

# “The Future of Adoption”

A holistic approach to adoption support

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# Adoption UK survey on adoption support

*"It Takes A Village to Raise a Child ..."*

- Online survey of adoptive parents carried out in 2011/12
- 455 responses
- UK-wide
- Local authority and voluntary adoption agency approved adopters (ratio c3:1)

# Understanding

There is a lack of understanding among adopters as to entitlements to support services:

- 62% did not understand the importance of adoption support as a prospective adopter
- 50% rated their current understanding of entitlements as non-existent or poor

# What adopters are saying...

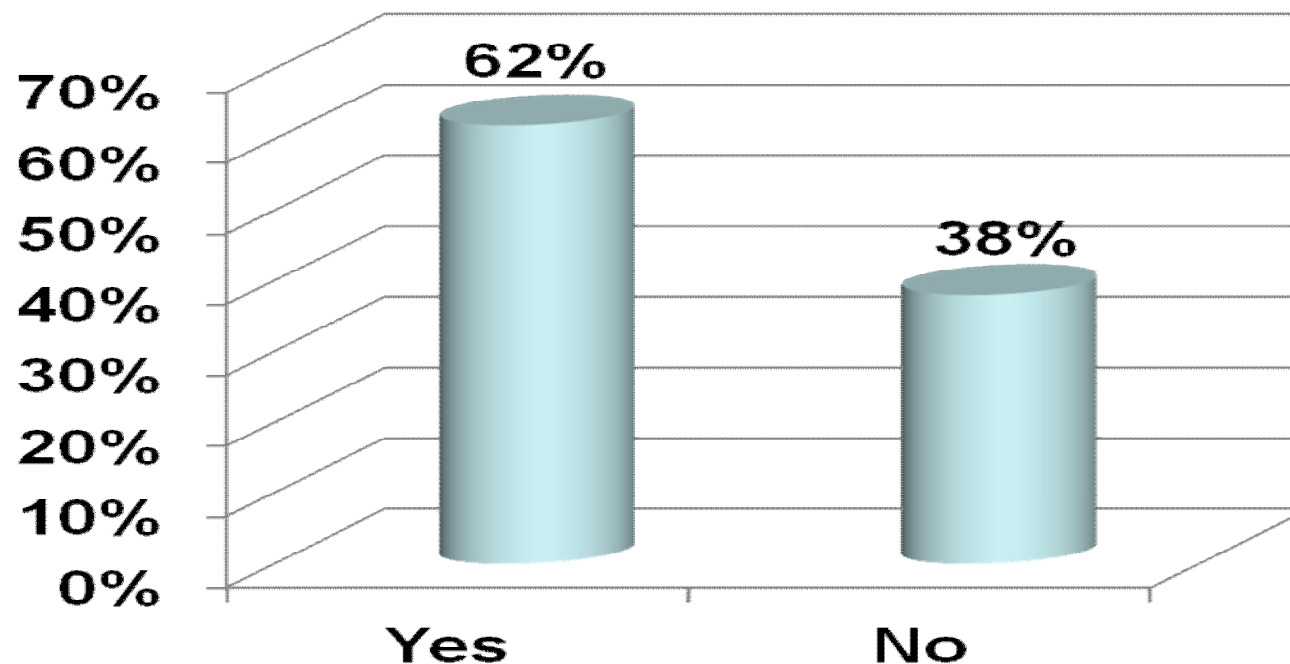
*"All of our support as such has come from Adoption UK. Our local authority was very clear to say all their support comes from Adoption UK NOT the agency."*

*"We had no clue, despite all the information coming at us, just how difficult this was going to be. Hence, no appreciation of how vital support is. Nor how bad the provision is!"*

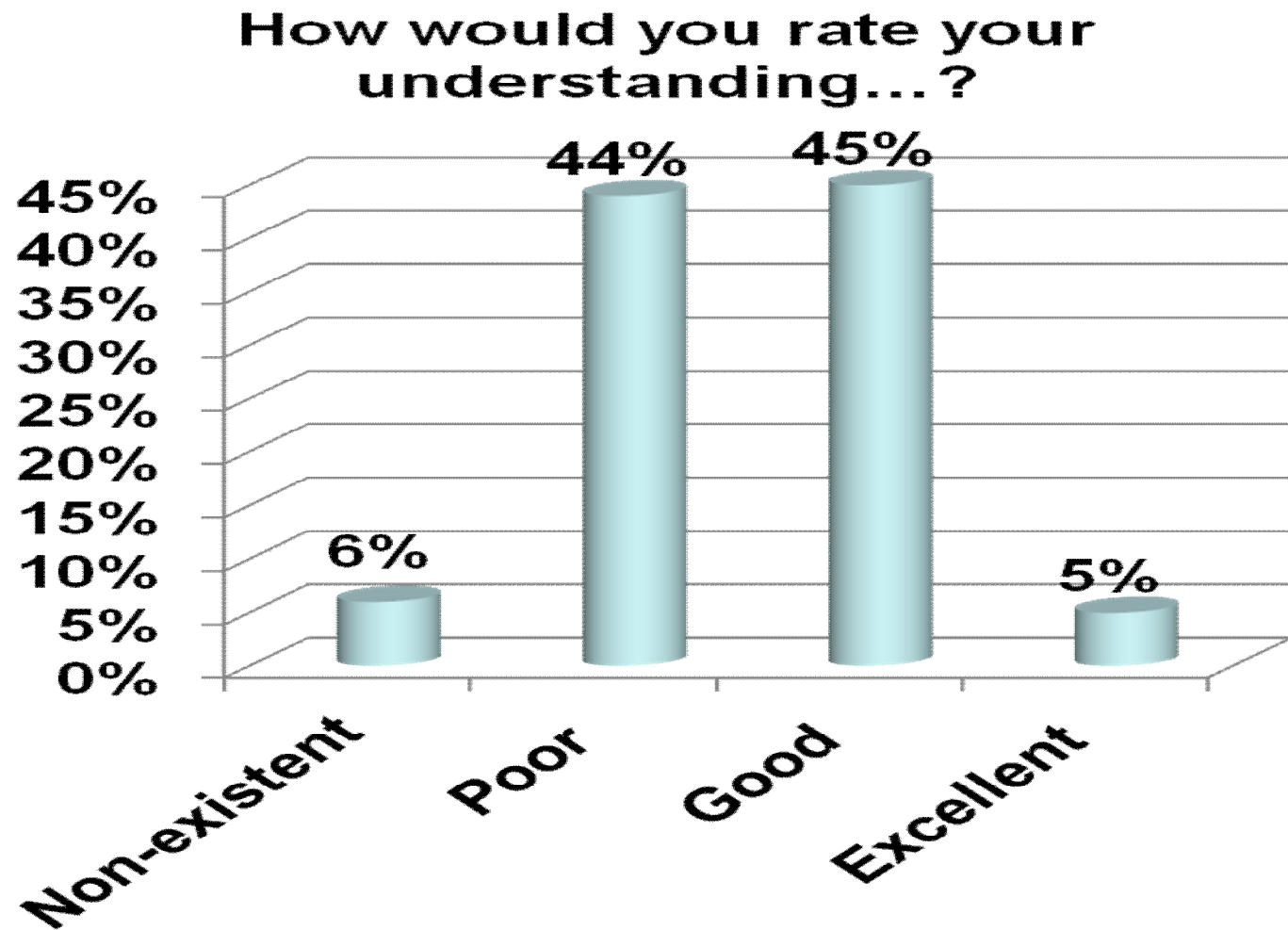
*"We did not understand that we would need it ten years later."*

***“I know about most of the support services now, but it took me a good couple of years to find them out”***

**Do you understand or know about your entitlements to adoption support services?**



# Understanding support services



# Accessing support services

Accessing support was difficult for many adopters:

- 30% requested an assessment for adoptive support, **of which**
  - 63% had an assessment carried out
  - 81% had support needs identified, **of which only ...**

# Accessing support services (contd)

...of which only ...

- 31% received the needed services identified in full, **yet**
- 60% of those receiving support confirmed it helped their family
- 63% rated the quality of the services as good to excellent



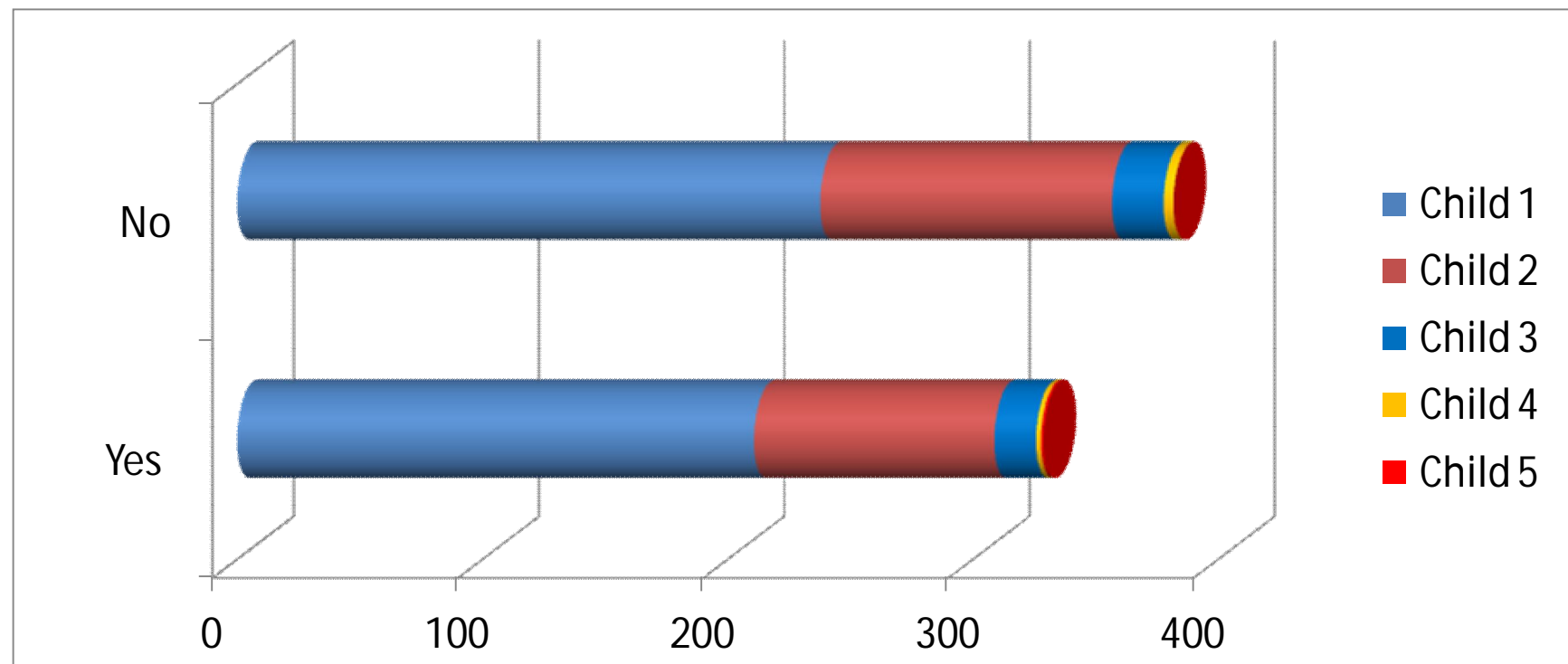
# Accessing support services (contd)

Furthermore

- 64% were not informed by their agency of their right to request an assessment
- 6% were refused an assessment
- 13% had their request ignored

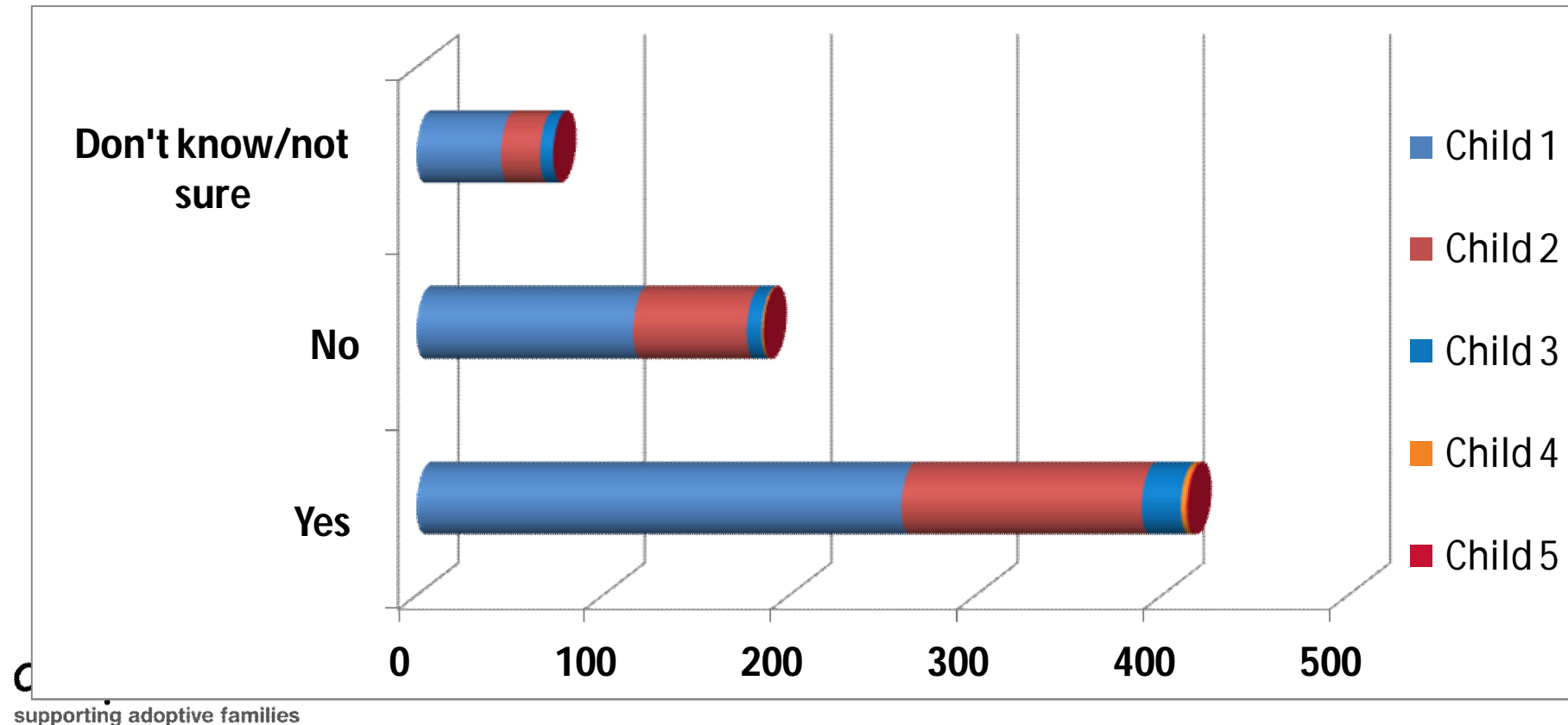
# Needs: receiving support services

Respondents currently receiving adoption support services



# Needs: special needs

Does your child(ren) have special needs that require greater support services?

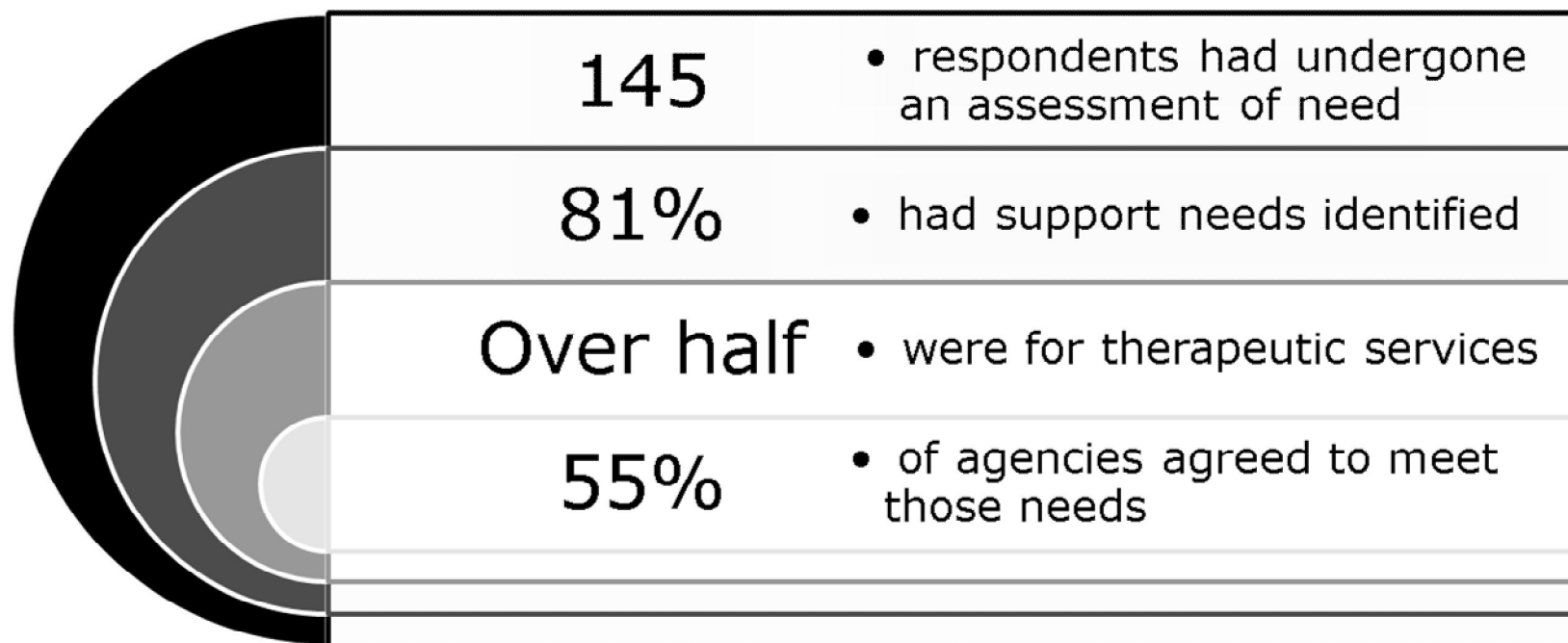


# What adopters are saying...

*"...we don't know what impact the children's history will have on them as they grow and come to terms with their past."*

*"I cannot believe that counselling for children and their new families is not automatically in place upon placement. Families are left to cope 24/7 with traumatised children who professionals have struggled with."*

# Needs: the stats



**60%** who had received support services, said they had helped their family

# Joint working

Different adoption agencies being involved exacerbated adopters difficulties:

- 57% described the working relationship between agencies, such as health, social services and education, as poor.

# Mismatch

Mismatch between the adoptive families' support needs, and services offered by agencies:

- 61% said they needed therapeutic services and only 28% of agencies provide this support.
- 30% said respite care would help them, while only 7% of agencies provide this.

# Barriers to accessing support

- Level of understanding and experience of adoption among professionals (27%)
- Money/finances (19%)
- Agency didn't see their problems (19%)
- Working relationships between different agencies (17%)
- Worried about being seen as a failure by their agencies (15%)



# Professional knowledge

*“Working with a range of professionals who did not always ‘get’ adoption and attachment... we were having to educate as we went along and often got labelled as neurotic parents.”*

# Education

Education is an area where support is needed:

- 64% expressed a view that educational support at school is needed, **of which:**
  - 47% said their children received support
  - 29% had assistance in accessing support

# Needs: education

*“this was our biggest battle”*

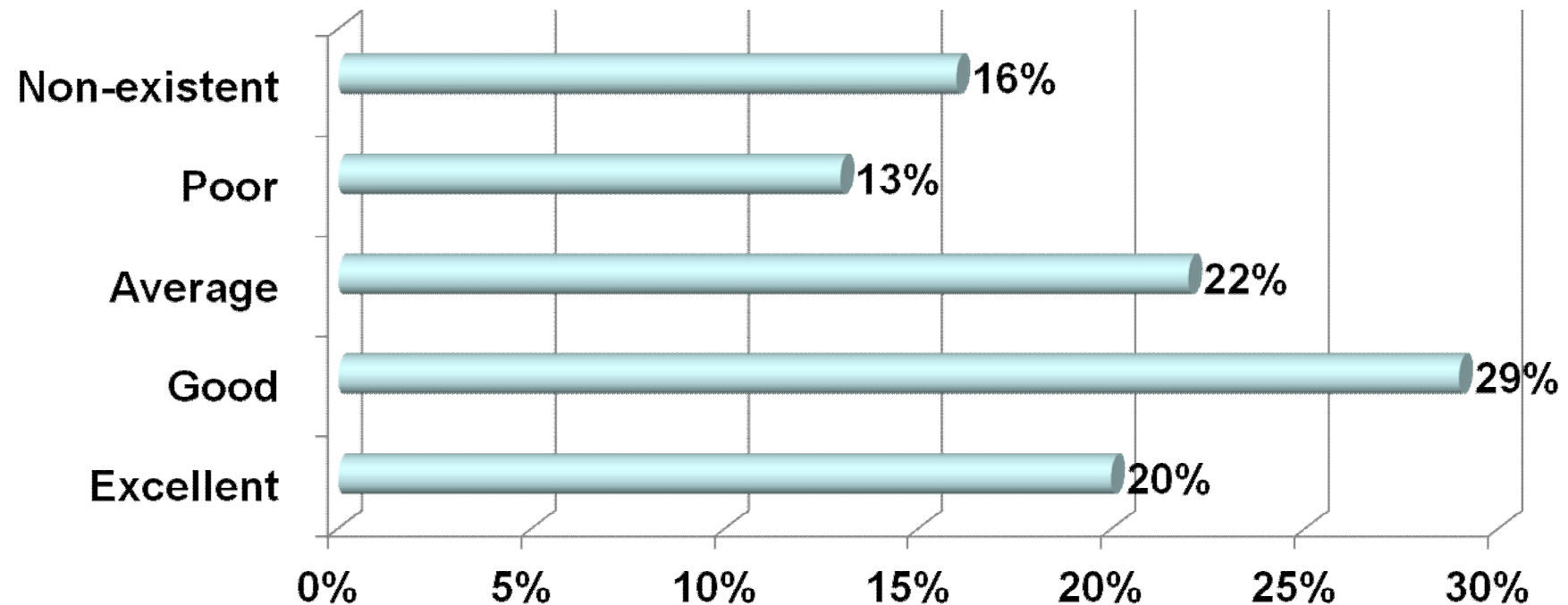
Around two-thirds of our respondents believe their child requires support in school.

*“He had been traumatised. How was he supposed to cope with a classroom of 30 children”*

*“Both children were so damaged by their early experiences that it affected their ability to learn”*

# Working relationships

How would you describe your relationship with your current adoption agency?



# Lack of consistency...

*"The agency that I was approved with was fantastic. The placing agency has been very poor..."*

*"My agency has been excellent but the poor performance of the placing authority had made their job almost impossible."*

# The future?

*"[There] needs to be a system in place which doesn't just let adopters drift out into the big world on their own."*

*"It is daft that adopters have a right to have their needs assessed, but then no right to have their needs fulfilled."*

# A passport to support ...



Adoption passport:

- Guarantee of support.
- Series of entitlements.
- Review of tax and benefits system.

# Working Group's proposals

- Parity between adoption leave and pay and maternity leave and pay.
- Entitlement to a Voucher for clinical Complex Needs/Diagnostic Assessment.
- Priority access to CAMHS.
- Greater recognition of adoption as an SEN start-point.
- An Adoption Skills Voucher, entitling adopters to a package of training.



# Working Group's proposals - 2

- National minimum adoption allowance.
- The provision for adoptive families within the tax credits system.
- The guarantee of child benefit payments to all adoptive families.
- Expand eligibility to relevant benefits, such as disability living allowance.

# More about Adoption UK and adoption support

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*It takes a village to raise a child* – Adoption UK survey report on adoption support (June 2012) – available from

[www.adoptionuk.org/information/281406/it\\_takes\\_a\\_village/](http://www.adoptionuk.org/information/281406/it_takes_a_village/)