

19 July 2025

Submission to the Child Safety Commissioner

Re: Misuse of Standards of Care Reviews – A Tool of Harm and Disconnection

Dear Commissioner,

I write this submission not only as a committed foster carer, but as someone who has experienced first-hand the immense emotional toll of a system that is meant to protect and nurture vulnerable children—yet in our case, has done the opposite.

Our journey as a foster family has brought great joy. We are deeply committed to creating a safe, loving, and connected environment where the children in our care feel heard, validated, and truly wanted in this world. Of the children we've cared for, all but one have been Indigenous. We are proud to support and honour their identity, working hard to ensure they remain connected to their culture and family wherever possible.

After asking him where he wanted to live until he was 18, Child Safety told him—and us—that he could remain in our care. We joyfully agreed and began planning for a stable, long-term future with him.

Then, without warning, we were told he could not stay with us because we are not Culturally Appropriate. The legislation, we were told, required that he be placed with family, extended family, or identified kin. This was despite the strong emotional bond, the stability, and the success he was experiencing in every area of his life.

On the day he was moved, Child Safety did not even attend as requested and promised – no phone all or email at all. There was no check-in, no emotional support, despite our clear communication that the day would be distressing for all involved, especially the child. That was the last day we saw him. We were promised—by Child Safety and the kin placement—that respite with us would continue. He was promised the same – repeatedly to support the transition. It never happened.

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED] has effectively cut the cord between us and the child we cared for and loved. He no longer sees his father, he is no longer enrolled in his scholarship school, and he no longer plays the sport he loved. Every connection and joy from the past [REDACTED] years has been erased. And now, we are told by the CSO that he doesn't want to see us anymore.

Can we blame him? The promises made to him by adults and authority figures were broken, one by one. The damage done to his emotional wellbeing, his trust, and our family cannot be overstated.

It is my firm belief that **Standards of Care Reviews are being used in some cases—not to protect children, but to control carers, silence dissent, and facilitate decisions already made.** When used without due process, transparency, or evidence, they are powerful and dangerous tools of disconnection.

This situation has left us feeling like we must tiptoe around the very system we serve. It feels like **Child Safety operates like a closed club, and foster carers are not part of it**—despite the fact that we open our hearts and homes in the most meaningful way.

There must be change. Standards of Care Reviews should never be used without proper process, and they should never be weaponised. The bonds formed between carers and children are sacred, and severing them should only happen in rare and extreme circumstances—with full evidence and transparency.

I would welcome the opportunity to provide further information and participate in any forum or hearing on this matter.

Sincerely,

[REDACTED]
Foster Carer and Advocate
[REDACTED]