

# Brothers and Sisters in West Dunbartonshire

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The Promise Lead Officer





# West Dunbartonshire demographics



- Total population: 88,000
- 0-15 – 15,000
- 16-24 – 8,500

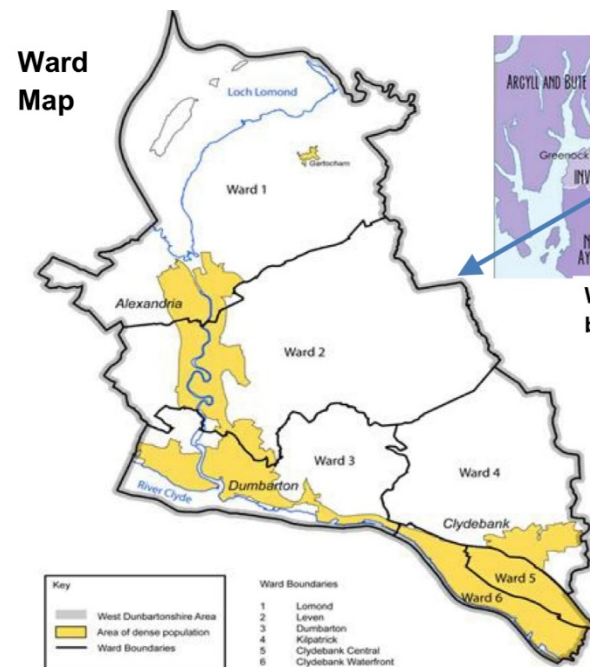
Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation (SIMD) 2020 and the proportion of data zones in each area among the most deprived 20%.



Child poverty – 27.6%

Looked After child rate per 1,000 of 0-17: 26.9

Scottish average per 1,000: 12.3





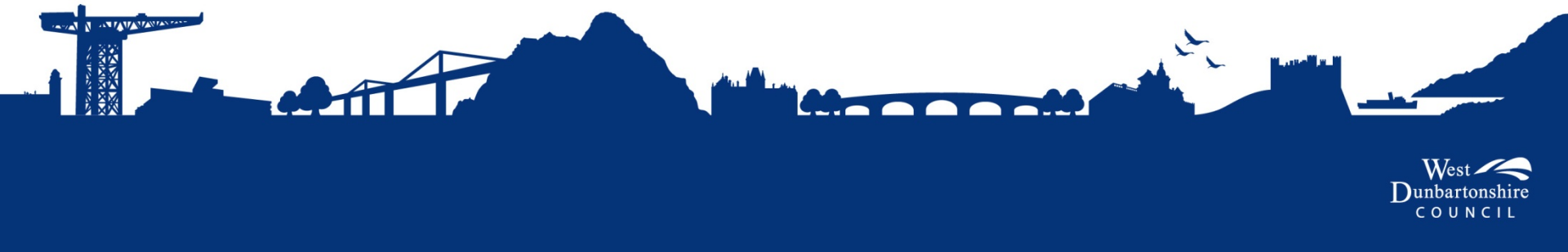
“Scotland will stop the practice of separating brothers and sisters, unless for reasons of safety.

Relationships between brothers and sisters will be cherished and protected across decision making and through the culture and values of the people who care for them.”

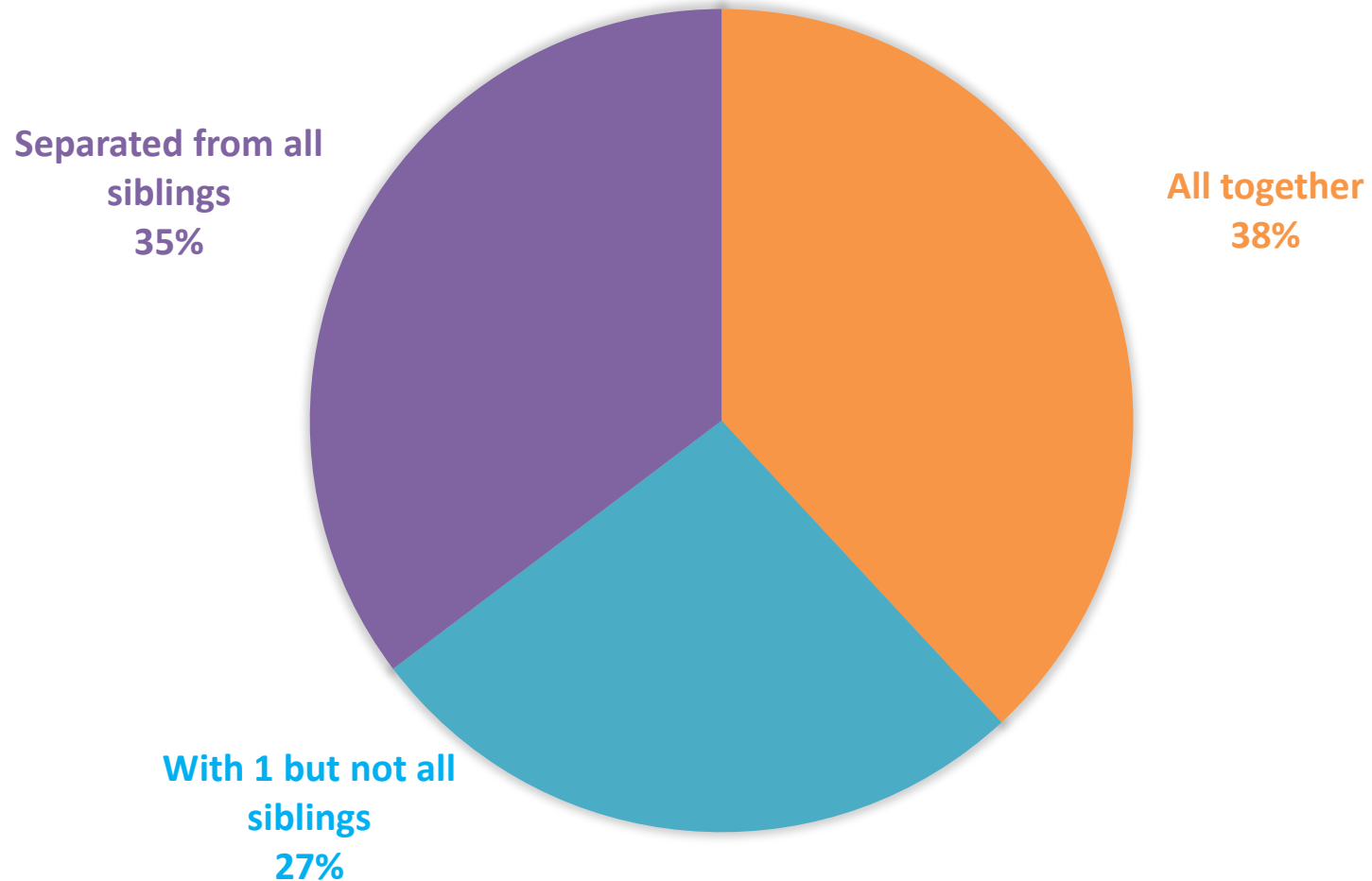
The Promise

# Gathering our data

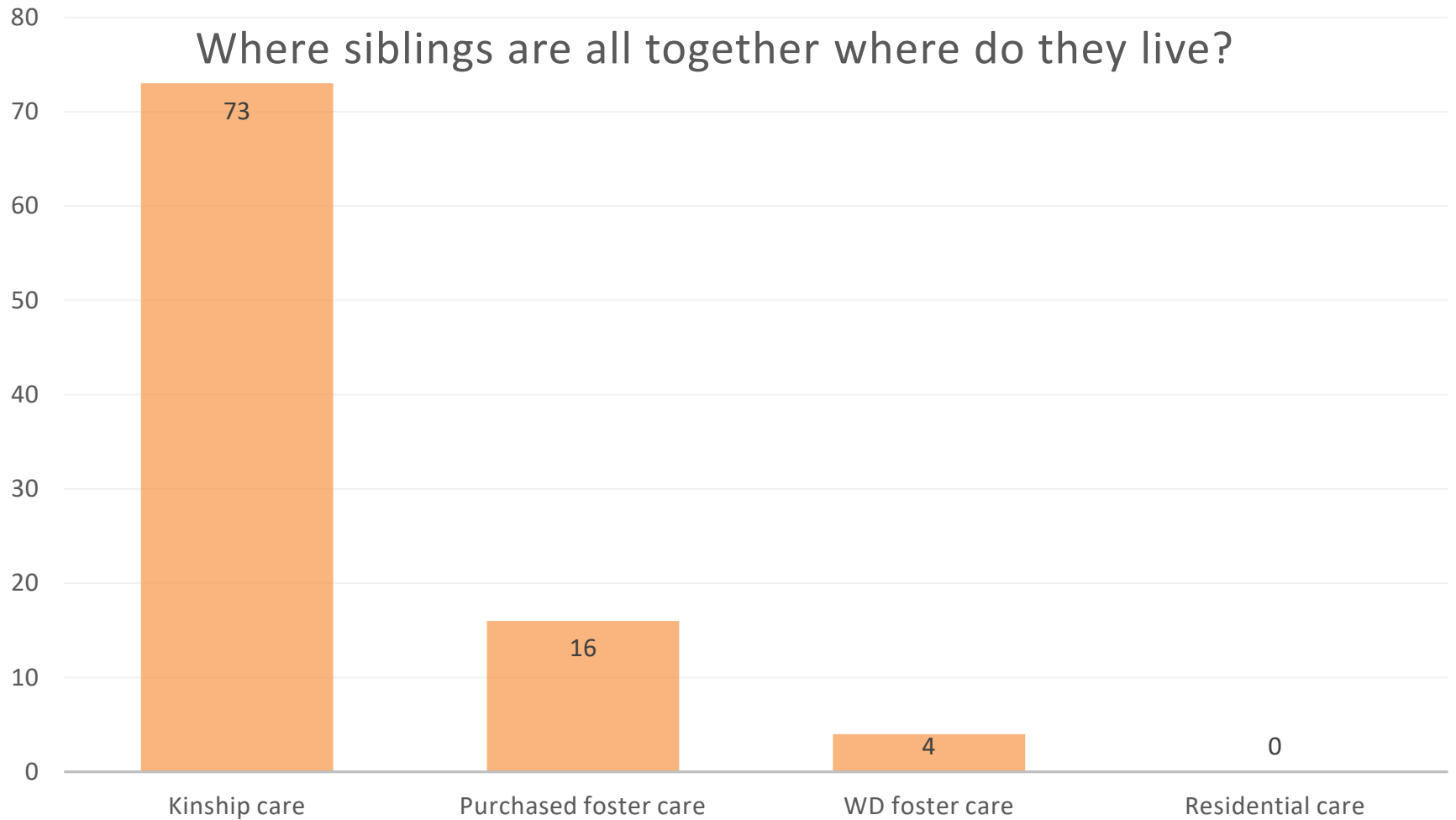
- On 24<sup>th</sup> March 2023 we had:
- 447 infants, children and young people looked after away from home
- 252 children had at least 1 sibling under 18



## HOW MANY CHILDREN ARE LIVING WITH THEIR SIBLINGS?

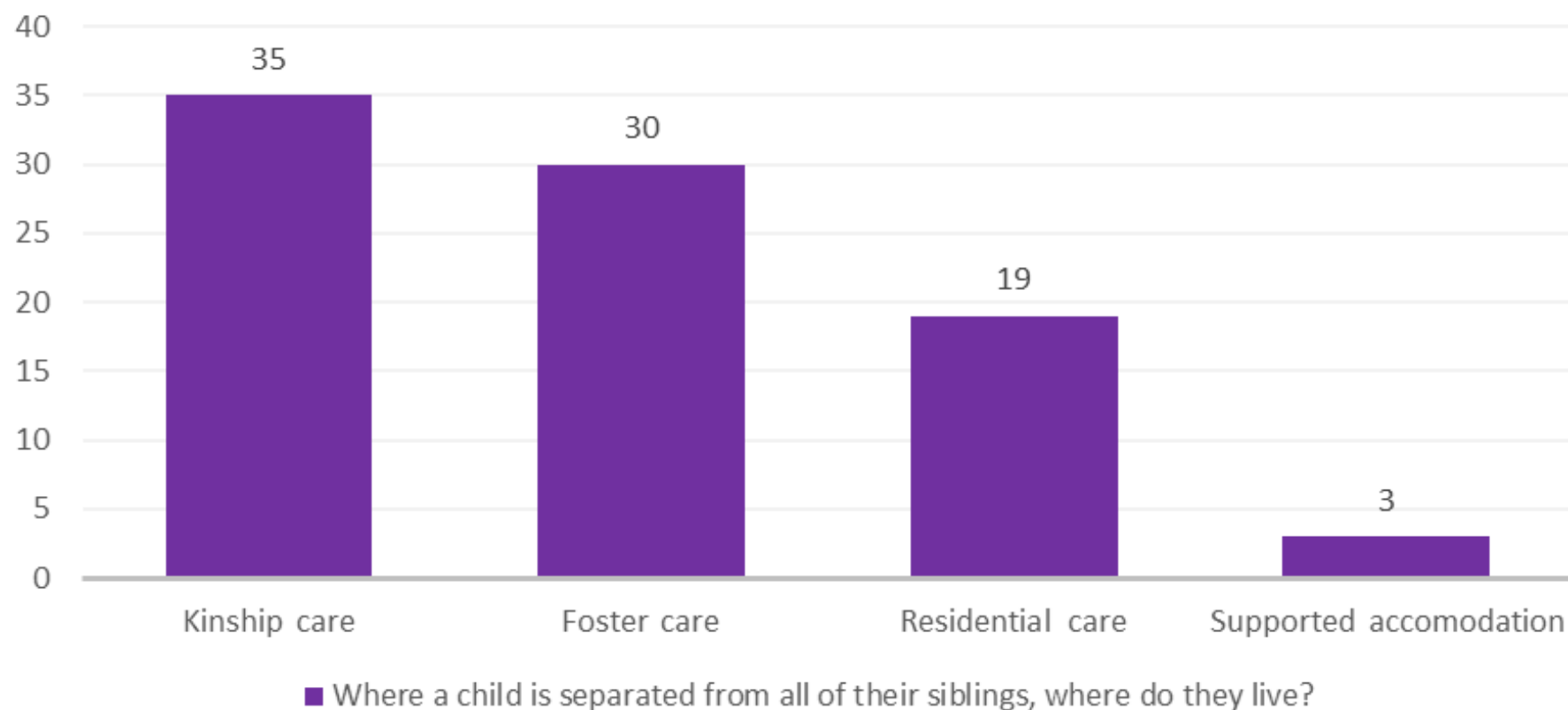


## Where siblings are all together where do they live?

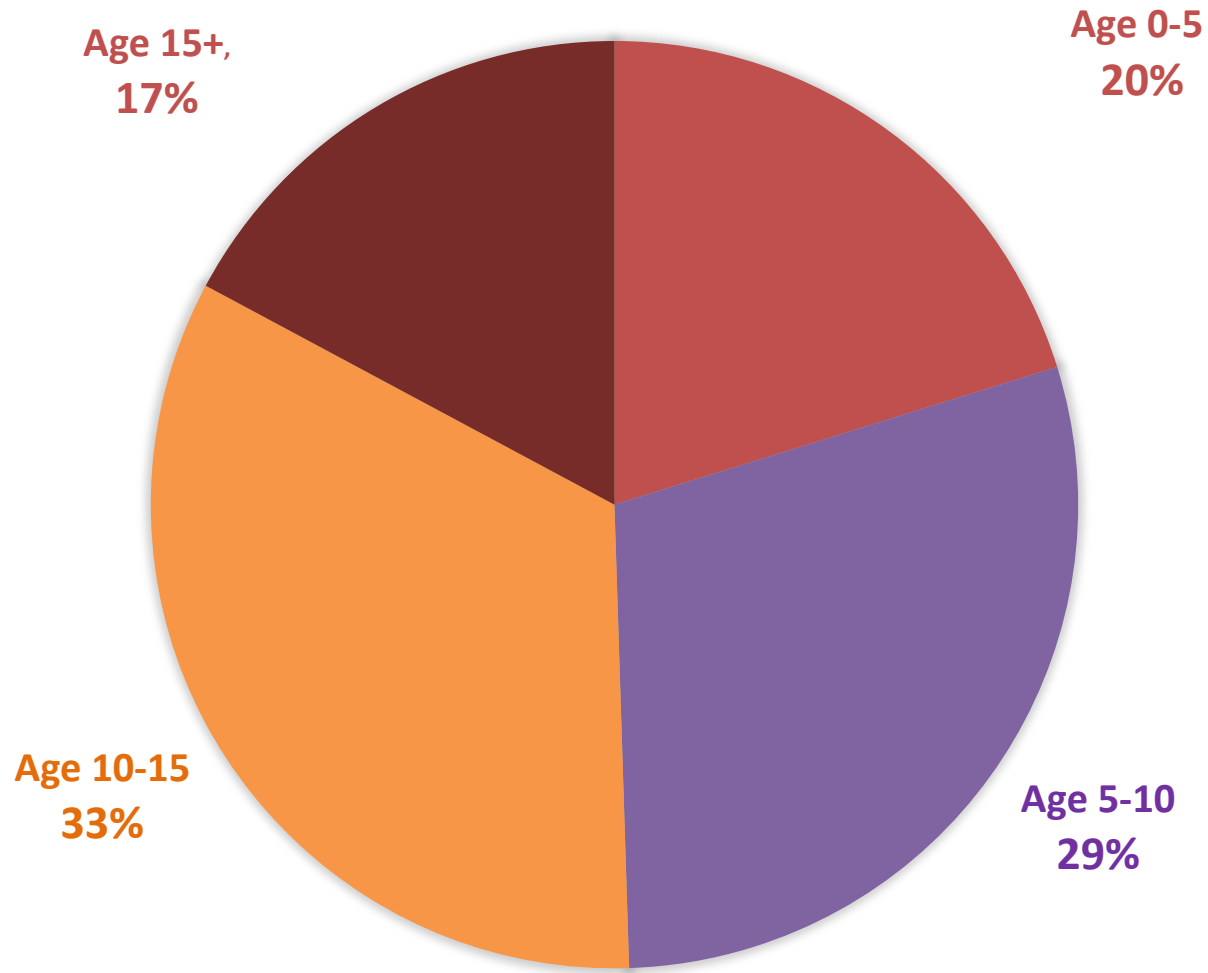


Where siblings are all together where do they live?

## Where a child is separated from all of their siblings, where do they live?



## HOW OLD ARE CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE WHO ARE SEPARATED FROM ALL OF THEIR SIBLINGS?





# Survey around support to brothers and sisters relationships

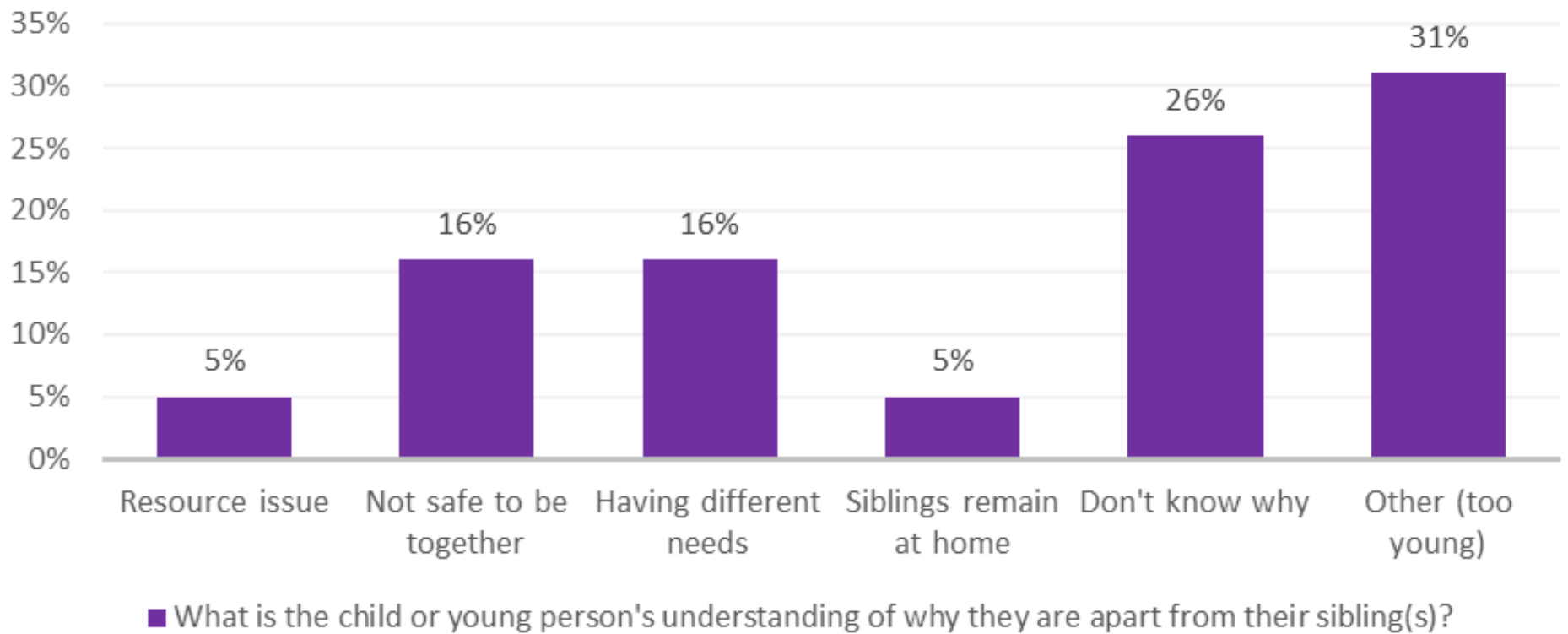
We wanted to find out more about the experience of children and young people who have siblings they are separated from, including time they spend together.

This was for infants, children and young people who were separated from their siblings to learn about how the relationships were being supported, what time together looked like.

We received 19 responses



## What is the child or young person's understanding of why they are apart from their sibling(s)?

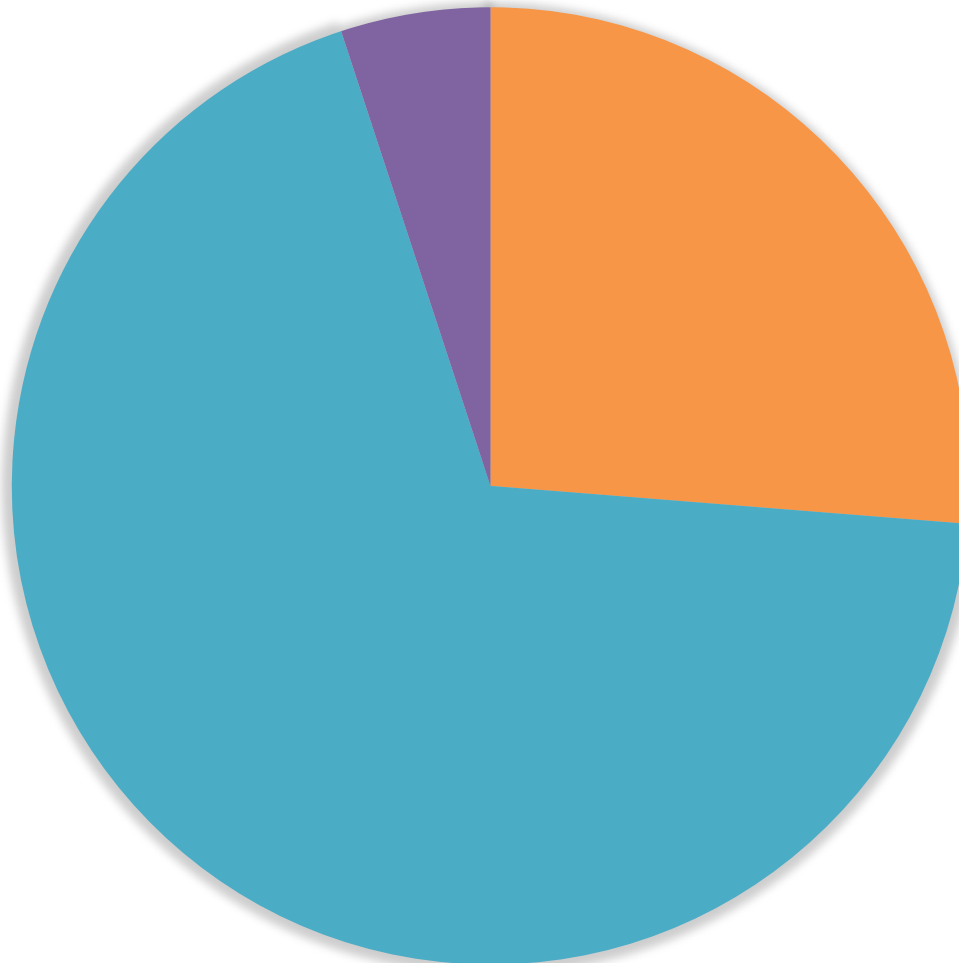


**IS THERE A FORMAL PLAN IN PLACE TO SUPPORT THEIR TIME TOGETHER  
WITH THEIR BROTHERS AND SISTERS OUT WITH CONTACT WITH  
PARENTS/WIDER FAMILY?**

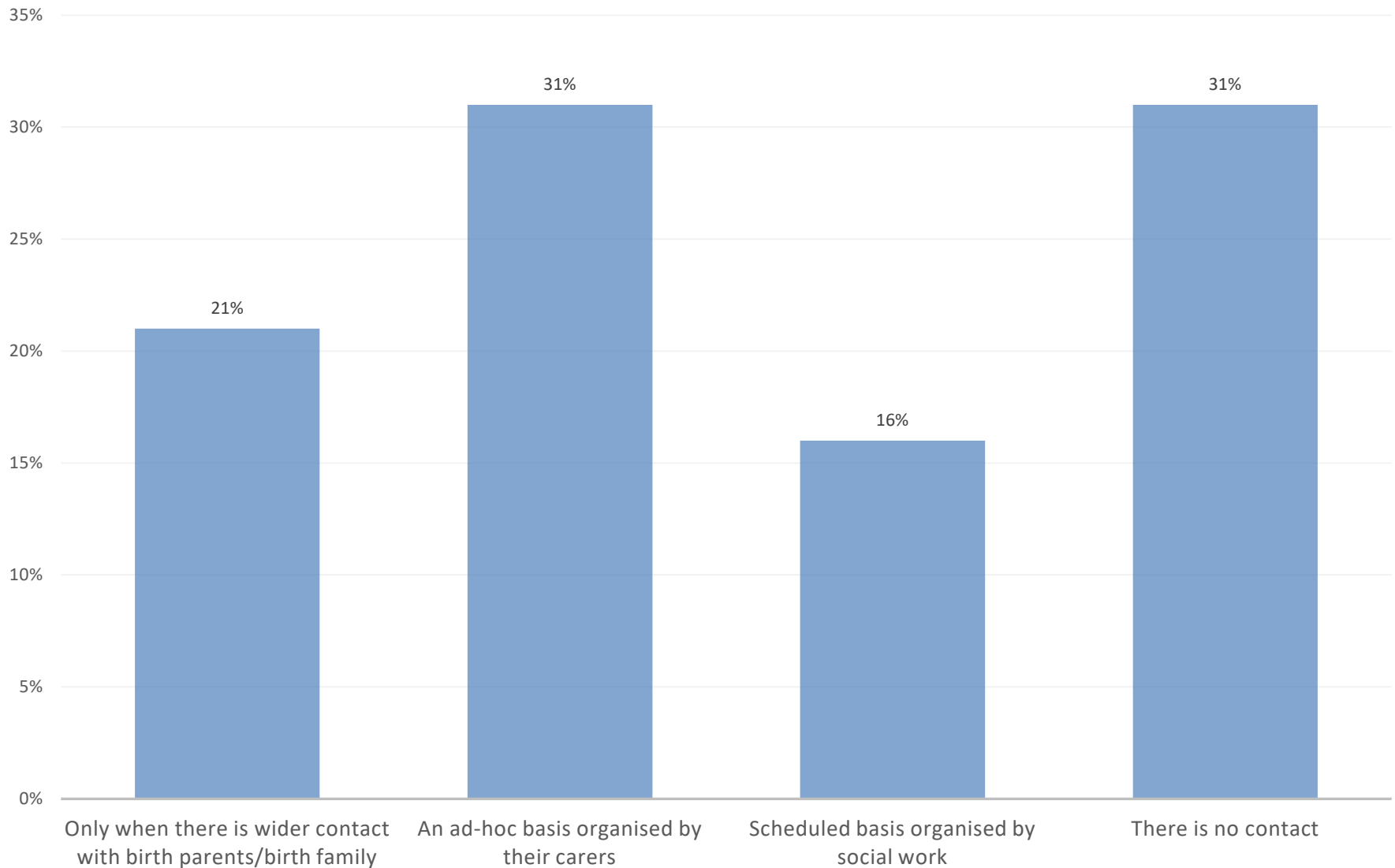
**Don't know**  
**5%**

**Yes**  
**26%**

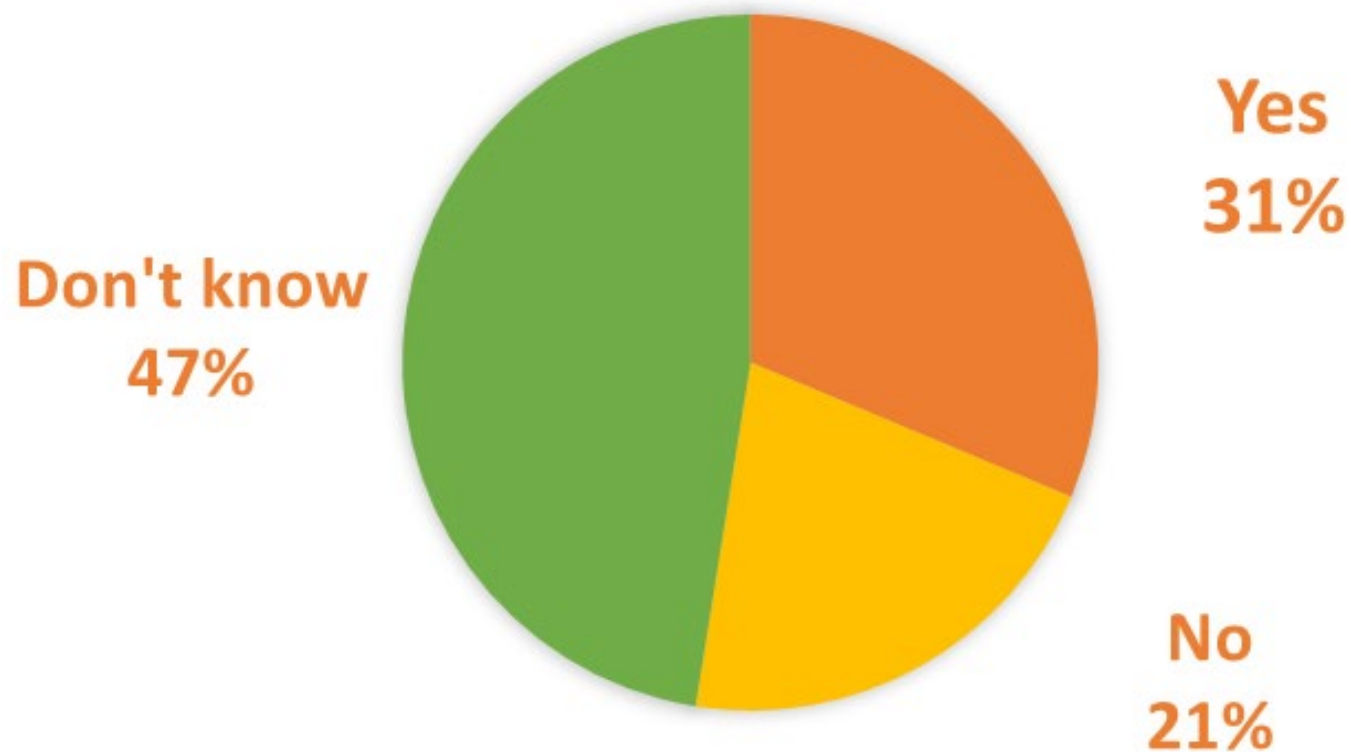
**No**  
**68%**



## What type of time together does the child or young person have with their sibling(s)?



**WOULD THE CHILD OR YOUNG PERSON LIKE TO  
HAVE MORE TIME WITH THEIR SIBLING (S)?**



# Breakout Session 1

- What would this data tell you? Or not tell you?
- Does it resonate with your experience?
- What are/would your priorities for change be based on this data?

# BROTHERS AND SISTERS

## RECOMMENDATIONS



### LOCAL POLICY

- Co-design Brothers and Sisters Charter alongside children, young people and the workforce.
- Chief Social Work Officer required to sign off decisions to separate siblings
- Increase numbers of brothers and sisters reports going to SCRA



### QUALITY ASSURANCE

- Independent Reviewing Officers to model and lead change in prioritising this area.
- Standing agenda items around time together, wishes, understanding of separation
- Increase use of Advocacy and awareness of siblings rights
- Training to ensure understanding of sibling rights and importance of relationships



### KINSHIP, FOSTERING & ADOPTION

- Further exploration around how to strengthen support provided to kinship carers
- Foster carer recruitment strategy
- Training and support to foster carers around brothers and sisters
- Training and support to adoptors around brothers and sisters



### SUPPORT SERVICES & CREATIVE PRACTICE

- Develop and strengthen our Family Ground Decision Making
- Increase Advocacy provision
- Increase and develop positive locations for time together
- Promoting multi-agency partner roles
- Embedding and empowering creative practice



### DATA

- Annual gathering of sibling data - quantitative and qualitative
- Wide reporting of our data to support understanding across local authority

# BROTHERS AND SISTERS



## LOCAL POLICY

- The development of a Brothers and Sisters Policy or Charter, co-designed by children, young people and the workforce to ensure clarity and consistency around the responsibilities of the local authority and what children and young people can expect
- Brothers and Sisters policy has clear process within it for required approval by the Head of Service to separate siblings.
- Focused implementation around sibling reports for Children's Hearings to increase the number completed

W E S T   D U N B A R T O N S H I R E

K E E P I N G   T H E   P R O M I S E



# BROTHERS AND SISTERS



## QUALITY ASSURANCE

Role of Independent Reviewing Officers

Standing agenda items around time together, wishes, understanding of separation

## QUALITY ASSURANCE

Increase uptake of Advocacy and understanding of sibling rights

Training to workforce to ensure understanding of sibling rights and importance of relationships

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## KINSHIP CARE

Strengthen the support we offer to kinship carers

Further exploration around time together when separated within kinship care

Greater understanding of reasons for separation and how we can mitigate this

## FOSTERING CARE

Foster carer recruitment strategy

Training and support to foster carers around brothers and sisters

Clearly defined expectations around their responsibilities to support brothers and sisters relationships, what they can do when direct time together is not possible

## ADOPTION

Training and support to be offered to adoptive and perspective adoptive carers around the importance of sibling relationships, and clearly defined expectations around supporting relationships following adoption

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## Support Services and Creative Practice

Developing and strengthening our Family Group Decision Making service to provide increased support around keeping families together, or identifying potential kinship carers

Increase Advocacy provision

Increase and develop positive locations for time together

Promoting multi-agency partner roles

Embedding and empowering creative practice

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## DATA

Annual gathering of sibling data- quantitative and qualitative to compliment CLAS return on siblings

Wide reporting of our data to support understanding across local authority and inform planning

Audit to be carried out to take a deeper look at reasons for separation

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# Breakout Session 2

- How have/are you using data to shift outcomes for the siblings your organisation works with?
- How have you effectively won hearts and minds when trying to deliver change?

# Call to Action

- Local authorities
- Gathering data on brothers and sisters as seen today
- 24<sup>th</sup> March 2024
- Please get in touch:  
[ailsa.dinwoodie@west-dunbarton.gov.uk](mailto:ailsa.dinwoodie@west-dunbarton.gov.uk)

