

Written evidence from P B Tovey (CFA0125)

HOUSE OF LORDS CHILDREN AND FAMILIES ACT 2014 SELECT COMMITTEE INQUIRY

Submission/Response To The House of Lords Select Committee On The Children and Families Act 2014

Summary Background And History Of Reasons For Submission (1) and (1b)

(1.) I am aged 68 ..Experiences of mental health statutory monitoring as a Co Chair and Vice Chair (2003 – 2012) in the mental health sector in Birmingham and other areas informally (London related and NIMHE) gave me opportunities to meet many suffering patients and amongst those were victims of poor care in Fostering and Adoption. I was particularly concerned about their lack of access to long term “good enough” therapies, in order that they could actually grieve their pains out and resolve often incredible lives of sadness as opposed to concealing those deep pains inside later drug regimes whether that was State based (NHS) or indeed illicit use of drugs and alcohol.

(1b) There was and is certainly a pattern of child abused lives . “Adverse Childhood Experiences” (ACE's). From issues of actual rape (both sexes) to various forms of bullying or abuses. Some of that was inside Adoption. I have been following this for many years now up to 2022. In 2021 a lady colleague and I as adult Adoptees decided to survey test some of these experienced realities and we were shocked . I will come to that shortly; it has a serious bearing on the Govt. Adoption visions which I believe “over-idealise” Adoption as a policy

(2.) Historically speaking : having seen the “modernisation programme of mental health” take place in the Blair years (2002 onwards) with Sainsbury Centre For Mental Health acting as part lead sometimes in therapy design/supply and work functionalisation - I was concerned that patients of backgrounds of poor care were going to receive better therapies. I never saw that happen for many since the therapy programmes barely touched the depths of pains for those who I'd seen as emerging from lives of poor care, abuses etc. Tony Blair you will note “modernised Adoption” too, from 2000, and aided allowances for placements in his time. His father was a successful (Adoptee) man.

(3.) We see in fact Tony Blair's Adoption-allegiance coloured by the pain of that Adoption in a Guardian news article of Dec 21st 2000 titled: “Why Adoption Is So Close To My Heart” :

“Prime Minister Tony Blair spoke publicly today about how his father, Leo, was adopted after his travelling entertainer parents left him with a couple they met on tour.”

(4.) Clearly some Adoptees are successful and go on into public life and careers . That is the other end of the spectrum I have witnessed, and it is more confined to luckier Middle Class outcomes.

(5.) The issue of who does it, and why Adoption is brought back into the national picture to solve "child care" issues on the record, is often affected **by personalised experiences**. Michael Gove MP and David Cameron MP (as Prime Minister) have Adoption and other care issues at the heart of their lives. Michael Gove MP is an Adoptee and successful . David Cameron MP looks after a child with special needs... The experiences partly led their thinking.

(6.) Both David Cameron MP and Michael Gove MP co-announced on 6th July 2012 from the Dept Of Education a press release :

"The prime minister today announced plans to reduce radically the time it takes for a baby to move in with their permanent family. The government will take action to put children's interests first and legislate to make fostering by potential adopters standard practice in many cases, so that those in care are placed with carers who have the potential to become their adoptive parents, rather than in temporary homes." The assumption was "fitter parents" would be made from a stock of Adopters.

(7.) 2013 - 14 saw concerns from the Lords emerge about access for birth parents in family stresses to helpful Early Intervention Funding streams, to stabilise family life. Those concerns were seriously justified since by 2021 Josh Mcallister of the Gov't ordered Social Care Review: "Case For Change" noted in his work (Page 34 Chapter Two) that five important streams of Early Intervention support were not coherent or patchy..

There are examples of central Government initiatives focussed on support for families, including the Supporting Families Programme (MHCLG), Healthy Child Programme (Department of Health and Social Care), Children of Alcohol Dependent Parents Programme (DHSC/DWP), Reducing Parental Conflict Programme (DWP) and establishment of Violence Reduction Units (HO). However, this split of family initiatives funded and set centrally but delivered locally can be frustrating and confusing, leading to lots of relatively small and short-term funding streams, each with differing objectives (Early Intervention Foundation, 2018). This adds to the complicatedness of the overall system.

(8.) It appears in the rush to change the "caring" systems over from: "**looked after children**" to one of mass Adoptions which started to be favoured in 2012, the UK has seen an almost self perpetuating cycle of more "**looked after children**" and more Adoptions also more undermining of some birth-family lives which may have been seriously helped by funded interventions.

(9.) In its efforts to make "fitter parents" from Adopters, the Gov't in 2015, created the Adoption Support Fund (ASF) .. By 2022 , the ASF according to the All Parliamentary Group on Adoption And Permanence (APPGAP) who informally overlook these matters (led by Rachel Maskell - Labour MP) states the ASF has reached about £200 Million. The design work of "better Adoptions" seems to be left though to Adoption agencies/charities giving therapies (self monitored by-in-large) and allowances from the ASF steered by Local Authorities for Adopter Parents to have classes and be upskilled in issues of Adoption. Meanwhile parents of children "**taken away**" by the State have been paradoxically undermined in their access to early remedial services.

(10.) The "Adoption Barometer" (survey) which started in 2017, with direct collaboration from the BBC – somehow involving itself in policy promotions with Adoption UK a Charity, became the much vaunted measuring device of matters monitoring the use of the ASF. Adoption UK (AUK) is a Charity run by a CEO with two Adoptees and survey sampling is almost totally on Adopters.

(11.) Results in the 2017 survey were actually very concerning and a Civitas Report of 2018 pointed them out and for ease I will insert part of that here ..

The difficulties faced by adoptive parents and their children have become more apparent since the Selwyn, Wijedasa and Meakings research was undertaken. This year, AUK collaborated with BBC Radio Four's *File on File* programme to investigate the realities of modern-day adoption. A survey was completed by approximately 3,000 adopters.⁴⁹ When asked how they would characterise their adoption, more than a quarter of parents said that there were either serious challenges impacting the wider family, or that their adoption was at risk of disruption, or that it had already disrupted. Almost a half were finding it 'challenging but stable' and just over a quarter were finding it 'fulfilling and stable'. The majority of adoptive parents who responded to the joint survey said that they were experiencing violence from their children. Adoptive parents were also asked whether their child had displayed aggressive behaviour towards them: of the 2,766 who answered, 1,762 (63.7%) said yes.⁵⁰

From Civitas Report Julie Pepper 2018

(12.) The use of the ASF it was noted by APPGAP (July 2019 report pg. 8, para 5 - "Investing In Families") did not seem to be aimed enough at Special Guardians (Special Guardian Orders) to care for a child ..SGO's are an arguable better way to care for children which I will come to later too .

"Awareness and understanding of the fund is much lower among special guardians than adoptive parents. While the fund has expanded its eligibility criteria to include some special guardians it is only available where the child was previously looked after immediately prior to the Special Guardianship Order (SGO) being granted. This adds to a lack of clarity around eligibility for special guardianship families. The fund needs to be publicised better among this community to ensure they do not miss out on accessing this vital support."

(13.) So, we see there are arguable areas where Gov't has undermined birth-family lives and improved the outlook for Adoption and Adopters. "Forced Adoptions" too have become an issue in the present . Though the Joint Committee Of Human Rights in 2021 itself is only examining historical ones between 1949 – 76. This submission argues that is wrong because many non consensual "Forced" Adoptions have been happening and it is known they disrupt birth-family lives badly. In 2018 the British Association Of Social Workers (BASW) issued concern about this. Page 3 of their 2018 Report into Ethical Standards around Adoption, clearly states many birth parents are concerned and have been subjected to non-consensual adoptions.

(14.) The Guardian carried an 18th Jan 2018 report stating UK Adoptions were a "runaway train"

"Adoption has become a "runaway train" impossible for individual social workers to stop, according to an independent inquiry into adoption law in the UK. The exhaustive two-year inquiry, which canvassed evidence from social workers, adult adoptees, adoptive parents and birth parents across the UK, has raised the alarm over practices that favour adoption over alternative care options seeking to help children stay with their birth parents."

The question thus becomes : does State policy with it's keenness on Adoption set children and others up for human rights abuses that affect them for decades?
Can we do better ?

(15) Earlier in 2015 the Theresa May M.P., "Historic Child Abuse Enquiry" started but oddly never looked at Adoption and Adoptee experiences as an important institutional subset even though I urged them to do that and call for evidence of child abuses inside Adoption .

Several times I did this 2015 - 2021 even up to the present and their concentration was on: Fostered or "Looked After Children" to the exclusion of Adoptee experiences of child abuses inside Adoption

(16) Finally I worked with another Adult Adoptee in early 2021 and we did a 2 month simple open survey of 95 UK Adult Adoptees, using the standard survey platform: "Survey Monkey". We used Facebook and groups where UK Adopters and UK Adoptees were present and UK birth parents. We were cautious to inform everyone this was a UK only survey. The results were shocking and the full

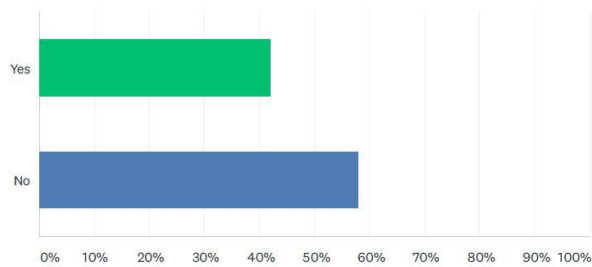
survey results in easy-to-view PDF data form is appended to this submission.
Here is one result.

PLEASE SEE NEXT PAGE

UK Adoptee Emancipation Pilot Survey

Q3 Were you child abused by Adopters inside your Adoption in your experience of it?

Answered: 95 Skipped: 0



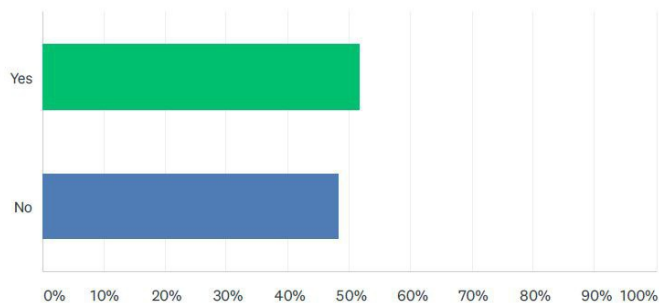
ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Yes	42.11%	40
No	57.89%	55
TOTAL		95

(17.) In testing Adult Adoptee experiences we were also looking at "how popular" in one sense was Adoption as an internal experience and how harmful it was . Revocation of Adoption is on the global agenda for some Adoptees. We have arrived: inside "The Age Of Identity Politics".. Access to DNA proof and geneology is globally bypassing the artificiality of Adoption as a concealed issue.

UK Adoptee Emancipation Pilot Survey

Q4 If ending, "revoking" your Adoption was legally eased for Adult Adoptees, would you "Revoke" it? In other words legally end it?

Answered: 95 Skipped: 0



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Yes	51.58%	49
No	48.42%	46
TOTAL		95

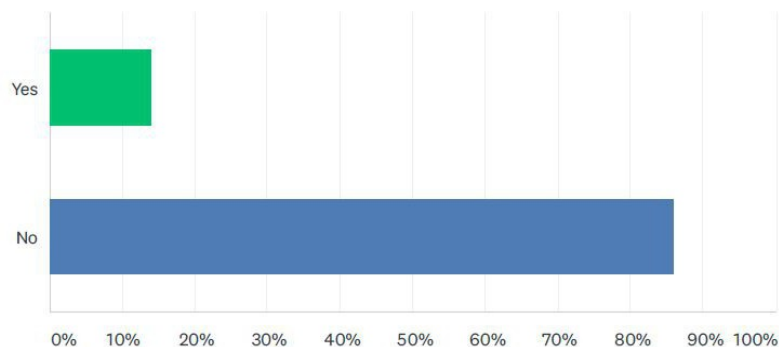
(18) Damages done inside Adoption to children who become hurt-adults are multi-factoral . Firstly the State is wedded to Adoption as an over-ideal. Promotion of "identity preserving" alternatives like Special Guardianship Orders and Kinship Carers alongside beefed up Early Interventions for birth family lives do not seem to be as well "media-politically-favoured". It may well be too, that successful Adoptees both surrounding political networks, media and Agencies influence of perpetuation of Adoption currently too much ...The State forgets it is partly driven too by personalisations of experience from TOP figures and "successful figures" who do not represent everyone.

(19) CAFCASS's head , Sally Cheshire is an Adopter of 3 children , CORAMBAAF employs adoptees at research Level too as do other charities. The CEO of AUK is an Adopter of 2 children. Precious little survey evidence exists for how Adoption can go very wrong further down the "Class- chain" and lead to lives of pain and mental ill health effects . The State promotes it's wished for "success" ... Adult Adoptees can offer a voice here but that voice is often made socially invisible. There are no allowances either for Adult Adoptees for therapies for how Adoption caused them pain. We checked this in our survey of 2021 ... The results are tragic ..

UK Adoptee Emancipation Pilot Survey

Q7 Was there any therapy in the UK specific for your Adult Adoptee needs?

Answered: 93 Skipped: 2



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Yes	13.98%	13
No	86.02%	80
TOTAL		93

(20) The review of the 2014 Children and Families Act intends to give the right of critique on Adoption as the well promoted centrepiece of the Government's "care" policies but it is likley it will ignore mostly unmeasured pain that is caused to some Adoptees whilst perpetuating no remedy too. Who in the UK can revoke their Adoption easily as an adult ? The State gives no social visibility to that because it undermines the socially "Over-idealised" promotion of Adoption. It does well to remember this : The Adoptees that are numbered in this survey

were once children and everyone "intended well" ... Didn't they ?

(21) How is it possible to make things better unless we pick apart what Adoption is legally and how

that is still very existentially “unreal” for many Adoptees. Remember this, we are inside **The Age of Identity** now and that will not go away.

(22.) Birth-identities for some Adoptees need to be re-assumed ... Adoption though legally confers **permanently** that the infant is to be raised **“as if born of the marriage”** of the Adopters. It confers another legal identity that is fictitious and still bars the original one. Worse still it still confers the right of infertile couples to fantasise they have a child that is living in the space of their unborn/non- born one. Some Adoptees are later horrified by this legally justified identity prison. Even “Open Adoptions” do not make a difference where the Adoptee is inside a “clingy” parent atmosphere.

(23.) It is surely better to make child care needs for security, when necessary, into Special Guardianship Orders where a child's identity even from sad origins is known, preserved, and loved. Is allowed to grieve eventually (with therapy help) and move into new forms of acceptance. Where personal birth history is not violated but resolved. SGO's look far better potentially where birth parents cannot be ultimately helped. **Most of those birth parents I have met mostly Online, should be helped by Early Intervention methods which have been undermined for years in their experience.**

(24.) Conclusions :

Adoption has been over-idealised by the 2014 Act and over-promoted for a number of years by the State as a final solution (of permanency) to babies being taken from mothers under stresses and given to other parents. The State and the Lords is well aware that current “Forced Adoptions” can barely be examined because of gagging orders by courts over mothers and others. Thus the State can act with violations unseen but experienced now by many and they go online and talk there. The results later from all this skewing of policy towards Adoption and creating it via non-consensuality is going to be more not less social instability. It is wrong to believe it is just babies taken for Adoption. That is incorrect . I know of mothers with older children and dubious evidences have been used against them at Courts. The BBC is well aware too but cannot act because of gagging acts. The State thus plays within the imprisoned voices of many though now . They are gagged one way or another. That is due to the delivery and design and impetus of more Adoption under the 2014 Act...

(25.) Remedies

Improving wrap-a-around Early Intervention Services for vulnerable birth parents. Make them locally accountable to Councillors too via Scrutiny Committees and open to independent lay monitoring and the public.

Special Guardianship Orders and Kinship Care Arrangements must be more available and aided.

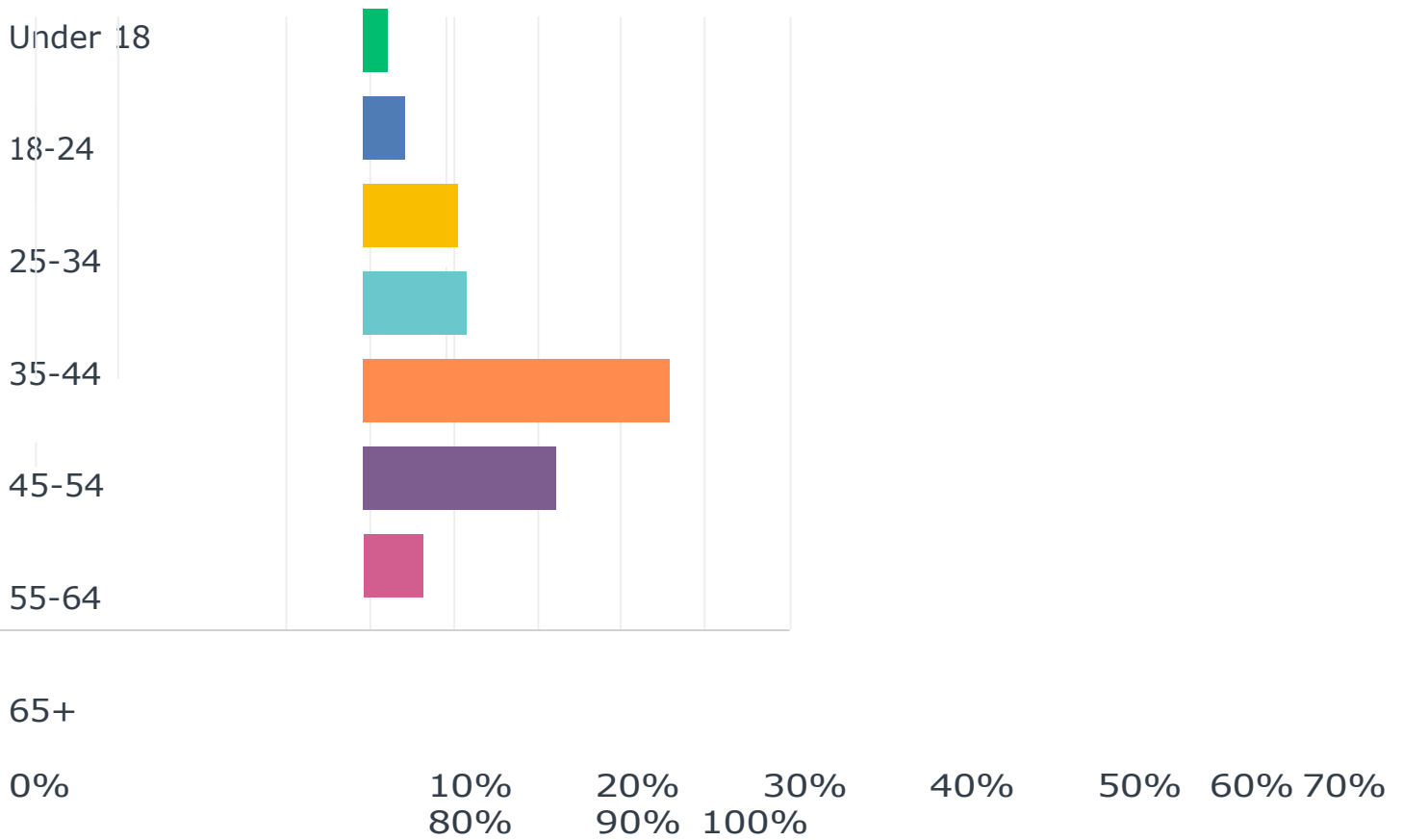
Adult Adoptees need the Human Right to revoke Adoptions where they see fit and that can be eased by simple forms at County Court Level.

The Age Of Identity Rights Is Here do not allow Adoption to make people fall into voids or fogs about that – encourage real identity because that is saner ..

Submission by : Paul Brian Tovey (Adoptee) Ex Health and Social Care Monitor of Services (pro bono) ... April 25th 2022 .

Q1 What is your age range?

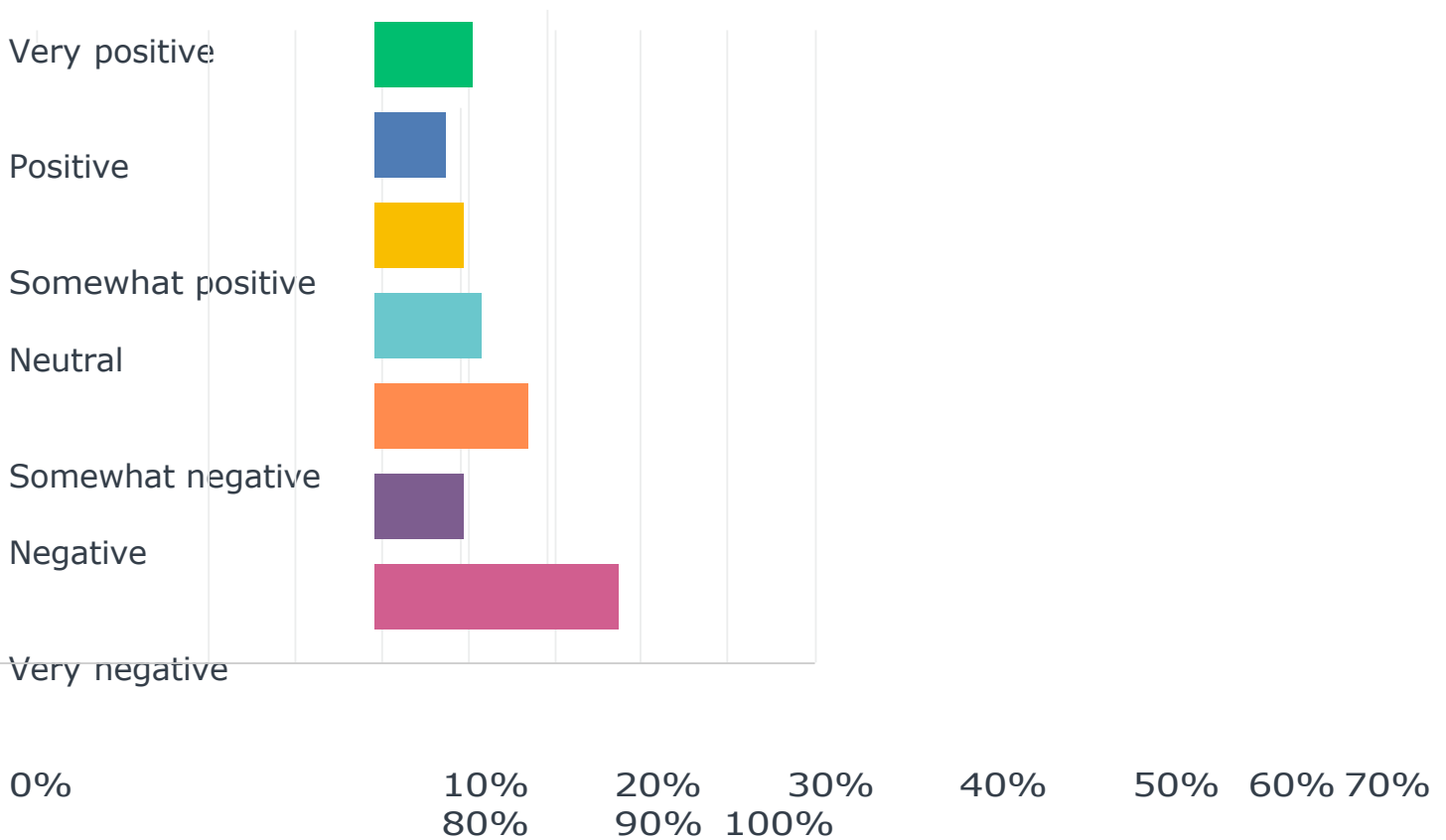
Answered: 95 Skipped: 0



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Under 18	3.16%	3
18-24	5.26%	5
25-34	11.58%	11
35-44	12.63%	12
45-54	36.84%	35
55-64	23.16%	22
65+	7.37%	7
TOTAL		95

Q2 Was your experience of Adoption as a UK Adoptee negative?

Answered: 95 Skipped: 0

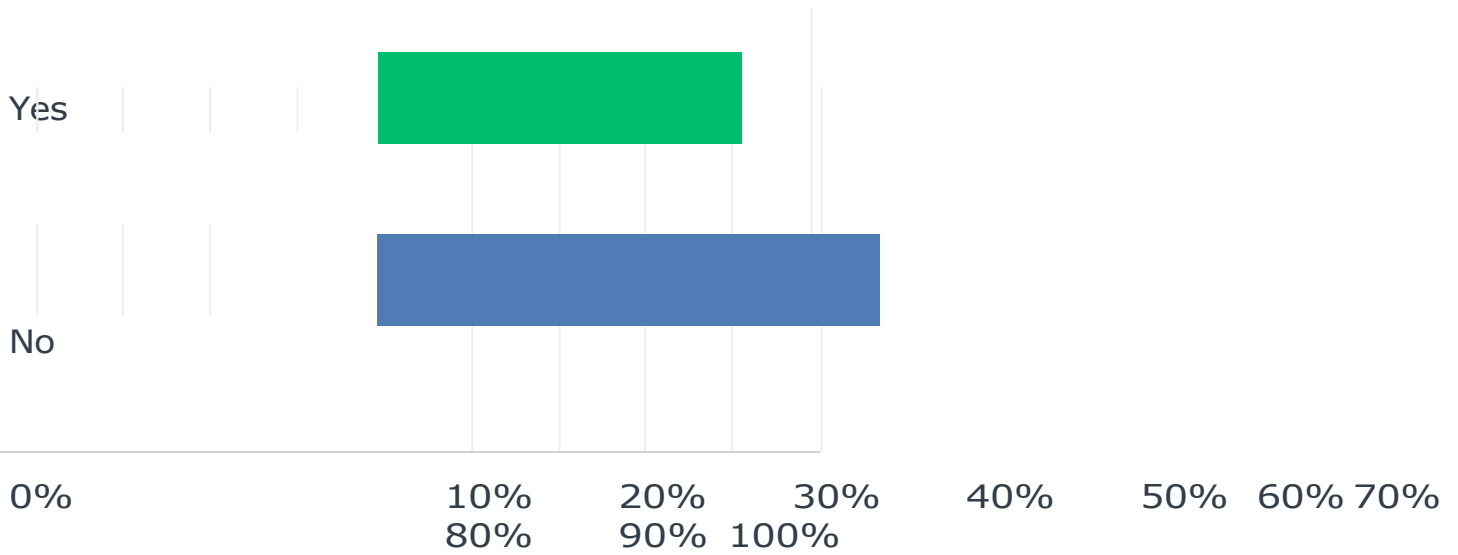


ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Very positive	11.58%	11
Positive	8.42%	8
Somewhat positive	10.53%	10
Neutral	12.63%	12
Somewhat negative	17.89%	17
Negative	10.53%	10
Very negative	28.42%	27

TOTAL

95

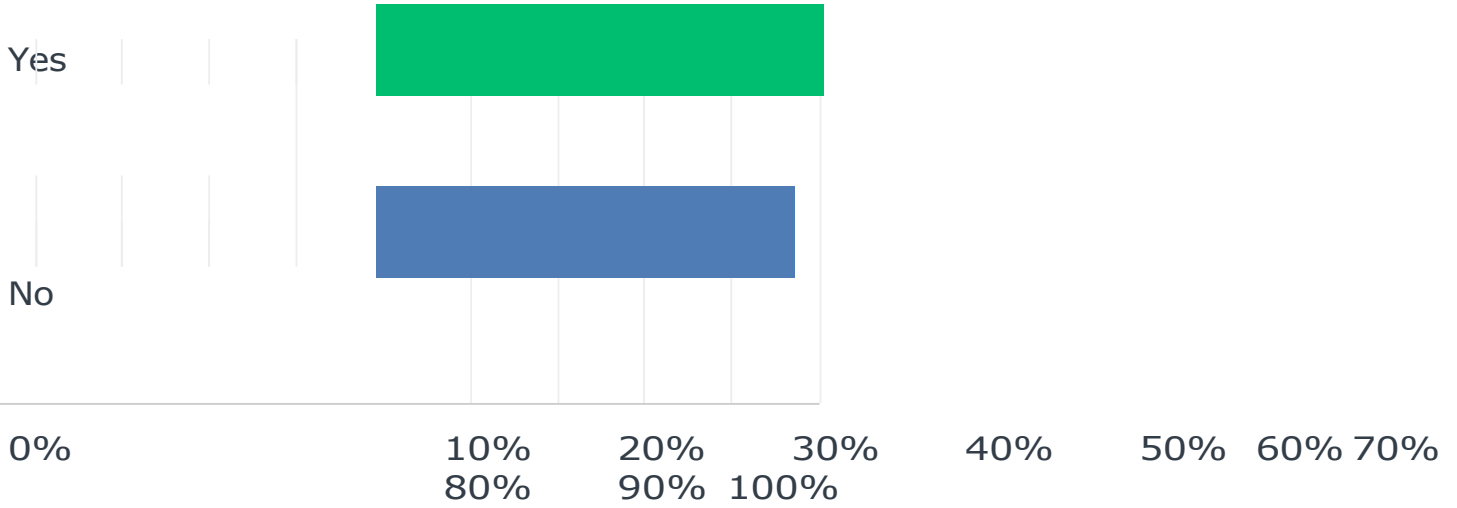
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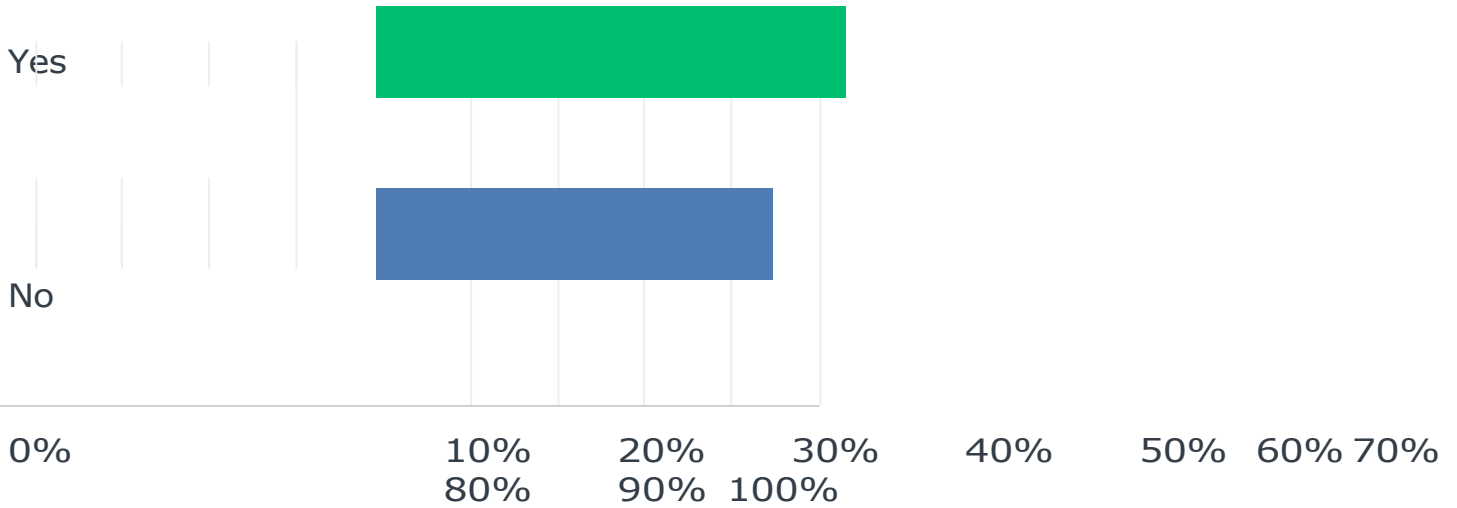
Answered: 95 Skipped: 0



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
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Q5 If you ended your Adoptee status would you feel more comfortable living as yourself in your chosen other identity or birth-identity?

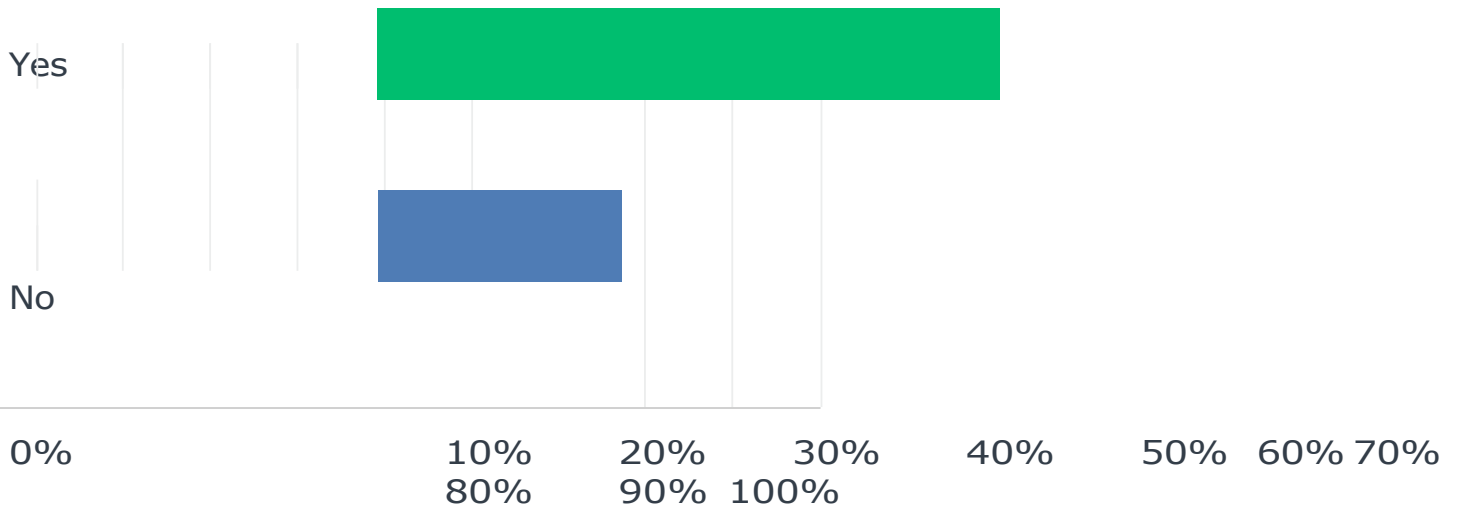
Answered: 94 Skipped: 1



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Yes	54.26%	51
No	45.74%	43
TOTAL		94

Q6 As an Adult Adoptee did you ever need a choice of therapy to help you?

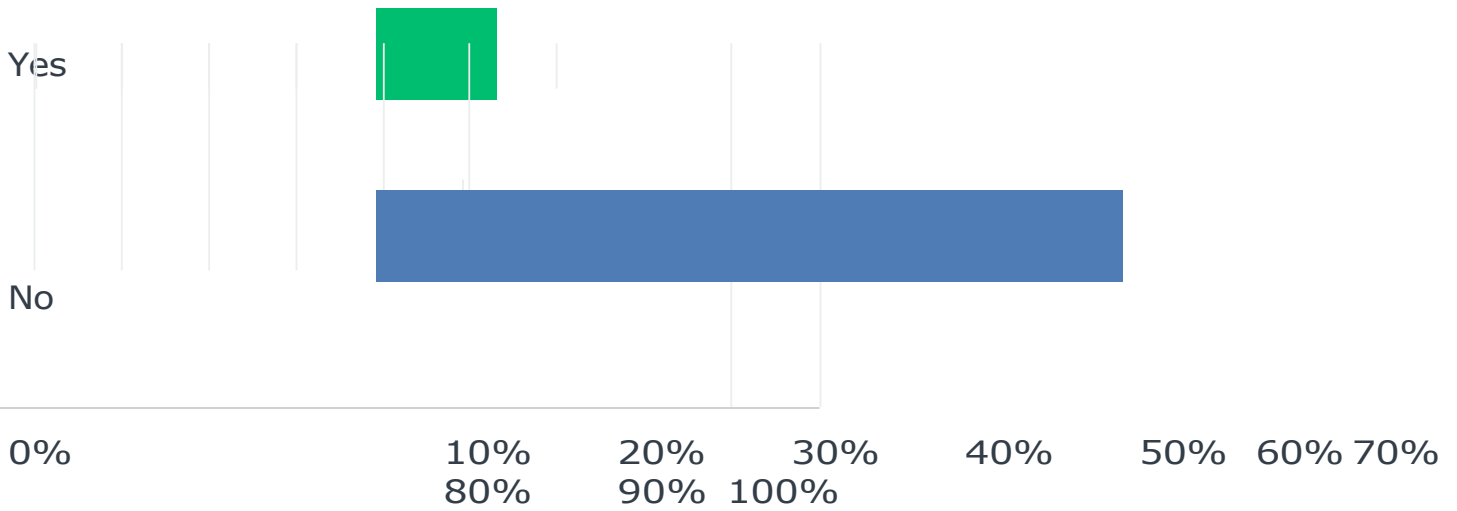
Answered: 92 Skipped: 3



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Yes	71.74%	66
No	28.26%	26
TOTAL		92

Q7 Was there any therapy in the UK specific for your Adult Adoptee needs?

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May 2022