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Your submission for this review:

I am a DCJ caseworker in the CFDU and work daily with service providers. I am also a respite carer and an aunt to my sister's foster children. I wish to speak for those who are providing care but to also state that my experience has made doing my job harder as I know first hand the struggles our carers are having and the red tape they have to go through to be heard and to have things covered financially for them. I use to think that a lot of foster carers 'did it for the money'. I don't mean to say they didn't have a desire to assist young people but I did think they did it as a form of work that would allow them to help children but also make some money as well for their efforts. I know now this couldn't be further from the truth. In my role in the CFDU I can describe the situation (only one of many) of a carer who said she would look after 2 more boys (along with the 1 young boy she already cared for ) as an emergency placement to assist the agency. That was over 2 years ago. The agency has tried to find a placement for the boys but after respite 'trials', no carer has come forward fulltime. She has had to quit her job as the diagnoses of the young boys means they are constantly suspended from school and banned from after school care. They have between them appointments for psychology, Speech and OT - at different times and in different places. They go to different schools. She is now in debt and desperate. The agency has begged DCJ for a flexible carer package so that she may get a THBC payment but they have said 'no'. She has no options now - the boys are going into emergency care and she has been broken. This story resonates with me as my sister who worked for DCJ for 10 years and is a senior social worker, has had almost the same situation ie had to quit her job, struggling to pay a mortgage in Sydney and a placement at risk despite loving these children as their own. Being a foster carer should be a paid, full-time recognised position.