



Characteristics of the carers and households in the POCLS

Overview of Dashboard 3

This document provides a high-level view of the characteristics of the carers and households in the Pathways of Care Longitudinal Study (POCLS). It accompanies the [interactive dashboard](#), published on the DCJ website.

The data in Dashboard 3 can be shown by household or by child or young person.

Data reported in Dashboard 3 are grouped into the following categories:

- Age of primary carer
- Employment status (in one and two carer households)
- Cultural identity of households that participated at each Wave
- Highest level of carer education
- Annual household income before tax

Where possible, carer characteristics can be broken down by the gender, age or placement type of child, and district. Households may have multiple children in OOHC and participating in the POCLS. As a result, household data cannot be split out by child characteristics such as age and gender.

It should be noted that the dashboards do not show whether differences are statistically significant, and so confirmation of trends observed in the dashboards through either published papers available on the POCLS website or by contacting the POCLS team is highly recommended before making decisions based on this data.

What types of questions can be explored with Dashboard 3?

The following are examples of the types of questions that can be answered in Dashboard 3.

Question	How to Guide	Answer
What are the characteristics of the carers who were interviewed at Wave 2? How old were they?	Choose cohort ' <i>Wave 2 all responses</i> ', district ' <i>All</i> ', Drill down level 1 ' <i>All Children</i> ', Drill down level 2 ' <i>All Children</i> ', Child or household ' <i>Child</i> '. Refer to the graphic entitled <i>Age of Primary Carer</i>	25% of children were looked after by carers aged 40 and under, 34% of children had carers aged between 41 and 50 years, 27% of children were cared for by carers aged between 51 and 60 years and the remaining 14% were looked after by carers aged 61 or over at Wave 2.
What were the cultural identities of households in Wave 1 in the Hunter/Central coast region?	Choose cohort ' <i>Wave 1 all responses</i> ', district ' <i>Hunter New England & Central Coast</i> ', Drill down level 1 ' <i>All Children</i> ', Drill down level 2 ' <i>All Children</i> ', Child or household ' <i>Child</i> '. Refer to the graphic entitled <i>Cultural Identity of Household</i>	17% were identified as Aboriginal households based on the Aboriginal status of the carer or spouse while the remaining 83% were identified as Other Australian households.
How many children in guardianship were in two carer households – with one or two carers in employment at Wave 4?	Choose cohort ' <i>Wave 4 all responses</i> ', district ' <i>All</i> ', Drill down level 1 ' <i>Placement type at wave interview</i> ', Drill down level 2 ' <i>All Children</i> ', Child or household ' <i>Child</i> '. Refer to the graphic entitled <i>Employment in One and Two Carer Households</i>	45% of children in guardianship were in two carer households with either one carer (30%) or both carers (15%) in paid employment.
What were the carer's highest level of education breakdowns at Wave 2 at the household level?	Choose cohort ' <i>Wave 2 all responses</i> ', district ' <i>All</i> ', Drill down level 1 ' <i>All Children</i> ', Drill down level 2 ' <i>All Children</i> ', Child or household ' <i>Household</i> '. Refer to the graphic entitled <i>Highest Level of Carer Education</i>	53% of households reported completing high school as the highest level of education of the carers, 24% had not completed high school and the remaining 23% had a university degree.

Question	How to Guide	Answer
What were the breakdowns of annual household before tax at Wave 1 at the household level?	Choose cohort 'Wave 1 all responses, district 'All', Drill down level 1 'All Children', Drill down level 2 'All Children', Child or household 'Household'. Refer to the graphic entitled <i>Annual Household Income Before Tax</i>	26% of households interviewed at Wave 1 reported earning less than \$40,000 per year, 45% reported earning between \$40,000 and \$100,000 annually and 22% reported earning more than \$100,000 per year.

Overview of the key characteristics of the carers and households in the POCLS

What were the ages of the primary carers?

- At Wave 1, 54% of children in relative/kinship care lived with a primary carer who was over 50 years old, compared to 26% of children in foster care.
- By Wave 4, 69% of those in relative/kinship care had carers who were over 50 years old compared to 43% of those in foster care. At Wave 4, 70% of carers of children in guardianship (n=106) were also over 50 years old. It should be noted that these percentages are for children interviewed at Wave 1 and/or at Wave 4. They may not necessarily be the same households.

Employment in single and two carer households

- At Wave 1, more children aged 12-17 years (37%) and 7-11 years (31%) lived in a single carer household than children aged 9-35 months (25%) and 3-6 years (23%).
- At Wave 4, 31% of children aged 3-6 years lived in single carer households compared to 31% of 7-11 year olds and 42% of 12-17 year olds.
- At Wave 1, 75% of children in foster care lived with a family where at least one carer worked, compared to 58% of children in relative/kinship care.
- At Wave 4, 75% of children in foster carer lived with a family where at least one carer worked compared to 48% of children in relative/kinship care and 56% of children in guardianship.
- As for the previous section it should be noted that these percentages are for all those interviewed at Wave 1 and/or at Wave 4. They may not necessarily be the same households.

Cultural Identity of Carer

- Breakdowns by child cultural background are not currently available in the dashboards.

- At Wave 4, 78% of children lived in an Other Australian household.
- At Wave 4, 26% of children in relative/kinship care lived in an Aboriginal household compared to 20% of children who had exited to guardianship and 21% of children in foster care.
- The percentage of male and female children in Other Australian households was similar with 76% of females in other Australian households and 81% of males in other Australian households at Wave 4.

Highest Level of Carer Education

- The highest level of carer education remained fairly steady over time at the household level. Selecting the cohort that were interviewed at each of Waves 1, 2, 3 and 4, the proportion of households with carers that had not completed high school went from 22% at Wave 1 to 20% at Wave 4. At Wave 1, 25% had completed university compared to 27% at Wave 4. The remaining group had completed a high school education.
- At Wave 1, 31% of children lived in relative/kinship care households where no carers have completed high school, compared to 19% of children in foster care. These results were similar at Wave 4 (30% and 15% respectively). Note the carers interviewed at Wave 1 and Wave 4 may have been different.

Household income

- At Wave 1, 24% of children lived with a family that reported earning less than \$40,000 a year. This was 31% among those in relative/kinship care and 19% among those in foster care, suggesting that kinship carers have less financial resources on average than foster carers.
- At Wave 4, 18% of children lived in a family reporting to earn less than \$40,000 a year. This was 22% among those in relative/kinship care and 11% for those in foster care. At Wave 4, 19% of children in guardianship lived in households reported to earn less than \$40,000 a year.

Where can I find further information?

The documents accompanying the dashboards present some key statistics about the carers and the children in the Study. If you are unable to use the interactive dashboards and need more granular information or other statistics, please contact the POCLS team on Pathways@facs.nsw.gov.au

For an overview of the POCLS please see the [Study objectives and strategic research agenda \(Technical Report No.1, 2020\)](#):

For more information on POCLS including our publications please visit our [web page](#).

