

Author name: Name suppressed

Date of submission: Tuesday, 4 June 2024

Your submission for this review:

The costs needed to maintain children in foster care are increasing but the capacity to access additional financial support to meet the needs of children is decreasing. With these factors: - children entering care older and with higher needs - less carers available -cost of living pressures - the cost of taking time off work/having a carer available to care for a child - therapies, supports and services required for children with complex needs It is becoming increasingly hard for NGOs to meet the costs of children. Carers are required to pay for services and supports for children, beyond what is covered by the carer allowance. The lack of carers available (with the inadequate financial support being one factor in this) means that more children are being placed in high cost emergency placements, where the costs are exorbitant. These placements are detrimental to children's wellbeing, as well as being unaffordable - once children are out of these arrangements, there are further high costs for meeting the children's additional needs. The PSP has made it a long and cumbersome process for getting additional funding from DCJ. There is contradictory advice from DCJ about when to apply for different packages and which packages to apply for. There have been situations where contracting manager supports the application but the manager at CFDU still says no. Granting of packages appears to be inconsistent. Most particularly complex needs packages are extremely hard to obtain. There are expectations that a certain amount of funding has been spent before a complex needs package can be applied for, but this does not account for the staffing costs (and the additional staffing costs in trying to apply for additional funding!)