

# BAAF Survey of Corporate Members 2006

## A Summary

Questionnaires asking members to comment on the value of services provided by BAAF, and on the impact of the work BAAF does, were sent to 475 corporate members in 2006. Ninety six completed forms were returned, a response rate of 20.2%.

We thank all of our contacts who took the time to respond and provide us with valuable data that will inform our work and the service we offer corporate members. Below we summarise the results.

### **The Members**

***“We have been very satisfied with the membership service.”***

Almost all of the returned questionnaires were from our full members, i.e. local authorities, Northern Ireland social care boards and trusts, independent fostering providers and voluntary adoption agencies. Local authorities, boards and trusts make up about 56% of these members and returned a similar number of questionnaires. There were, however, rather more responses from voluntary adoption agencies than their number would have suggested. And correspondingly fewer from independent fostering providers.

About 81% of those who completed the questionnaires were family placement or other managers.

### **Who Sees What We Send?**

As we expected, adoption and fostering social worker figured highly amongst those to whom our publications are distributed. But we were pleased that others were often included on the circulation lists, including looked after children and child protection social workers, panel members, reviewing officers, medical advisers and designated nurses, and contracts, service development and training staff.



### **Membership Administration**

***“We have been very satisfied with the membership service”.  
“Efficient/friendly/helpful”.***

### **Service Satisfaction**

98% of members were “pleased” or “very pleased” with the overall administration of their agency’s membership. Just a handful reported difficulties to do with our mailings. These problems included mailings that had arrived with insufficient copies or in poor condition. Eight out of ten respondents thought that the amount of the materials we send members is “about right”. Almost 10% said there was too much and another 6% said there was not enough.

All of those who had reported a problem with the administration of their membership were satisfied with the way in which it had been handled.

## Membership Services

### Electronic Services

*"I find BAAF's one of the better Web sites to find my way around and tend to use it more than" other sites.*

#### Internet

All but one agency had Internet access and most of these had a broadband connection. When we last had a survey, in 2002, Internet access was restricted to key staff in 33% of cases. This time that was so in only 8% of agencies. In 83% all staff had access.

#### Web site

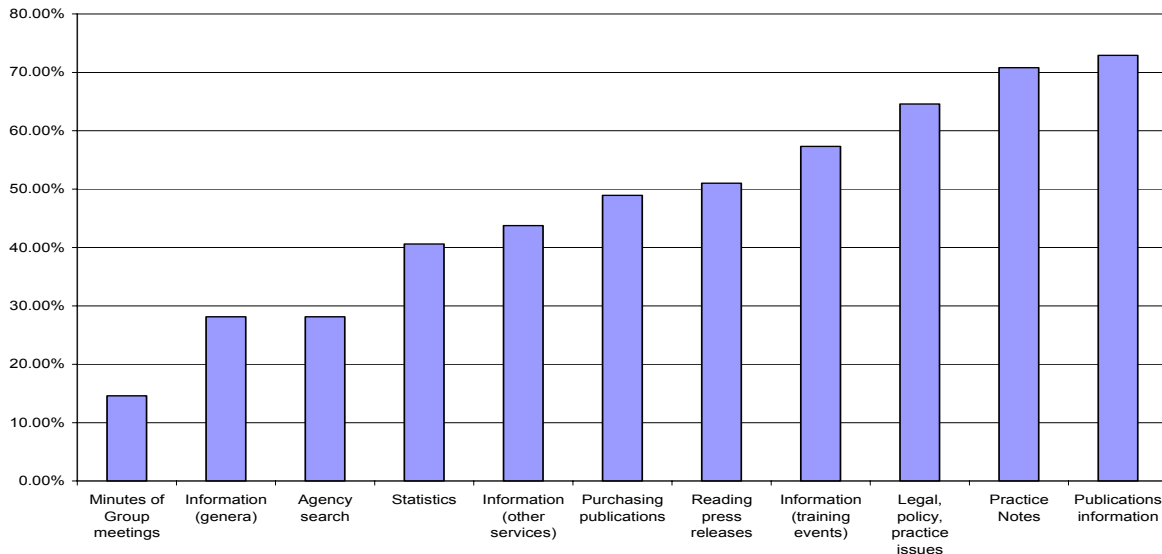
Although 70% of members found logging in to the members' area of our Web site easy, a significant number reported problems. A smaller proportion had difficulty finding what they wanted on the site. We are looking at can be done to improve this.

Ideas for improving the Web site included:

- Links to research and research summaries
- Information about adoption consortia
- Improved navigation
- More information for members in Ireland

#### Electronic Media

Members found the Web site most useful for finding information about publications and for downloading our practice notes from the members' area. The percentages of agencies using the site for these and other purposes are shown in the chart below.



86% of respondents told us it was useful to have practices available electronically. Fewer agencies, 69%, thought the online *Adoption & Fostering* was as useful.

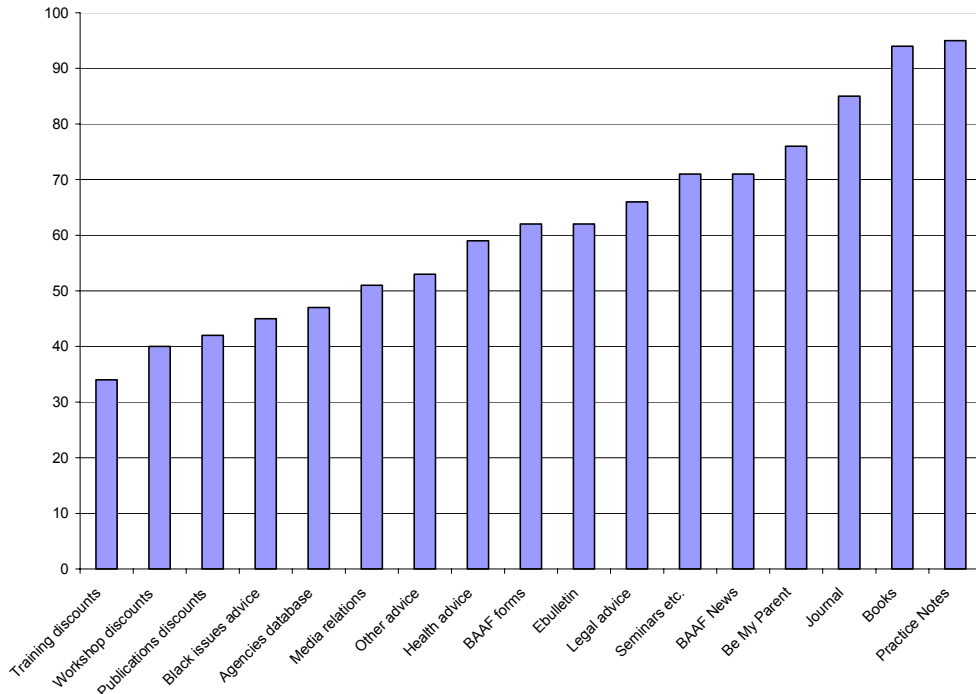
Almost 68% of respondents said they forwarded informational emails from BAAF to colleagues. In the largest number of cases these emails were forwarded to between 3 and 10 co-workers.



## Other Services

***“We’ve found advice from BAAF very helpful – messages are responded to promptly, advice sound etc.***

Agencies were asked to rate BAAF services as *Excellent*, *Good*, *Adequate* or *Poor*. The chart below shows the percentage of responding agencies that had used each service and categorised it as *Excellent* or *Good*.

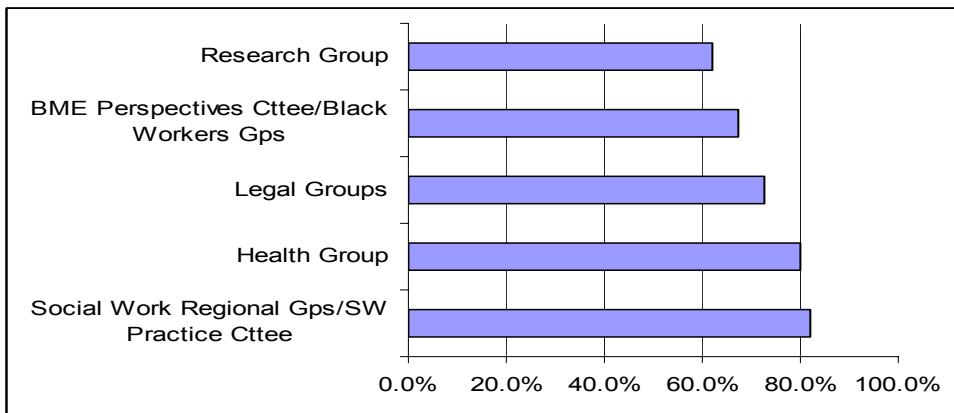


## Regional/Country Services

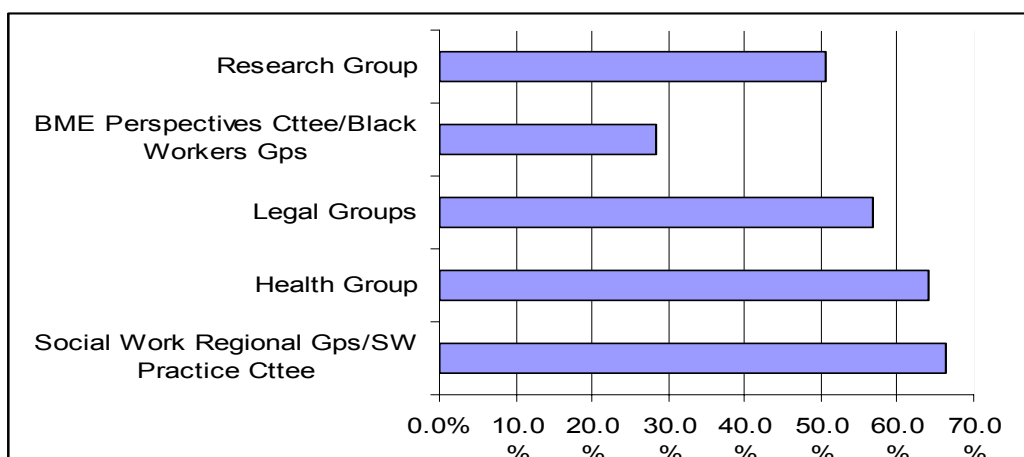
We asked members to rate the services provided by the BAAF team in their region or county. Only one of the agencies had found a service it had used not to be useful. The rest rated them as “Useful” or “Very useful”.

## Advisory Groups

Most members were aware of BAAF’s professional groups and committees but the level of awareness varied, as this chart shows.



Members were invited to say how useful the Groups and Committees had been for their agency. The percentages rating each as “Very valuable” or “Of some value” are shown in this chart.



### Relevance of Services

Almost all of the agencies had had membership for two years or longer. None thought that BAAF had become less relevant than before. 42% of those expressing an opinion said BAAF had become more relevant. 51% thought that BAAF’s relevance to their work had stayed the same.

### Improvements

***“Keeping publications relevant to issues that are current and challenging for social workers”.***

We asked what improvements members would like to the services we provide and whether there was new work we might do. Most members made no suggestions. The ideas of those who did comment included:

- Improved arrangements for ordering publications and commissioning training.
- A stronger focus on fostering
- A better balance between adoption and fostering
- More attention to the needs of local authority members
- Extending advice line hours
- More booklets to explain adoption to children under 6
- Online members forum
- More international information
- Reduced charges
- Email alerts to journal articles
- A project on long-term foster care
- Faster response to new legislation
- Development of adoption consortia
- Greater emphasis on a child’s right to family life as against the rights of the parents.
- More support for inexperienced social workers
- Improved BAAF forms
- Attention to inter-agency fees
- Help with sibling assessment and adoption support
- New leaflets for all involved in adoption

### Satisfaction

A small number of members expressed some dissatisfaction with the services we provide. They did not all say what the cause of dissatisfaction was but the following were mentioned:

- Problems with mailings
- Level of membership fees
- Problems with BAAF electronic forms
- Too few publications for members
- Delays in delivering publications purchased

## **Our Scope**

82% of members agreed that it would be helpful if BAAF paid more attention to the needs of looked after children in general, not just those fostered or adopted. Some stressed that the quality of our current services should not be compromised by this.



## **BAAF and the Outside World**

***“I am always impressed by the speed of response by BAAF to issues arising in the media and I feel that BAAF have a very professional, measured image which can be respected.”***

BAAF puts great effort into informing and persuading policy makers, the news media and the public about the needs of children who are separated from their birth families, and about our point of view on the important issues of the day.

70% of members thought BAAF had had “a fair amount” or “a great deal” of success in informing and educating the public. A similar majority believed we had successfully influenced legislators and civil servants. Almost 52% rated BAAF’s media profile as “medium” and about 35% as “high”.

## **Conclusion**

***“I value knowing that BAAF is out there fighting our corner . . . But I rarely have time to really take full advantage of publications, training etc”.***

BAAF is grateful to its agency “linkpersons” for taking the time from their demanding schedules to help BAAF by completing our questionnaires. We do try to take into account the pressures under which they work. And we hope that the results of this survey will help us improve our services in ways that will better help them meet the demands made of them.

## **Don’t Wait**

Members’ opinions are always welcome. There is no need to wait for the next survey to tell us what you think. If you have any comments on our services to members please let the Membership Officer know.

