



Billy Black

## Pathways of Care Longitudinal Study

*The artist is a young person who grew up in care.*

*"The banner shows many pathways through the care system with a carer or caseworker acting as a guide, ultimately leading to independence for every young person. Whether we live with family or strangers, study, work, or just try our best, the paths we choose and are guided through in our youth are what we use to prepare ourselves for the happiest adulthood we can achieve" Billy Black*

## Service use and support for children and carers in OOHC

Australian Social Policy Conference September 2017  
Ilan Katz and Christine Eastman



# Paper aims

## Service Use and Support in the Pathways of Care Longitudinal Study (POCLS)

- To explore service provision and support for child and carer.
- Presentation focuses on 3 types of support:
  - Informal support
  - Caseworker support
  - Services (eg health, counselling, child care)
- ❖ Paper is based on analysis of Waves 1 and 2 of the POCLS



# Services & support in the provision in OOHC

- Other than the actual provision of care, service provision is the most important component of the care experience supporting the child's wellbeing and improved outcomes.
- A very wide range of services are provided to children in OOHC and their carers.
- In addition carers receive informal support from family, friends and neighbours.
- The caseworker is a key component of the service provision to children in OOHC and their carers.

# Evidence base



- The research literature confirms that children in OOHC have very high needs for services, particularly in terms of their health, socio-emotional wellbeing and educational wellbeing.
- Children in OOHC benefit from health and education plans, which benefit from good partnership working between caseworkers, carers, children and relevant workers.
- There is no previous literature which relates children's needs to the provision of services, although research does indicate that many health and cognitive issues are not picked up.
- There is also very limited research on the impact of casework on children and carers, in terms of their access to services or their outcomes.

# Respondent numbers: study child service analysis



Cultural background	Wave 1 survey respondents		W1 and W2 survey respondents	
	N	%	N	%
Other Australian/unspecified	704	54.8	565	54.7
Aboriginal	469	36.5	388	37.6
CALD	112	8.7	79	7.7
Total	1285	100.0	1032	100.0

Placement type (at wave one)	Wave 1 survey respondents		W1 and W2 survey respondents	
	N	%	N	%
Foster Care	661	51.4	533	51.6
Relative/Kinship Care	598	46.5	487	47.2
Residential Care	26	2.0	12	1.2
Total	1285	100.0	1032	100.0

Data source: Wave 1 and 2 of POCLS carer/CYP survey files V6, FACS Admin data linked to survey data

# Support for children and young people



# Issues/needs definition

- Cannot directly measure service need so proxy measures have been used – referred here as issues/needs
- May indicate a need for service
- Combination of carer-reported issues and standardised test measures
- Proxy measures used to measure need for services as at wave 1 (full details available from presenters):
  - Any socio-emotional development issue above relevant cut-off
  - Any cognitive issue above relevant cut-off
  - Any physical development issue above relevant cut-off (children aged under 60 months)
  - Any long-term (6+ months) health condition (carer reported) – split between psychological and physical/other
- Numbers may differ due to definitions used by other researchers

# Percentage of children & young people with issues/needs at Wave 1

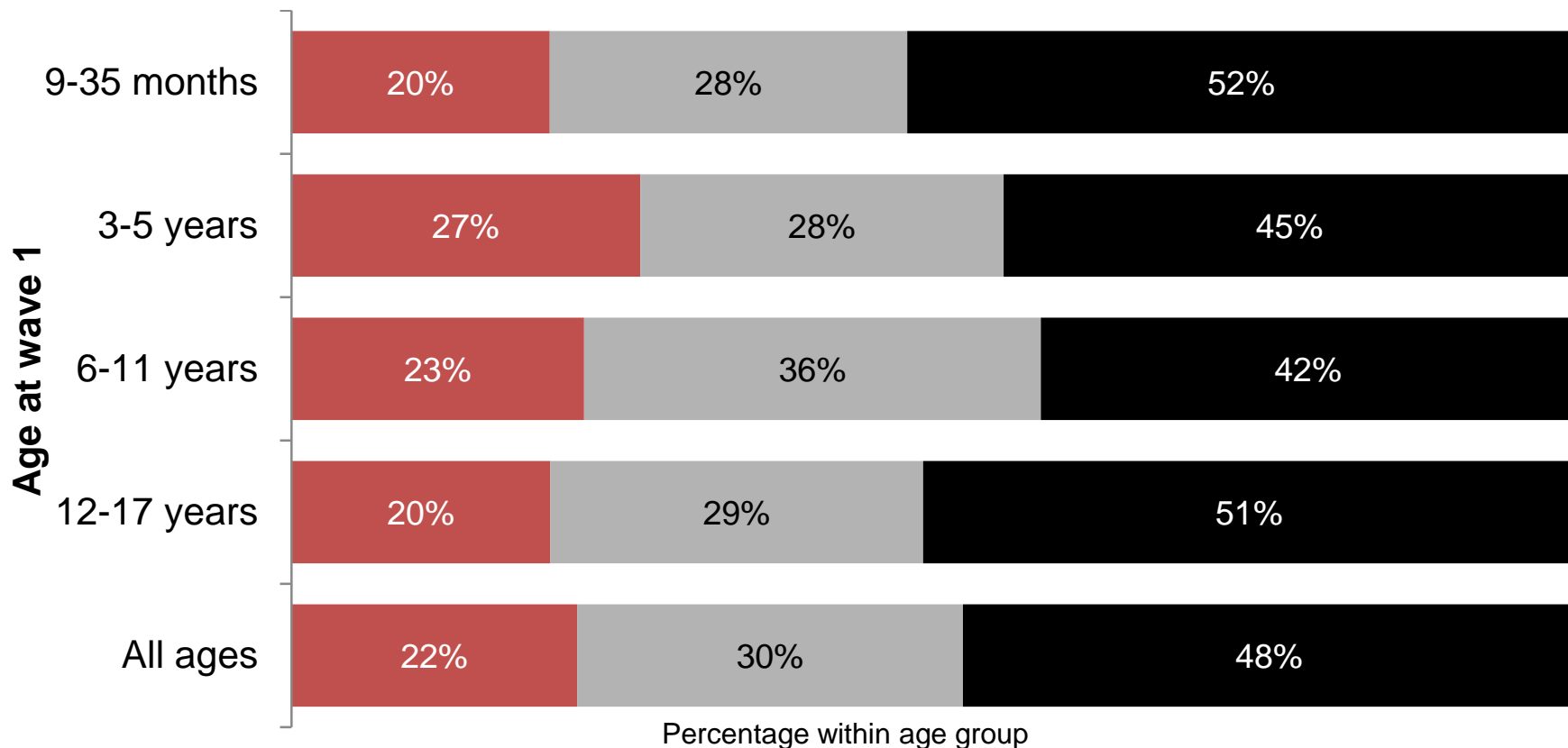


	9-35 months	3-5 years	6-11 years	12-17 years	All ages
	%	%	%	%	%
Socio-emotional issue	45	32	30	47	39
Cognitive issue	48	40	40	48	44
Physical development issue	46	31	n/a	n/a	n/a
Long-term health condition - psychological	9	21	19	23	16
Long-term health condition - physical/other	35	38	50	40	40
Total	567	265	329	124	1285

Data source: Wave 1 and 2 of POCLS carer/CYP survey files V6, numbers rounded so may not add to 100%



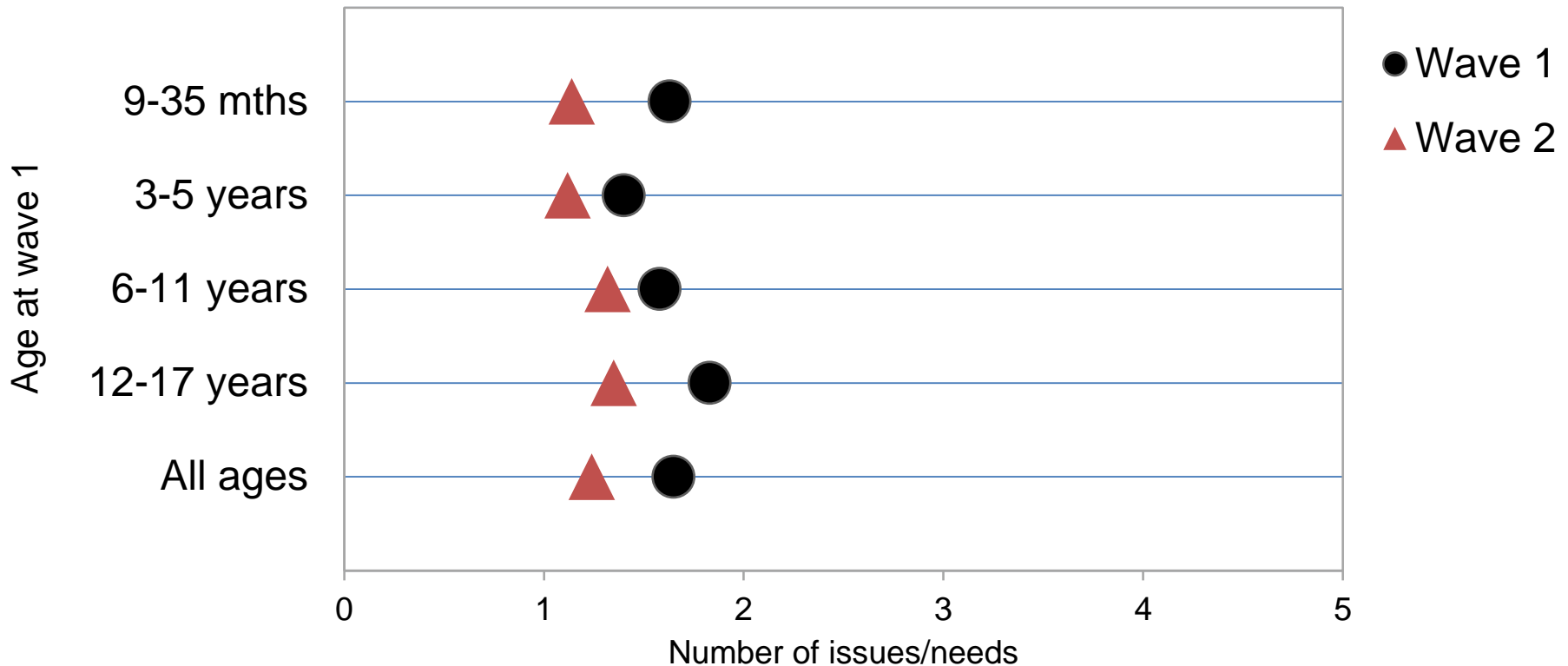
# Number of issues/needs amongst children & young people in care at Wave 1



■ 0 issues/needs    ■ 1 issue/need    ■ 2+ issues/needs

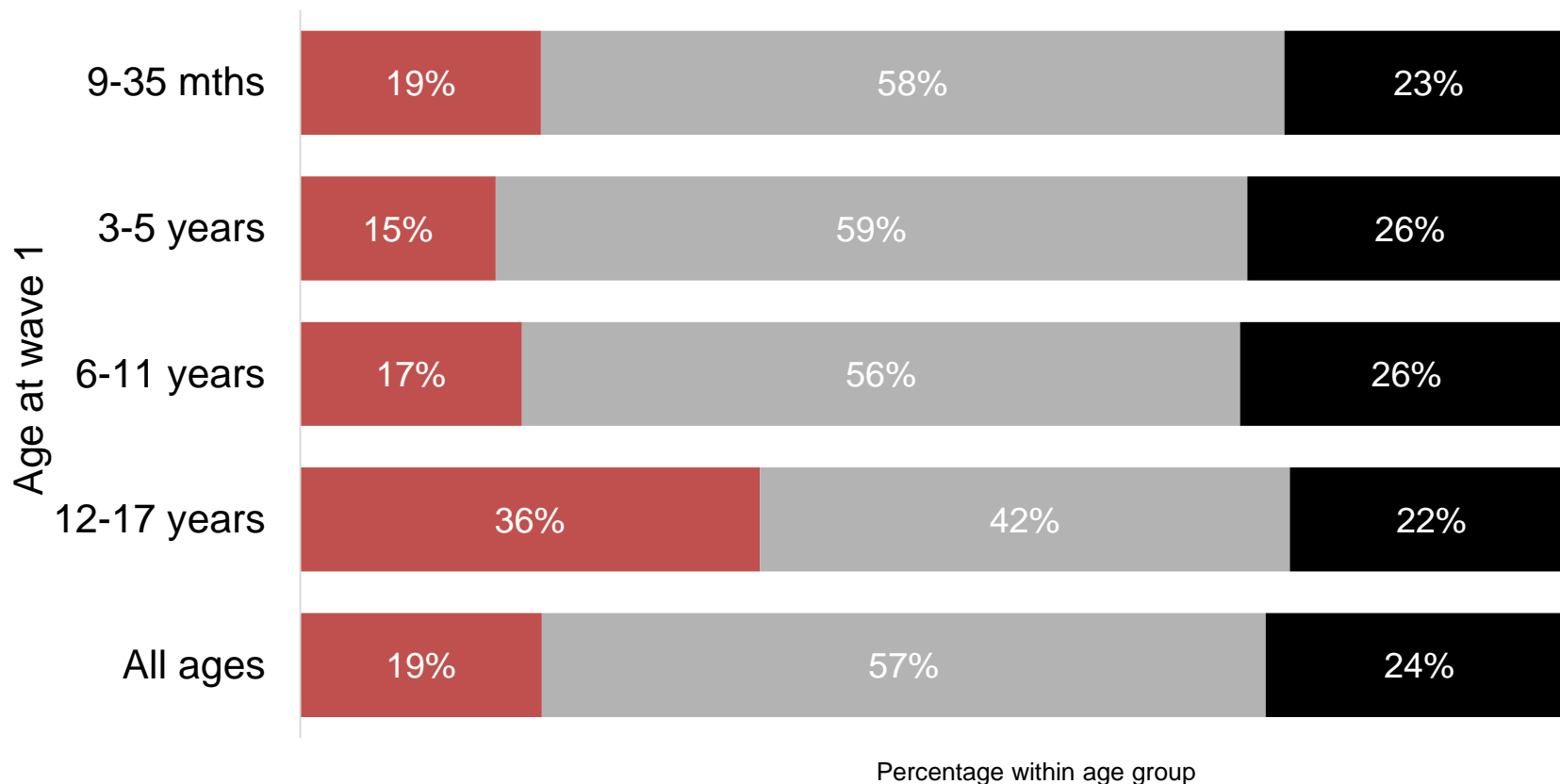
Data source: Wave 1 and 2 of POCLS carer/CYP survey files V6, numbers rounded so may not add to 100%

# Mean number of issues/needs at Wave 1 and Wave 2



Data source: Wave 1 and 2 of POCLS carer/CYP survey files V6

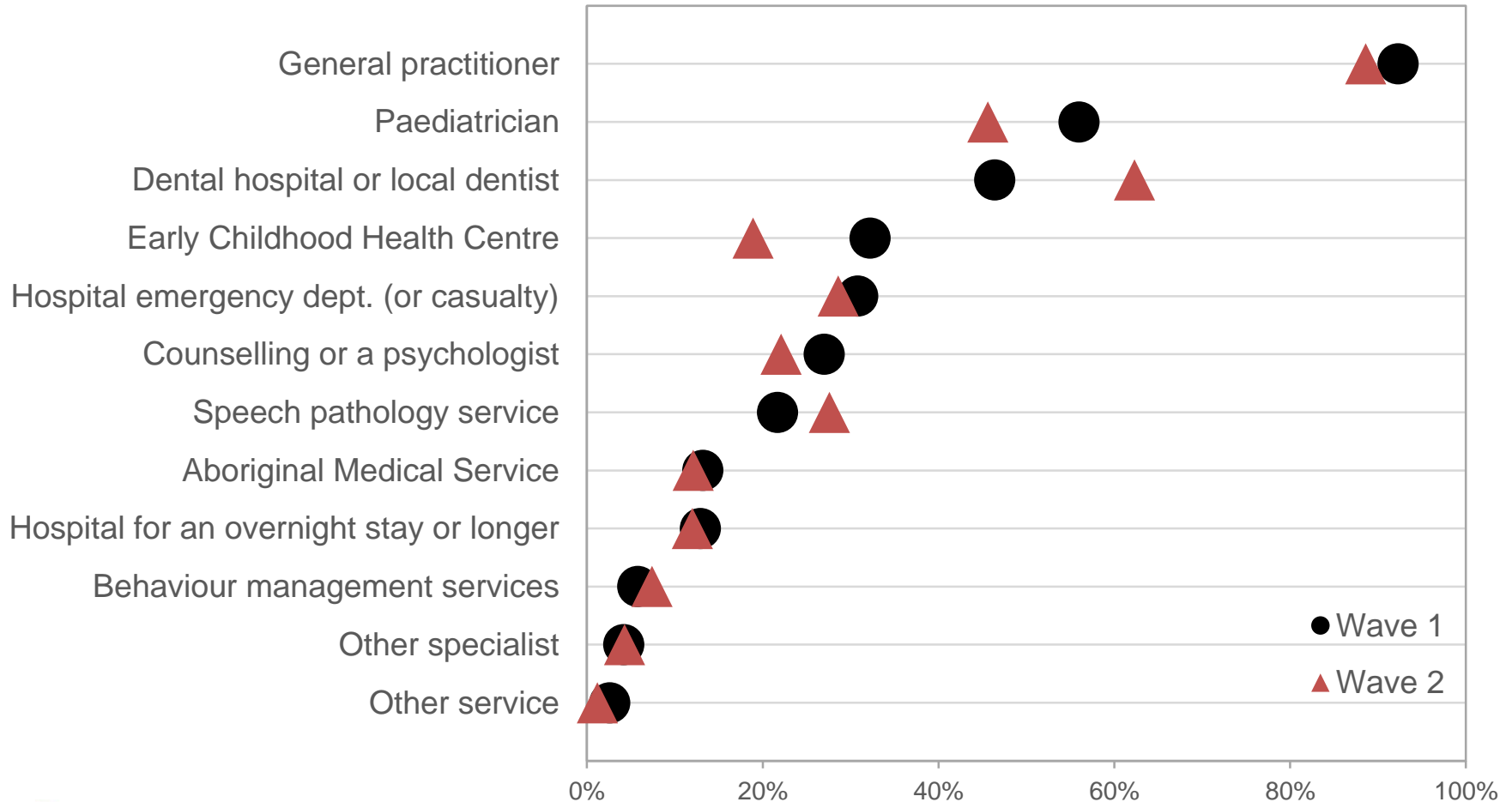
# Change in carer rating of child & young person overall health, Wave 1 to Wave 2



■ Deterioration   ■ No change   ■ Improvement

Data source: Wave 1 and 2 of POCLS carer/CYP survey files V6, numbers rounded so may not add to 100%

# Carer-reported health & allied services use among children & young people, Wave 1 & Wave 2



# Support for Carers

# Respondent numbers (carers) with two waves of responses



Cultural background of carer 1	N	%
Other Australian/unspecified	479	73.3
Aboriginal	91	13.9
CALD	83	12.7
Total	653	100.0

Placement type (at wave one)	N	%
Foster Care	340	52.1
Relative/Kinship Care	309	47.3
Residential Care*	4	0.6
Total	653	100.0

\* Residential care not analysed separately due to small numbers but included in analysis of all respondents where appropriate

Data source: Wave 1 and 2 of POCLS carer/CYP survey files V6

# Average carer satisfaction with caseworker & associated agencies across Waves 1 and 2



Combines:

- Ability with being able to reach caseworkers when needed
- Assistance from caseworkers
- Working relationship with other agencies related to the study child



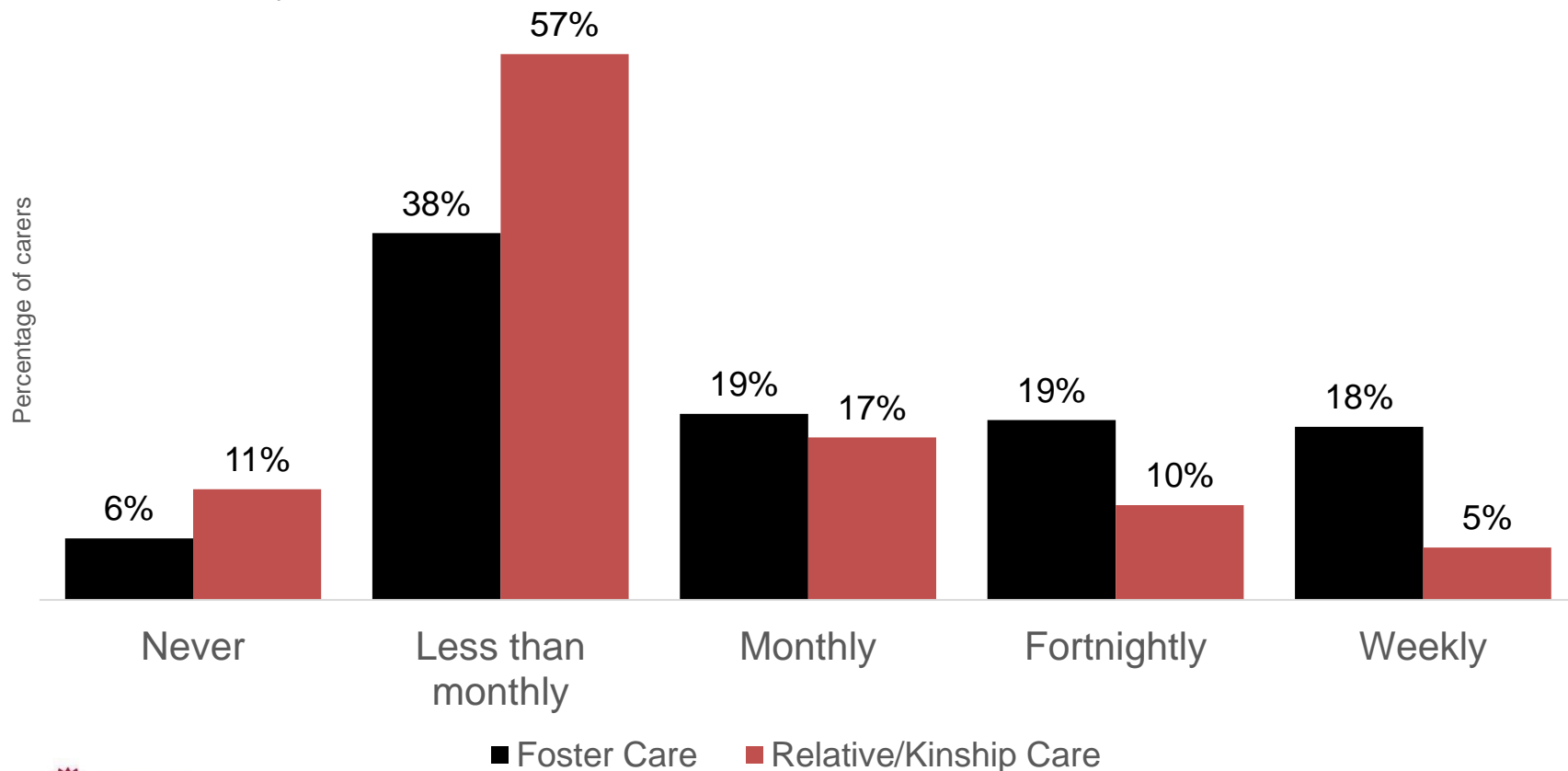
Data source: Wave 1 and 2 of POCLS carer/CYP survey files V6

# Average contact frequency with caseworker across Waves 1 and 2



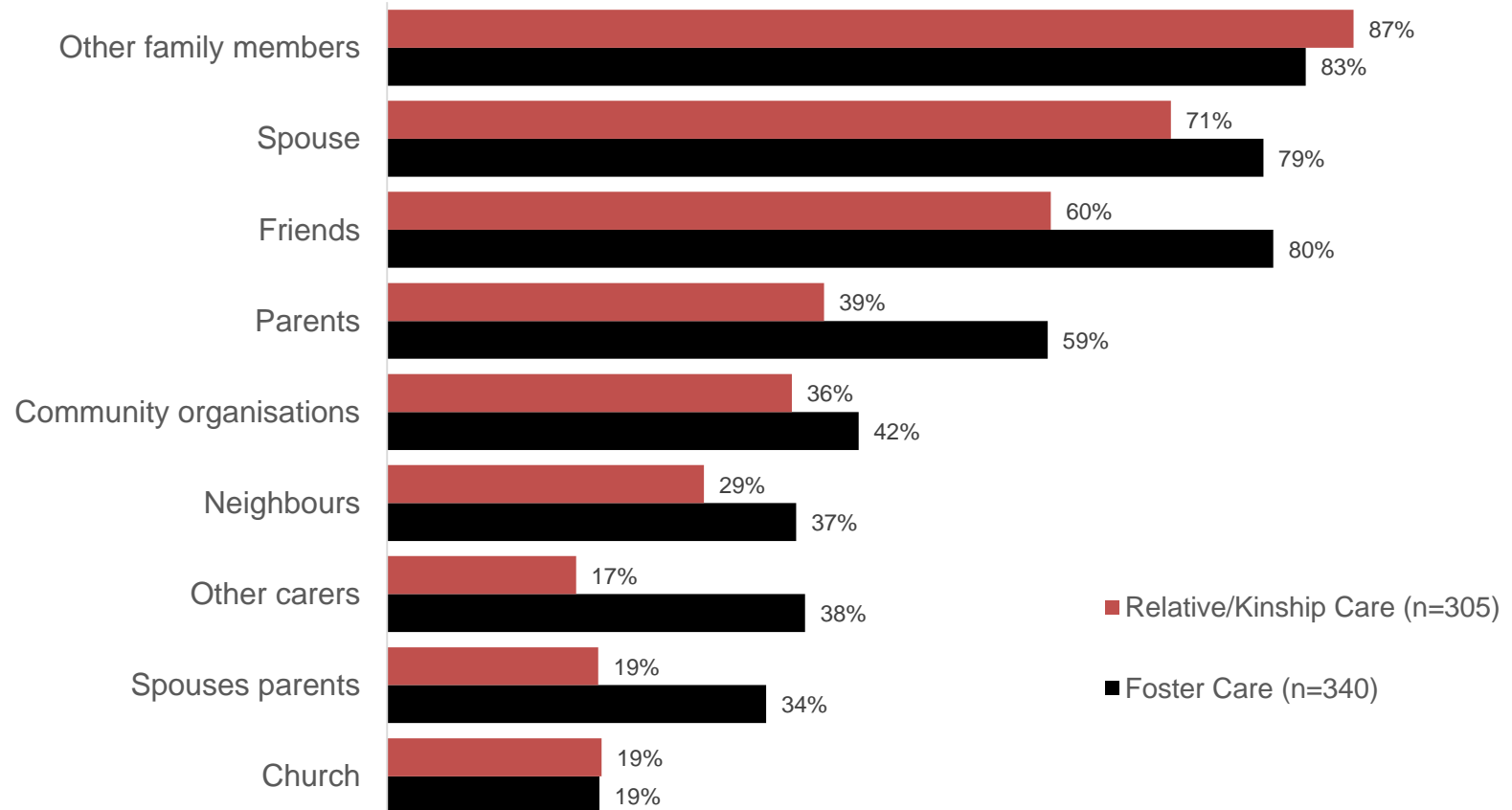
Combines:

- Frequency of face-to-face contact with caseworker
- Frequency of phone or email contact with caseworker



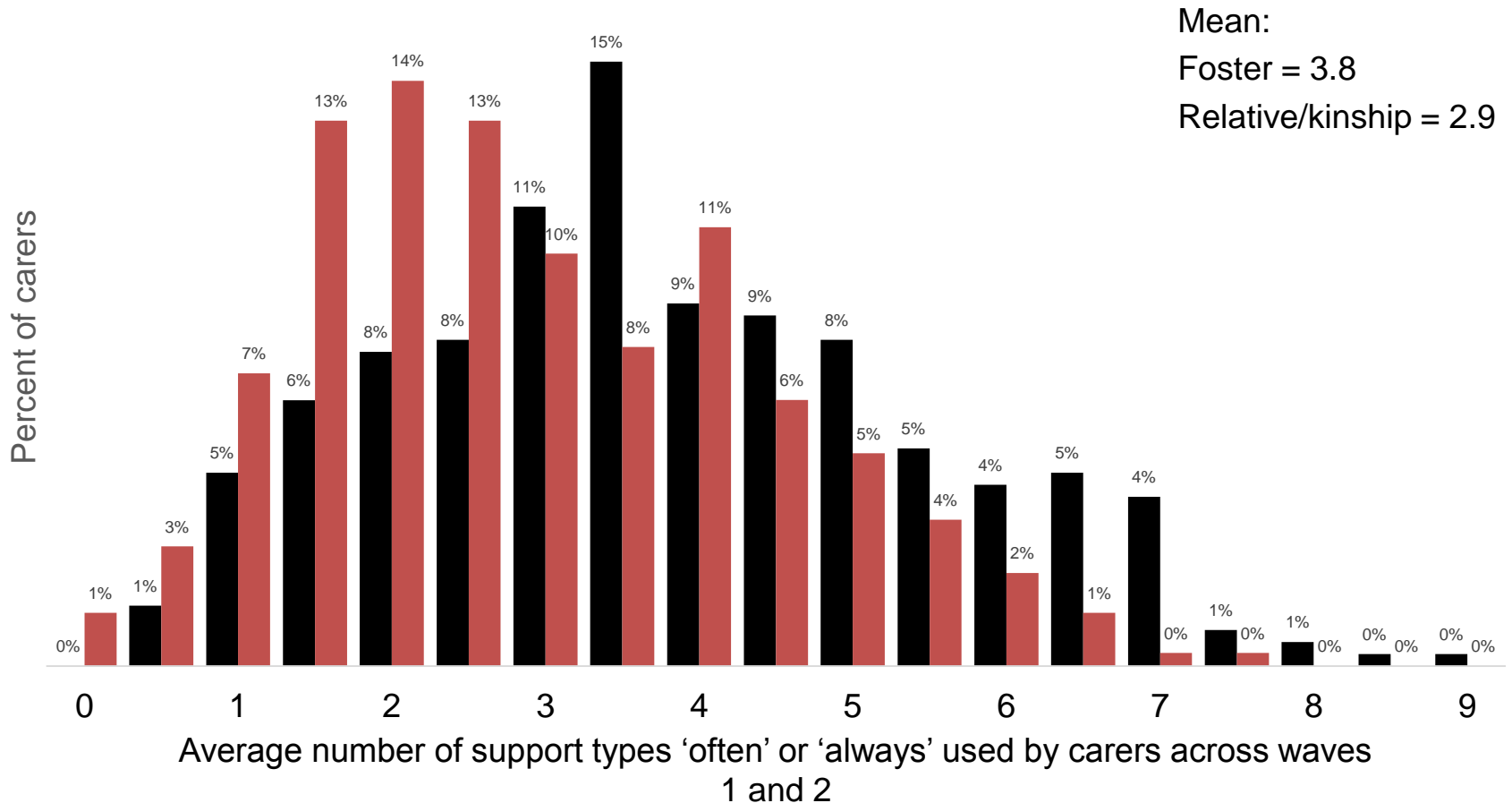


# Type of informal support accessed by carer across Waves 1 and 2

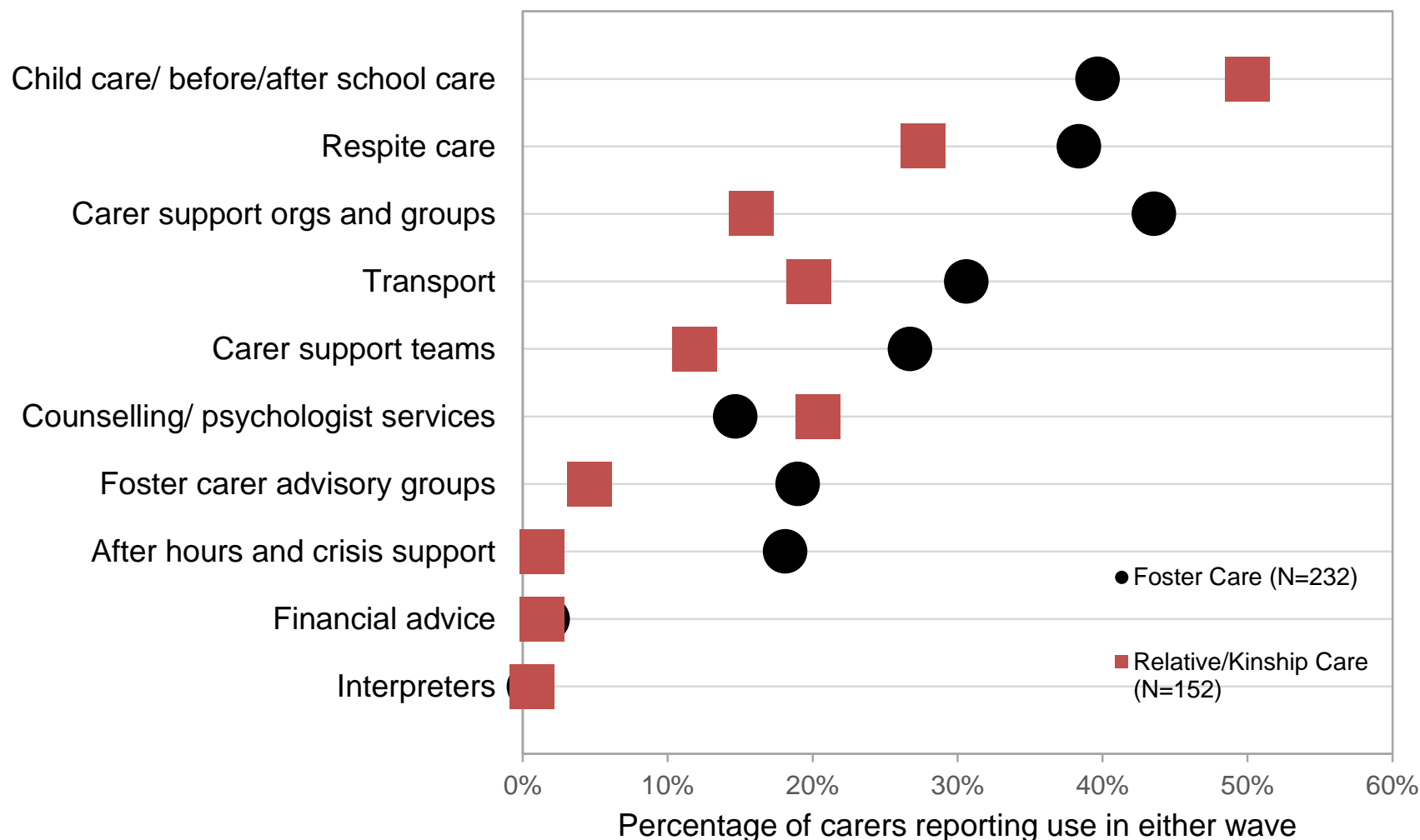


Percentage carers responding 'Often/Always' has support

# Average number of informal support types used by carers across Waves 1 and 2

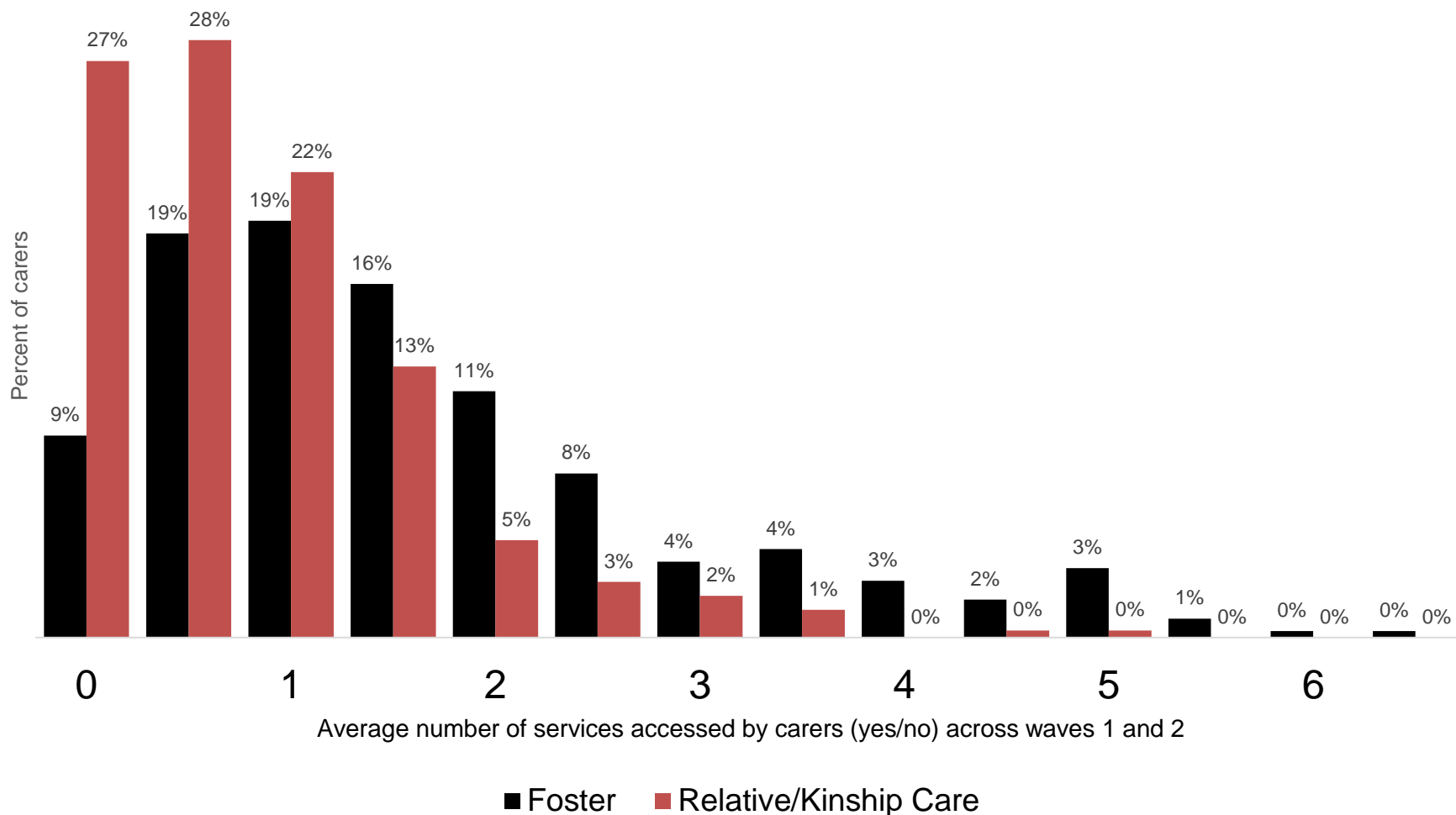


# Professional services and supports used by carers across Waves 1 and 2

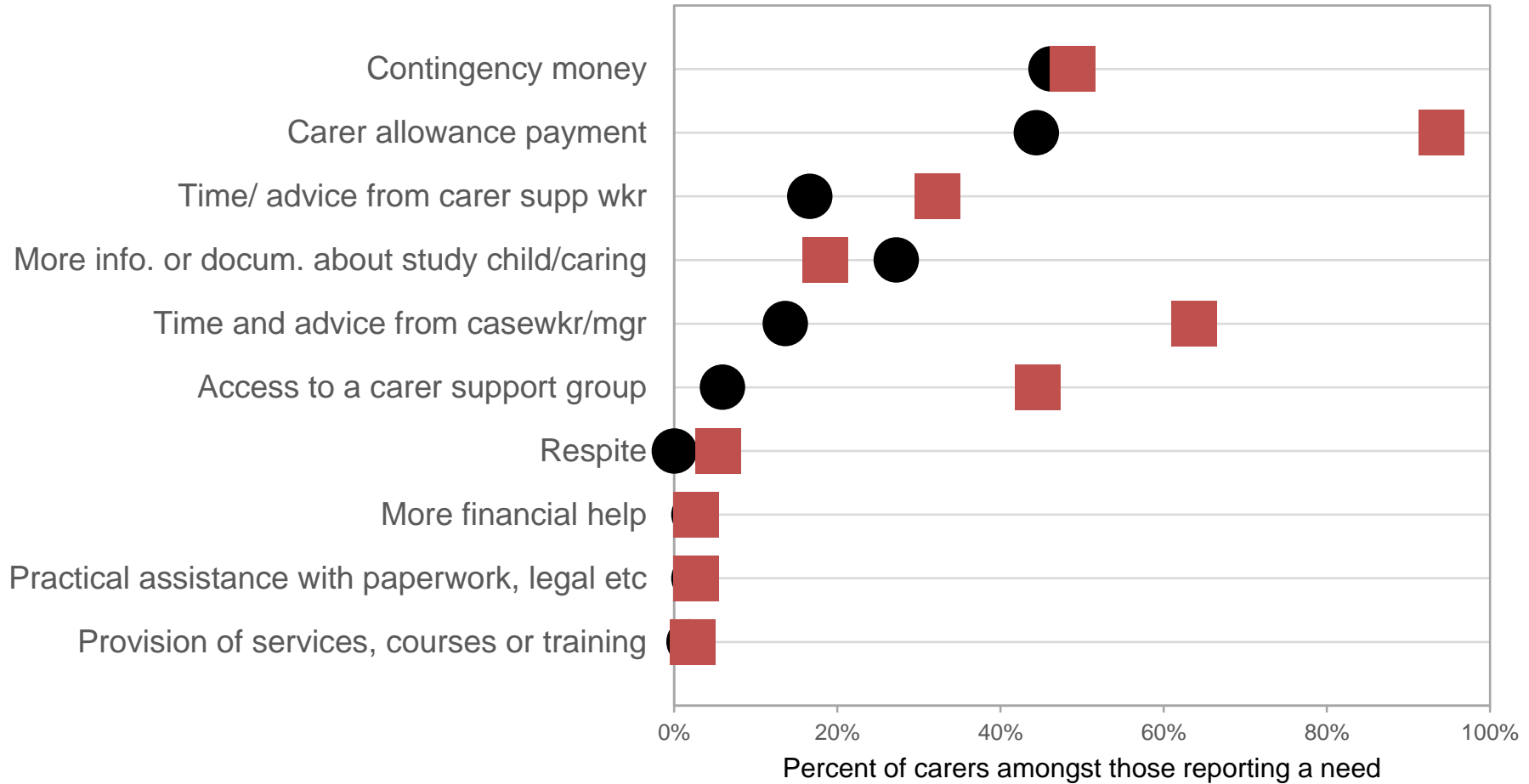


Data source: Wave 1 and 2 of POCLS carer/CYP survey files V6

# Average number of professional services used by carers across Waves 1 and 2



# Services desired but not received upon study child being placed, Wave 1



● Foster Care (N = 169)

■ Relative/Kinship care (N=184)

# Summary



- Children in the POCLS cohort had high levels of issues/needs in physical, socio-emotional and cognitive domains
- Youngest and oldest age groups showed more issues/needs
- The wellbeing of most children in the cohort improved between the two waves although some did deteriorate
- Generally those who had higher numbers of issues/needs accessed more services
- Service use stayed the same or decreased between the two waves for all services (except dentists). This is likely to be driven by the age of the cohort.

# Summary (cont.)



- Kinship carers have less access to caseworkers and are less satisfied with their contact than foster carers
- Kinship carers do not access as much formal support from agencies or informal support from family, friends and community
- Kinship carers also have a much higher rate of desiring but not receiving support from agencies, especially carer attendance payment and time and advice from caseworkers.
- However children in kinship care seem to have equivalent access to services compared to those in foster care.

# Questions and comments



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# Further Information



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Study DVD, information and publication clearinghouse