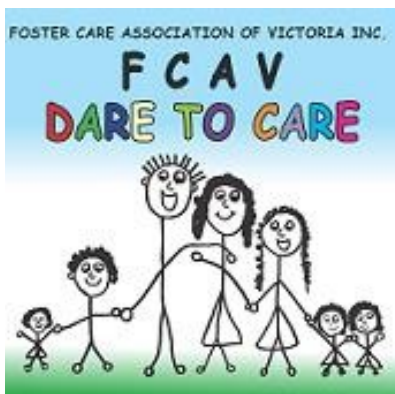


FCAV / PPSS Carer Information & Support Service

Annual Results 2010/2011



**Post
Placement
Support
Service**





Annual Results—2010/11
Carer Issue Reporting

INTRODUCTION

Since its launch in July 2008, the Carer Information and Support Service (CISS) has grown considerably, with the most recent achievement being that of securing recurrent government funding for the resourcing of the service.

The 2008/09 financial year saw the service receive 239 calls and record 476 concerns. Three years later, the service took 575 calls—a 141% increase on the first year. These 575 calls resulted in the recording of 685 issues, 44% more than in the first year. There is no question, the service is growing, and with it, our capacity to meet demand.

Over the three years, significant work has been done to refine the data collection tool, define more effectively the carer concern categories, and to better determine the work output in terms of hours spent handling calls and files to the service.

The service was evaluated in early 2010 (B. Laister, K. Mercieca (2010) FCAV/PPSS Carer Information and Support Service - Service Evaluation 2010), and of the 23 subsequent recommendations made in the report, 18 have been implemented, and the remaining 5 are under ongoing consideration and planning. Planning is earmarked for a further evaluation of the service in the coming months. The service evaluation report can be reviewed on the FCAV website at www.fcav.org.au.

STATISTICS 2010/11

In the 2009/10 financial year, a total of 488 contacts were received to the service, with 683 issues/concerns being recorded. In the financial year for 2010/11, these figures have increased, with 575 contacts received, an increase of 18% on the year before, along with a 13% increase in reported issues for a total of 772 issues for the year. Here are some key annual statistics for 2010/11:

Contact Information

Total contacts received:	Calls:	486	(14% increase (inc) on 2009/10)
	Emails:	76	(38% inc on 2009/10)
	Letters:	4	(25% decrease (dec) on 2009/10)
	Faxes:	0	(no change from 2009/10)
	Online Enquiry:	6	(not captured in 2009/10)
	Visits:	3	(not captured in 2009/10)

Information Sheets

- Development time:	133 hours*	(17% dec from 2009/10)
- No. of sheets released:	8	(11% dec from 2009/10)
- Sheets released:	Foster Caregiver Reimbursement 2010/11	Released 31/07/2010
	Kinship Caregiver Reimbursement 2010/11	Released 31/07/2010
	Explaining Children’s Court Orders	Released 31/08/2010
	Carer support during Quality of Care	Released 31/08/2010
	Permanent Care	Released 31/10/2010
	Caring for Aboriginal Children and Young People	Released 30/11/2010
	Resources & info for gay & lesbian carers	Released 31/03/2011
	Passport Applications	Released 31/03/2011

*Please note, additional hours were spent over the reporting period updating existing information sheets.

Response time

99% of concerns responded within 48 hours of receiving the contact (3% improvement on 2009/10)

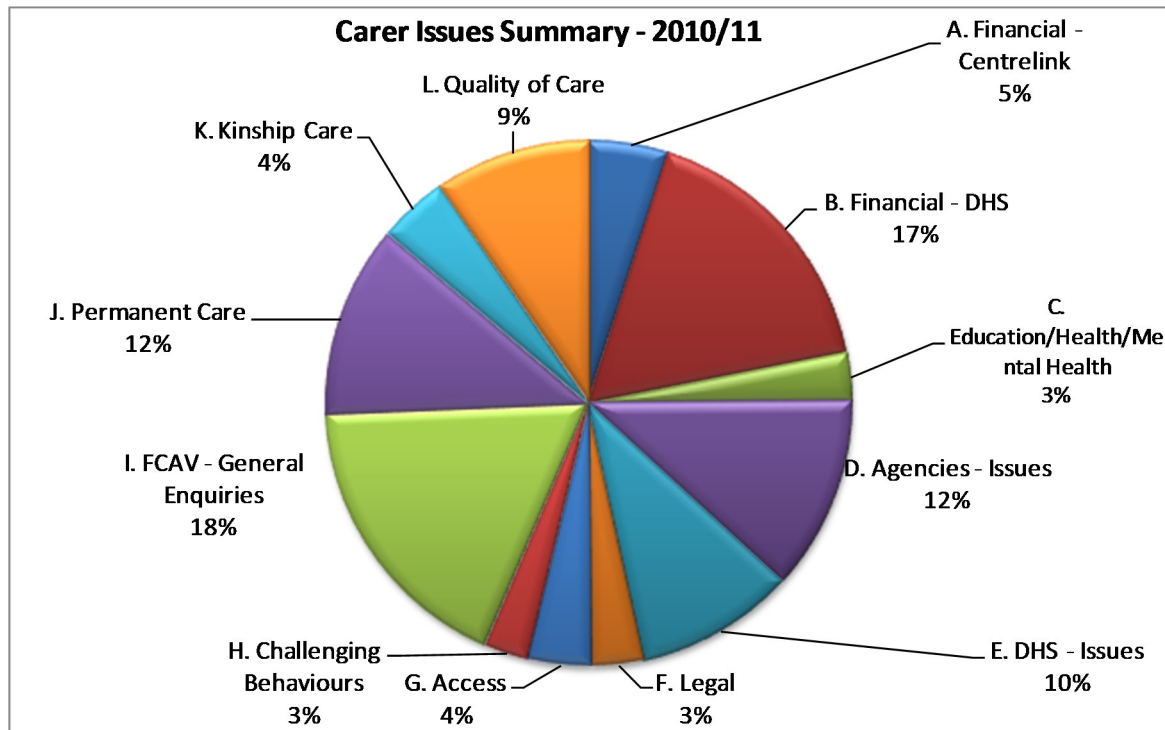
Contact Demographic

Contact received from:	404	Foster Carers	(13% inc on 2009/10)
	57	Kinship Carers - Statutory	(21% inc on 2009/10)
	50	Foster/Permanent Carers	(11% inc on 2009/10)
	33	Adoption & Permanent Carers	(120% inc on 2009/10)
	21	Kinship Carers – Non-Statutory	(31% inc on 2009/10)



Carer Issue Summary

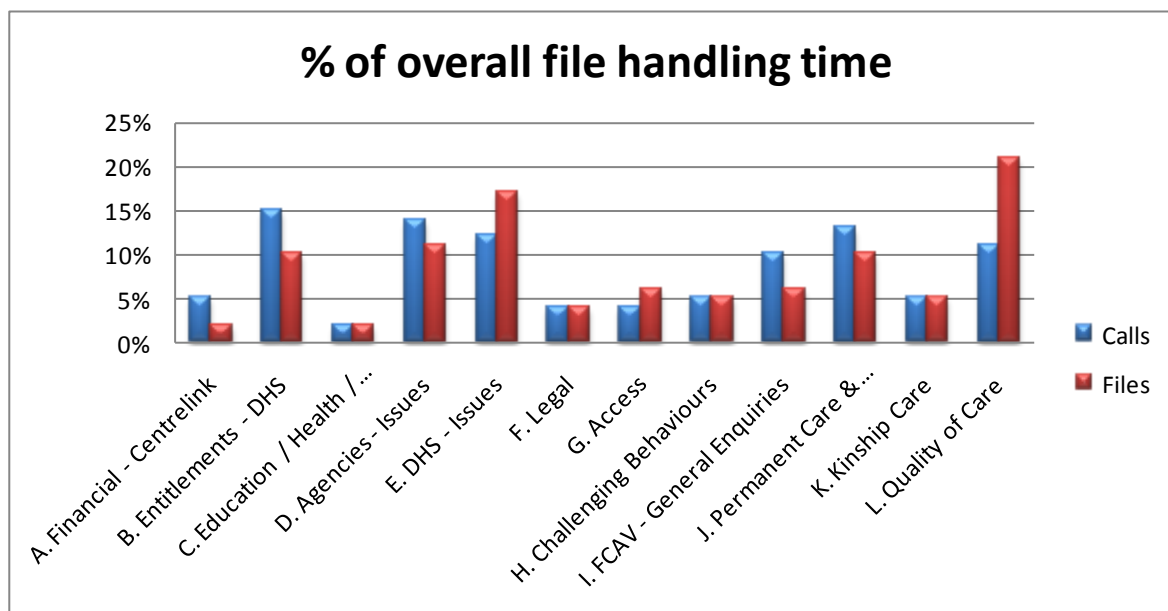
For the 2010/11 financial year, all calls to CISS were documented under the following carer issue categories. The volume of calls pertaining to each categories has been reflected as an overall percentage in the graph below:



Call and file handling times

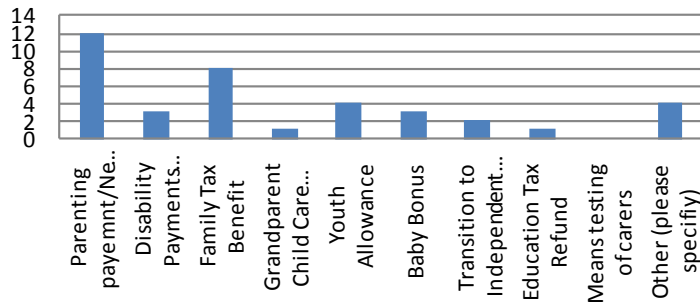
Average call time: 13 minutes per call (13% dec from 2009/10)
 Average file handling time: 1 hour and 1 minute per file (23% dec from 2009/10)

As displayed above, carer concerns in the areas of *Permanent Care & Adoption* and *Quality of Care* represented 12% and 9% of the concern volumes respectively. Interestingly however, is the amount of time spent on the initial calls and then subsequently spent actioning these files for carers as detailed below:



The following is a breakdown of the carer issues/concerns (by actual figures) reported to CISS for the 2010/11 period:

Financial - Centrelink



Parenting Payment/Newstart Allowance/Welfare to Work queries featured heavily in this category as in 2009/10, with calls regarding Family Tax Benefit also featuring strongly.

There was a 5% decrease in concerns recorded for this category from 2009/10.

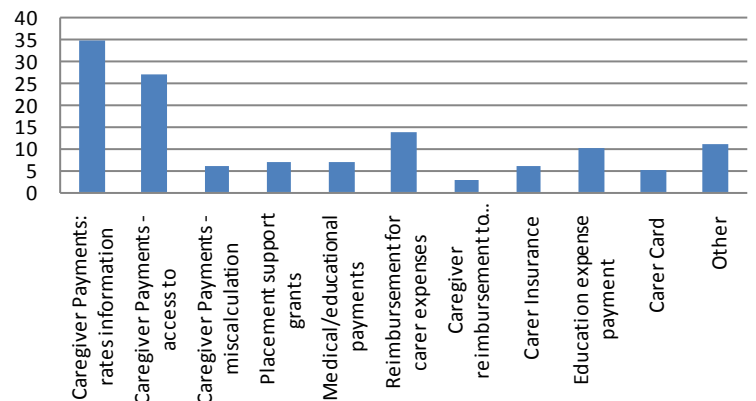
Total concerns: 38

Queries regarding caregiver rate amounts, and carers seeking access to caregiver reimbursement dominated the calls received in this category for the period.

This category recorded the highest overall percentage of 17% (discounting FCAV General Enquiries at 18%) of recorded concerns for the period. There was a 49% increase in concerns recorded to 'DHS—Financial' matters from 2009/10.

Total concerns: 131

Financial - DHS

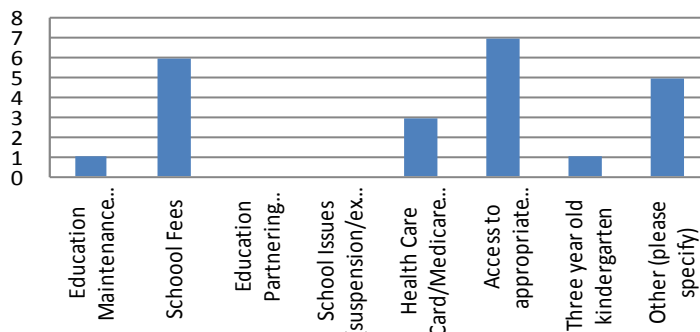


Access to appropriate services featured as a key area for the reporting period, as it did in the 2009/10. In addition, there were a number of calls received around school fees, in particular for young people who had reached 18 yrs and were still completing secondary school.

There was a 28% increase in concerns recorded for this category from 2009/10.

Total concerns: 18

Education/Health/Mental Health



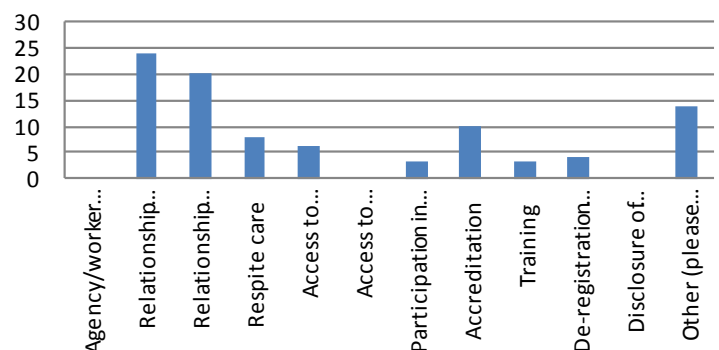
Relationship with agency and relationship with worker dominated Agencies—Issues, with a combined total of 44 concerns or 48% of concerns raised in this category.

Having said this, the figure of 44 concerns was an 18% decrease on the 2009/10 figures for these two areas.

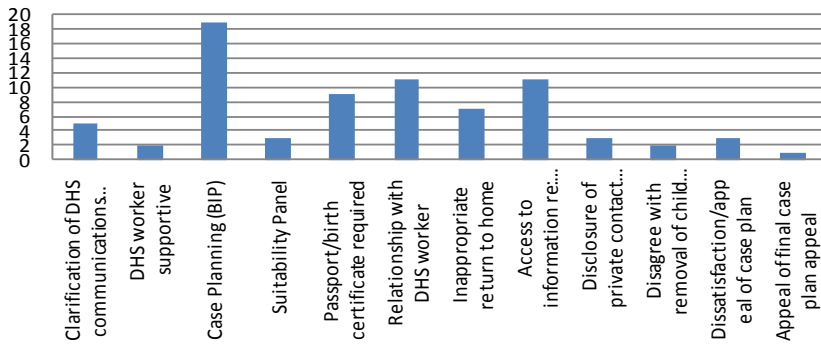
There was an overall 39% decrease in concerns recorded for this category from 2009/10.

Total concerns: 92

Agencies - Issues



DHS - Issues



Concerns regarding *case planning* dominated with 25% of the DHS— Issues citing this issue. This was followed by 11% of concerns identifying *inappropriate return to home* and a further 11% identifying *access to information re: children/ young people* as areas of concern for carers.

There was a 36% increase in concerns recorded for this category from 2009/10.

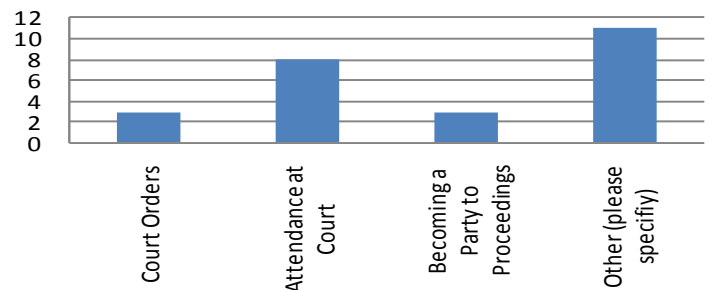
Total concerns: 76

Changes to the CISS Database in 2010/11 have allowed for Quality of Care concerns to be captured separately from the category of 'Legal, resulting in a significant decrease in concerns for this category. As a result, we have seen attendance at court and miscellaneous legal queries dominate this category for the reporting period.

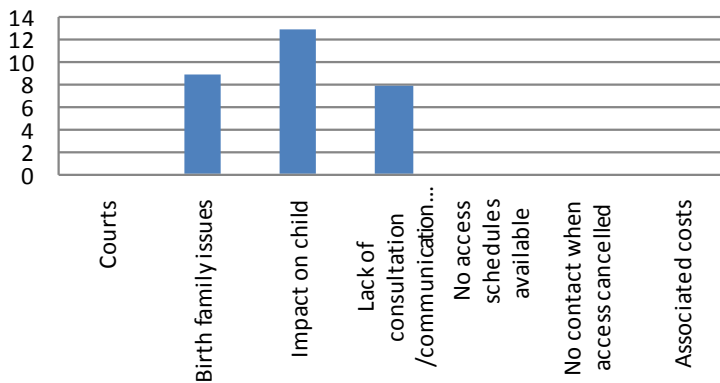
There was a 63% decrease in concerns recorded for this category from 2009/10.

Total concerns: 25

Legal



Access



As reported in 2009/10 the overriding concerns in the category of Access were for the impact of high levels of access on children (particularly children under 5yrs), and the ongoing impacts and challenges of maintaining positive and effective relationships with birth families.

There was a 9% decrease in concerns recorded for this category from 2009/10.

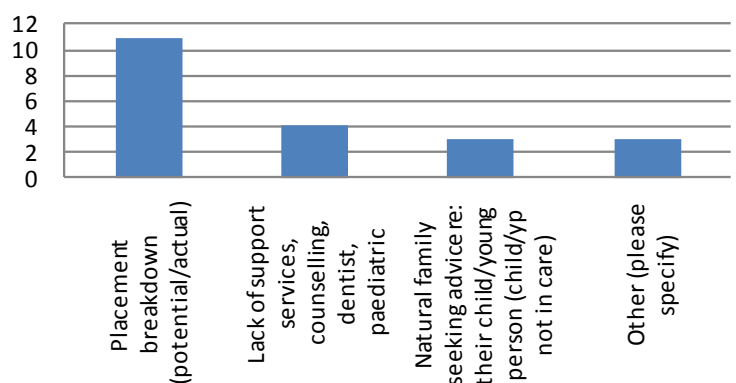
Total concerns: 30

The majority of concerns highlighted in the category of Challenging Behaviours related to permanent care placements, and pertained to adolescent young people in care. We received four calls from birth parents in the past twelve months, seeking advice and assistance on how to manage the difficult behaviours of their adolescent children in their care.

There was a 50% increase in concerns recorded for this category from 2009/10.

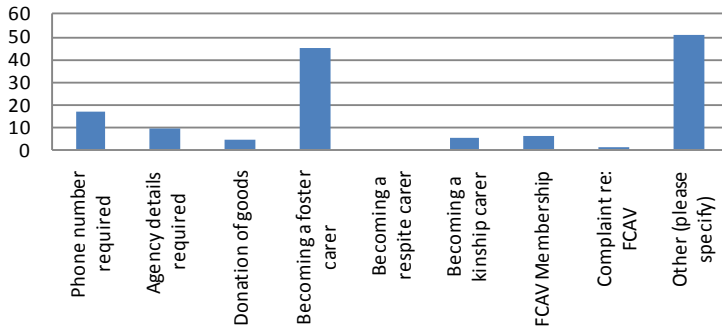
Total concerns: 21

Challenging Behaviours





FCAV - General Enquiries



The great news for the FCAV—General Enquiries category with 33% the calls from prospective carers seeking further information on *how to become a carer!*

There was a 16% decrease in concerns recorded for this category from 2009/10.

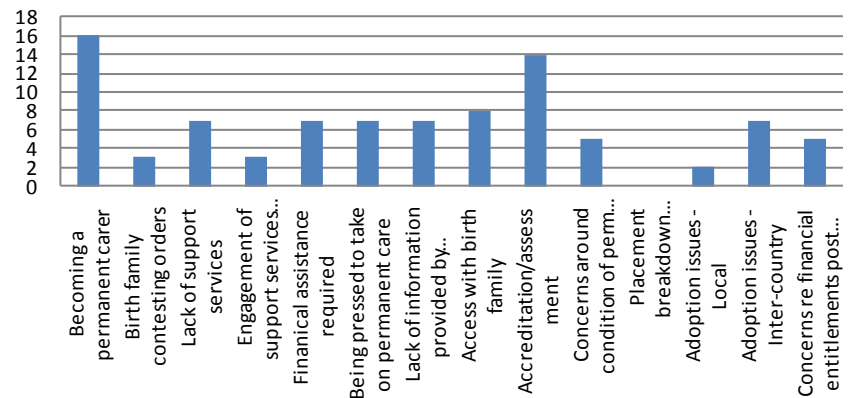
Total concerns: 138

Permanent Care and Adoption received the second highest overall percentage (12%) of recorded concerns equal to Agencies—Issues. The key areas of concern recorded were queries from carers seeking information on *becoming permanent carers*, and queries or concerns around the *accreditation* process.

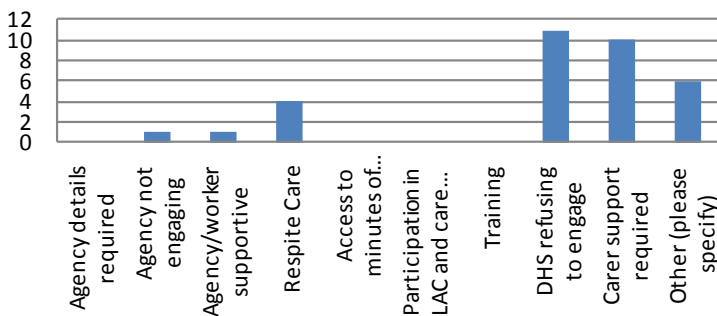
There was a 102% increase in calls for this category from 2009/10.

Total concerns: 91

Permanent Care & Adoption



Kinship Care



Changes to the CISS Database in 2010/11 have allowed for Kinship Care concerns to be captured for the first time.

The key themes revealed in this category were from carers seeking *DHS engagement* in their situation, and *carers seeking support*.

Kinship care concerns represented 4% of the overall concerns captured for the 2010/11 period.

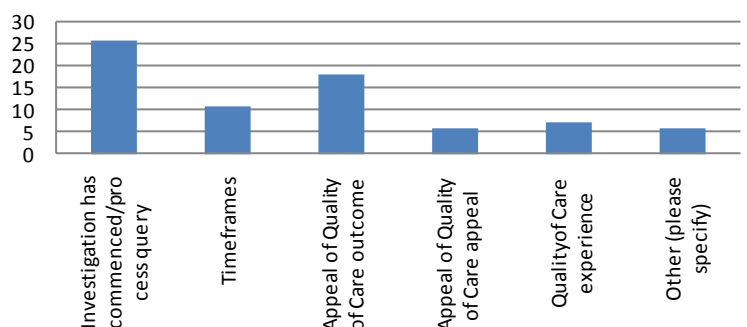
Total concerns: 33

Quality of Care concerns represented the third highest response rate (equal with DHS—Issues) for the 2010/11 period with 10% of the overall concerns recorded for this category.

The key areas of concern raised by carers were the *commencement of a quality of care investigation* and the *appeal of quality of care outcomes*.

Total concerns: 74

Quality of Care



Top 8 issues reported in 2010/11

The top 8 issues raised by carers for the reporting period were:

- FCAV—General Enquiries: Becoming a Foster Carer
 6% of the overall issues recorded were from prospective carers seeking further information and guidance on how to become a foster carer. What a great 'Number 1' issue to have!!
- Financial—DHS: Caregiver Payments—Rates Information
 5% of the overall issues recorded for the period were around information on caregiver payments. 14% of these calls came from workers seeking further information on rate amounts, processes or entitlements. A further 25% of these calls were from kinship carers and 68% of calls from foster carers seeking information on their financial entitlements with DHS.
- Financial—DHS: Caregiver Payments—Access To
 3% of the overall issues captured were from carers seeking access to caregiver reimbursement payments. 15% of these calls were from workers seeking access to and information regarding payments for kinship carers. 44% of calls were from statutory kinship carers seeking assistance in securing payments, commencing payments or having a review of placement's financial needs, with a further 19% from non-statutory carers seeking access to caregiver reimbursements.
- Quality of Care: Investigation has commenced/process enquiry
 92% of calls for this issue were from carers seeking information and support during a quality of care investigation. File work and follow up for carers citing this issues accounted for 14% of the overall work output for CISS for the 2010/11 financial year period.
- Agencies—Issues: Relationship with Agency
 Relationship with agency has been a recurring issue in the 'top 6' for some time and represented 3% of the overall issues captured for the reporting period.
- Agencies—Issues: Relationship with Worker
 Relationship with worker also featured strongly in the end of year reporting with 3% of the overall issues falling into this category.
- Permanent Care & Adoption: Becoming a permanent carer
 The majority of calls received citing this category as an issue centred around the process of permanent care and what and how to negotiate a permanent care package of entitlements. There were also a few calls from carers concerned that siblings of children already in their permanent care were being transitioned to permanent care, but with other carers.
- Permanent Care & Adoption: Accreditation
 Calls citing this category as an area of concern ranged from queries around timeframes involved in permanent care assessment and placement to carers seeking to appeal link meeting decisions, particularly in cases where another sibling was already in their care.



Conclusions

The review of the carer issues categories conducted in July 2010 has ensured a more effective and accurate capture of carers issues over the last 12 months with greater definition and clarity of concerns collected in the following areas:

- More accurate capture and alignment of concerns pertaining to DHS and Agency areas of responsibility and control;
- Expansion of the 'Permanent Care' issues to incorporate local and inter-country adoption issues;
- Inclusion of the 'Kinship Care' category allowing kinship issues to be captured accurately and separately;
- Inclusion of the 'Quality of Care' category incorporating the issues of 'Investigation has commenced', 'Time frames', 'Appeal of quality of care outcome' and 'Appeal of quality of care appeal'.

FCAV have conducted a significant piece of work in the last half of 2010/11 looking at what support and service provisions are required to strengthen carers and placements in home-based care. The publication of this work is imminent and it is hoped the report will help to inform the department and agencies as to what supports and services are still required across the sector.

FCAV does not currently have DGR charitable status, which limits FCAV's access to philanthropic funding. However, as mentioned earlier, FCAV has been successful in securing increased recurrent funding through the Department of Human Services, which sees the CISS Co-ordinator role fully funded for the first time.

