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The views of children and young people in out-of-home care

Overview of indicator results from a pilot national survey

2015

Summary

This bulletin provides an overview of results from a 2015 national pilot data collection on the views of children and young people in out-of-home care. It presents new data for eight indicators under the *National Standards for Out-of-Home Care*, allowing reporting against these indicators for the first time.

Data are presented on 2,083 children aged 8–17 who were under the care of the Minister or Chief Executive in the eight states and territories. Jurisdictions collected these data as part of their local case management processes during the period from 1 February 2015 to 30 June 2015.

Key findings include:

- ♦ 91% of children reported feeling both safe and settled in their current placement
- ♦ 67% of children reported that they usually get to have a say in what happens to them, and people usually listen to what they say
- ♦ 87% of children reported that they received adequate support (from their carer or someone else) to participate in sport, community or cultural activities
- ♦ 94% of children reported feeling close to at least one family group: the people they live with now (coresident family), family members they do not live with (non-coresident family), or both
- ♦ 70% of children reported satisfaction with one or more types of contact (that is, visiting, talking or writing) with non-coresident family

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- ♦ 86% of children reported that they had at least some knowledge of their family background and culture
- ♦ 97% of children reported that they had a significant adult; that is, an adult who cares about what happens to them now and in the future
- ♦ 58% of those aged 15–17 reported that they were getting as much help as they needed to make decisions about their future. A further 30% reported that they were getting some help but wanted more.

This bulletin complements more detailed online data for the full set of National Standards indicators on the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare website <<http://www.aihw.gov.au/nfpac/>>.

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1 Introduction

The *National Standards for Out-of-Home Care* (the ‘National Standards’) are a joint initiative of the Australian Government and state and territory governments, and constitute a priority project under the *National Framework for Protecting Australia’s Children 2009–2020*.

The National Standards have been designed to drive improvements in the consistency and quality of care provided to children and young people who are unable to live with their families and are under the statutory care of the Minister or Chief Executive in states and territories (FaHCSIA 2011). The 13 National Standards focus on the key factors that influence better outcomes for these children and young people. Indicators were also developed as a means by which progress against these National Standards could be monitored over time.

In March 2012, Community and Disability Services ministers agreed to a national biennial survey of children in out-of-home care—as part of each jurisdiction’s case management processes—to facilitate monitoring of and reporting on eight child-reported indicators under the National Standards. As a number of jurisdictions were already running similar surveys, it was agreed that the national survey would build on existing methods and expertise.

This bulletin presents an overview of results from the national survey, highlighting key findings for these eight indicators. It complements more detailed online data for the full set of National Standards indicators on the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare website <<http://www.aihw.gov.au/nfpac/>>.

The terms ‘children’ and ‘young people’ are used interchangeably throughout the bulletin.

Methods

For the pilot national survey, states and territories collected data on the views of children in out-of-home care (as part of their local case management processes) during the period from 1 February 2015 to 30 June 2015. All jurisdictions used an electronic survey administration tool, with audio computer-assisted self-interviewing functionality. All jurisdictions collected responses to a set of core national questions to facilitate national reporting (see Table 5 for the full list of questions under the eight indicators). Children answered the survey questions themselves; however, departmental staff or other support persons provided assistance where requested or needed.

The in-scope population for the survey was children aged 8–17 residing in out-of-home care (including foster care, relative/kinship care, family group homes, residential care and independent living), whose care arrangements had been ordered by the relevant Children’s Court and parental responsibility for the child had been transferred to the Minister or Chief Executive, and who had been on a relevant court order for 3 months or more. Throughout this bulletin, these children are broadly referred to as being ‘in care’.

As such, the survey captures a subset of children in-scope for the National Standards. The National Standards have a broader scope with regard to age (0–17-year-olds), living arrangement types (any type), and length of time on orders (any length) (FaHCSIA 2011:5).

The states and territories submitted data to the Australian Institute for Health and Welfare for national collation and analysis. The Institute developed the presentation of results for the eight National Standards indicators in consultation with the National Standards Survey Working Group.

Further details on the methods used are provided in Section 3, including the different sampling and administration methodologies used by jurisdictions, and available information on sample bias and representativeness. This information should be considered when interpreting the results presented.

Survey respondents

Data were received for 2,083 children across the eight states and territories (Table 1), representing an estimated 10% of all children in care. The survey respondents had the following characteristics (Table 2):

- Ages ranged between 8–17, with most children (55%) aged 10–14.
- There were similar proportions of males and females (52% and 48%, respectively).
- Around one-third (34%) were Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander children.
- The majority were living in foster care (44%) or with relatives/kin (40%) on the night before completing the survey.

Section 3 includes available information on sample bias and representativeness.

Table 1: Number of survey respondents

	NSW	Vic	Qld	WA	SA	Tas	ACT	NT	Total
Number	369	471	396	299	329	40	86	93	2,083
Per cent	17.7	22.6	19.0	14.4	15.8	1.9	4.1	4.5	100.0

Source: AIHW 2015 Out-of-home care survey national data set.

Table 2: Characteristics of the survey respondents

Characteristics		Number	Per cent
Age (years)	8–9	433	20.8
	10–14	1,149	55.2
	15–17	501	24.1
Sex	Male	1,076	51.7
	Female	1,007	48.3
Indigenous status	Indigenous	712	34.2
	Non-Indigenous	1,365	65.5
Living arrangement ^(a)	Foster care	919	44.1
	Relatives/kin	840	40.3
	Residential care	217	10.4
	Other	107	5.1
Total		2,083	100.0

(a) Living arrangement on the night before survey completion. 'Other' comprises family group homes, other home-based care, independent living, parents, detention, and other living arrangements.

Notes

1. 'Total' includes children whose Indigenous status was 'not stated'.
2. Percentages may not sum to 100 due to rounding.

Source: AIHW 2015 Out-of-home care survey national data set.

2 Findings

This section presents an overview of the key findings for each of the eight National Standards indicators. The number of respondents varies across and within indicators, as some responses (for example, 'not stated' responses) are excluded from reporting. More detailed data and explanatory footnotes for each indicator are provided in the supplementary tables available online at <<http://www.aihw.gov.au/nfpac/>>.

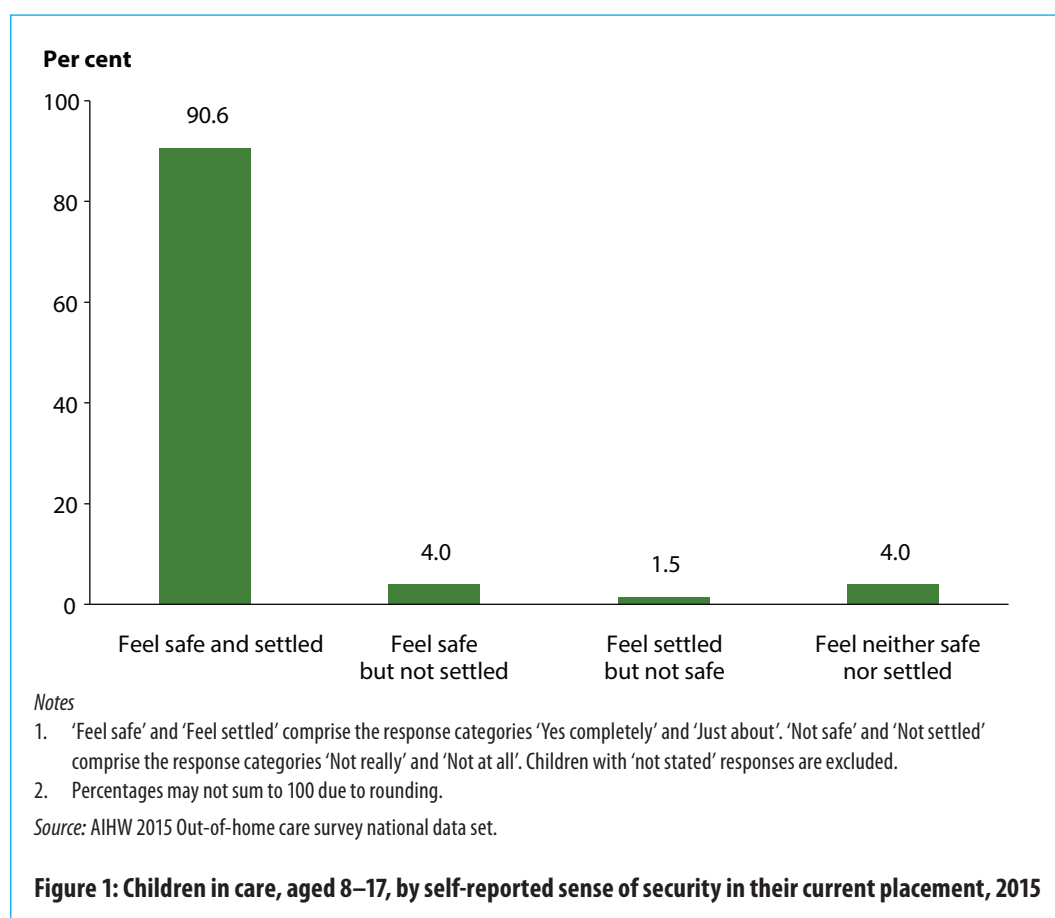
Sense of security

Indicator 1.3 Sense of security: The proportion of children and young people in out-of-home care who report feeling safe and secure in their current placement.

Children aged 8–17 were asked 4 questions related to this indicator (Table 5). These questions aimed to assess the extent to which children felt safe and settled in their current placement. The findings for this indicator were based on responses from 2,068 children.

Key findings:

- The majority of children (91%) children reported feeling both safe and settled in their current placement (Figure 1).
- A further 6% reported feeling safe (4%), or feeling settled (2%), but not both (Figure 1).
- Among those who indicated that they did not feel safe (113 children), common responses to the open-ended question ‘Can you say why you don’t feel safe?’ were related to the behaviour of other residents, such as bullying and fighting (38%); feeling that the neighbourhood was unsafe (11%); and commenting that they were unsure or it was hard to explain why they did not feel safe (18%).
- Among those who indicated they did not feel settled (164 children), common responses to the open-ended question ‘Can you say why you don’t feel settled?’ were related to the behaviour of other residents, such as bullying and fighting (28%); missing their family or previous placement (18%); feeling the rules were unfair or strict (10%); and commenting that they were still settling in to a new or temporary placement (6%).



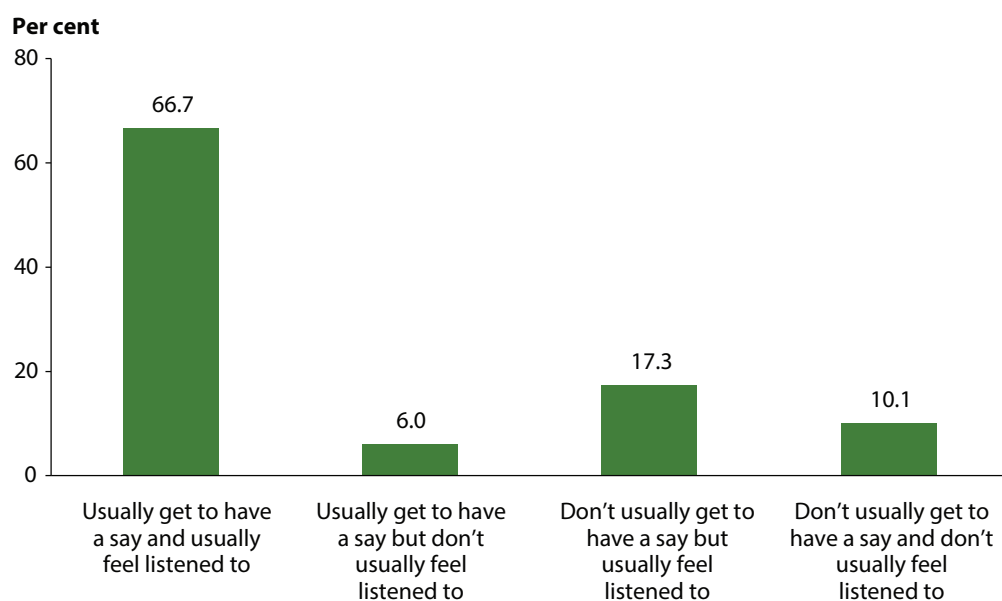
Participation

Indicator 2.1 Participation: The proportion of children and young people who report that they have opportunities to have a say in relation to decisions that have an impact on their lives and that they feel listened to.

Children aged 8–17 were asked 3 questions related to this indicator (see Table 5). These questions aimed to assess children’s perceptions of having the opportunity to participate in decision-making—in particular, whether they feel they get to have a say, and whether they feel listened to. As an additional explanatory factor, children were also asked whether someone explains the decisions made about them. The findings for this indicator were based on responses from 2,031 children.

Key findings:

- The majority of children (67%) reported that they usually get to have a say in what happens to them, and people usually listen to what they say (Figure 2).
- A further 23% reported that they usually get to have a say (6%), or they usually feel listened to (17%), but not both (Figure 2).
- Most children (74%) reported that people usually explained the decisions made about them.



Notes

1. 'Usually' comprises the response categories 'All of the time' and 'Most of the time'. 'Don't usually' comprises the response categories 'Not very often' and 'Never'. Children with 'not stated' responses are excluded.
2. Percentages may not sum to 100 due to rounding.

Source: AIHW 2015 Out-of-home care survey national data set.

Figure 2: Children in care, aged 8–17, by self-reported participation in decision making, 2015

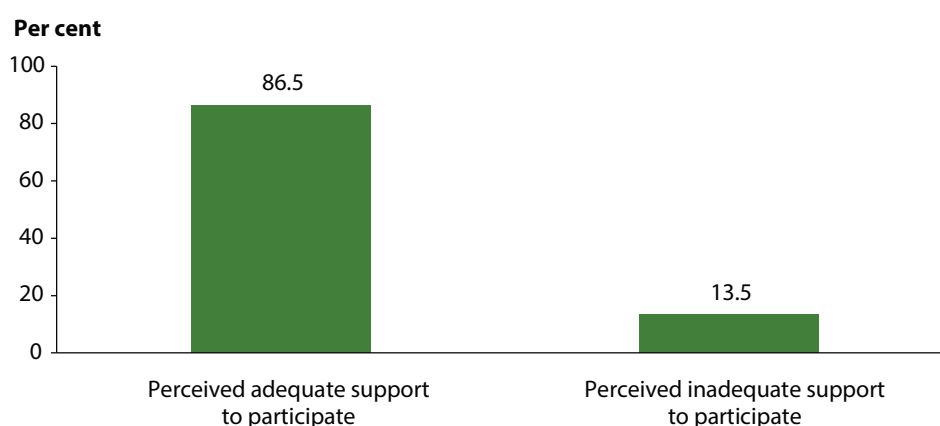
Community activity

Indicator 8.1 Community activity: The proportion of children and young people who report they may choose to do the same sorts of things (sporting, cultural or community activities) that children and young people their age who aren't in care do.

Children aged 8–17 were asked 2 questions related to this indicator (see Table 5). These questions aimed to assess children's perceptions of the support they received to participate in sporting, cultural or community activities that would bring them into contact with others. Although this indicator specifies a comparison, when developing the survey questions it was not considered appropriate to ask children in care to compare themselves directly with children not in care.

Key findings:

- The majority of children (87%) reported that they received adequate support (from their carer or someone else) to participate in sport, community or cultural activities (Figure 3). These findings were based on responses from 1,937 children.
- Many children provided multiple answers to the open-ended question 'Are there any sports, hobbies or other activities you would like to try?'. The most common responses were related to sport, physical and outdoor activities, such as soccer and swimming (59%); creative activities, such as art and music (10%); and community activities, such as youth groups and volunteering (2%). Around one-third of children indicated that they were already doing activities they liked and/or that there was not anything specific they would like to try (36%). These findings were based on responses from 2,083 children.



Note: 'Perceived adequate support' comprises the response categories 'All the time' and 'Most of the time'. 'Perceived inadequate support' comprises the response categories 'Not very often' and 'Never'. Children with 'not stated' and 'I am not interested in these things' responses are excluded.

Source: AIHW 2015 Out-of-home care survey national data set.

Figure 3: Children in care, aged 8–17, by self-reported support to participate in community activities, 2015

Family connection

Indicator 9.2 Family connection: The proportion of children and young people who report they have an existing connection with at least one family member which they expect to maintain.

Children aged 8–17 were asked 2 questions related to this indicator (see Table 5). These questions aimed to assess children’s feelings of connection and closeness to family (regardless of the level of contact). The questions asked children about how close they felt to:

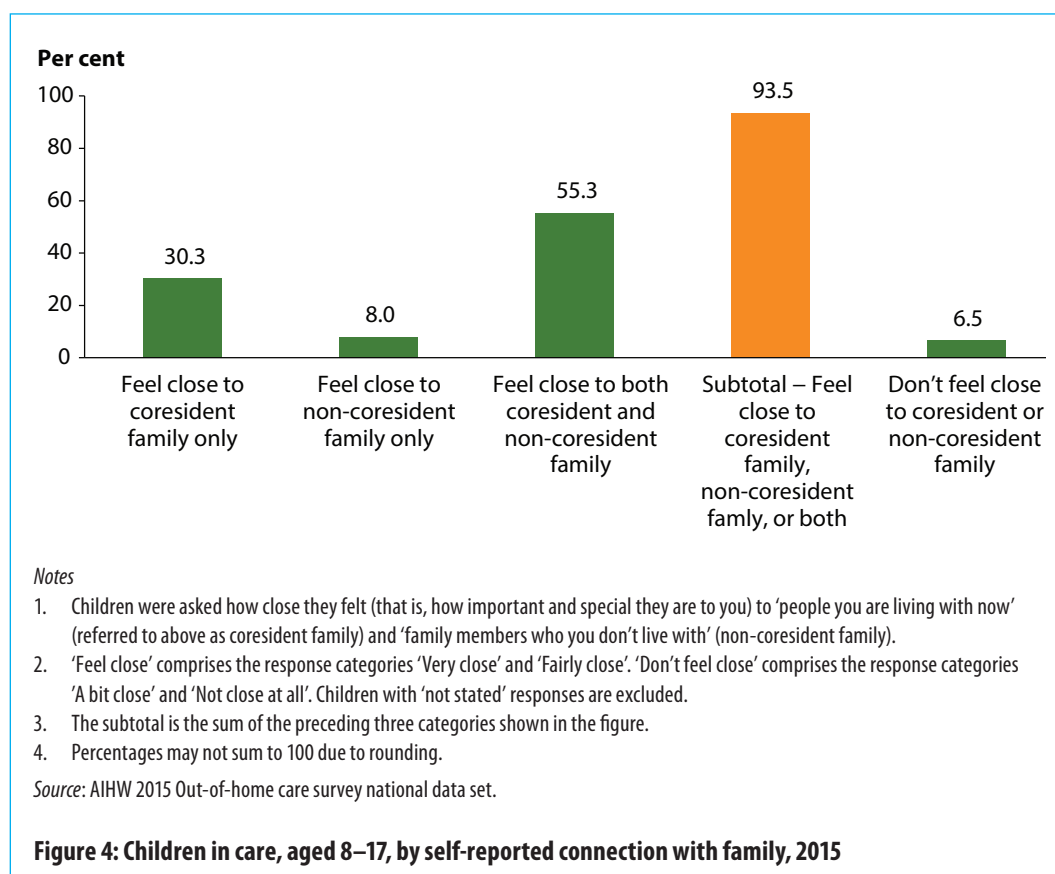
- ‘the people you are living with now’ (referred to below as co-resident family, which may include relatives/kin or long-term foster carers)
- ‘family members who you don’t live with’ (referred to below as non-co-resident family).

‘How close’ was described as ‘how important and special they are to you’. ‘Family’ was broadly self-defined by the responding children. Children in care may not distinguish between biological and non-biological relationships, and may feel equally close to their birth family, carer family and others in their current placement.

The findings for this indicator were based on responses from 2,059 children.

Key findings:

- The majority of children (94%) reported feeling close to at least one family group (co-resident family, non-co-resident family, or both) (Figure 4).
- Over half (55%) felt close to both their co-resident family and non-co-resident family (Figure 4).
- As previously noted, most children were living in foster care or with relatives/kin (see Table 2). Similar proportions reported feeling close to co-resident family—91% among children in foster care and 91% among children in relative/kin care.



Family contact

9.3 Family contact: The proportion of children (as age-appropriate) and young people who report having contact with family members, by the reported frequency of contact, by their reported satisfaction with contact arrangements.

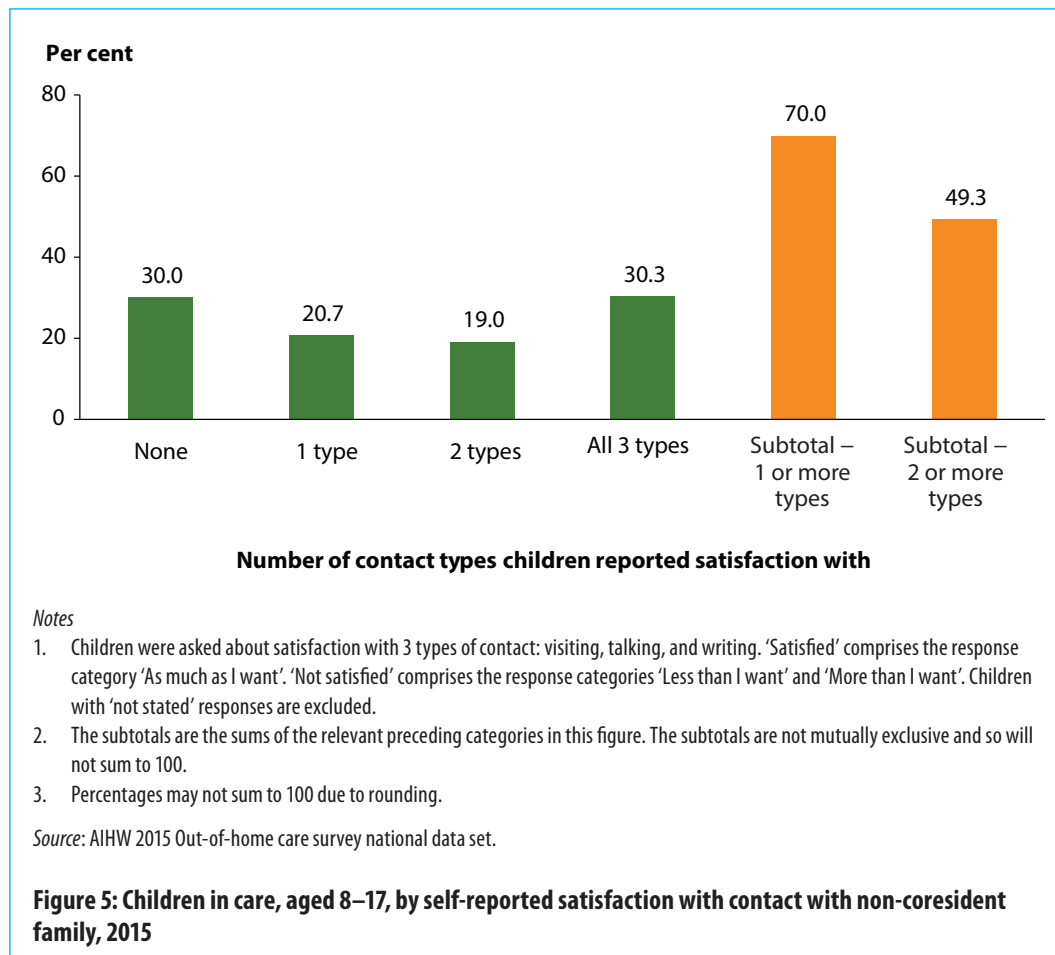
Children aged 8–17 were asked 4 questions related to this indicator (see Table 5). These questions aimed to assess children's reported satisfaction with their contact with family they do not live with (non-co-resident family)—in particular, the type and amount of contact.

'Family' was broadly self-defined by the responding children. They may not have distinguished between biological and non-biological relationships (for example, biological, half, step, de facto, kinship and carer relationships).

Children were asked about 3 types of contact with non-co-resident family: visiting, talking, and writing. The availability and appropriateness of different contact types may vary across children and family members (for example, due to geographical distance, costs, and safety reasons). In addition, 40% of children were already living with relatives/kin (see Table 2).

Key findings:

- Regarding contact with non-coresident family, 70% of children reported satisfaction with 1 or more contact types, 49% reported satisfaction with 2 or more contact types, and 30% reported satisfaction with all 3 types (Figure 5). These data were based on responses from 2,050 children.
- To the open-ended question 'Is there anything you want to change about contact with family?', half of the children (50%) indicated they did not want any changes and were happy with the current arrangements. Many children provided multiple answers, and had different requests for contact with different family members. Other common responses were related to requesting more contact (32%) or less/no contact (3%) with particular family members, and requesting specific arrangements such as contact type and location (11%). The results for this question were based on responses from 2,083 children.



Sense of community

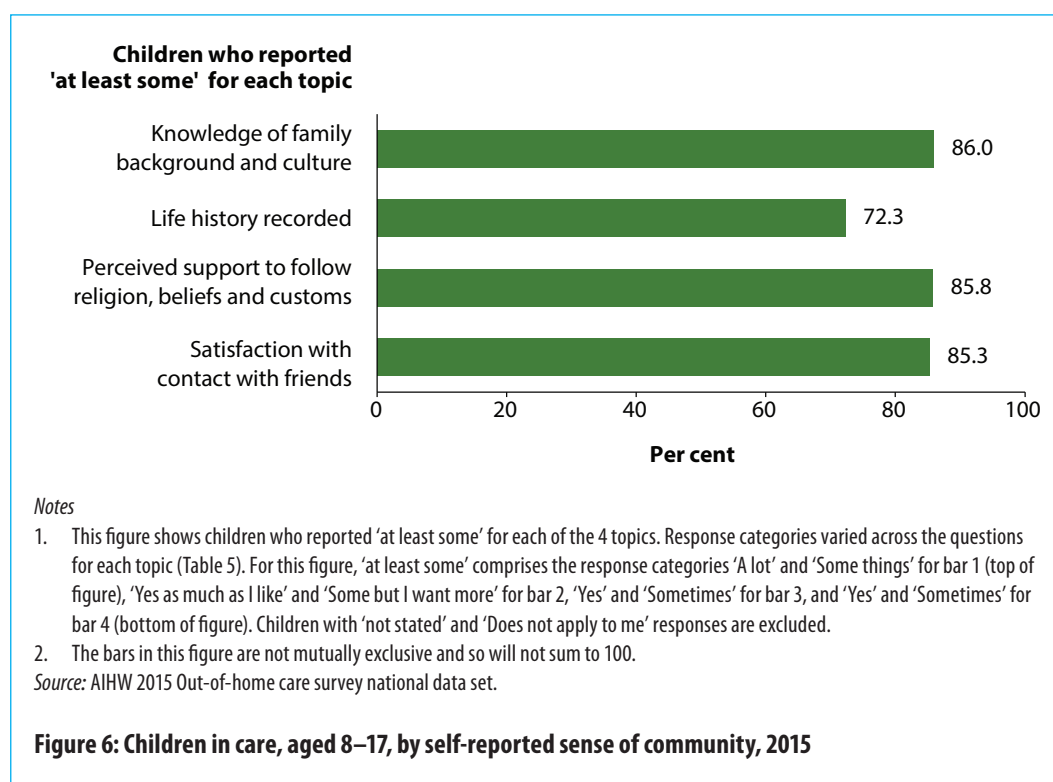
10.2 Sense of community: The proportion of children (as age-appropriate) and young people who demonstrate having a sense of connection with the community in which they live.

Children aged 8–17 were asked 4 questions related to this indicator (see Table 5). These questions aimed to assess children’s sense of community through knowledge of their life history, whether their life history is being recorded, whether they feel connected to their culture or religion, and through contact with friends.

The findings for this indicator were based on responses from between 1,378 and 2,043 children; the number of respondents varied across questions (for more detail see online data for this indicator at <<http://www.aihw.gov.au/nfpac/>>).

Key findings:

- ✦ The majority of children (86%) reported they had at least some knowledge of their family background and culture.
- ✦ Most children (72%) reported they had at least some of their life history recorded (that is, they kept some things about their life, such as photos, a life story book, or a memory box).
- ✦ Among children who indicated it was applicable, 86% reported they had at least some help or support to follow their religion, beliefs and customs.
- ✦ The majority of children (85%) reported at least some satisfaction with the amount of contact with their friends.



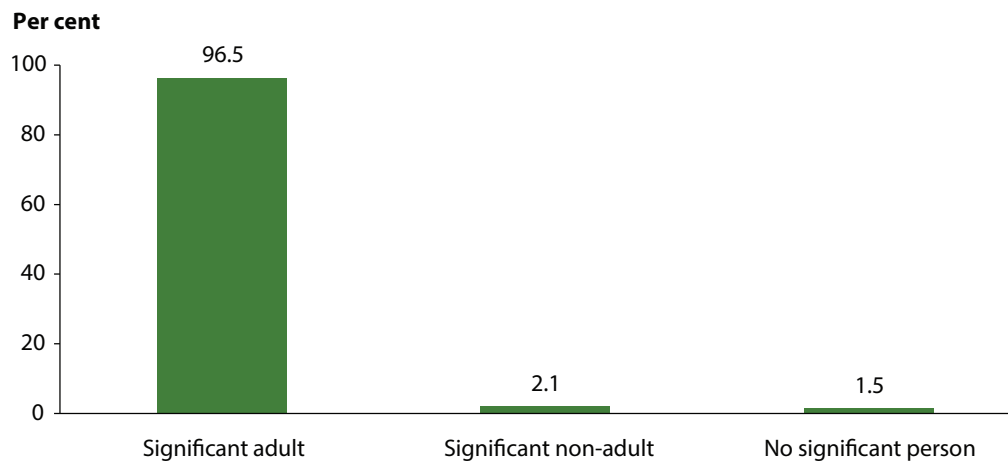
Significant person

11.1 Significant person: The proportion of children and young people who are able to nominate at least one significant adult who cares about them and who they believe they will be able to depend upon throughout their childhood or young adulthood.

Children aged 8–17 were asked 3 questions related to this indicator (see Table 5). These questions aimed to assess whether children could nominate an adult who cares about them. Children who were unable to nominate an adult were asked a follow-up question about non-adult support sources. As an additional measure, children were also asked about their satisfaction with the amount of contact with their nominated person. The findings for this indicator were based on responses from 2,047 children.

Key findings:

- The majority of children (97%) reported that they had a significant adult; that is, an adult who cares about what happens to them now and in the future (Figure 7).
- A further 2% reported they did not have a significant adult, but they did have a significant non-adult who cares about what happens to them now and in the future (Figure 7).
- Most children (84%) reported they were satisfied ('most of the time' or 'all of the time') with the amount of contact with their significant adult.



Notes

1. 'Significant non-adult' only includes children who reported they did not have a significant adult. 'No significant person' only includes children who reported that they did not have a significant adult, or a significant non-adult. Children with 'not stated' responses are excluded.
2. Percentages may not sum to 100 due to rounding.

Source: AIHW 2015 Out-of-home care survey national data set.

Figure 7: Children in care, aged 8–17, by self-reported significant person, 2015

Leaving care

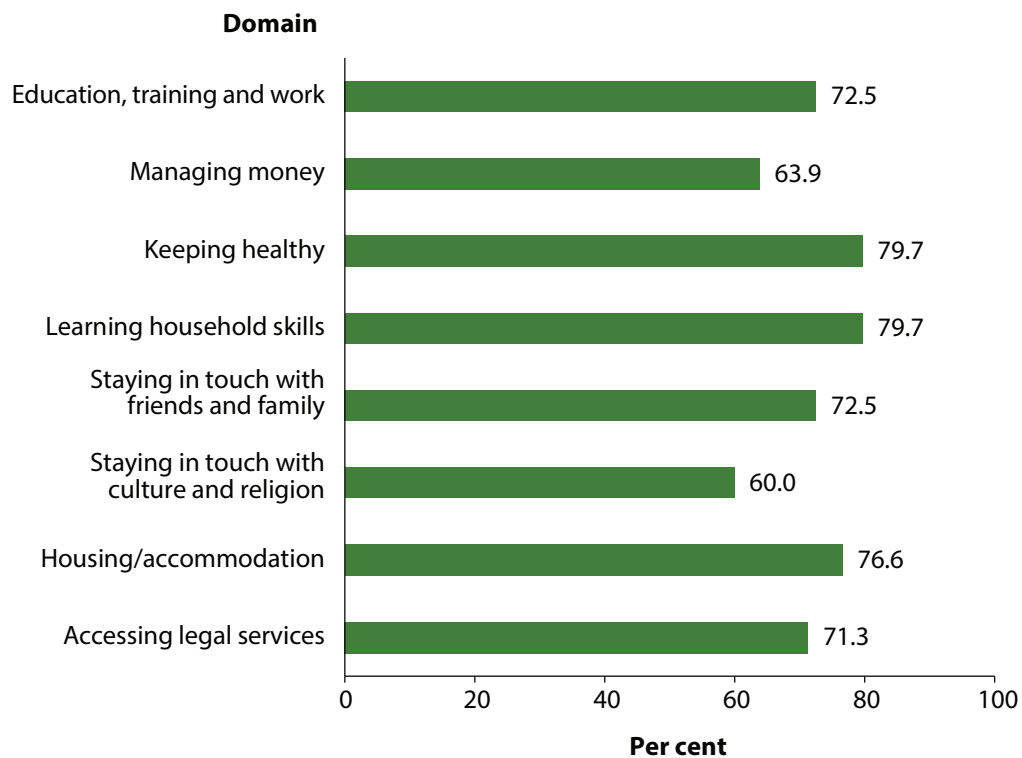
13.2 Leaving care: The proportion of young people who, at the time of exit from out-of-home care, report they are receiving adequate assistance to prepare for adult life.

Transitioning from out-of-home care to independence: a nationally consistent approach to planning (the 'National Approach') describes the exit from out-of-home care as a gradual process of transitioning to independence, starting at age 15 (FaHCSIA 2011). As such, although this indicator specifies young people exiting care, when developing the survey questions it was considered more appropriate to ask young people still in care about the assistance they were currently receiving.

Young people aged 15–17 were asked 9 questions related to this indicator (see Table 5). These questions aimed to assess young people's perceptions of the adequacy of the assistance they are currently receiving to help prepare them for adult life, including 8 life domains to be considered in transition planning under the National Approach.

Key findings:

- Over half of those aged 15–17 (58%) reported they were getting as much help as they needed to make decisions about their future. A further 30% reported they were getting some help but wanted more. These findings are based on data for 130 young people from four jurisdictions (data were available for Western Australia, South Australia, Tasmania and the Australian Capital Territory).
- The proportion of those aged 15–17 who reported they were getting as much help as they needed ranged between 60–80% across the 8 life domains of the National Approach (Figure 8). A further 11–19% reported they were getting some help but wanted more. These findings were based on responses from between 293 and 455 young people from all eight jurisdictions; the number of respondents varied across questions (for more detail, see online data for this indicator at <<http://www.aihw.gov.au/nfpac/>>).



Notes

1. This figure shows children who reported they were getting 'as much help as I need' across the 8 life domains to be considered in transition planning, as identified in *Transitioning from out-of-home care to independence: a nationally consistent approach to planning* (FaHCSIA 2011).
2. Children with 'not stated' and 'Does not apply to me' responses are excluded from each domain.
3. The bars in this figure are not mutually exclusive and so will not sum to 100.

Source: AIHW 2015 Out-of-home care survey national data set.

Figure 8: Children in care, aged 15–17, by self-reported adequacy of leaving care assistance, 2015

3 Technical notes

As noted in the 'Methods' section (see Section 1), jurisdictions collected data on the views of children in out-of-home care as part of their local case management processes. This approach enabled jurisdictions to build on existing case management and communication processes with which children were familiar. However, as a result, there was some variation in the sampling and administration methodologies used across jurisdictions. A brief description of the state and territory methodologies is provided in Table 4.

Key similarities across all jurisdictions include:

- Child participation in the survey was voluntary.
- Processes were in place to introduce the survey and seek consent from each child before starting the survey.
- An electronic survey administration tool, with audio computer-assisted self-interviewing functionality, was used. Responses to a set of core national questions were collected to facilitate national reporting.
- The survey questions were answered by the child. However, assistance was provided by departmental staff or other support persons, where requested or needed.
- Processes were in place to provide support before, during and after the child completed the survey.
- Participating agencies and staff were provided with relevant training, information and materials to assist in administering the survey.

A set of core national questions were collected by all jurisdictions to facilitate national reporting (Table 5). These questions were developed in 2013–14 by a national working group comprising representatives from state/territory departments responsible for child protection, the Department of Social Services and the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare. In line with the decision of Community and Disability Services ministers (see 'Introduction'), the core national questions built on existing state and territory surveys of children in care.

Information was not available to the Institute on the size of the actual in-scope population for the survey, or the level of survey take-up and refusals. Without this information, it is not possible to indicate whether there are any biases in the reported sample compared with the in-scope population. In future surveys, consideration should be given to capturing and assessing this information.

However, data on selected characteristics of a suitable comparison group were available to assess the representativeness of the sample. Table 3 shows the characteristics of the survey respondents and the comparison child protection population. These data suggest that the representativeness of the survey sample was quite good, with all characteristics within $\pm 5\%$ of the comparison population.

A data quality statement for the national data set is available at <http://meteor.aihw.gov.au/content/index.phtml/itemId/630619>.

Table 3: Characteristics of the survey respondents and comparison population (per cent)

Characteristics		Survey respondents ^(a)	Comparison child protection population ^(b)	Percentage point difference ^(c)
Age (years)	8–9	20.8	22.1	–1.3
	10–14	55.2	51.8	3.4
	15–17	24.1	26.2	–2.1
Sex	Male	51.7	51.8	–0.1
	Female	48.3	48.2	0.1
Indigenous status	Indigenous	34.2	35.5	–1.3
	Non-Indigenous	65.5	64.4	1.1
Living arrangement ^(d)	Foster care	44.1	39.8	4.3
	Relatives/kin	40.3	43.6	–3.3
	Residential care	10.4	8.4	2.0
	Other	5.1	8.2	–3.1

(a) The survey respondents group comprises children aged 8–17 on the day of survey completion; who were on a care and protection order on the day of survey completion, their care arrangements having been ordered by the relevant Children’s Court, with parental responsibility transferred to the Minister or Chief Executive, and who had been on orders for 3 or more months; and who were residing in out-of-home care on the night before survey completion. Surveys were completed during the period from 1 February 2015 to 30 June 2015.

(b) The comparison group is not the actual in-scope population for the survey, but is suitable to assess the representativeness of the sample. For all jurisdictions except New South Wales, the comparison population was sourced from unit record (person-level) data, and comprises children aged 8–17 at 30 June 2015; who were on a care and protection order at 30 June 2015, their care arrangements having been ordered by the relevant Children’s Court, with parental responsibility transferred to the Minister or Chief Executive, and who had been on their current order for 3 or more months; and who were residing in out-of-home care on the night of 30 June 2015. For New South Wales, the comparison population was sourced from aggregate data, and comprises children aged 8–17 at 30 June 2015, who were on any type of care and protection order at 30 June 2015, and who were residing in out-of-home care on the night of 30 June 2015.

(c) The percentage point difference indicates the extent to which the ‘Survey respondents’ proportion is higher or lower than the ‘Comparison child protection population’ proportion. A negative value indicates that the ‘Survey respondents’ proportion is lower; a positive value indicates that the ‘Survey respondents’ proportion is higher. The percentage point difference is calculated by subtracting the ‘Comparison child protection population’ proportion from the ‘Survey respondents’ proportion.

(d) Living arrangement on the night before survey completion. ‘Other’ comprises family group homes, other home-based care, independent living, parents, detention, and other living arrangements.

Sources: AIHW 2015 Out-of-home care survey national data set; AIHW Child Protection National Minimum Data Set 2014–15.

Table 4: Overview of data collection methodology, by state and territory

Jurisdiction	Survey administration/sampling process	Electronic survey administration software used
New South Wales	The New South Wales Department of Family and Community Services (FACS) identified a sampling frame of in-scope children. To reflect the case management responsibility functions that operate within New South Wales, the sampling frame included cases managed by the FACS and non-government organisations. Agencies were provided with a list of the children they manage, who were included in the randomly selected representative sample. Surveys were administered by the agency with case management responsibility.	Viewpoint

continued

Table 4 (continued): Overview of data collection methodology, by state and territory

Jurisdiction	Survey administration/sampling process	Electronic survey administration software used
Victoria	<p>The Victorian Department of Health and Human Services identified a sampling frame of in-scope children. To reflect the case management responsibility functions that operate within Victoria, the sampling frame included cases managed by community service organisations and all four Victorian child protection divisions.</p> <p>Surveys were administered by the agency with case management responsibility.</p>	Viewpoint
Queensland	<p>The Queensland Department of Communities, Child Safety and Disability Services identified a sampling frame of in-scope children, and allocated each of Queensland's seven regions a minimum number of surveys to complete, based on population share. Regions were asked to ensure that their sample was representative, where possible, across child safety service centres and child characteristics (for example, age, sex, Indigenous status, and living arrangements).</p> <p>The survey was mainly administered by Child Safety Officers, using a limited number of dedicated iPads that were supplied to regions for survey implementation. Children had discretion to use their own personal device (for example, smartphone) to complete the survey if they wished. Children could also complete the survey without the support of departmental staff (for example, their Child Safety Officer) if preferred.</p>	Viewpoint
Western Australia	<p>Data were collected as part of a broader ongoing process managed by the Western Australian Department for Child Protection and Family Support. All children in care aged 5–17 are invited to complete a survey using Viewpoint, as part of their care planning process throughout the year. Children were supported in completing the survey by their caseworker.</p> <p>For national reporting, Western Australia extracted data for a subset of children: those aligning with the national scope and collection period (see 'Methods'). The most recent response was used for children who completed the survey more than once during the collection period.</p>	Viewpoint
South Australia	<p>The South Australian Department for Education and Child Development identified a sampling frame of in-scope children. Children were randomly selected by social/case work staff to complete the survey. This included children from 17 offices across the state.</p> <p>The child's social/case worker facilitated completion of the survey with the child at a location chosen by the child. The survey was administered using Viewpoint 'offline' on Families SA laptops. This enabled use in areas without internet connectivity.</p>	Viewpoint
Tasmania	<p>The Tasmanian Department of Health and Human Services identified a sampling frame of in-scope children, based on region, age, living arrangement, care and protection order type, and length of order. It is thought some sample bias may have been introduced into the survey sample by including more accessible children in the Hobart area.</p> <p>Children were supported in completing the survey by a specialist case management worker. In some instances, depending on the child's proficiency with computers, a paper survey was used, with results being entered into the online tool by the worker.</p>	Lime Survey
Australian Capital Territory	<p>Data were collected as part of a broader ongoing process managed by the Australian Capital Territory Community Services Directorate. Children aged 5 and over on reviewable orders (including, but not limited to, orders where the Director-General has parental responsibility) and placed in out-of-home care for 3 months or more, are invited once a year to complete a survey using Viewpoint. The invitation will usually coincide with preparing the child's Annual Review Report. Children were supported in completing the survey by their case manager.</p> <p>For national reporting, the Australian Capital Territory extracted data for a subset of children: those aligning with the national scope and collection period (see 'Methods').</p>	Viewpoint

continued

Table 4 (continued): Overview of data collection methodology, by state and territory

Jurisdiction	Survey administration/sampling process	Electronic survey administration software used
Northern Territory	The Northern Territory Department of Children and Families identified a sampling frame of in-scope children, which was distributed to the three regions. Regions nominated staff responsible for coordinating the surveys in each office, randomly selecting the children from the sampling frame, and accompanying the caseworker to conduct the survey. Children were supported in completing the survey by their caseworker.	Viewpoint

Table 5: Core national questions, in order of National Standard

National Standard	Indicator	Core national questions		
		Question	Response categories	Source survey ^(a)
Standard 1: Children and young people will be provided with stability and security during their time in care.	1.3 Sense of security: The proportion of children and young people in out-of-home care who report feeling safe and secure in their current placement.	1. Do you feel settled where you live now?	Not at all Not really Just about Yes completely <If 'yes completely', child will skip to Q3.>	Western Australian Viewpoint survey
		2. Can you say why you don't feel settled?	Open-ended	Western Australian Viewpoint survey
		5. Do you feel safe where you live now?	Not at all Not really Just about Yes completely <If 'yes completely', child will skip to Q7.>	Western Australian Viewpoint survey
		6. Can you say why you don't feel safe?	Open-ended	Western Australian Viewpoint survey
Standard 2: Children and young people participate in decisions that have an impact on their lives.	2.1 Participation: The proportion of children and young people who report that they have opportunities to have a say in relation to decisions that have an impact on their lives and that they feel listened to.	17. Do you get to have a say in what happens to you, such as where you live, your school and learning, and your future?	Never Not very often Most of the time All the time	Queensland Foster care survey (question modified)
		18. Do people listen to what you say?	Never Not very often Most of the time All the time	Queensland Foster care survey (question modified)
		19. Do people explain the decisions made about you?	Never Not very often Most of the time All the time	Queensland Foster care survey

continued

Table 5 (continued): Core national questions, in order of National Standard

National Standard	Indicator	Core national questions		
		Question	Response categories	Source survey ^(a)
Standard 8: Children and young people in care are supported to participate in social and/or recreational activities of their choice, such as sporting, cultural or community activity.	8.1 Community activity: The proportion of children and young people who report they may choose to do the same sorts of things (sporting, cultural or community activities) that children and young people their age who aren't in care do.	3. Does your carer or someone else encourage you to do things with other people, such as sport, community or cultural activities?	Never Not very often Most of the time All the time I am not interested in these things	Western Australian Viewpoint survey (question modified)
		4. Are there any sports, hobbies or other activities you would like to try?	Open-ended	Western Australian Viewpoint survey
Standard 9: Children and young people are supported to safely and appropriately maintain connection with family, be they birth parents, siblings or other family members.	9.2 Family connection: The proportion of children and young people who report they have an existing connection with at least one family member which they expect to maintain.	7. How close do you feel to: (a) the people you are living with now? (b) family members who you don't live with? By 'how close', we mean: how important and special they are to you?	Very close Fairly close A bit close Not close at all	New South Wales Pathways survey (question modified)
		8. For family you don't live with: (a) Do you get to visit your family? (b) Do you get to talk to your family? (including phone calls) (c) Do you get to write to your family? (including emails, messaging, letters)	Less than I want As much as I want More than I want	Queensland Foster care survey (question modified)
		9. Is there anything you want to change about contact with family?	Open-ended	Western Australian Viewpoint survey (question modified)

continued

Table 5 (continued): Core national questions, in order of National Standard

National Standard	Indicator	Core national questions		
		Question	Response categories	Source survey ^(a)
Standard 10: Children and young people in care are supported to develop their identity, safely and appropriately, through contact with their families, friends, culture, spiritual sources and communities and have their life history recorded as they grow up.	10.2 Sense of community: The proportion of children (as ageappropriate) and young people who demonstrate having a sense of connection with the community in which they live.	10. Do you see your friends as much as you want?	No Sometimes Yes	Western Australian Viewpoint survey
		14. How much do you know about your family background and your culture?	Nothing Some things A lot	Not applicable (new question)
		15. Do you keep things about your life, such as photos, a life story book, or a memory box?	Not at all Not really Some but I want more Yes as much as I like	Western Australian Viewpoint survey (question modified)
		16. Are you helped to follow your religion, beliefs and customs where you live?	No Sometimes Yes Does not apply to me	Western Australian Viewpoint survey (question modified)
Standard 11: Children and young people in care are supported to safely and appropriately identify and stay in touch, with at least one other person who cares about their future, who they can turn to for support and advice.	11.1 Significant person: The proportion of children and young people who are able to nominate at least one significant adult who cares about them and who they believe they will be able to depend upon throughout their childhood or young adulthood.	11. Do you have an adult who cares about what happens to you now and in the future?	Yes No <If 'yes', child will skip to Q13. If 'no', child will proceed to Q12.>	Western Australian Viewpoint survey (question modified)
		12. Do you have someone else (who is not an adult) who cares about what happens to you now and in the future?	Yes No <If 'yes', child will proceed to Q13. If 'no', child will skip to Q14.>	Western Australian Viewpoint survey (question modified)
		13. Do you see this person as often as you want?	Not at all Not really Most of the time All of the time	Western Australian Viewpoint survey

continued

Table 5 (continued): Core national questions, in order of National Standard

National Standard	Indicator	Core national questions		
		Question	Response categories	Source survey ^(a)
Standard 13: Children and young people have a transition from care plan commencing at 15 years old which details support to be provided after leaving care.	13.2 Leaving care: The proportion of young people who, at the time of exit from out-of-home care, report they are receiving adequate assistance to prepare for adult life.	(for 15–17-year-olds) 20. Do you get enough help to make decisions about your future?	Not at all Not really Some but I need more Yes as much as I need	Western Australian Viewpoint survey (question modified)
		(for 15–17-year-olds) 21. Do you get enough help with: (a) education, training and work? (b) managing your money? (c) keeping healthy? (d) learning household skills like cleaning and cooking meals? (e) staying in touch with friends and family? (f) staying in touch with your culture and religion? (g) housing/accommodation? (h) accessing legal services?	Not at all Not really Some but I need more Yes as much as I need Does not apply to me	Western Australian Viewpoint survey (question modified)

(a) The core national questions were built on existing state and territory surveys of children in care available at the time. ‘Western Australian Viewpoint’ refers to a survey used by the Western Australian Department for Child Protection and Family Support as part of case management/care planning processes (Viewpoint Organisation 2015). ‘Queensland Foster care’ refers to the 2011 Views of Children and Young People in Foster Care survey undertaken by the Queensland Commission for Children and Young People and Child Guardian (CCYPCG 2012). ‘New South Wales Pathways’ refers to the Pathways of Care longitudinal research study being undertaken by the New South Wales Department of Family and Community Services (NSW FaCS 2015). ‘Question modified’ indicates that the existing state/territory survey question was modified during the development process to better suit the purposes of the national survey (for example, the question wording and/or responses categories may have been revised to align more closely with the relevant National Standards indicator).

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Australian Institute of Health and Welfare

Board Chair

Dr Mukesh C Haikerwal AO

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Digital and Media Communications Unit

Australian Institute of Health and Welfare

GPO Box 570

Canberra ACT 2601

Tel: (02) 6244 1000

Email: info@aihw.gov.au

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