



Lucille's story

Disclaimer: This is the story of a person who shared their personal experience with the Commission of Inquiry through a submission or interview. The names in this story are pseudonyms and identifying details have been removed. The person who shared this experience may not have been a witness and their account is not evidence. They did not take an oath or affirmation before providing the story.

Nothing in this story constitutes a finding of fact by the Commission of Inquiry. Instead, these stories have been published to show how people are experiencing the current child safety system in Queensland. Any views expressed are those of the person who shared their experience, not of the Commission of Inquiry.

Content warning: Some material may be distressing. These statements may include references to violence, abuse, neglect, exploitation, suicide, or self-harming behaviours, and may contain strong or confronting language. Some narratives may be about First Nations people who have passed away. Readers are encouraged to engage with this material in a way that supports their wellbeing.

If you would like support, please visit the Commission's [Contact & Support page](#) or reach out to a trusted person or a relevant support service.

My experience as a foster carer is one that I would never recommend to anyone. We have 2 children in our care (one since aged 3 and one from birth- half sisters). Foster carers are not viewed as part of the journey. Our views are dismissed, seen as biased and we are not involved in any discussions nor are our views considered yet we open our arms, homes and love these kids like our own.

Recently our youngest who everyone (department, NGO and us) thought would be with us forever was reunified without warning and very rapidly, ostracising her from her entire life to live with bio parents she had only ever had weekly supervised contact with. There was a total disregard for her views and wishes and a systemic failure from child safety, public guardian and NGOs to protect her and her autonomy. It was due to a severe lack of staffing and documentation which, when faced with intense legal pressure, child safety had no evidence to protect the child. There were numerous concerns raised by both us and childcare which were disregarded. We have been through 3 CSO's in 12 months averaging a home visit every 3rd month. Our current CSO does not respond to any communication. We have asked for 12 months for psychology support with no response. It took 3.5 months for our HSNA funding to be re-approved (nothing had changed) and approximately 3 months for approval to be given for a stimulant dose increase made by a paediatrician for an existing medical condition. Meanwhile, we are paying out of pocket for private care and the children are suffering waiting for these approvals.

For our other child, we commenced the PCO process and this has not moved in 12 months despite the initial affidavit being mostly completed. Department say it's due to lack of staff and that it's not a priority. A child's security and future is not a priority. We only recently found out that this child has been previously sexually assaulted, information that was never passed along. This is vital for therapeutic support. We know very minimal information regarding her life before us and what we do know has been put together through bits and pieces from others. We have asked on many occasions for an accurate history to no avail.

No one fosters for the money. However the current allowance does not adequately cover the expenses a child in care requires. Public healthcare is virtually impossible to access meaning we pay out of pocket to access private

Child Safety Commission of Inquiry



specialists. Allied health such as psychology and OT etc are always also out of pocket in addition to loss of wages to attend these frequent appointments. Cost of living has escalated rapidly and CPI does not account for this.

Through all of this we are very fortunate to have the support of an excellent NGO who advocates on our behalf. However, they too have a limited scope and many limitations when it comes to dealing with child safety.

I would like to see transparency and accountability from child safety. I would like these kids lives to matter. I would like for carers to be involved and a part of their story. I would like for carers to be treated as employees with benefits as this is a 24/7 job usually done out of the goodness of their hearts.

We have no regrets about our foster journey however that is completely due to our 2 incredible foster kids. These kids do not choose this life and these circumstances and they should all experience unconditional love and support. They should feel safe, they should be able to experience childhood free of worry, violence and harm. They should be given a voice and this voice should be heard. And carers should be able to advocate for their kids and be heard, and this should be free from repercussions.

The system needs to change, these kids need to matter.