83.6%	12.7%	3.6%	100.0%
Total	Count	246	64	24	334
	Row %	73.7%	19.2%	7.2%	100.0%

Less than 45% (13) of Inter Country applicants reported that any concerns or questions they had about the service were 'Always' or 'Nearly always' answered to their satisfaction. This compared with 73.7% (129) of Domestic applicants, 77.3% (58) of Adults who have been adopted and 83.6% (46) of Step parent/family applicants whose concerns were 'Always' or 'Nearly always' answered. Overall, some 20% (64) of respondents indicated that their concerns were only answered 'Sometimes'.

## Appendix C.3

### TABLES

#### Question 16: Did you feel Social Services worked actively on your behalf?

		Always/Nearly Always	Sometimes	Almost Never/ Never	Total
Domestic Applicants	Count	123	28	26	177
	Row %	69.5%	15.8%	14.7%	100.0%
Inter Country Applicants	Count	13	10	8	31
	Row %	41.9%	32.3%	25.8%	100.0%
Adults who have been adopted	Count	60	10	10	80
	Row %	75.0%	12.5%	12.5%	100.0%
Step parent/ family applicants	Count	48	3	4	55
	Row %	87.3%	5.5%	7.3%	100.0%
Total	Count	244	51	48	343
	Row %	71.1%	14.9%	14.0%	100.0%

When asked if they felt Social Services had worked actively on their behalf, just over 25% (8) of Inter Country applicants reported that this was 'Never' or 'Almost never' the case. A further 32% (10) indicated that it was only 'Sometimes' the case and 42% (13) reported that it was 'Always' or 'Nearly always' the case. Almost 90% (48) of Step parent/family applicants, 75% (60) of Adults adopted and nearly 70% (123) of Domestic applicants reported that Social Services 'Always' or 'Nearly always' worked on their behalf.

#### Question 17: Taking everything into account, did you get all the help you needed?

		Definitely/ Probably Yes	Definitely/ Probably Not	Total
Domestic Applicants	Count	131	46	177
	Row %	74.0%	26.0%	100.0%
Inter Country Applicants	Count	18	13	31
	Row %	58.1%	41.9%	100.0%
Adults who have been adopted	Count	59	20	79
	Row %	74.7%	25.3%	100.0%
Step parent/ family applicants	Count	49	6	55
	Row %	89.1%	10.9%	100.0%
Total	Count	257	85	342
	Row %	75.1%	24.9%	100.0%

When asked to take everything into account, almost 42% (13) of Inter Country applicants, 26% (46) of Domestic applicants and 25% (20) of Adults who have been adopted reported that they were 'Definitely' or 'Probably Not' given the help they needed. By way of contrast, overall 75% (257) of all applicants indicated that they were 'Definitely' or 'Probably' given the help they needed, with satisfaction levels highest amongst Step parent/family applicants (89%, 49).

## Appendix C.3

### TABLES

#### Question 18a: Did you feel that staff were approachable?

		Always/Nearly Always	Sometimes	Almost Never/ Never	Total
Domestic Applicants	Count	151	24	3	178
	Row %	84.8%	13.5%	1.7%	100.0%
Inter Country Applicants	Count	27	2	2	31
	Row %	87.1%	6.5%	6.5%	100.0%
Adults who have been adopted	Count	73	6		79
	Row %	92.4%	7.6%		100.0%
Step parent/ family applicants	Count	48	6	1	55
	Row %	87.3%	10.9%	1.8%	100.0%
Total	Count	299	38	6	343
	Row %	87.2%	11.1%	1.7%	100.0%

Respondents were asked if they felt staff were 'approachable', 'helpful', 'sensitive to their needs', 'easy to contact', 'reliable in keeping appointments', 'in doing what they said they would do', 'considerate', 'good at their job', and 'knowledgeable about the things you would expect them to know'.

Overall, 87% (299) of respondents reported that staff were 'Always' or 'Nearly always' approachable, with less than 2% (6) reporting that this was 'Almost never' or 'Never' the case.

#### Question 18b: Did you feel that staff were helpful?

		Always/Nearly Always	Sometimes	Almost Never/ Never	Total
Domestic Applicants	Count	148	23	8	179
	Row %	82.7%	12.8%	4.5%	100.0%
Inter Country Applicants	Count	24	6	1	31
	Row %	77.4%	19.4%	3.2%	100.0%
Adults who have been adopted	Count	68	10	2	80
	Row %	85.0%	12.5%	2.5%	100.0%
Step parent/ family applicants	Count	50	4	1	55
	Row %	90.0%	7.3%	1.8%	100.0%
Total	Count	290	43	12	345
	Row %	84.1%	12.5%	3.5%	100.0%

When asked if they felt that staff were helpful, over 77% (24) of Inter Country applicants and over 90% (50) of Step parent/family applicants reported that this was 'Always' or 'Nearly always' the case. This contrasted with less than 4% (12) of applicants overall, who indicated that staff were 'Never' or 'Almost never' helpful.

# Appendix C.3

## TABLES

### Question 18c: Did you feel that staff were sensitive to your needs?

		Always/Nearly Always	Sometimes	Almost Never/ Never	Total
Domestic Applicants	Count	137	25	16	178
	Row %	77.0%	14.0%	9.0%	100.0%
Inter Country Applicants	Count	22	5	4	31
	Row %	71.0%	16.1%	12.9%	100.0%
Adults who have been adopted	Count	68	10	2	80
	Row %	85.0%	12.5%	2.5%	100.0%
Step parent/ family applicants	Count	43	9	3	53
	Row %	78.2%	16.4%	5.5%	100.0%
Total	Count	270	49	25	344
	Row %	78.5%	14.2%	7.3%	100.0%

When applicants were asked if staff were sensitive to their needs less than 8% (25) reported that this was 'Almost never' or 'Never' the case, compared with nearly 80% (270) of applicants who reported that this was 'Always' or 'Nearly always' the case.

### Question 18d: Did you feel that staff were easy to contact?

		Always/Nearly Always	Sometimes	Almost Never/ Never	Total
Domestic Applicants	Count	137	28	13	178
	Row %	77.0%	15.7%	7.3%	100.0%
Inter Country Applicants	Count	17	11	3	31
	Row %	54.8%	35.5%	9.7%	100.0%
Adults who have been adopted	Count	54	15	9	78
	Row %	69.2%	19.2%	11.5%	100.0%
Step parent/ family applicants	Count	45	8	2	55
	Row %	81.8%	14.5%	3.6%	100.0%
Total	Count	253	62	27	342
	Row %	74.0%	18.1%	7.9%	100.0%

When asked if staff were easy to contact, overall 74% (253) of applicants indicated that they were 'Always' or 'Nearly always' easy to contact, 18% (62) reported that they were 'Sometimes' easy to contact and just below 8% (27) reported that they were 'Almost never' or 'Never' easy to contact.

Nearly 82% (45) of Step parent/family applicants found staff easy to contact, compared with 55% (17) of Inter Country applicants.

## Appendix C.3

### TABLES

**Question 18e: Did you feel that staff were reliable in keeping appointments?**

		Always/Nearly Always	Sometimes	Almost Never/ Never	Total
Domestic Applicants	Count	151	21	6	178
	Row %	84.8%	11.8%	3.4%	100.0%
Inter Country Applicants	Count	28	3		31
	Row %	90.3%	9.7%		100.0%
Adults who have been adopted	Count	63	7	4	74
	Row %	85.1%	9.5%	5.4%	100.0%
Step parent/ family applicants	Count	52	2	1	55
	Row %	94.5%	3.6%	1.8%	100.0%
Total	Count	294	33	11	338
	Row %	87.0%	9.8%	3.3%	100.0%

When asked if staff were reliable in keeping appointments, 87% (294) of applicants indicated that staff were 'Always' or 'Nearly always' reliable in keeping appointments. Less than 10% (33) 'Sometimes' found this to be the case and below 4% (11) reported that staff were 'Almost never' or 'Never' reliable in keeping appointments.

**Question 18f: Did you feel that staff were reliable in doing what they said they would do?**

		Always/Nearly Always	Sometimes	Almost Never/ Never	Total
Domestic Applicants	Count	144	22	11	177
	Row %	81.4%	12.4%	6.2%	100.0%
Inter Country Applicants	Count	25	3	3	31
	Row %	80.6%	9.7%	9.7%	100.0%
Adults who have been adopted	Count	61	11	8	80
	Row %	76.3%	13.8%	10.0%	100.0%
Step parent/ family applicants	Count	49	5	1	55
	Row %	89.1%	9.1%	1.8%	100.0%
Total	Count	279	41	23	343
	Row %	81.3%	12.0%	6.7%	100.0%

Overall, over 81% (279) of respondents indicated that staff 'Always' or 'Nearly always' did what they said they would do, 12% (41) sometimes did and nearly 7% (23) 'Almost never' or 'Never' did what they said they would do. While just below 90% (49) of Step parent/family applicants reported that staff 'Always' or 'Nearly always' did what they said they would, just over three quarters (61) of Adults who were adopted reported this to be the case.

# Appendix C.3

## TABLES

### Question 18g: Did you feel that staff were considerate?

		Always/Nearly Always	Sometimes	Almost Never/ Never	Total
Domestic Applicants	Count	149	20	8	177
	Row %	84.2%	11.3%	4.5%	100.0%
Inter Country Applicants	Count	26	2	2	30
	Row %	86.7%	6.7%	6.7%	100.0%
Adults who have been adopted	Count	72	8		80
	Row %	90.0%	10.0%		100.0%
Step parent/ family applicants	Count	48	4	3	55
	Row %	87.3%	7.3%	5.5%	100.0%
Total	Count	295	34	13	342
	Row %	86.3%	9.9%	3.8%	100.0%

Overall, 86% (295) of respondents reported that staff were 'Always' or 'Nearly always' considerate, with a further 9.9% (34) indicating that staff were 'Sometimes' considerate, and the remaining 4% (13) were of the opinion that staff were 'Almost never' or 'Never' considerate.

### Question 18h: Did you feel that staff were good at their job?

		Always/Nearly Always	Sometimes	Almost Never/ Never	Total
Domestic Applicants	Count	146	22	9	177
	Row %	82.5%	12.4%	5.1%	100.0%
Inter Country Applicants	Count	23	6	2	30
	Row %	74.2%	19.4%	6.5%	100.0%
Adults who have been adopted	Count	63	16		79
	Row %	79.7%	20.3%		100.0%
Step parent/ family applicants	Count	49	5	1	55
	Row %	89.1%	9.1%	1.8%	100.0%
Total	Count	281	49	12	342
	Row %	82.1%	14.3%	3.5%	100.0%

While overall staff were perceived as being good at their job by 82% (281) of respondents, there were some applicant groups who were less satisfied with staff. For example, less than three quarters of Inter Country applicants felt staff were 'Always' or 'Nearly always' good at their job, with a further 20% (6) reporting that staff were 'Sometimes' good at their job as did 20% (16) of Adults who had been adopted.

# Appendix C.3

## TABLES

**Question 18i: Did you feel that staff were knowledgeable about things you expected them to know?**

		Always/Nearly Always	Sometimes	Almost Never/ Never	Total
Domestic Applicants	Count	141	19	17	177
	Row %	79.7%	10.7%	9.6%	100.0%
Inter Country Applicants	Count	15	13	3	31
	Row %	48.4%	41.9%	9.7%	100.0%
Adults who have been adopted	Count	66	13	1	80
	Row %	82.5%	16.3%	1.3%	100.0%
Step parent/ family applicants	Count	50	3	2	55
	Row %	90.9%	5.5%	3.6%	100.0%
Total	Count	272	48	23	343
	Row %	79.3%	14.0%	6.7%	100.0%

When asked if staff were knowledgeable about the things they expected them to know, nearly 80% (272) of respondents reported that this was 'Always' or 'Nearly always' the case. Less satisfaction was expressed by Inter Country applicants, 41% (13) of which reported that staff were 'Sometimes' knowledgeable about the things they expected them to know. Less than 7% (23) of respondents indicated that staff were 'Never' or 'Almost never' knowledgeable about the things they expected them to know.

**Question 19: How fairly do you think that you were treated?**

		Very Fairly/ Fairly	Not at All Fairly/ Not Very Fairly	Total
Domestic Applicants	Count	146	29	175
	Row %	83.4%	16.6%	100.0%
Inter Country Applicants	Count	21	10	31
	Row %	67.7%	32.3%	100.0%
Adults who have been adopted	Count	73	6	79
	Row %	92.4%	7.6%	100.0%
Step parent/ family applicants	Count	50	5	55
	Row %	90.9%	9.1%	100.0%
Total	Count	290	50	340
	Row %	85.3%	14.7%	100.0%

When asked how fairly they thought they were treated, almost 15% (50) of respondents felt that they were 'Not at all fairly' or 'Not very fairly' treated, with 32% (10) of Inter Country applicants and 16% (29) of Domestic applicants reporting this to be the case. Overall, 85% (290) of respondents indicated that they were 'Very fairly' or 'Fairly' treated.

## Appendix C.3

### TABLES

#### Question 20: Do you feel you were listened to?

		Always/Nearly Always	Sometimes	Almost Never/ Never	Total
Domestic Applicants	Count	142	22	11	175
	Row %	81.1%	12.6%	6.3%	100.0%
Inter Country Applicants	Count	23	4	3	30
	Row %	76.7%	13.3%	10.0%	100.0%
Adults who have been adopted	Count	71	7	2	80
	Row %	88.8%	8.8%	2.5%	100.0%
Step parent/ family applicants	Count	47	5	3	55
	Row %	85.5%	9.1%	5.5%	100.0%
Total	Count	282	38	19	339
	Row %	83.2%	11.2%	5.6%	100.0%

Less than 6% (19) of respondents reported that they were 'Never' or 'Almost never' listened to, compared with 83% (282) who indicated that they were 'Always' or 'Nearly always' listened to.

#### Question 21: Do you feel that your needs were recognised?

		Always/Nearly Always	Sometimes	Almost Never/ Never	Total
Domestic Applicants	Count	129	23	23	175
	Row %	73.7%	13.1%	13.1%	100.0%
Inter Country Applicants	Count	20	6	4	30
	Row %	66.7%	20.0%	13.3%	100.0%
Adults who have been adopted	Count	64	12	4	80
	Row %	80.0%	15.0%	5.0%	100.0%
Step parent/ family applicants	Count	44	8	3	55
	Row %	80.0%	14.5%	5.5%	100.0%
Total	Count	257	49	34	340
	Row %	75.6%	14.4%	10.0%	100.0%

When asked if they felt their needs were recognised, over 75% (257) of respondents reported that this was 'Always' or 'Nearly always' the case, 14% (49) that this was 'Sometimes' the case, and 10% (34) expressed the opinion that this was 'Never' or 'Almost never' the case. While 80% of Adults who have been adopted indicated that their needs were 'Always' or 'Nearly always' recognised, just below 67% (20) of Inter Country applicants indicated this to be the case.

## Appendix C.3

### TABLES

#### Question 22: Do you feel that your needs dealt with appropriately?

		Always/Nearly Always	Sometimes	Almost Never/ Never	Total
Domestic Applicants	Count	128	26	20	174
	Row %	73.6%	14.9%	11.5%	100.0%
Inter Country Applicants	Count	16	9	5	30
	Row %	53.5%	30%	16.7%	100.0%
Adults who have been adopted	Count	62	12	5	79
	Row %	78.5%	15.2%	6.3%	100.0%
Step parent/ family applicants	Count	43	9	3	55
	Row %	78.2%	16.4%	5.5%	100.0%
Total	Count	249	56	33	338
	Row %	73.7%	16.6%	9.8%	100.0%

Over 11% (20) of Domestic applicants and almost 17% (5) of Inter Country applicants reported that they felt their needs were 'Never' or 'Almost never' dealt with appropriately. This contrasted with almost 80% (62) of Adults who have been adopted and Step parent/family applicants (43) who reported that this was 'Always' or 'Nearly always' the case. Just over 53% (16) of Inter Country applicants felt their needs were 'Always' or 'Nearly always' dealt with appropriately.

#### Question 23: Were your family's needs recognised?

		Always/Nearly Always	Sometimes	Almost Never/ Never	Total
Domestic Applicants	Count	29	4	4	37
	Row %	78.4%	10.8%	10.8%	100.0%
Inter Country Applicants	Count	2	2	1	5
	Row %	40.0%	40.0%	20.0%	100.0%
Adults who have been adopted	Count	10		3	13
	Row %	76.9%		23.1	100.0%
Step parent/ family applicants	Count	28	1	3	32
	Row %	87.5%	3.1%	9.4%	100.0%
Total	Count	69	7	11	87
	Row %	79.3%	8.0%	12.6%	100.0%

For applicants whose families were involved with or affected by the service, almost 80% (69) reported that their families needs were 'Always' or 'Nearly always' recognised, compared with just under 13% (11) who indicated that this was 'Never' or 'Almost never' the case.

# Appendix C.3

## TABLES

### Question 24: Were your family's needs dealt with appropriately?

		Always/Nearly Always	Sometimes	Almost Never/ Never	Total
Domestic Applicants	Count	27	6	4	37
	Row %	73.0%	16.2%	10.8%	100.0%
Inter Country Applicants	Count	2	2	1	5
	Row %	40.0%	40.0%	20.0%	100.0%
Adults who have been adopted	Count	8		5	13
	Row %	61.5%		38.5%	100.0%
Step parent/ family applicants	Count	27	2	3	32
	Row %	84.4%	6.3%	9.4%	100.0%
Total	Count	64	10	13	87
	Row %	73.6%	11.5%	14.9%	100.0%

When asked if their family's needs were dealt with appropriately, almost 15% (13) of respondents reported that this was 'Never' or 'Almost never' the case, compared with just under 74% (64) of applicants who indicated that their family's needs were 'Always' or 'Nearly always' dealt with appropriately.

### Question 25: Taking everything into account, how satisfied were you with the service you received?

		Very Satisfied/ Satisfied	Very Dissatisfied/ Dissatisfied	Total
Domestic Applicants	Count	140	39	179
	Row %	78.2%	21.8%	100.0%
Inter Country Applicants	Count	17	14	31
	Row %	54.8%	45.2%	100.0%
Adults who have been adopted	Count	66	13	79
	Row %	83.5%	16.5%	100.0%
Step parent/ family applicants	Count	50	5	55
	Row %	90.9%	9.1%	100.0%
Total	Count	273	71	344
	Row %	79.4%	20.6%	100.0%

When asked how satisfied they were with the service, just over 20% (71) of respondents reported they were 'Very dissatisfied' or 'Dissatisfied', results ranged from 9.1% (5) of Step parent/family applicants to almost 22% (39) of Domestic applicants. By way of contrast, overall nearly 80% (273) of respondents reported that they were 'Very satisfied' or 'Satisfied' with the service, with 83% (66) of Adults who have been adopted and almost 91% (50) of Step parent/family applicants indicating similar levels of satisfaction with the service. Levels of overall satisfaction with the service were lowest amongst Inter Country applicants (54.8%) and highest amongst Step parent/family applicants (90.9%).

# Appendix D

## COMMENTS BY PEOPLE WHO COMPLETED THE ADOPTION SERVICES QUESTIONNAIRE

### INTRODUCTION

This section of the 'Adopting Best Care' report presents an overview and analysis of comments received from people who completed the adoption services questionnaire (Appendix C). The questionnaire was mailed to the following four groups of people who were in contact with Trusts' adoption services during the period 1 October 1998 to 30 September 1999:

- **Domestic adopters**

This group included:

- parents who had adopted children from Northern Ireland;
- people who had been approved to adopt and were awaiting the placement of a child from Northern Ireland; and
- people who had applied to adopt and were in the process of being assessed or were waiting to be assessed by the Trust to adopt a child from Northern Ireland.

- **Intercountry adopters**

This group included:

- parents who had adopted children from foreign countries;
- people who had been approved to adopt and were awaiting the placement of a child from a foreign country; and
- people who had applied to adopt and were in the process of being assessed or were waiting to be assessed by the Trust for an inter-country adoption.

- **Step parent and family adopters**

This group included:

- parents and step parents who had adopted a child from their own family;
- parents and step parents and other family members whom Trusts' social workers were visiting in order to prepare a report for the court in respect of the adoption of a child from the family; and
- parents and step parents and other family members who had served a notice of intention to adopt on the Trust and who were about to be visited by the Trust.

## Appendix D

### COMMENTS BY PEOPLE WHO COMPLETED THE ADOPTION SERVICES QUESTIONNAIRE

- **Adults affected by adoption**

This group included:

- adults who had been adopted as children and who had contacted the Trusts for help in seeking information about their origins or other information; and
- relatives of children who were adopted - some of whom would now be adults - seeking information about their adopted relatives.

The questionnaire was not sent to children or birth mothers of children who had recently been placed for adoption as the Inspectors thought that it would not be appropriate to make contact with them in this way. Instead, the Inspectors interviewed children and parents whose children were placed for adoption and their comments and views are referred to in the main body of the report.

The answers that people gave to fixed choice questions in the questionnaire are summarised in tables in Appendices C1, C2, and C3 of this report. The information presented in this section gives an overview of the written comments made by respondents to the questions:

- **Were there any aspects of the service that you were particularly dissatisfied with?** (Question 26 of the questionnaire); and
- **What changes, if any would you like to see to the service?** (Question 27 of the questionnaire).

Of 636 questionnaires that were sent, 350 were completed, representing a response rate of 55%. Of those who completed the questionnaire, 51 (14.6%) respondents made no written comments to either of the questions. 75 (21.4%) respondents stated that there was nothing they were dissatisfied with and several of these made positive comments about their experience of the adoption service. 42 (12%) respondents stated that they felt there were no changes needed to the services and a number of these reiterated their positive statements about their experience. Some of the comments reproduced below have been edited slightly to remove any information that might identify staff or users and preserve the confidentiality of the people who returned the questionnaire.

## Appendix D

### COMMENTS BY DOMESTIC ADOPTERS

#### DOMESTIC ADOPTERS

##### The things they were dissatisfied with

###### *Delay*

The main dissatisfactions were the delays and the length of time the adoption process took. Domestic adopters attributed this to poor organisation of services and poor case management by both Trusts and the Courts. The following comments give some idea of the concerns:



*from the date of application to social services to join the adoption list to date of adoption assessment, interviewing etc, took a period of approx. 4 years - due to shortages in social workers;*

*when the social worker went off on maternity leave and extended leave we were waiting to go to Panel to see if we were accepted. It took 9 months approximately to get an answer because no one took up the original social workers workload. We phoned several times but it took a letter to head of social services in our area before we got a reply;*

*forgotten about by Court. Date for Adoption Panel cancelled 3 times. Going to Panel and sent for more details. Being passed by Panel and still waiting for agent summary report so we can get back to Court to get adoption made final;*

*appointments with social worker being cancelled at very short notice, having taken time off work. Length of time waiting for a second placement - 8/9 years and the heartache and disappointment especially for our other adopted child as well as ourselves;*

*we travelled long distances to meetings and co-operated in every way. The adoption was to have been completed in October 1999 and to this day we don't know the outcome - we were never contacted or told what happened to the children or our application; and*

*at the Information Evening we were told they were actively looking for new adopters but the timescale seems extreme.*



## Appendix D

### COMMENTS BY DOMESTIC ADOPTERS

A number of people referred to the length of time they had been on the waiting list for the placement of a child. For some this was 5 years. Two approved adopter households reported that they had waited 9 and 10 years respectively. Yet another prospective adopter indicated that after years of assessment no child had been placed with them.

#### ***Lack of information***

A number of domestic adopters were dissatisfied with the information they received. Some indicated that they received poor quality information, that it was inaccurate, that they received conflicting advice from different health professionals and that they were only given information 'on a need to know' basis, often having to push to get information rather than it being readily given. Some respondents felt that there was no social worker to help with adoption queries and that they should be given more regular information about how their case was proceeding rather than the onus being put on them to constantly chase things up to determine progress. Comments included:

“

*our very first enquiry was disappointing and discouraging. The literature we were sent was very poorly presented. We persisted until we spoke to someone who was able to help us;*

***we were dissatisfied in not being informed about other services and groups which could help and support us;***

*we were told that we could not proceed with assessment while undertaking IVF in case we upset other couples ..... We had our hopes built up wrongly and were turned down on medical grounds;*

***a complete overhaul of information that is available, some information is deliberately withheld and very seldom are things offered without having to ask or beg; and***

*being given incorrect information e.g. (information about the children's parents) which was untrue. Being lied to. Being unable to do anything about this as there was no independent person involved.*

”

## Appendix D

### COMMENTS BY DOMESTIC ADOPTERS

#### *Lack of contact/ communication by Trusts*

Domestic adopters alluded to the fact that they found it extremely difficult to maintain contact with staff and to be kept informed about the progress of their adoption. In some cases respondents stated that their calls were not returned, appointments were broken, files were misplaced and that in one particular case the social worker and social services did not know that the couple had a child placed. Some respondents felt that there was no post adoption support and that they were not given sufficient advice about how to cope with children who had emotional and behavioural problems. Others complained that adoption allowances were regularly late and that there should be more financial help for adopters.

Comments included:



*when contact was made by phone, messages were seldom passed on. Sometimes it took days for the social worker to return the call;*

*we only receive a standard letter every six months saying there is no change in circumstances;*

*staff kept changing the times when we rang up nobody knew who we were or who was dealing with us;*

*we would have appreciated ongoing support after adoption. Our son has emotional and behavioural problems and we were not given strategies and advice on dealing with these and where to go for help;*

*lack of information to do with placement. My husband and myself have been waiting nine years for adoption; and*

*although I was accepted as an adoptive parent after going through all of the procedures. I have not been kept informed of any likelihood of ever a child being placed with me.*



## Appendix D

### COMMENTS BY DOMESTIC ADOPTERS

#### *The attitude of staff*

Whilst some people praised their social worker and acknowledged their professional and supportive approach (see below) a number of respondents expressed concerns about the insensitive and unsupportive attitudes of staff:



*we have been subjected to blackmail, threats, deception that the children would be removed if we didn't toe the line;*

*my own personal opinion was - you were stereotyped if you were not in their criteria something was wrong. At times attitudes were very condescending as if you had no experience of life or child rearing practices;*

*x told us if we didn't adopt the child someone else would do it .... we thought this was terrible speak for someone in a caring profession. PS: We are both very happy with our adopted daughter and we both love her so much; and*

*the social worker who conducted the initial interview was judgmental of my partner and me before we had ever entered the assessment process. This attitude left us feeling very negative about our chances of being accepted for parenthood. Hence we have not proceeded beyond the initial interview.*



Some domestic adopters were concerned about the messages they were given by social workers about their personal characteristics, for example, age and weight. Others expressed annoyance that confidential information they shared with their social worker was made known to another social worker and that it was not accurately reported.

A few people made comments about the attitude of Guardians ad Litem and these have been passed to the Northern Ireland Guardian ad Litem Agency (NIGALA).

## Appendix D

### COMMENTS BY DOMESTIC ADOPTERS

#### **THE POSITIVE ASPECTS OF THE SERVICE**

Whilst the above comments indicate that there is a considerable agenda to be tackled to improve domestic adoption services, 78.2% of domestic adopters who completed the questionnaire stated that they were 'very satisfied' or 'satisfied' with the service they received. Some of the positive comments recorded on the questionnaire included:



*they are doing a great job as it is;*

*overall I had a positive experience of using the adoption services of the Trust;*

*they were great with us at all times;*

*delighted with the social workers involved. Felt that they try to have a real empathy with prospective adopters - not dissatisfied at all apart from a 5 year wait between placements; and*

*I felt I was given excellent information as a single professional person.*



#### **THE CHANGES NEEDED**

Many of those who responded to this question indicated that they would like to see some action to reduce the long delays associated with the adoption process. Views were expressed by a number of domestic adopters that adoption applicants should be allowed to attend the Adoption Panel and to see what had been written about them. Some suggested that the whole adoption service in Northern Ireland needed to be reviewed and indicated the need for regional services. Some domestic adopters stated that perhaps staff shortages, heavy caseloads and lack of resources caused the delays and stressed the need for more resources and more staff dedicated to adoption work. The suggestions presented below were common to a number of respondents:



*adoption services should be centralised instead of all the different Trusts because each Trust has its own way of dealing with adoption matters;*

*more communication and interaction between all parties involved in child's case e.g. child's social worker, parents social worker, link worker; and*

## Appendix D

### COMMENTS BY DOMESTIC ADOPTERS

*once a child has been in care and it has been decided that it will not return home - a freeing order should be granted quickly. The whole process is far too slow and birth parents are given far too much time to get their act together.*

”

A number of domestic adopters suggested the need for more training to help social workers support adoptive parents and provide post adoption support. The need for more resources was mentioned as a way to redress the long delays experienced by service users. People also wished to see deficiencies in communications at all levels being addressed. They wanted information on the progress of their case, the reasons for any delays explained and face to face contact at regular intervals with social workers who could keep them up to date about the likelihood of a child being placed with them. Some felt that social workers needed to be more accountable and that they should be more willing to accept individuality and diversity and should place less emphasis on age as a determining factor in adoptions.

#### **INTERCOUNTRY ADOPTERS**

##### **The things they were dissatisfied with**

The dissatisfactions of intercountry adopters were similar to those of domestic adopters with additional issues that were specific to intercountry adoption.

##### ***Delay and cost***

The main concern of intercountry adopters was the length of time the process took and several respondents recorded dates to illustrate the problematic timescales. These dissatisfactions were compounded by the fact that they had to pay a considerable sum for the service. Since they were paying they felt that the service should be much more professional and user focused. A number of respondents made unfavourable comparisons between the intercountry adoption process here and that of the USA. The following comments sum up commonly expressed sentiments:

“

*we stressed at the beginning of the process we did not want a big age gap between the adopted child and our own children. That gap continues to grow. We were then charged £2,500 for the home study - which we had absolutely no control over. The whole process made us feel powerless with no one to seek guidance from. The process was extremely inefficient;*

## Appendix D

### COMMENTS BY INTERCOUNTRY ADOPTERS

*the delay in beginning the procedure ..... the delay in conducting the procedures. .... an American homestudy is ten pages long and is compiled over 3 meetings. Their courts do not need or want the epic tomb produced by your service at present. You are operating an outdated system, designed for domestic/parochial use and it is largely irrelevant and unhelpful.....;*

*long delays between Family Placement Service approval and DHSS approval, Arbitrary ruling, preventing applicants (inter-country adoption) seeing their own homestudy is unacceptable;*

*when we initially applied for over seas adoption there were no staff for almost a two year period to deal with this aspect of adoption;*

*we pay £3,000 for this service. The waiting list is long. If we are not approved we are not given the reason why yet we are paying for this service; and*

*I have been waiting a year and a half to be assessed for an inter-country adoption and still have no idea when I shall be dealt with. On top of this I am expected to pay £3,000 an unjustifiable sum. If paying privately one would expect to be dealt with immediately.*

”

#### **Knowledge and attitudes of staff**

A number of intercountry adopters expressed concerns about social workers' lack of knowledge of intercountry adoption, the negative attitudes they felt they had encountered from staff and the intrusive nature of the process.

“

*there was absolutely no knowledge of foreign adoption and total inflexibility. Also we found the service judgmental;*

*long delay in getting appropriate information. Not knowing where to start from and no follow through. We had to obtain information ourselves;*

*knowledge of our selected country not well known by service. Time Delays. Entire process untimely;*

## Appendix D

### COMMENTS BY INTERCOUNTRY ADOPTERS

*the dismissive and condescending attitude of X. Total lack of specific knowledge of foreign adoption. Inability to voice any concerns regarding process for fear of damaging our case in front of a faceless, all powerful panel, whose verdict is final;*

*totally unhelpful in all aspects as indicated from start to finish, i.e. they did not want you to adopt; and*

*it's just such an awful pity that prospective adopters have to subject themselves to the irrelevant, intrusive ordeal that your service provides. The world is full of children available for adoption. Northern Ireland is full of couples who would adopt them. Your service represents one of the most significant barriers between the two.*

”

#### **THE POSITIVE ASPECTS OF THE SERVICE**

Overall, intercountry adopters were the least satisfied with services with just 54.8% of adopters expressing satisfaction with the service (Question 25, Appendix C3). Most who made comments in the questionnaire identified dissatisfactions and suggested a number of changes to be made to the service. One respondent, however, commented:

“

*I was very pleased with the service and the social worker involved with us. She was very efficient, reliable and above all she took a lot of time to listen to our needs which I think was a big help.*

”

#### **THE CHANGES NEEDED**

When asked about the changes they would like to see to the services most intercountry adopters indicated that they wanted to see the process speeded up. They wanted to be given the same priority as domestic adopters. They wanted the inefficiencies in the service to be addressed: assessments to begin sooner and to be completed in a shorter time scale. A number of respondents stated that they would like to see staff who were knowledgeable about inter country adoption and who had more positive attitudes towards people who wanted to adopt from abroad. Some indicated that the relationship between the services and support groups should be enhanced and one respondent suggested that a fact sheet should be available to indicate the various steps in the adoption process.

## Appendix D

### COMMENTS BY STEPPARENT/FAMILY ADOPTERS

One respondent summarised many of the issues raised by both domestic and intercountry adopters as follows:



*we would like to see the process speeded up. We understand that there are many issues to cover in an adoption application but if the delays could be minimised we feel that more prospective adoptive parents would come forward. Under the present system people have to be extremely determined to see the process through and whilst this may have its advantages in assessing the applicant's strength of character and ability to deal with an adoptive child it undoubtedly discourages some applicants who would probably make good parents. We would also like to see more information available on inter country adoption, i.e. support groups for parents. This is an area which is becoming more popular and one on which there is still a lot of ignorance. There are many groups in mainland UK but very little in Northern Ireland.*



#### **STEP PARENT/FAMILY ADOPTERS**

##### **The things they were dissatisfied about:**

Families who were dissatisfied with aspects of the services indicated a broad range of issues that concerned them. These focused on:

- delays caused by social services being difficult to contact or failing to follow up contacts and appoint a social worker to deal with their case;
- being unable to understand the legal jargon and not being given the opportunity to read reports compiled on them by social services
- the intrusive nature of the questioning they had undergone, in particular questions about their personal life, the impact on their family and the formal checks which they were required to undergo; and
- perceived lack of impartiality by social workers, changes in staff and social workers' losing information.

For some, the issues were being treated as new parents despite the fact of having brought up a family together. The following comments provide an illustration of common concerns:



*we feel that we were spoken to as if we were solicitors. We could not understand all the technical terms;*

## Appendix D

### COMMENTS BY STEPPARENT/FAMILY ADOPTERS

*I felt that myself and my husband should have had the opportunity to read the reports compiled by social services;*

*myself and my family were put under an enormous amount of undue pressure. We felt as though we were victimised due to our beliefs and circumstances. The social workers were most definitely NOT impartial;*

*I didn't expect such in-depth questions into my past personal life - felt very uncomfortable with this;*

*need for police checks and going into things when you were a juvenile. We felt we were being treated as new parents when we had already brought up the family together the past 8 years; and*

*I tried to help our social worker by letting them know the convenient times to meet with my family and referees. This was ignored and led to a delay in our application.*

”

#### **THE POSITIVE ASPECTS OF THE SERVICE**

The above comments need to be set in the context of the general responses of step parent and family adopters to the questionnaire. These are presented in Appendix C3. A high proportion of this group (90.9%) expressed satisfaction with the services they received. Stepparent/family adopters were the most satisfied of the four user groups who completed the questionnaire. Some recorded the following comments:

“

*as my family and myself have experienced this situation I did not find any fault with help from social services and therefore don't see any need for changes;*

*my wife, my daughter and myself were very happy at the way everything was done. It made me and my family understand a lot of issues. Thanks;*

*overall the service we received was great, and everything was explained; and*

*I think social services did a V V good job and helped us.*

”

# Appendix D

## COMMENTS BY STEPPARENT/FAMILY ADOPTERS

### **THE CHANGES NEEDED**

When asked to comment on aspects of the service that they would like to see changed, the issues identified by stepparent/family adopters included the following:

- the need to use less legal jargon, to have access to reports including social service and court reports;
- Better education, training and experience for social workers; and
- clarification of the relevance of questions and written communication to be given between each stage of the process so as to keep people informed of progress.

### **ADULTS WHO HAVE BEEN ADOPTED**

#### **The things they were dissatisfied with:**

Adults affected by adoption were dissatisfied that there was insufficient information about agencies that could help them, that getting legal information was difficult and that getting court records seemed almost impossible. Some felt that they were having to do all the work, to drive the process, to arrange meetings and follow up appointments with phone calls to determine progress. They viewed the service as a reactive rather than a proactive one. Some people felt that they were alone in their search, that it was leading nowhere and that while some staff were understanding they were ultimately not able to help. One person indicated that s/he was waiting 14 months for an interview with their real mother - both wanted to meet but this was not possible because the social worker was too busy. Comments included:



*X did not follow up my case, anything that I found out was down to my own effort;*

*following initial information I was left alone and no contact/follow up made;*

*the lack of speed in dealing with paper work. It took almost a year to get as far as getting my original birth certificate. Each time I phoned I was told it would be dealt with straight away but it never was;*

## Appendix D

### COMMENTS BY ADULTS WHO HAVE BEEN ADOPTED

*insufficient information regarding other agencies that could possibly help - however I feel that the problem was probably ignorance of how to access other agencies;*

*I find the whole situation very distressful and thought DHSS would trace and contact my mother for me. I was very disillusioned when information that this was not the case and that I would have to do a lot of my searching myself. That is why it has taken 9 years for me to get my head round doing some searching my self and still haven't started; and*

*I felt X didn't want to help, listen or had time for my needs.*

#### **THE POSITIVE ASPECTS OF THE SERVICE**

Of 79 adults who completed the questionnaire, 66 (83.5%) recorded that they were 'very satisfied' or 'satisfied' with the service they received (Question 27 Appendix C3). A significant number of respondents indicated that there was nothing they were dissatisfied with and one respondent commented;

*the service that I received from X was of an exceptionally high standard in all aspects and was particularly good at forecasting any problems, which made it easy to work through, all in all, very professional.*

#### **THE CHANGES NEEDED**

When asked about changes they would like to see, adopted adults indicated that they would like to see a better-organised and informed service that was more responsive to users needs. Respondents suggested that they would like more advice on how to conduct searches, to trace parents and where best to obtain information. One person suggested a register should be kept of all birth parents who could be contacted if they wanted their children to find them – suggesting that s/he had not been given information about the Adoption Contact Register. Others suggested better record keeping by social services suggesting that all information on adoption should be held on files. Some adopted adults felt that the service could be better resourced to help them with their search and that there ought to be closer liaison between social services and the Public Records Office. A few people also suggested that counselling should be available to both help them cope with the ups and downs of their search and their feelings if things did not work out.

# Appendix D

## CONCLUSION

### **CONCLUSION**

The comments received from service users indicate that there is a need for radical change to many aspects of adoption services that affect domestic, intercountry, family adopters and adults who have been adopted and their birth relatives. The issues that have been identified in this qualitative analysis of the questionnaire responses are exactly the same as those that were raised with the inspectors during face to face contact with service users. These and other findings were further endorsed in the analysis of the casefile records of service users. The vast majority of these matters have already been addressed in the recommendations of the Boards' inspection reports which were issued in October 2001. They are further endorsed in the overview of the inspection reported in the main body of 'Adopting Best Care'. The Inspectors are most grateful to service users who took the time to complete the questionnaire and to make written comments on the services they received. We hope you will feel that this analysis has done you justice and will serve to introduce much needed changes to the statutory adoption service in Northern Ireland.





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