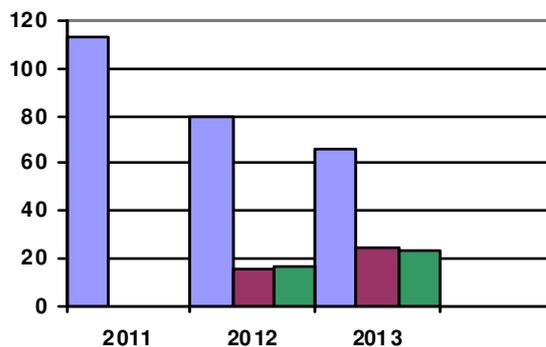


In 2011 KCV established a longitudinal study into the lives of kinship carers. The carers are interviewed every twelve months to determine the changes in their lives. Every second year the survey is a more extensive with a broader range of questions asked. The results of this study are used to inform the work program of KCV and to inform a range of decision makers who have the power to make decisions that affect the lives of kinship care families.

This 2013 report outlines the results of the third survey which was not an extensive survey: it maps movements in and out of kinship care and general levels of quality of life for the kinship families.

### Overall shifts since 2011

Since 2011 there have been many changes in the lives of the carers and children/young people in the study, most particularly in the movements of children/young people in and out of care. The table and statistics below outline the changing patterns.



- Caring still
- Lost carers
- No longer caring

Overview – 2011 – 2013 – Total 113			
	Caring still	Lost carers	No longer caring
2011	113	0	0
2012	80	16	17
2013	66	24	23

This report addresses each of the three categories outlined above.

### Lost carers

In 2012, contact was lost with 16 respondents. In 2013 this number has increased to a total of 24.

KCV has made repeated efforts to maintain contact with all respondents, using all methods available to them: traditional mail, e-mail, and phone. The label 'Lost Carers' indicates that all of these methods have failed.

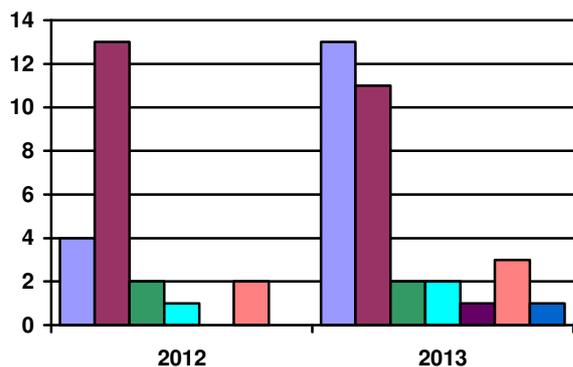
It is difficult to know what conclusions to draw. However, KCV views the circumstance with concern given that some of the families with whom contact has been lost were in need of support.

### No longer caring

23 kinship families have indicated that they are no longer caring for one or more of the children/young people formerly in their care. Reasons for this are varied but generally fall into one of three categories

- Returned to parents
- Transitioned to other care
- Transitioned into adulthood by turning 18.

The table on the following page provides a more detailed overview of the reason children/young people have left kinship care.



- Child turning 18
- Child went back to parents
- Child went to foster care
- Child went to group home
- Child went back to grandparents
- Child went to other kith or kin
- Child moved in with boyfriend

Transition movements	2012	2013
Child turned 18	4	13
Child went back to parents	13	11
Child went to foster care	2	02
Child went to group home	1	02
Child went back to grandparents	0	01
Child went to other kith or kin	2	03
Child moved in with boy friend	0	01
	<b>22</b>	<b>33</b>

The following clauses offer further information about the circumstances leading to children/young people leaving the kinship carer.

### Turning 18

Since 2011, 13 young people have transitioned into adulthood, nine of them in the past 12 months. In many cases these young people are still living with the family members who were caring for them. We expect that the number of children/young people turning 18 will suddenly increase in 2014-15. One indicator of this trend is the number of carers who have reported that the young people in their care are now learning to drive.

### Returning to parents

In 2013, 11 children/young people had returned to the care of one or both of their parents. There has been a slight drop in the number of children who returned to their parents since 2012 because several children/young people or young people who had been with their parent/s in 2012 have either been returned to their carer or transitioned out of kinship care altogether.

### Other kith or kin

In several cases, the reason the children/young people moved away from their carers was that they required specialised care that the carers were unable to provide. In these cases alternative arrangements had to be made, and several of these children have been placed in the care of other family members, usually uncles or aunts.

### Other outcomes

Several cases have occurred in which the child/young person required specialised care that could not be provided by any family member. In these cases the child/ young person has transitioned into either foster care or a group home.

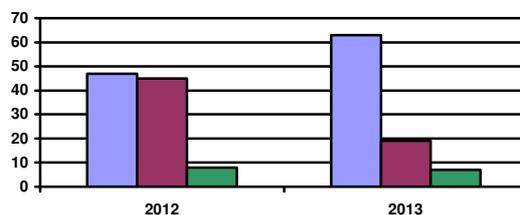
In one case a young person under the age of 18 left kinship care to live with a boyfriend.

### Caring still

It is important to note that while many children/young people are transitioning out of kinship care, in 2013 several carers have indicated that they are now caring for additional newly babies born since the last survey was conducted.

### Quality of life

All respondents were asked to self-assess whether the current quality of life for themselves and the children/young people in their care was positive or negative. The trends of 2012-2013 can be seen in the table below.



- Positive
- Negative
- Unclear

	2012	2013
Positive	47	63
Negative	45	19
Unclear	08	07

### **Positive situations**

In 2013, a majority of respondents (71%) indicated that their current living situation was generally positive. This is a positive result compared to the 2012 figures, which recorded that only 47% reported a positive living situation. It is important to note however, that even those respondents who indicated that their current living situation was positive still had concerns about some aspects of their lives.

Cases where the living situation was deemed to be positive included reports of:

- improvements in the children/young people's negative behaviours
- improvements in the mental and or physical health of children/young people or their carers
- improvements in school results
- young people learning to drive
- participation in extra-curricular activities
- young people getting part-time jobs
- positive relations with the children/young people's parents

### **Negative situations**

In 2013, 21% of respondents reported that their situation was negative, a drop from 45% of respondents in 2012.

Cases where the living situation was deemed to be negative included reports of:

- severe medical issues for either children/young people or their carers
- severe mental health issues
- the death of carers
- deteriorating relations with the parent/s of the children or young people
- continuing traumatic relations with police or DHS
- children transitioning out of kinship care to foster care or group homes

### **Unclear situations**

7% of responses could not be categorised as either positive or negative. This is a drop from 8% of responses that could not be categorised in 2012.

Cases where the living situation was deemed to be unclear included reports of:

- children with severe mental illnesses were now receiving treatment and beginning to improve
- relations with one of the children/young person parents were improving, while relations with the other parent were deteriorating
- the home life of the family being positive, but the court appearances were traumatic.

### **For further information contact:**



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