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| *Strong Carers, stronger children* – Victorian Carer Strategy |
| Carer census survey instrument |

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| **Liability limited by a scheme approved under Professional Standards Legislation**  **EY Sweeney is accredited under the International Standard, ISO 20252.**  **All aspects of this study will be completed in accordance with the requirements of that scheme.** |



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# Carer Census: Final

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| --- | --- |
| Study No. | 31076 |
| Client | Department of Health and Human Services |
| Version | Version 4 – 3rd December 2020 |

# Sample structure

No quotas

# Introduction

Thank you for participating in this survey. It will take about 10 minutes to complete depending on your answers. Your responses will be completely confidential and anonymous.

[**Please note** that the following two paragraphs were used in the introductory email sent to carers and were not included on the survey landing page]

This survey is designed to understand more about the experiences of carers living in Victoria. By sharing your thoughts, you will be helping to improve experiences of carers in the future.

This survey is part of the Victorian Government’s Home-based Carer Strategy Strong carers, stronger children and will provide information for improving future policy, programs and services. The survey has been endorsed by Kinship Carers Victoria (KCV) and the Foster Carers Association of Victoria (FCAV).

As a kinship carer, foster carer, permanent parent or carer or respite carer, some response options to questions we have offered may not feel applicable to you. If this is the case, you can choose not to select these options.

# How To Complete The Survey

"Click" the relevant circles or boxes to mark your selection with a dot or a tick.

You may close the survey down and re-enter at the point you left off using the link emailed to you.

Once you have completed all questions on a page you will need to click the "Next" Button to proceed to the next screen.

In order for your answers to be sent you must click the "Submit" button at the end of the survey.

Thank you for your participation.

Please press **NEXT** to continue.

For access to the [EY Sweeney Privacy Policy, click here](https://eysweeney.com.au/privacy-policy) ("https://eysweeney.com.au/privacy-policy "). For any technical problems with this survey please send an e-mail by selecting on the link that appears at the bottom of each page.

# Section 1: Carer Classification or Level of Experience

## A1. Which of the following describes you?

### Instructions

* I am, or I have been a…
* Please select for children you either currently care for or have previously cared for.
* **Please select all that apply.**

### Options

* Foster carer: Providing care for a child or young person either through a Children’s Court order or a voluntary childcare agreement 4
* Kinship carer: Providing care for a child or young person who is a relative or a member of a close social network…

through a Children’s Court order 01

through child protection involvement 02

through a private non-statutory arrangement 03

* Permanent carer: Permanent care parent for a child after a permanent care order has been made by the Children’s Court which grants you exclusive parental responsibility for the child via…

direct recruitment as permanent carer 05

* Kinship care under another order 06
* Foster care under another order 07
* Adoptive parent or carer: child has become a member of an adoptive family, such as where they are unable to be taken care of by birth parents or extended families. The child is usually voluntarily placed for adoption by the birth parent or parents. 08
* Other **(please type in your response)** 97
* I am not currently a carer, nor have I ever been a carer **Terminate** 99

### Programmer note

Allocate as follows:

* Kinship carer: A1=1,2 OR 3
* Foster carer: A1=4
* Permanent carer: A1=5,6,7 or 8
* Other: A1=97

## A2. What type of kinship or foster care have you provided?

### Instructions

Ask if: kinship or foster carer.

Please select for children you have either currently or have previously cared for.

Please select all that apply.

### Options

* **Long term carer under a long-term care order**: For children and young people who require care for a period longer than six months. 01
* **Longer term kinship or foster care**: Care arranged when a child or young person cannot return home for some time while future is determined 02
* **Short term kinship or foster care**: For children and young people who require care ranging from overnight up to about six months 03
* **Respite kinship or foster care**: Short-term or intermittent care provided for children and young people living with full-time foster and kinship carers or parents 04
* **Emergency kinship or foster care**: For children and young people who require immediate care due to concerns for their safety 05
* **Therapeutic kinship or foster care**: having been provided with specialist training, and support to care for children and young people who need therapeutic responses to their specific needs 06
* **Other** (please type in your response) 97

## A3. Please think about the time you cared for a child.

### Instructions

The next set of questions are to learn a little more about your role as a **<insert bolded response from A1: if more than one selected add ‘and’ to show all>** carer. For the rest of the survey we would like you to think about your experience with caring for the children under this arrangement.

How long have you been a carer?

Please type a number.

### Options

* <Insert number> years
* More than 30 years 01
* <Insert number> months
* Less than one month 01

### Programmer note

No piping for A1=97.

Show A3-A4 on the same page.

Min=1 must enter figure into either years or months or both.

## A4. How many children have you cared for since you first became a carer?

### Instructions

If you can’t remember the exact number, please provide your best estimate.

Please type a number.

### Programmer note

Min = 1

## A5. How many children do you currently care for?

### Instructions

Again, please think about the number of children under a formal or statutory care arrangement up to the age of 20.

Please type a number.

### Programmer note

Min = 0

## A6. Have you ever had a placement end earlier than planned?

### Instructions

Please select one response only.

### Options

* Yes (please specify the number) 01
* No 02
* Can’t recall or I don’t know 99
* Not applicable 98

### Programmer note

Ask if A5=less than A4

## A7. What was the reasons the placement ended?

### Instructions

Please type in your answer.

### Programmer note

Ask if A6=1

# Section 2: Child Profile

## Instructions

We would now like to understand a little more about the children you currently care for, please be assured the information provided is completely confidential and will never be attributable to the child, or you.

Below, we are keen to provide an easy method for you to identify your children, if you are not comfortable providing names or initials, please add in an alternative to help you recognise each child for the purpose of the survey.

## Programmer note

If A5=0 skip this section

## B1. Please record below the initials (or pseudonym), gender, age and how long they have been in your care for each member of your household you currently care for under the age of 21.

**Programmer note**: Display number selected A5

### Options

First name

* Initials

Postcode of the child’s school

* Please type in the postcode
* Don’t know
* Prefer not to say

What gender is the child or are the children you care for

* Male 1
* Female 2
* Other 3

How old are they?

* Please type in a number
* **Programmer note**: Max age of 20

How long have they been in your care?

* <Insert number> years
* <Insert number> months
* Less than 1 month
* **Programmer note:** Must enter response in years or months or both

## B2. The next set of questions is to understand the type of arrangement you have with the children in your care, and a little more about their background.

### Instructions

Please select from the drop-down options or type in your response.

### Programmer note

* Pipe in name or initials of children
* Autocode
* Use drop down lists below. Do not show category names – included only for analysis purpose

## Questions for each child

### What is the type of care arrangement you have with the child?

(**Programmer note**: If A1=1 response only autocode response and do not ask)

* Foster carer (Children’s Court order of voluntary agreement)
* Permanent carer (direct recruitment)
* Kinship carer (Children’s Court order)
* Adoptive parent or carer

### Foster care only: What type of foster care are you providing this child?

* Long term carer under a Long-term care order
* Long term kinship or foster care
* Short term kinship or foster care
* Respite kinship or foster care
* Emergency kinship or foster care
* Therapeutic kinship or foster care
* Other
* Not applicable for this child

### In which country were they born (if known)?

* Australia
* England
* India
* China (excludes SARs and Taiwan)
* New Zealand
* Vietnam
* Italy
* Sri Lanka
* Philippines
* Malaysia
* Greece
* South Africa
* Germany
* Scotland
* Hong Kong (SAR of China)
* Pakistan
* Netherlands
* United States of America
* Iraq
* Afghanistan
* Malta
* Indonesia
* North Macedonia
* Other (please specify)
* Don’t know
* Prefer not to say

### Do they, or their parents, speak a language other than English at home?

* Yes – please specify
* No
* Don’t know

### Do they identify as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander?

* Yes
* No
* Don’t know

### Kinship carer only: Do you have a formal arrangement for this child, that is a child protection order?

* Yes
* No
* Don’t know

### Is there any contact between the child and their parents?

* Yes
* No
* Don’t know

### Do they have any of the following support needs?

* History of trauma
* Attachment issues
* Grief or loss issues
* Behavioural issues
* Physical disability
* Learning difficulties
* Mental health difficulties
* Other
* None of these
* Don’t know

### Kinship carer only: What is your relationship to the child?

* (Open-ended reponse)

# Section 3: Attitudes and experiences with caring

The next set of questions are focused on your experience as a carer....

Programmer note: Show for those not currently caring A5=0 – Please think about your previous experience as a carer when responding to the following questions.

## C1. What were your reasons for becoming a carer in the first place?

### Instructions

Please select all that apply

### Programmer note

Randomise and anchor 97 at the bottom

### Options

* Obligation or motivation to care for family member or kin 01
* To make a positive difference in a child’s life 02
* To play a positive part in the community 03
* Personal experience in the care system 04
* To have a family or companionship 05
* Prompted by seeing advertising or communications 06
* Seeing family or friends already caring 07
* A sibling for another child 08
* I was approached by child protection services 09
* Other (please type in your response) 97

## C2b. Which of the following, if any, have you found challenging since starting your role as a carer?

### Instructions

Please select all that apply.

### Programmer note

Randomise and anchor 97 and 99 at the bottom

### Options

* Lack of time to meet caring obligations 01
* Restrictions in the ability to make decisions 02
* Speed of response to queries regarding the child 03
* Lack of consistency of support provided by care workers (such as child protection workers, foster care workers) 04
* Having everything the child needs (such as nappies, clothes, toothbrush and so on) 05
* Speed of getting documentation signed (such as approval to take trips, medication scripts and so on) 06
* Accessing organisations and people with sufficient knowledge to advise or help me 07
* Not knowing how to address issues with the child (such as developmental or behavioural issues) 08
* Not having support to address issues with the child, (such as developmental or behavioural issues) 09
* Managing parental access arrangements 10
* Ability to access practical supports (such as babysitting, support from friends or family members, respite care) 11
* Lack of key documentation like birth certificate, Medicare number or court order 12
* Availability or access to specialist and generalist support from practitioners (such as medical, educational, health or allied health and so on) 13
* Navigating child protection systems and processes 14
* Other (please type in your response) 97
* None of these 99

## C3. To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements in relation to your role as a carer…?

### Instructions

Please select one response per row.

### Programmer note

Randomise

### Options

* Strongly disagree 1
* Disagree 2
* Neither agree nor disagree 3
* Agree 4
* Strongly agree 5
* Don’t know or Not applicable 99

### Questions

1. I am confident in my personal ability to provide care to the child or children
2. I feel well supported by the Victorian Department of Health and Human Services
3. I feel well supported by carer advocacy groups (such as FCAV, PCA Families, KCV)
4. The Department or carer agency works around my commitments (work and family)
5. I feel well supported by carer agencies (such as Anglicare, Berry Street, OzChild, VACCA)
6. Department or care agency expectations of carers are realistic
7. I felt well prepared prior or at the beginning of my role as a carer
8. I would recommend being a carer to others
9. I feel I have access to information I need when I need it
10. I’m confident in supporting children in my care to maintain their connection with their cultural identity and heritage
11. I understand how to appropriately support an LGBTI or gender diverse child in my care (such as lesbian, gay, bisexual and so on)

## C4. To what extent have the following been positively, or negatively, affected as a result of your caring responsibilities…?

### Instructions

Please select one response per row.

### Programmer note

Show C5 and C6 on same screen.

### Options

* Negatively affected 1
* Neither 2
* Positively affected 3
* Don’t know or Not applicable 99

### Questions

1. My mental health
2. My immediate family members (those who live within the household)
3. My relationship with immediate family members
4. My relationship with my partner
5. My relationship with the child or young person I am caring for (such as in kinship care)
6. My social relationships (such as with friends and extended family)
7. My personal finances
8. My work or career
9. My physical health
10. My ability to attend social events (such as sporting events, holidays, family gatherings and so on)
11. My levels of stress
12. My connection to my community
13. My feeling of making a difference in a child’s life

## C5. How likely, or unlikely, would you be to care in the future?

### Instructions

Please think about your likelihood of continuing caring beyond your current placements or care arrangements, if you have them.

Please select one response only.

### Programmer note

Show C5 and C6 on same screen.

### Options

* Very unlikely 1
* Unlikely 2
* Neither likely nor unlikely 3
* Likely 4
* Very likely 5

## C6. Please provide as much detail as you can on all the reasons you would be likely, or unlikely, to care in the future…

### Instructions

Please type in your response.

# Section 4: Support And Training Needs

The next set of questions are focusing on your support and training needs as a carer…

## D1. Through which of the following, if any, have you accessed support or training for your role as a carer?

### Instructions

Please select all that apply.

### Programmer note

Show C5 and C6 on same screen.

### Options

* The Department (Victorian Department of Health and Human Services) such as kinship teams, child protection 01
* Peak and advocacy bodies (such as Foster Care Association of Victoria, Kinship Carers Victoria, Permanent Care and Adoptive Families) 02
* Agencies (such as Anglicare, VACCA, McKillop Family Services, Berry Street and so on) 03
* Local government or community agencies (independent agencies based close to where you live) 04
* Support groups, such as kinship peer support groups 05
* Carer KaFE • 06
* Other (please type in your response) 97
* I have not accessed support or training 99

## D2. Below are a list of the types of support and training you may or may not have accessed.

### Instructions

Using the drop down, please select which of the descriptions best describes you. Please select one response per row.

### Programmer note

Set up as drop down.

### Options

* I was not aware of support or training in this area 1
* I was aware of support or training in this area but have not accessed it 2
* I have accessed support or training in this area 3
* Not applicable to my situation 99

### Questions

1. Introductory training prior and at the beginning of your role as a carer (such as First Supports program)
2. Support provided to navigate the system as a carer (such as health, education, court and so on)
3. Support on where to go to identify a child’s specific needs (such as behavioural, cultural, grief or loss and so on)
4. Educational training (such as engage children in learning, supporting literacy or numeracy and so on)
5. Developmental training (such as building resilience, supporting participation in sporting activities, music and art activities, community activities and so on)
6. Behaviour management training
7. Cultural diversity training
8. Aboriginal Cultural Awareness training
9. Therapeutic parenting training (such as trauma, attachment and resilience-informed and so on)
10. Complex needs training
11. Carer mental and physical wellbeing support
12. Respite support
13. Legal support
14. Financial support
15. Support to care for children with a disability

## D3. To what extent did the support or training you accessed improve your ability to provide care?

### Instructions

Please select all that apply.

### Programmer note

Ask if D2=column 3 and only show these codes.

### Options

* Didn’t help me at all 1
* Helped me be a better carer 2
* Helped me be a much better carer 3
* Don’t know 99

### Questions

1. Introductory training prior to starting your role as a carer
2. Support provided to navigate the system as a carer (such as health, education, court and so on)
3. Support on where to go to identify a child’s specific needs (such as behavioural, cultural, grief or loss and so on)
4. Educational training (such as engage children in learning, supporting literacy or numeracy and so on)
5. Developmental training (such as building resilience, supporting participation in sporting activities, music and art activities, community activities and so on)
6. Behaviour management training
7. Cultural diversity training
8. Aboriginal Cultural Awareness training
9. Therapeutic parenting training (such as trauma, attachment and resilience-informed and so on)
10. Complex needs training
11. Carer mental and physical wellbeing support
12. Respite support
13. Legal support
14. Financial support
15. Support to care for children with a disability

# Section 5: Financial Supports

## E1. Which of the following financial impacts, if any, have you experienced as a result of your caring role?

### Instructions

Please select all that apply.

### Options

* Used my personal savings 01
* Taken money out of my superannuation 02
* Been unable to pay a utility bill on time 03
* Been unable to pay rent or mortgage repayments on time 04
* Borrowed money from family or friends 05
* Borrowed money from other lenders (such as bank, cash loans and so on) 06
* Regularly use my own funds to pay for other expenses for children in my care (such as medical, dental, therapies, sport, recreation, and education) 07
* Other (please type in your response) 97
* None of these 99
* Being a carer has not impacted my personal finances 98

## Instructions

The next set of questions are looking more specifically about the financial supports available to you as a carer…

## E2. Thinking about the following financial supports you may access, which of the following best describes you?

### Instructions

Please select one response per row.

### Options

* I was not aware of this support 1
* I was aware of this support but have not requested it 2
* I have requested this support but not received it 3
* I have received this support 4
* Not applicable to my situation 99

### Questions

1. **Care allowance**: assists carers with day-to-day costs of providing care to children
2. **New placement allowance**: additional allowance paid for the first six months of a new level one placement
3. **School attendance allowance**: to contribute to education expenses
4. **Child Care subsidies**: for approved child-care situations
5. **Disability payments**: for a child with disabilities
6. **Family assistance**: for those unable to support themselves through paid employment due to demands of carer role
7. **Health allowance**: to aid with costs relating to mental and physical health, dental and so on.
8. **Flexible funding (by DHHS)**: for permanent carers to help meet additional needs of a child in their care.
9. **Flexible funding (by PCA Families or Oz Child)**: for permanent carers to help meet additional needs of a child in their care

## E3. Thinking about the financial supports you have received, to what extent does it meet your needs as a carer?

### Instructions

Please select one response per row.

### Programmer note

Ask if received support – E2=column 4 and only show those received.

### Options

* A lot less than I need 1
* A little less than I need 2
* About right or covers my needs 3
* A little more than I need 4
* A lot more than I need 5 (99 for questions 8 and 9)

### Questions

1. **Care allowance**: assists carers with day-to-day costs of providing care to children
2. **New placement allowance**: additional allowance paid for the first six months of a new level one placement
3. **School attendance allowance**: to contribute to education expenses
4. **Child Care subsidies**: for approved child-care situations
5. **Disability payments**: for a child with disabilities
6. **Family assistance**: for those unable to support themselves through paid employment due to demands of carer role
7. **Health allowance**: to aid with costs relating to mental and physical health, dental and so on.
8. **Flexible funding (by DHHS)**: for permanent carers to help meet additional needs of a child in their care.
9. **Flexible funding (by PCA Families or Oz Child)**: for permanent carers to help meet additional needs of a child in their care

## E4. As a carer, what outgoing expenses are not covered, or subsidised, which you think should be…

### Instructions

Please type in your answer into the boxes provided.

### Programmer note

Provide 10 open-ended boxes.

### Options

* Open response
* There are no outgoing expenses I need that are not already covered or subsidised 99

## E5. Thinking more broadly about your role as a carer, what more could be done to improve your ability to care?

### Instructions

Please type in your answer.

# Section 6: Classification

## Instructions

And finally, just a few questions to help us understand a little more about you...

## F1. Do you identify as…?

### Instructions

Please select one response only.

### Options

* Male 1
* Female 2
* Other 3

## F2. How would you describe your sexual orientation?

### Options

* Heterosexual 1
* Lesbian or gay 2
* Bisexual 3
* Transgender or transsexual 4
* Intersex 5
* Queer or questioning 6
* Asexual 7
* Another sexual orientation (please describe) 8
* Don’t know 98
* Prefer not to say 99

## F3. How old are you?

### Instructions

Please type your response in the box below.

## F4. Which of the following best describes your status?

### Instructions

Please select all that apply.

### Options

* Caring full time 01
* Working full time 02
* Working part time 03
* Unemployed, seeking work 04
* Unemployed, not seeking work 05
* Looking after the home 06
* Studying full time 07
* Studying part time 08
* Retired 09
* Other (please type in your response) 97

## F5. Which of these best describes your current occupation?

### Instructions

Please elect the option closest to your situation. Please select one response only.

### Programmer note

Only ask if F4=2 or 3 (working).

### Options

* **Manager or Administrator** (senior manager, government official, administrator) 01
* **Professional** (architect, lawyer, accountant, doctor, scientist, teacher, health professional such as optometrist, dentist or registered nurse, professional artist) 02
* **Associate professional** (technical officer, technician, enrolled nurse, medical officer, police officer, computer programmer) 03
* **Trades persons** (building, electrical, metal, printing, vehicle, horticulture, marine trades person) 04
* **Advanced clerical or service** (bookkeeper, library assistant, flight attendant, secretaries or personal assistants) 05
* **Intermediate clerical, sales or service** (general clerk, receptionist, sales rep, childcare worker, waiter, driving instructor, nursing assistant, teaching or nursing aid) 06
* **Intermediate production and transport** (road, rail, machine, mobile or stationary plant operators or driver) 07
* **Elementary clerical, sales or service** (sales assistant, check out operator, mail or filing clerk, courier) 08
* **Labourers and related workers** (cleaner, process worker, tradesmen’s assistant, construction and mining labourer, food handler) 09
* Other (please type in your response) 97
* Prefer not to say 99

## What is the highest level of education you have completed to date?

### Instructions

Please select one response only.

### Options

* Started secondary (not completed VCE or equivalent) 1
* Completed VCE or equivalent 2
* Advanced diploma, Diploma or Certificate III or IV 3
* Bachelor degree 4
* Graduate diploma or Graduate certificate 5
* Postgraduate qualification 6

## F7. Where were you born?

### Instructions

Please select one response only.

### Options

* Australia 01
* Afghanistan 02
* China (excludes SARs and Taiwan) 03
* England 04
* North Macedonia 05
* Germany 06
* Greece 07
* Hong Kong (SAR of China) 08
* India 09
* Indonesia 10
* Iraq 11
* Italy 12
* Malaysia 13
* Malta 14
* Netherlands 15
* New Zealand 16
* Pakistan 17
* Philippines 18
* Scotland 19
* South Africa 20
* Sri Lanka 21
* United States of America 22
* Vietnam 23
* Other (please type in your response) 97
* Prefer not to say 99

## F8. Do you identify as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander?

### Instructions

Please select one response only.

### Options

* Yes – Aboriginal 1
* Yes – Torres Strait Islander 2
* Yes – both 3
* No – neither 4
* I prefer not to say 99

## F9. Where were your parents born?

### Instructions

Please select all that apply.

### Options

* Australia 01
* Afghanistan 02
* China (excludes SARs and Taiwan) 03
* England 04
* North Macedonia 05
* Germany 06
* Greece 07
* Hong Kong (SAR of China) 08
* India 09
* Indonesia 10
* Iraq 11
* Italy 12
* Malaysia 13
* Malta 14
* Netherlands 15
* New Zealand 16
* Pakistan 17
* Philippines 18
* Scotland 19
* South Africa 20
* Sri Lanka 21
* United States of America 22
* Vietnam 23
* Other (please type in your response) 97
* Prefer not to say 99

## F10. Do you, or other members of your family, speak a language other than English at home?

### Instructions

Please select all that apply.

### Options

* Yes – I do (please specify) 1
* Yes – other members of my family do (please specify) 2
* No 3
* I prefer not to say 99

## F11. Which of the following best describes you?

### Options

* A single person living with parents 01
* A single person living alone or sharing 02
* One of a couple with no children at home 03
* One of a couple with children at home 04
* A single parent with children at home 05
* Other (please specify) 97

## F11a. How many children do you have living with you in addition to those you care for under a care arrangement (such as biological children)?

### Instructions

Please select all that apply.

### Programmer note

Ask if F11=code 4 or 5.

### Options

* Under the age of 5 years old <type how many>
* Aged 6 – 10 years old <type how many>
* Aged 11 – 15 years old <type how many>
* Aged 16 – 18 years old <type how many>
* Over the age of 18 years old <type how many>

## F13. What is your postcode?

### Instructions

Please type in your response.

### Options

* Open response
* Don’t know 99

## F14. Which income bracket does your total household annual income before tax fall?

### Instructions

It does not matter if you do not know the exact amount, we are interested in your household’s approximate level of income.

Please select one response only.

### Options

* Under $20,000 1
* $20,000 - $39,999 2
* $40,000 - $69,999 3
* $70,000 - $99,999 4
* $100,000 - $149,999 5
* $150,000 or more 6
* Prefer not to answer 99

# That is the end of the survey – thank you

The study has been conducted on behalf of the Victorian Department of Health and Human Services.

As a market research company, we comply with the requirements of the Privacy Act. The information you have provided will be used only for market research purposes.

Should you need to contact us please call us on 1800 35 77 39.

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# Accessibility

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