

Financial Allowances Survey 2021

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The need for the survey

- Poverty and kinship care are linked.
- Taking on the care of someone else's child means becoming financially responsible for them.
- Being a kinship carer often restricts or prevents employment opportunities.
- 64% of all calls to Kinship's advice line are about financial concerns.
- Kinship carers do not have a legal right to an allowance in the same way foster carers do.

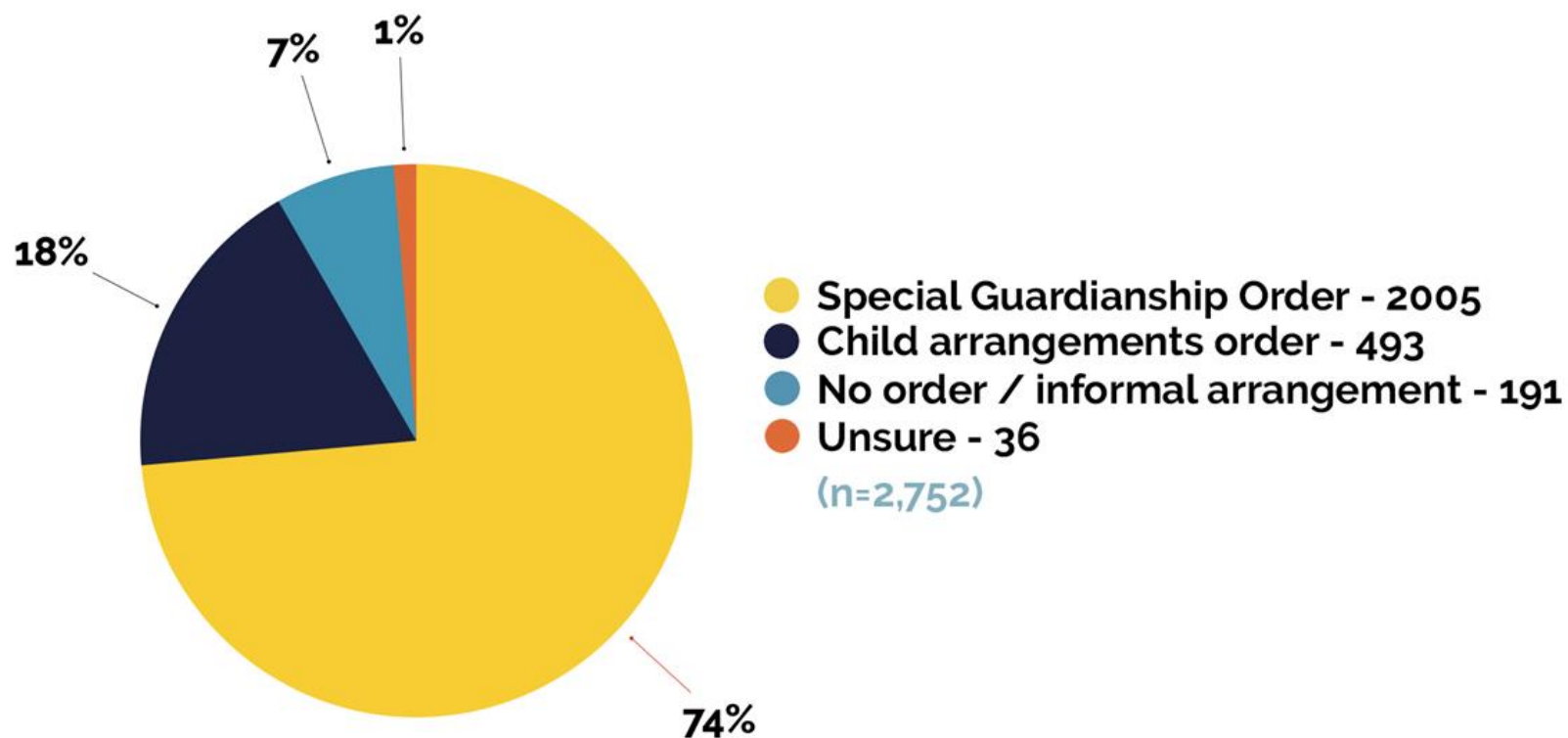


Method

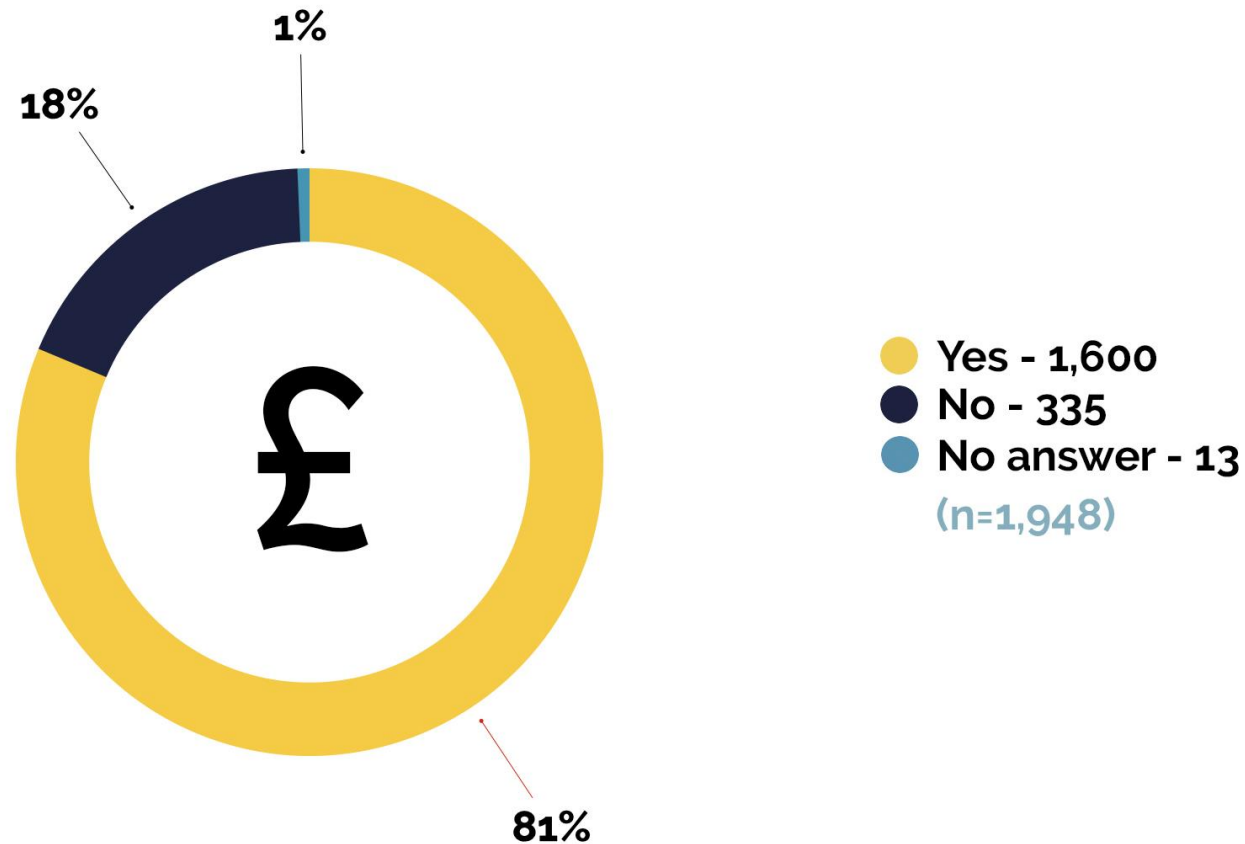
- A short survey was developed asking kinship carers about the financial circumstances for each child they cared for.
- Kinship foster carers were not included because they are legally entitled to fostering allowance.
- Survey was live between February and March 2021.
- There were 1,948 responses from kinship carers who were caring for 2,808 children.



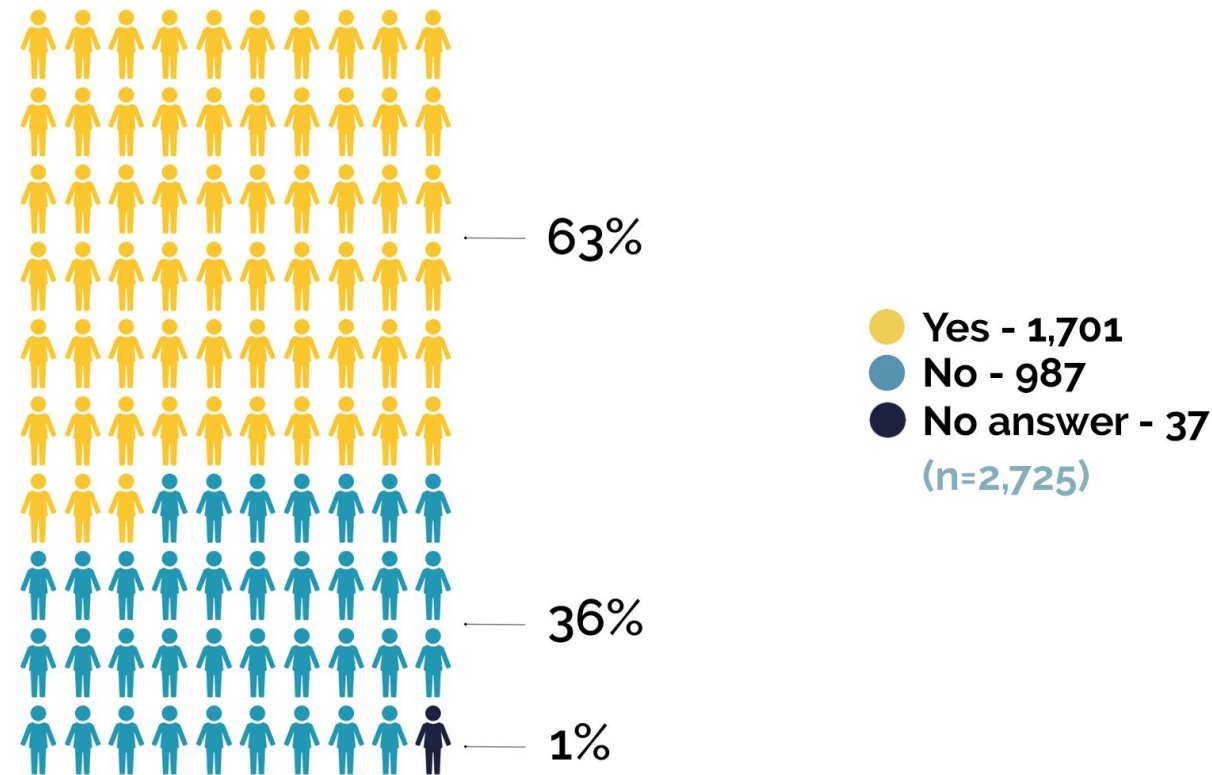
The legal statuses of the children



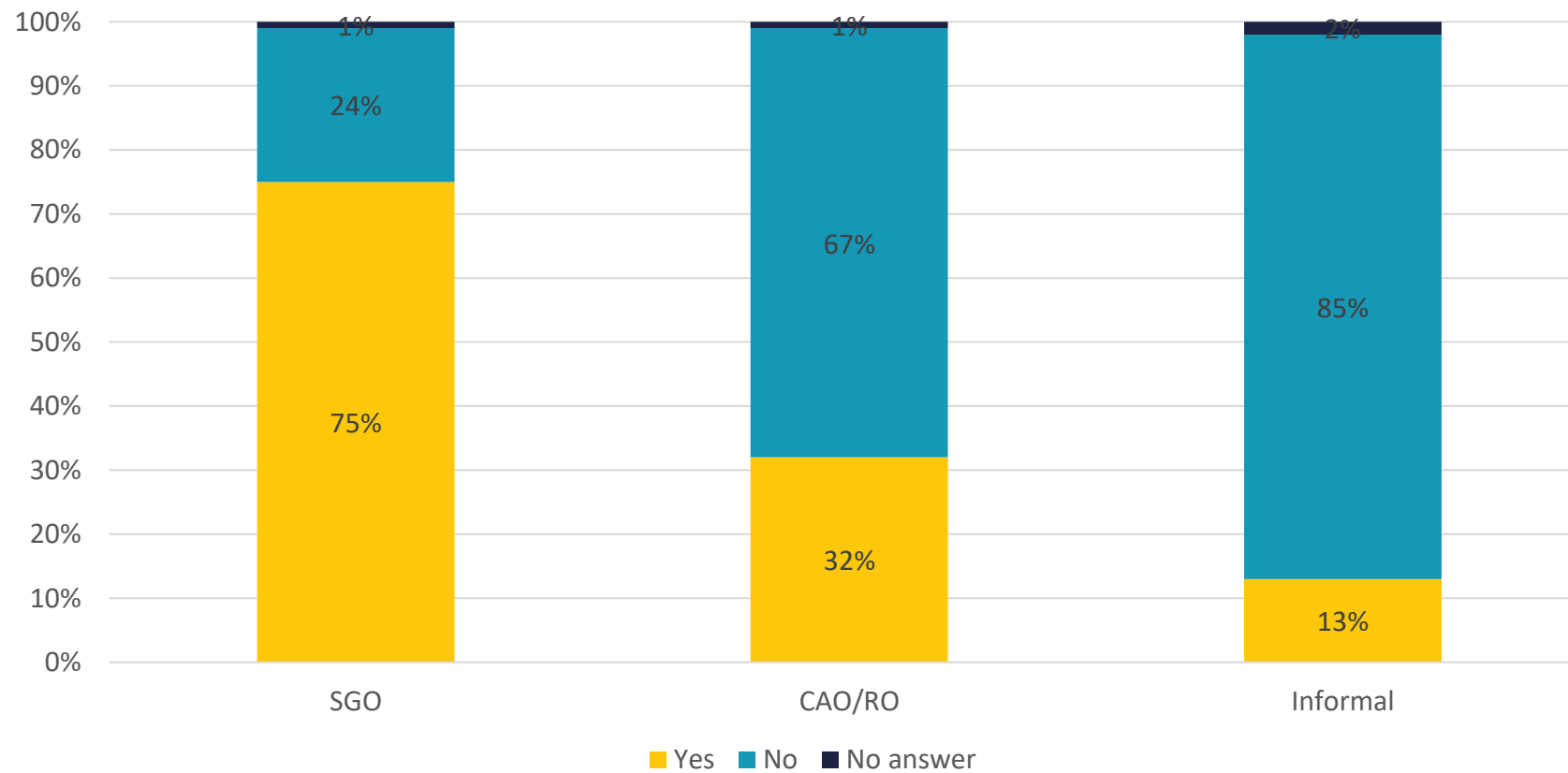
Had the carers worried about money in the past year?



Had the carers received a financial allowance for the children?



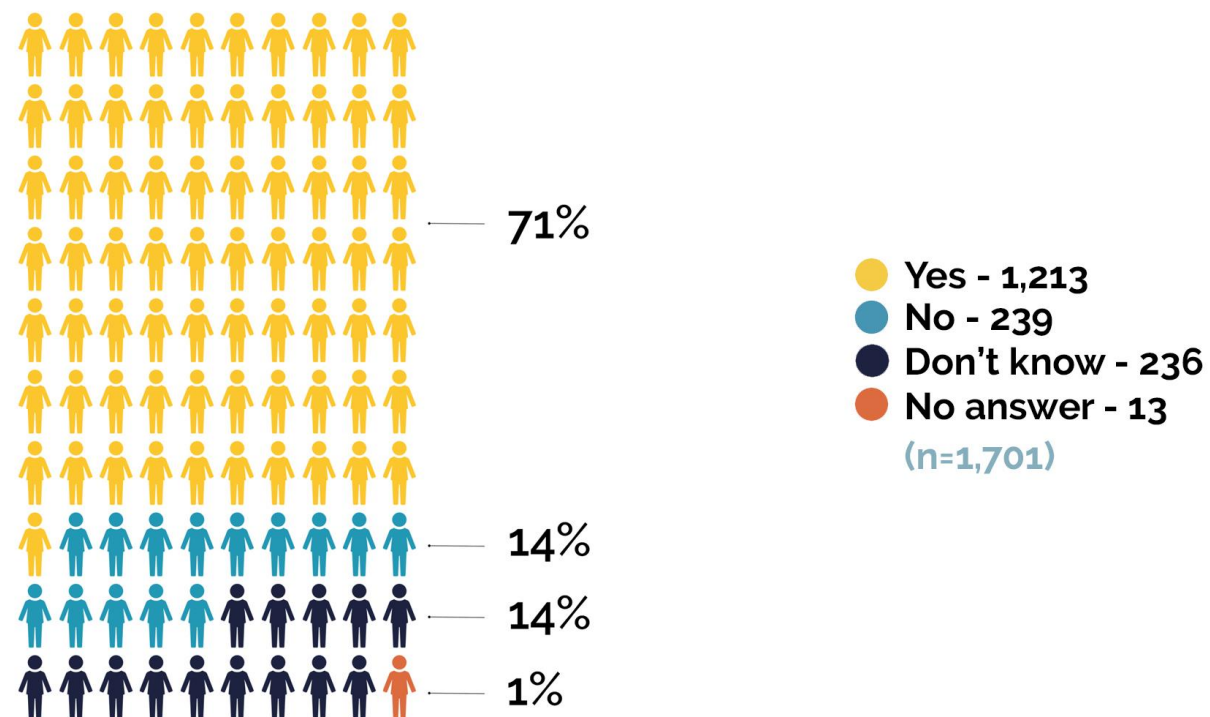
Did the carers receive a financial allowance for the children? (Breakdown by legal status)



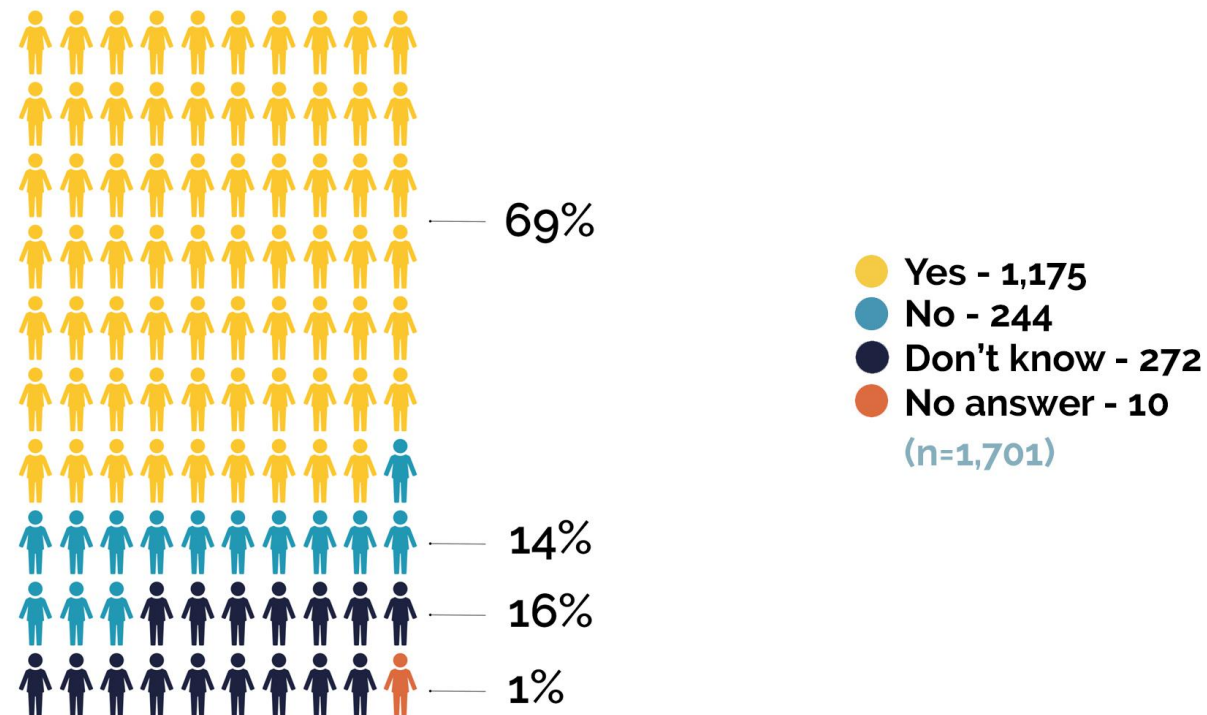
Weekly average amount of allowance received



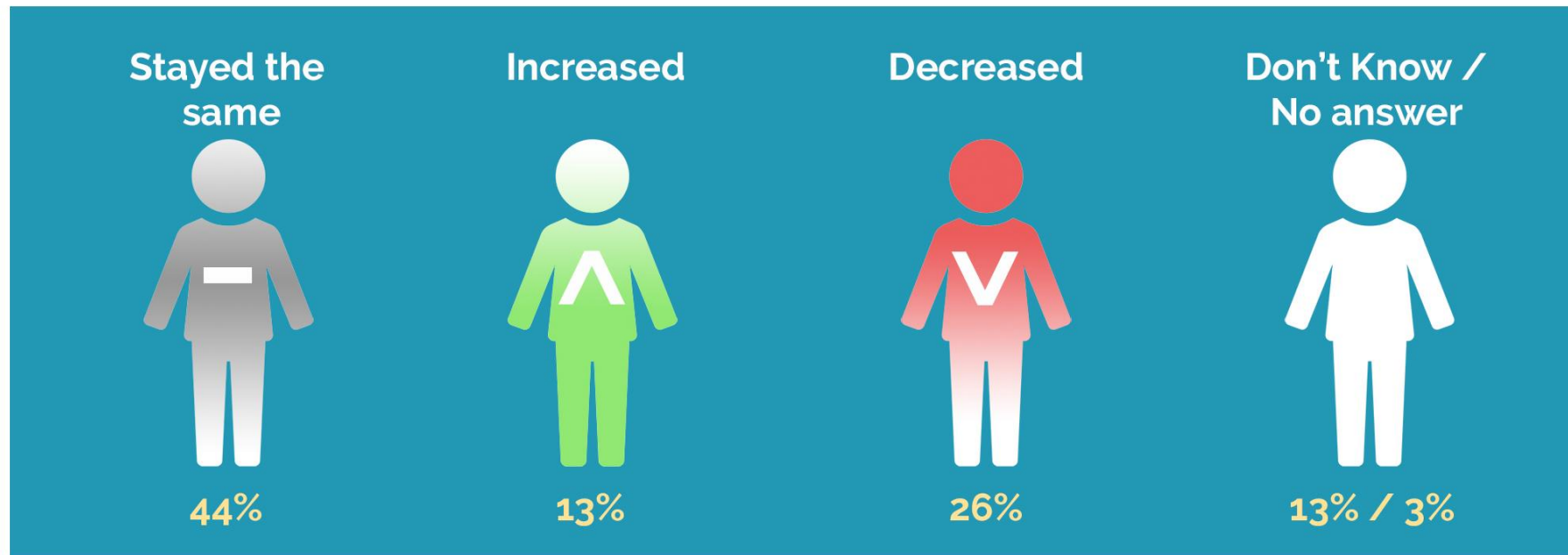
Were allowances means tested?



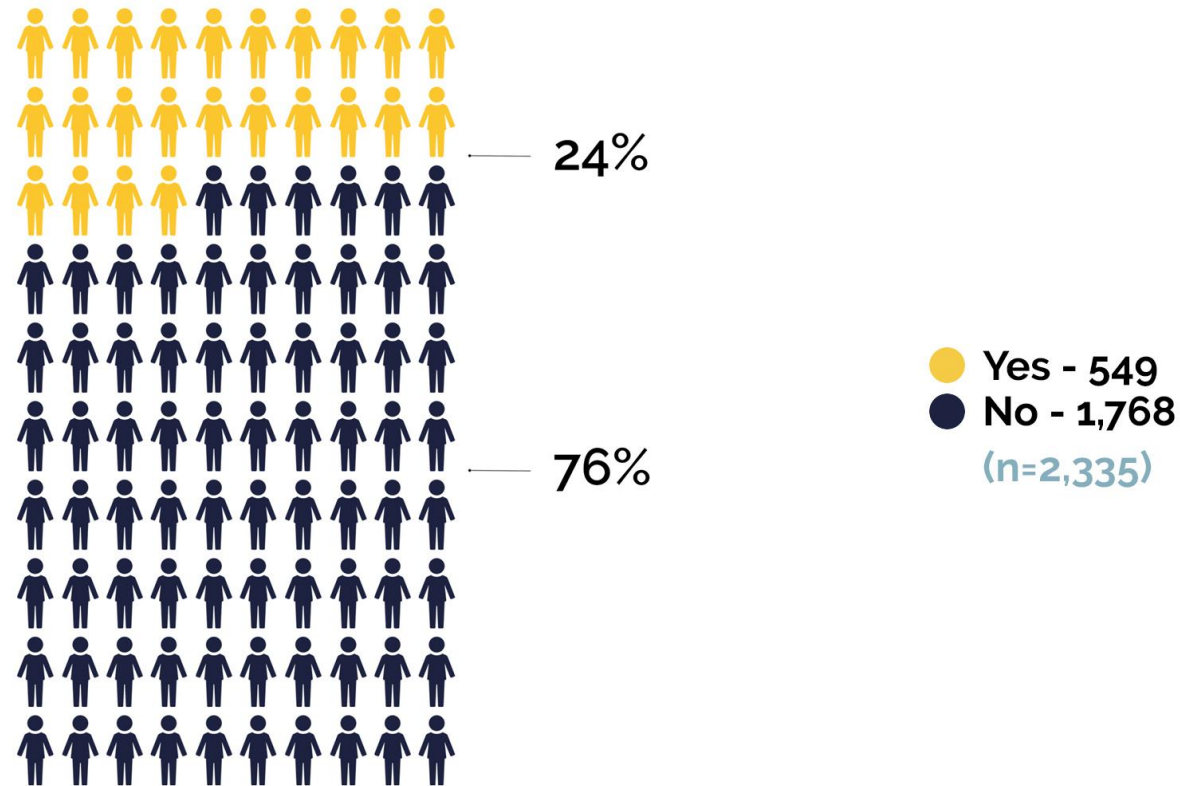
Were allowances reviewed?



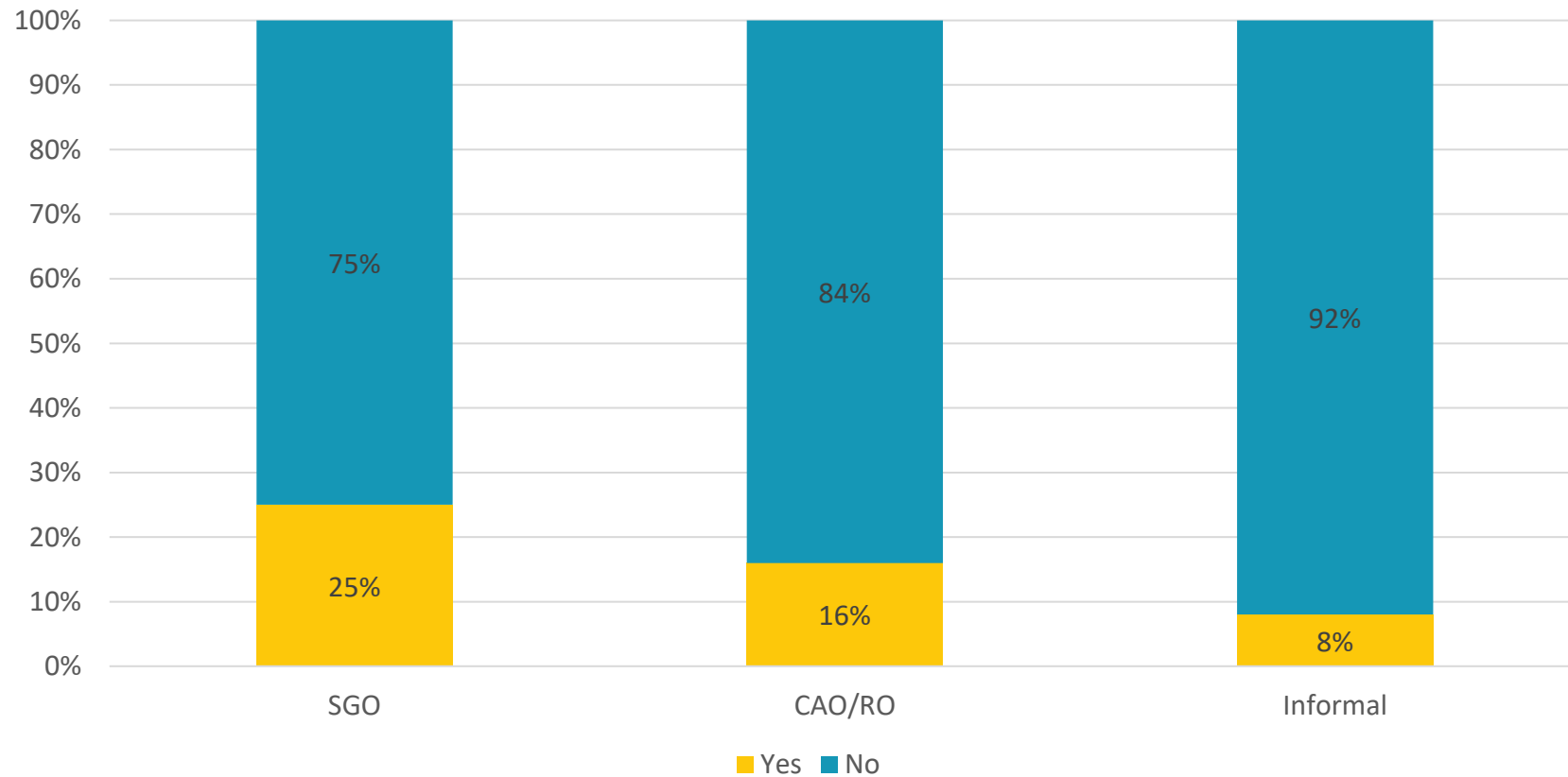
How did allowances change at the last review?



Were allowances enough to meet the needs of the children?



Were allowances enough to meet the needs of the children?



Why are these findings important?

- This study has added to the evidence that becoming a kinship carer plunges families into poverty.
- Poverty is linked to many negative consequences for adults and children.
- When kinship carers are worried they will not be able to feed their children and heat their homes they have less capacity to help the children to manage their vulnerabilities.
- Adequate financial support, such as that provided to foster carers, lowers the stress on families and allows carers to focus on the needs of the children.



Conclusions

- Over three quarters of kinship carers do not receive the financial support necessary to meet the needs of their children.
- Kinship carers sacrifice financial security to provide care to some of society's most vulnerable children.
- There is a hierarchy of support in kinship care that needs to end.
- Financial support for most kinship carers is insecure.
- All kinship carers should be entitled to receive an adequate minimum allowance for their children.



Recommendation

- All kinship carers should receive a fair allowance to cover the costs of raising their children that is equal to the national minimum fostering allowance.

