

# 2026 FOSTER CARER SNAPSHOT REPORT



FOSTER CARE ASSOCIATION OF VICTORIA

## Introduction

The Foster Carer Snapshot report is a snapshot in time of foster carer households across Victoria gathered by all Community Service Organisations (CSOs) and Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisations (ACCOs) reported data. This annual report provides a high-level overview of foster carer trends in Victoria as it stood at the time the data was collected.

The data presented in this snapshot report reflects two different reporting approaches and timeframes. Data relating to active, non-active and in-accreditation carer households provides a point-in-time snapshot, showing the number of households in each category at a specific moment in March 2026. In contrast, data relating to accredited and exited carer households reflects activity across the previous calendar year (January to December 2025).

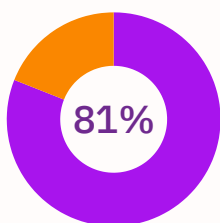
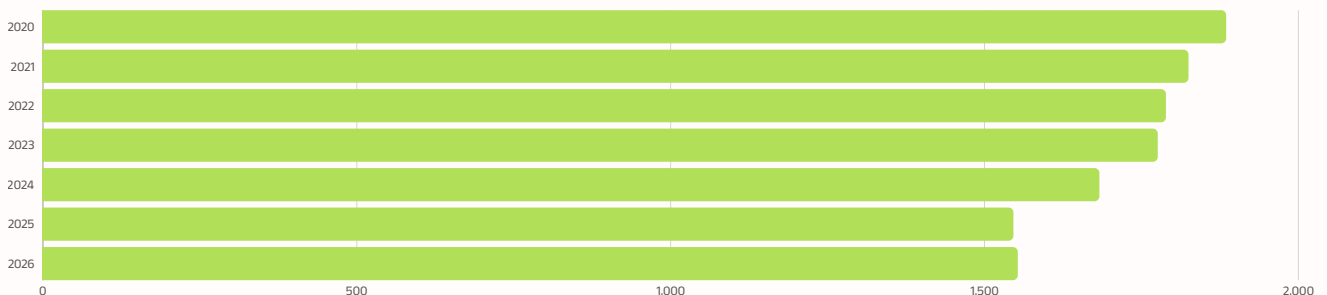
## Foster carer key statistics

This year, the snapshot reflects a stabilisation of active foster carer households, with steady non-active carers households and an increase in carers going through the accreditation process.



Compared with pre-pandemic levels in 2020, Victoria has 18% fewer active carer households available to provide home-based care in 2026. Active carers are critical to meeting demand for home-based care, and sustained reductions place additional pressure on existing carers and the broader out-of-home care system.

Graph 1. Active carer households from 2020 to 2026.



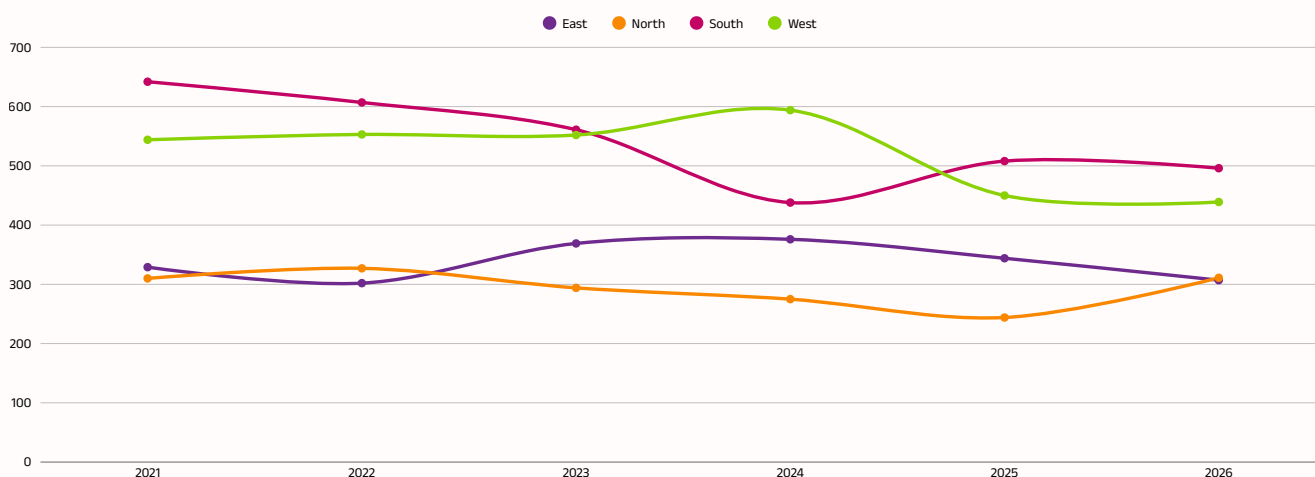
81% of households going through accreditation compared to 2020

The number of carer households in accreditation increased in 2026 to 338, up from 238 in 2025. Carer households in accreditation had almost halved between 2020 and 2025, declining from 418 to 238. Even with the 42% increase recorded in 2026, overall accreditation numbers remain at 81% of earlier levels.

Additionally, despite the increase in carers going through accreditation, this has not translated into substantial growth in active carer households, highlighting the continued need for strengthened recruitment efforts.

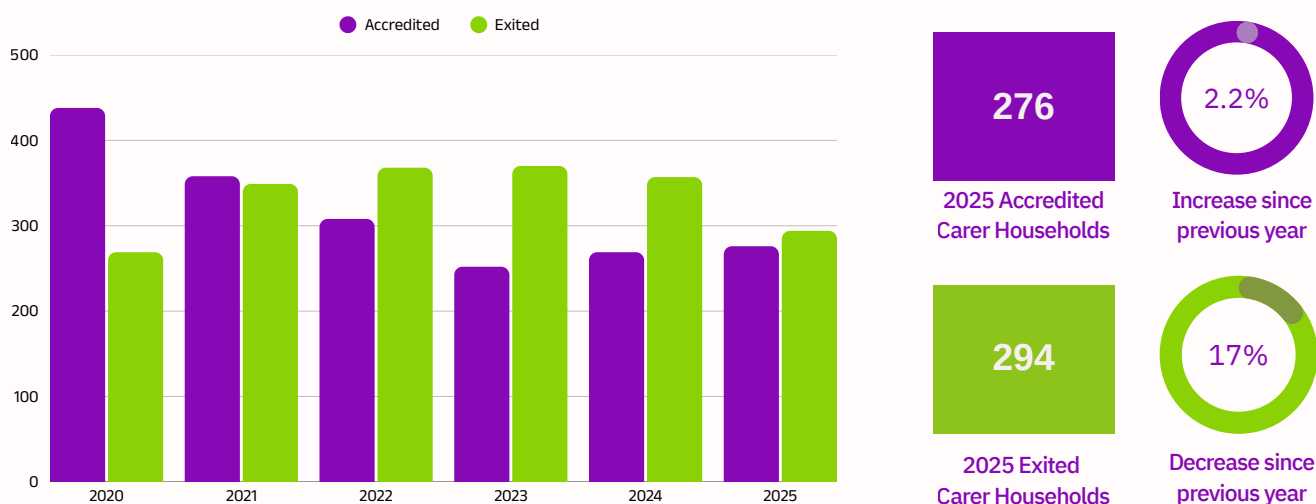
Regional trends highlight varying patterns in carer households across the Department of Families, Fairness and Housing (DFFH) divisions. In the **East** active carers have declined from a peak of 376 in 2024 to 307 in 2026. The **North** shows strong growth in active carers, increasing from 244 in 2025 to 310 in 2026, returning to 2021 levels. In the **South**, active carers remains below the high of 642 in 2021 to 496 in 2026. The **West** continues a gradual decline in active carers from its 2024 peak of 594 to 439 in 2026.

Graph 2. Active carer households by DFFH division from 2021 to 2026



Data provided by CSOs and ACCOs on accredited and exited households in 2025 shows a clear shift over time. The number of accredited carer households has declined overall, from a peak of 438 in 2020 to 276 in 2025, representing a significant reduction despite recent signs of stabilisation. In contrast, exited carer households have fluctuated but remained relatively high across the period, rising from 269 in 2020 to a peak of 370 in 2023, before decreasing to 294 in 2025.

Graph 3. Accredited vs Exited carer households from 2020 to 2025.



Overall, the data indicates a stable active carer base, continued growth in the accreditation pipeline, and a notable reduction in exits. Without sustained intervention, the system is likely to continue operating with a diminished and further stretched pool of carer households, with direct implications for placement availability and continuity of care for children and young people.