

Learning from the Deaths of Children and Young People (National Hub): Engaging with families and carers to support them through the child death review process in Scotland.

Dr Alison Rennie (Consultant Paediatrician and National Hub Clinical Lead, Healthcare Improvement Scotland),
Nanisa Feilden (Senior Reviewer, Healthcare Improvement Scotland), Janice Brown (Strategic Inspector, Care Inspectorate)

Background

In October 2021, the National Hub for Reviewing and Learning from the Deaths of Children and Young People commenced a system which ensures a review is conducted in response to all deaths of children under 18, and care leavers under 26 in receipt of continuing care or aftercare at the time of their death.

Key Objectives

We wanted to understand:

- Families' knowledge of existing review processes.
- What mattered to them in terms of engagement and input.
- How they felt about the outcomes of the review process.

Method

We worked with bereaved families and carers, third sector organisations and our expert advisory group to develop and distribute a survey.

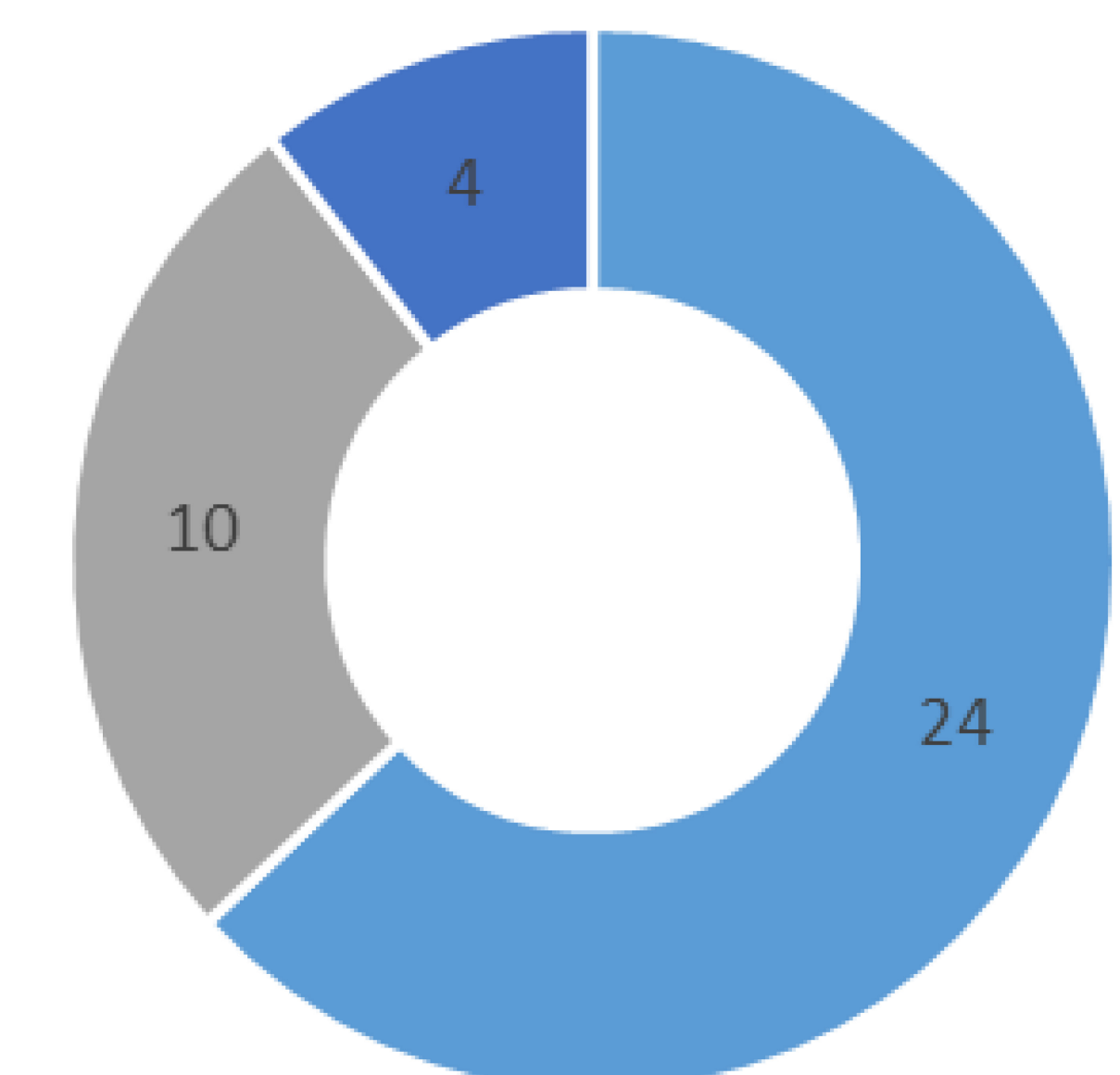
This aimed to find out more about:

- Bereavement support following the loss of a child or young person.
- Family involvement in the review process.
- Knowledge of the outcome of the review.

"Our work would not be possible without hearing the voices of bereaved families. Speaking as a clinician, this is what drives us to change and improve."

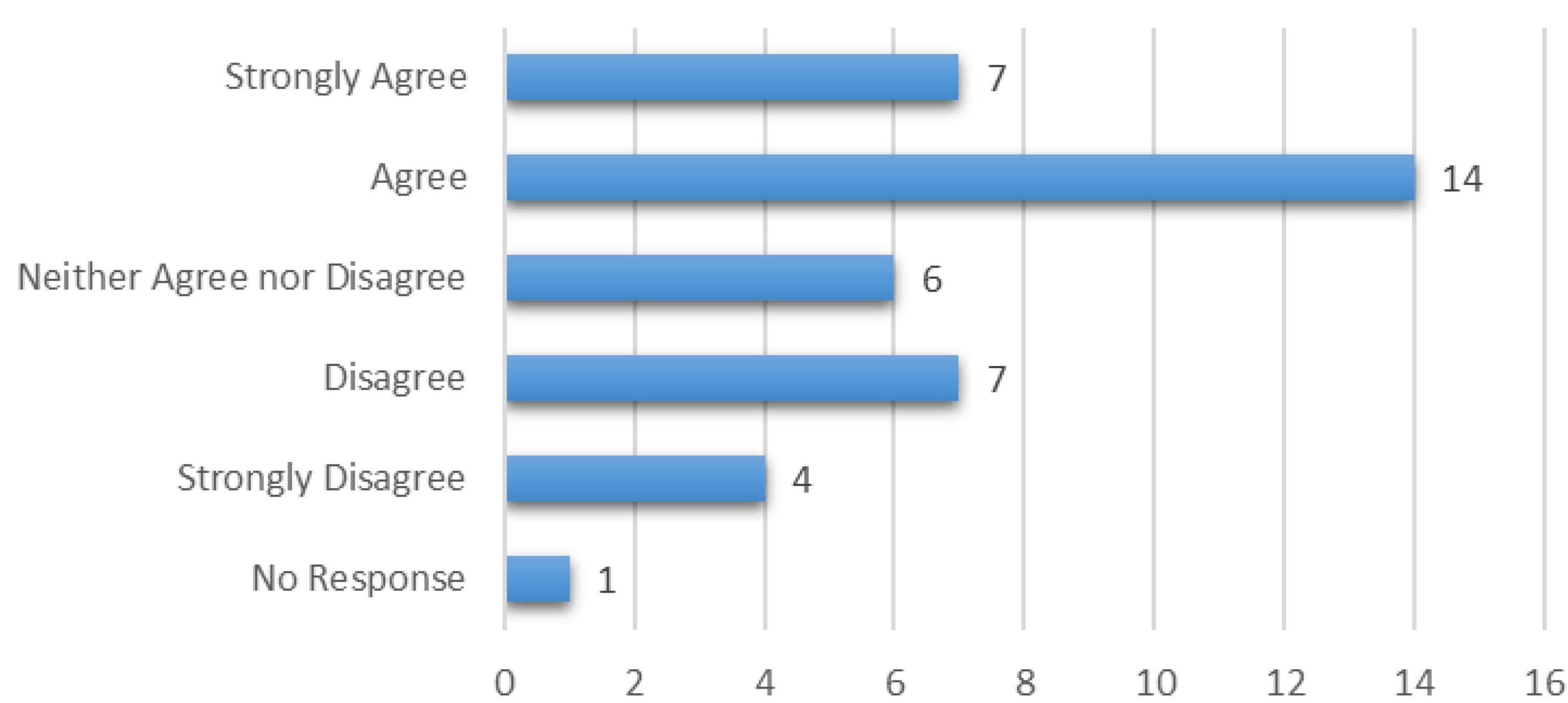
Dr Alison Rennie

Were you offered, or directed to, bereavement support?



■ Yes ■ No ■ I can't remember / unsure

After the death of your child, did you feel you were kept informed and helped to understand what would happen next?



Conclusion

Our report will shape learning and practice throughout Scotland. We conclude that reviews should be sensitive, flexible, and family centred.

Organisations should work together to deliver comprehensive bereavement support for families and carers and ensure staff have the necessary skills and knowledge to develop clear action plans for change.

The National Hub is working in partnership with third sector organisations and bereaved families and carers, to develop clear, accessible information to support this.

Results

- Trauma affected capacity to process or retain information.
- A key contact was highlighted as being crucial in helping guide families through the review process.
- Families wanted to see action points to improve care for future deaths.

"Please take time to understand the fog the bereaved parents are existing in... losing a child is like learning to live in a foreign land, nothing makes sense and you have to take your time to understand things."

Quote from a bereaved family

