

My name is [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

I have been a foster carer for [REDACTED] and have fostered several children, I am currently caring for a child that has been with us for [REDACTED] years and [REDACTED] other children.

The system is worse than it has ever been and more broken and the relationship that foster cares have with CSO's and service centres is one fuelled by disrespect and distrust.

We have had CSO's tell us they don't like foster carers; we are accused of financial gain and must argue for every penny for the child and over justify our spending right down to writing down our expenses.

Foster carers are treated as nothing more than after thoughts, decisions about the child are made and even though it may impact the carer they are not included in the conversation.

The details and examples would have to be discussed in person as its too much to write down, but CSO's refuse to include carers in decisions making that is relevant and that carers can be included in. As an [REDACTED] I am aware of the decision-making processes and the rationale so I am aware of what carers can and cannot be included in and we are never included in conversations, decisions are made and then we are an afterthought and if we argue we are difficult and shut down.

We have had kids removed from our care that did not want to leave but because it came down to a financial decision the child was removed.

We have had children in our care with no CSO for long periods of times then multiple CSO's and each one comes on with a different agenda and throws the child and household into chaos each time and if the carer advocates, we are labelled as problematic, difficult and threatened to have our foster care status not renewed or endorsed.

I am a child of foster care myself and had a positive experience in care and know the value of a positive experience in care and how it can alter the trajectory of a child enough to avert them from the justice system and give them a chance at a good life.

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED] and a proud mother of a teenage son about to graduate and go to university to study nursing and a foster mum to many. I am a current [REDACTED] [REDACTED] and know the value of a supportive network for kids in care as a lack of, can lead them to the justice system.

However, child safety refuses to allow carers to address problematic behaviours for example we had a child in our care recently that was engaging in [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] when we asked for support to reduce this behaviour we were told our standards were too high and they gave her the option of leaving our home after [REDACTED] years. [REDACTED] sister remains in our care. [REDACTED]

Child safety tells us that the kids will go back to their family anyway so not to get invested which is true but while the child is in care all efforts to reduce their risk of harm and engaging in behaviours that increase their vulnerability should be undertaken.

Carers need more respect from CSO's it is DISGUSTING the way that we are treated we are treated worse than the parents that the children are removed from, they get more respect. The system is to about the kids it's about money and ticking boxes, decisions are not made in the best interests of the kids.

In regard to residential care, in [REDACTED] a residential foster care home was placed across the road from my home. It was horrific, the kids were out breaking and entering all night long, at that time we had [REDACTED] [REDACTED], and we do a big family friendly display, these kids terrorised the neighbourhood, throwing rocks at families spitting on them and fighting and screaming and threatening people no one felt safe.

When we spoke to then resi worker onsite we were told that they finish work at 10am and it's not their problem after that. Police were called daily, and no one helped from the residential. Finally, a complaint was made to the organisation managing the resi from a retired police officer and after 5 months of abuse and disgusting behaviour that terrorised the neighbourhood the resi was removed and the kids placed elsewhere.

I hope that this information will be considered by the commission, child safety needs to do a lot better and foster cares need to be shown respect and more support so that we can support the kids in our care safely and well.