



## **Membership survey 2022 Summary of feedback**

Every autumn, NAFP asks its members, independent fostering agencies (IFA) across England, Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales, to complete an online survey to let us know what they think about the campaigns we undertake on their behalf each year. We also ask for their ideas about what we should focus on next year and feed these suggestions into our plan for the coming year. This report summarises the key messages from our members in the survey that took place at the end of 2022.

### **Return rates (2018-22)**

<b>2018</b>	77	10%
<b>2019</b>	60	7%
<b>2020</b>	67	8%
<b>2021</b>	69	12%
<b>2022</b>	81	12%

### **Respondents**

Within IFA members, NAFP most frequently interacts with registered managers, contracting teams and directors. Respondents to this annual survey nevertheless came from a wide range of roles, including:

- Advanced practitioner
- Agency decision maker
- Business manager
- CEO
- Contracts and finance officer
- Director
- Director of customer engagement
- Head of contracting and service development
- Head of fostering
- Head of operations
- Head of quality and development
- Head of referrals
- National development manager
- Placement and assessment team manager
- Practice manager
- Quality assurance manager
- Regional operations manager

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- Registered manager
- Responsible individual
- Senior manager (strategic planning)
- Service manager
- Supervising social worker

**Q1. Which of NAFP's successes this year have been the most important for you (choose one)?**

The most popular choice, as it was last year and up from 33% to 42%, was:

*Supporting practice - briefings (inc. language, sharing Form F, expired contracts, moving children, annual panel report), online seminars (inc. cyber security, preparing for Ofsted, allegations, sharing Form F), weekly members' calls*

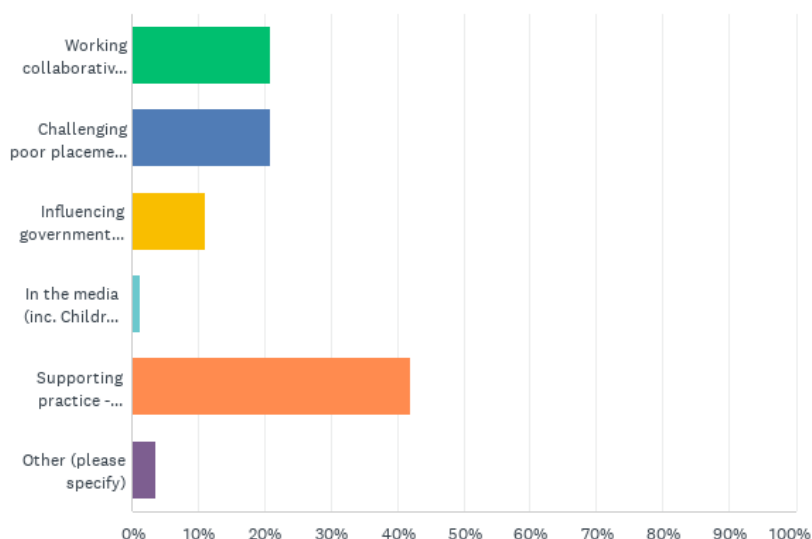
Followed by (both on 21%):

*Working collaboratively with local authorities to improve commissioning (inc. terms/conditions, discounts, monitoring, NAFP database*

*Challenging poor placement and commissioning practice (inc. price-capping, monitoring, comparative costs, Golden Hellos, referral information, negative marketing)*

These three areas will inform the overarching aims in NAFP's annual plan for 2023-24.

**Q1 Which of NAFP's successes this year have been the most important for you (choose one)?**



**Q2. How does NAFP membership help you?**

Most responses fell into these categories:

- Support: from NAFP and other IFAs; with local authorities, on practice issues
- Good practice: fostering and child related, guidance, reassurance
- Keeping up to date: trends, developments, commissioning, legislation
- Issues: responsive fora to discuss practice and business issues, raise issues and seek advice and guidance, learn from others' experience

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updates Keeps touch  
helps guidance sector across advice  
fostering Keeping issues date  
forums NAFP information  
voice share support meetings  
practice us  
Keep abreast agency good practice<sup>LA</sup>  
developments good IFAs informed  
advice guidance keep updated

*'NAFP support and guidance is invaluable to myself, and that of our agency in terms of ongoing practice issues'*

**Q3. What will be the most important issues for you over the coming year that you would like NAFP to campaign on?**

Most responses fell into these categories:

- Cost of living: fees/allowances, local authority fees to IFAs, tax
- Foster carer recruitment/retention
- Relationships with local authorities
- National image of fostering
- Government reviews/policies/programmes

Legacy  
inflation good IFA commissioning  
children Continued carers Cost living  
profit fees fostering placements  
Working practice LA foster carers uplifts  
impact care care review support

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- I find the weekly calls interesting and a good way to keep linked in with other agencies.
- Great team and I enjoy our meetings.
- I do miss coming to the meetings and being more engaged but my own agency has gone through huge change in the last couple of years. I feel I miss out on everything that NAFPP has to offer as a result-a criticism/reflection of myself rather than NAFPP!
- The regional meetings have been very supportive in addressing the Eliminating Profit Agenda and the weekly Best Practice meetings cover a wide range of topics. As well as the courses, seminars, workshops and papers NAFPP is invaluable.
- And a massive thank you to you Harvey. For a small agency like ours it is reassuring to know that we have you fighting our battles for us, putting across our points of view, keeping us updated of developments and being the voice of reason in an often crazy world!
- It's a welcoming group who are mutually supportive, committed, child-centered and highly professional.
- Just to say that it is an essential service, especially for registered managers.
- Thank you and keep up the excellent work
- I like knowing that there is an organisation that supports and has the voice of IFPs.
- It provides a very necessary service as we need IFAs to be able to work together to provide the best service to carers and children, and to engage with local authorities also.
- It's great to have you looking out for us all
- Provided a supportive and open forum to raise and discuss issues. Being a RM, having to interpret legislation can feel isolating, and having a place where you can gain a wider view other than just your own agency's view, is helpful.
- Always find NAFPP to be helpful and professional with any queries we have raised. They respond quickly, we have confidence in their knowledge and responses we have received to date.
- The meetings are organised and keep discussions on track without taking too much time. The agenda items are always relevant/current.
- Looking forward to continuing to work with NAFPP in 2023.
- Good piece of work conducted in respect of the referrals of children, from a provider perspective and the report produced.
- Looking forward to moving forward with sharing foster carer profiles with local authorities as opposed to Form Fs and reviews, as part of the referral and matching processes. Again, another good piece of work.
- NAFPP provides an outstanding service in my view to IFAs, giving balanced, fair, responsive support. NAFPP are extremely knowledgeable about issues affecting the industry across the entire country, work in collaboration with IFAs extremely well, whilst also being fair and balanced to our local authority colleagues.
- The communication fora of regional meetings, along with weekly team meetings are effective, keeping providers in the loop, whilst also using these opportunities to network amongst colleagues and develop supportive working relationships.
- I see NAFPP as integral to the work I do and very much value our effective partnership approach we have adopted. Thank you for the fantastic work you all do.
- I would like more time to attend meetings as I don't know everything that is involved from commissioning stuff I am not really involved in.
- It was helpful to talk through Covid and how this affected everyone and also when

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an IFA had an Ofsted inspection but only managed to attend three meetings within the whole year.

- NAFPP colleagues are always approachable and knowledgeable. I enjoy attending the IFA meetings which are always chaired extremely well by Harvey, mins are taken and shared in a timely manner.
- I enjoy the group discussions as it does help to reassure that experiences are not always individual to our agency. There is always good support and a lot of experience that is shared.
- Only that I find NAFPP approachable and helpful and I appreciate the support.
- I have only just recently had the opportunity to join in my new role but have found the weekly bulletin, meetings and access to research and guidance invaluable to support the agency development.
- NAFPP is a great resource for us in the independent fostering sector. It keeps us up to date on developments across the UK, it provides a forum for discussion and therefore aids understanding of proposals and developments. It also performs the very important lobbying function.
- This organisation fills a very necessary role in debates and dissemination of information.
- Great service and ability to give the uniqueness in support and training from the provider experience.
- Love the passion and campaigning.
- Good support from the team when needed with pertinent issues e.g. dealing with 4Cs and developments in Wales.
- As I am the only person in the group that completes tenders and manages contracts and relationships with commissioners, NAFPP provides a great sounding board and place of discussion where there are contentious issues.
- NAFPP is the voice for fostering providers. They are valued and respected for their critical friend challenge in the sector.
- NAFPP membership has been invaluable for us over the last year, especially with regards to the Welsh Government's policy proposals
- This is an excellent organisation which supports IFAs - keep up the great work of championing causes that benefit children in care, but evidencing positive outcomes through IFAs.
- Harvey is approachable, professional and I like that he speaks at many important fora and gets media coverage.
- The weekly newsletter is excellent and I read it and share it within the organisation. It reminds the agency of the range of support you provide for the membership fees.
- I will recommend NAFPP to other IFAs who are not yet members.
- Very approachable and knowledgeable staff team.
- NAFPP has been refreshing, great.
- Keep it up.
- We value your support, guidance and influencing
- You have been a great support and have had answers when we have needed them or been able to signpost to the place where we can get an answer. You give us the feeling of 'we have your back'.
- As an agency we enjoy working with Harvey and the team, the briefings are always informative and kept on track and timed well.
- I've found the NAFPP extremely helpful this year. Membership has made a real difference to the practice in our agency. It helps us to be evidence-based and to incorporate learning from others. The organisation is welcoming and supportive. Thank you.

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- Keep up the good work.
- I really enjoy the fact that we have an organisation that we can use and supports us in practice and enables us to collaborate with others.
- Very supportive.
- All positive Harvey
- Catherine has been excellent since she joined the team
- Marie - great source of info regarding tenders
- Harvey is doing a commendable job and navigating the complex landscape impressively.
- I think you do an excellent job. Harvey is so measured in his responses to Government and I think it helps us to get heard. Marie is excellent at picking tenders apart and working to get contractual matters right and fair. The association with Guardian Saints has been helpful over data protection matters.
- Overall, I think the team is an excellent support to the sector in so many ways, particularly representing us to Government and brokering fair contracts and tenders.
- Bringing providers in areas together to work on the common issues we face.
- I really feel Harvey has such current knowledge of fostering over Britain and is passionate about supporting providers.
- I think the responses on behalf of the sector to various government enquiries, media activity and other channels where child care provision is raised is a really important part of the organisation's role which cannot be achieved by individual organisations.
- Very knowledgeable, useful to link in with other agencies - sadly I haven't been able to get to as many meetings as I would have liked to.
- Thanks for all your support folks - very much appreciated and the training sessions have been excellent.
- I find all NAFPP colleagues approachable, friendly, helpful and knowledgeable. It's a pleasure.
- I would like to say a massive thank you to NAFPP for all the support and representation of the independent sector this year.
- Always very approachable, professional and helpful
- Thank you, and have a great Christmas!
- No, very happy with their approach and structure.

**Q6. Can you give us one example from your own work over the last year that you're most proud of?**

These were wide-ranging but have all been included as they are all important to each agency respondent.

- Making safe good matches with foster families across the fostering agencies and developing further the out of hours referrals service, running weekdays, weekends and bank holidays being available to local authorities and assisting them place children in an emergency situation. This service has grown and has been very successful last year and I am very proud to oversee this service.
- The good outcome of our Ofsted inspection in 2022 is something we as a team are proud of. Having talked about NAFPP during the inspection was something Ofsted were happy to hear about, in terms of peer support and good practice.
- Supporting carers and monitoring the growth and new experiences children have had with the families.
- Recruitment and retention of staff and foster carers.
- I am very proud of the work we did with The Sunflower Network to develop a

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bespoke therapeutic training programme for our foster carers and staff, as well as a reflective practice and CPD offer for our staff team. We launched this at the end of December 2022 and the programme commences in January 2023. It has been a journey full of stops and starts, since I joined the agency in September 2019 - and I am very proud to be able to offer this to staff and foster carers.

- The successful 'coming together' of my agency and another to form a partnership - we have been able to create formal bonds and an overarching board but still run our agencies exactly as we founded and keep our important respective cultures alive. We can learn from each other, take the best bits of sharing good practice, but retain our own identities. I am pleased that we have negotiated what could have been very tricky waters with staff and carers and helped people feel valued, hopefully, and part of something optimistic and positive.
- Our foster carers do an incredible job looking after some of the more vulnerable members of our society, providing them with the stable family environment they deserve but that unfortunately, through no fault of their own, they have not been receiving. It makes me proud to know that our agency supports our carers to care for these young people and one example that demonstrates this is a young person (12) who this year, for the first time, has had two consecutive Christmases in the same home.
- The act of a child who had been very challenging in placement and he had lost his place with us after he assaulted his carer. When I gave him a lift back to his mum's after he had been back to us for a day-time supervision while she worked, he gave me a huge hug that might have said 'sorry' and 'thanks' at the same time.
- Achieving our second consecutive Ofsted Outstanding rating. Also, further development of our therapeutic assessment and treatment model.
- Ofsted Outstanding is the obvious one but actually supporting carers, children & staff with impact of cost of living impact which has been huge!
- Achieving a successful outcome with our Ofsted inspection.
- Getting our good in all areas back. Very tough year.
- Developing our parent and child and therapeutic service.
- Supporting young people to find the right placement, developing our links with residential settings and developing assessment of young people's readiness to move back into family placements.
- From having a very stable staff team for many years we have had multiple members of staff retiring and changes to our management structure. Periods of change impact on everyone, although not without bumps along the way we have navigated through this period of change the best we can with as little impact on carers and staff as possible.
- Establishing a new agency which is committed to including birth parents - which has really enhanced and improved the child's experience of living in foster care.
- Not a particular example but massively proud of the agency's high level of support to fostering households and children and young people placed in therapeutic placements. As we are currently the biggest single registration I am proud of our Ofsted rating (we were inspected this month).
- Joint work we did with yourselves as part of the data collation and interviews re the referrals piece of work that NAFP undertook.
- I am very proud of securing a significant number of fee uplifts on children's placements within our agency through persistence, networking with other IFA colleagues on how they have overcome negotiation challenges, seeking out feedback and support from NAFP and raising good practice, and barriers in the appropriate forums. Fee uplifts are critical, particularly given the current financial climate, and allow for continued financial sustainability and investment in our foster

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- carers, children/young people and staff.
- Feeling able to challenge local authorities more.
- Advocating on behalf of children.
- Supporting my team to maintain foster carers and sustain placements despite the challenges of Covid, and cost of living crisis.
- Advising local authority of good practice for Continuing Care support and negotiating appropriate continuing support for young person and their needs which have not changed from being an age for fostering.
- Implementing more direct work with children.
- Achieving Ofsted Outstanding in our inspection. :)
- I am pleased that I helped to get a resolution with one of the local authorities with regards funding for young people moving to the continuing care status without compromising my values.
- Got to be achieving outstanding in inspection and feeling like we deserved it.
- Continuing to innovate (in our own small way!) despite all the pressures everyone is under.
- Generally being able to sustain positive partnerships with local authorities despite the churn of their staff and the pressures that they are under (which at times get 'passed on' to partner organisations).
- Supported the team through a successful Ofsted Inspection and having the ability to demonstrate the strength of the team, evidencing the quality service that the entire team promotes and being able to lead a team that is motivated to continually develop.
- All our agencies have achieved good or outstanding in inspections held.
- We have successfully embedded more children's participation within our agency. This was through a dedicated role developed to offer activities and opportunities as well as individual support to the children and YP.
- Growing the business and developing new areas in such a specific area we operate in with placing disabled children.
- Having been inspected by Ofsted and achieved an outstanding judgement.
- Going above and beyond to ensure delayed information is obtained to get applicants to panel to maximise carer sufficiency.
- One of our young people has an interview at Cambridge, and second one has an interview at Oxford.
- The service has developed our ambassador service after Covid which is a team of foster carers who work with our carer recruitment officers developing recruitment activity and supporting new carers.
- Re-engaged across our services with our carers following the challenging Covid period offering services face to face.
- The ability to maintain positive relationships with local authorities in what is becoming a very challenging environment whilst also continuing to expand the therapeutic service.
- increasing stability for children and getting outstanding in inspection.
- NAFP has allowed us to keep up to date on developments with regards to the Welsh government policy proposals and allowing us to have as much influence over the process as possible. This has helped reduce our anxiety and to concentrate on our day-to-day work of helping to look after our children and young people.
- I'm most proud of running a staff practice forum in April 2022 on the importance of and nature of capturing the child's views in a way that when they access their file in adulthood they will get a clear sense of their wishes, feelings, social presentation and something positive about how they interacted with the staff and maybe their

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foster carer that day. This session enabled me to discuss tools such as games that can be used with the child and to encourage staff to write in child friendly language. The session also enabled me to remind all staff of the importance of sharing their visit report with the local authority every time, as it is the local authority's file that is read and not the agency's.

- Writing bid for Tyne Tees contract and receiving positive scoring without ever having done this before.
- Where placements have broken down we have managed to identify alternative placements within our own provision which provides some level of continuity for children and supports family time commitments.
- Successful Ofsted inspection in 2022.
- 90% of our placements are stable and long term.
- Our carer recruitment has been progressively stable/
- Ongoing provision of support/specialist training to our foster carers post the pandemic allowing us to increase the number of specialist support offers to children waiting the longest. Therefore maintaining stability for more children in our care.
- Setting up a management team that is cohesive and driving in the same direction.
- Working closely with the local authority to improve outcomes for a particular child and to protect her from family and friends and others that pose a risk to her.
- I organise the annual children's event for all our children and their foster families. This year was the first time in three years that we were able to meet in person. To be able to give the children and young people a day to remember and to value what we do as a fostering community by celebrating together is amazing.
- Keeping our relaxed family feel of our agency, despite the constant threat of Ofsted at any minute. Knowing all the children and they know me as the responsible individual, we are a very small agency.
- Continuing to support carers and helping them to provide positive outcomes for our young people.
- The amount of learning I have done and the impact this has had on my own practice and the overall practice in our agency.
- Carer retention,
- The team has created something special, and our foster carers are making an amazing difference to the lives of the children they care for.
- We have one of the most complex young people in placement with us and he has just done amazingly.
- We have managed to negotiate legacy fee rises with most of the local authorities in White Rose and the North East.
- Supporting carers in stabilising placements.
- Obtaining outstanding rating with Ofsted.
- Commissioning.
- Offering more loving homes than ever to children and young people.
- Some success with a local authority and Continuing Care.
- The work with foster carers to find ways of supporting them with the added pressures caused by the cost of living increases. This was approached by managing expectations about how much additional financial support was possible and explaining this as a way of getting carer engagement in what was implemented. Different options for financial support were proposed and discussed with carer representatives and then implemented. Open communication about what was being implemented in changes to fees and the rationale behind this was undertaken with all carers. The result was that carers have had extra money and changes to mileage rates and other expenses to offset increased costs. On the

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whole this approach has been well received by carers who have appreciated the transparency alongside the added cash they receive.

- Outstanding rating by Ofsted.
- Developing a meaningful fostering forum ensuring partner agencies are attending to talk to foster parents about support and benefits that they can offer families.
- Surviving as service manager for our whole service having stepped in as responsible individual only - have had to up my game with HR/insurance/health and safety/DBS/finance etc :) Looking forward to 2023 and social work!!
- Continued good or outstanding Ofsted inspections across all agencies and registrations within the group.
- New carer training - therapeutic pathway training that has been produced by our head of therapy. So far we have had fantastic feedback from carers, staff and even Ofsted!
- Slowing down the loss of carers, providing therapeutic care to so many children and young people.
- We have worked hard to ensure stability for children and to ensure that any transitions are planned. our breakdown rate has been very low. These things have been part of what has contributed to some fantastic outcomes for children looked after by our foster parents.
- We managed to maintain nearly all our placements with little disruption.

February 2023

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