

Carer Support Team Annual Results

1 July 2025 – 30 June 2026

The **Carer Support Team** comprises **Carer Advocates** providing information, advice and advocacy to foster carers (*enquiries*) and the **Carer Assistance Program**, providing short-term therapeutic counselling to foster and permanent carers (*sessions*).

Overall, for the **2025-2026** year the Carer Support team delivered a total of **1,020** sessions and provided **2,425** hours of service delivery.

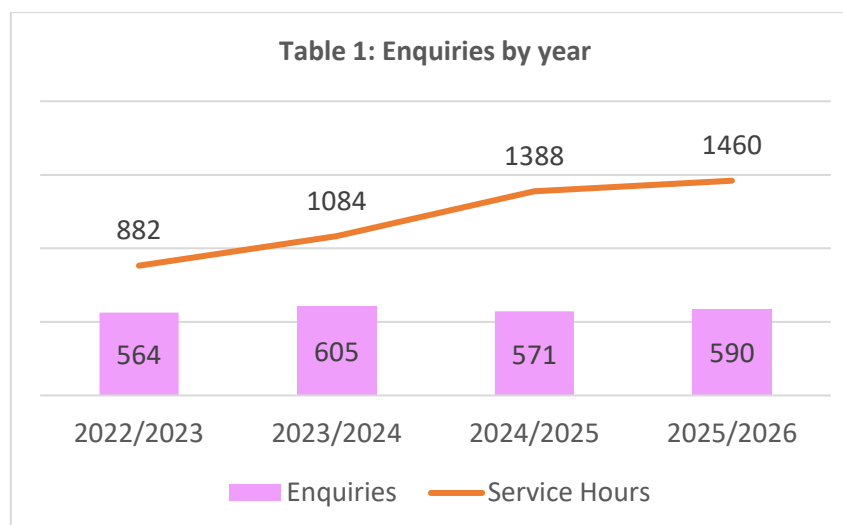
Carer Advocates

The Carer Advocates responded to and closed **590** enquiries, delivering **1460** hours of service in the year.

While the number of enquiries remains consistent, hours of support increased significantly. Support for carers through complex Client Incident Management System (CIMS) investigations continues to remain a priority for carers accessing the service.

Carer Advocates spend considerable time emotionally supporting carers through the investigation process, which is often a traumatic and a lengthy process. They often provide support through the interview process along with information throughout the steps in the investigation. There have been several carers who have experienced concurrent CIMS investigations, when there are new allegations made against them through the course of the first investigation.

When allegations are substantiated carers can lose their Working with Children Check, again having a significant impact on their lives in relation to their paid work and community participation. Carer advocates also assist carers with complaints processes, when there are significant issues and concerns about decisions made by the Department of Fairness Families and Housing (DFFH).



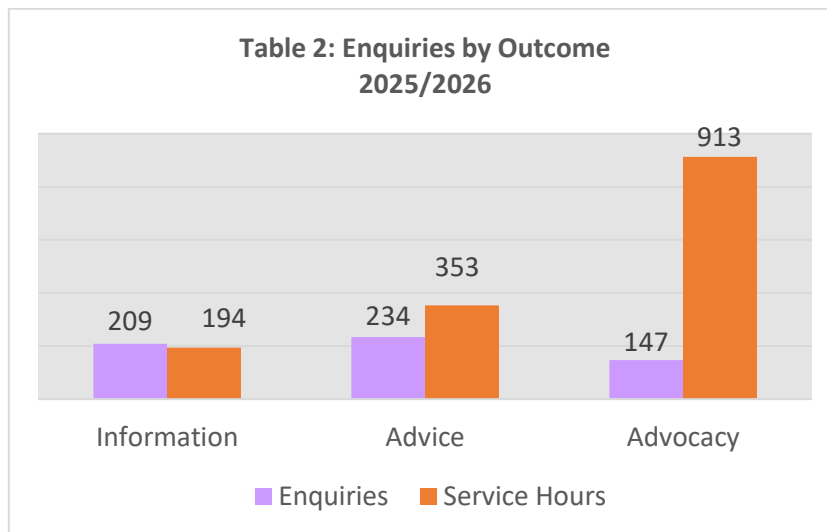
Enquiries by Outcome

The Carer Advocates provided Information to 209, Advice to 234 and Advocacy to 147 foster care enquiries in the year. The service focusses on empowering carers to navigate the system with confidence and independence. If relationships are fractured or matters are complex, then Carer Advocates may liaise and advocate on behalf of a carer with the DFFH, the carers agency or other key stakeholders.

There were 147 Advocacy issues with carers that took a significant 913 hours of advocates time, demonstrating the complexity of issues within the system and how time consuming it can be to work alongside other professionals in the system to address and resolve matters.

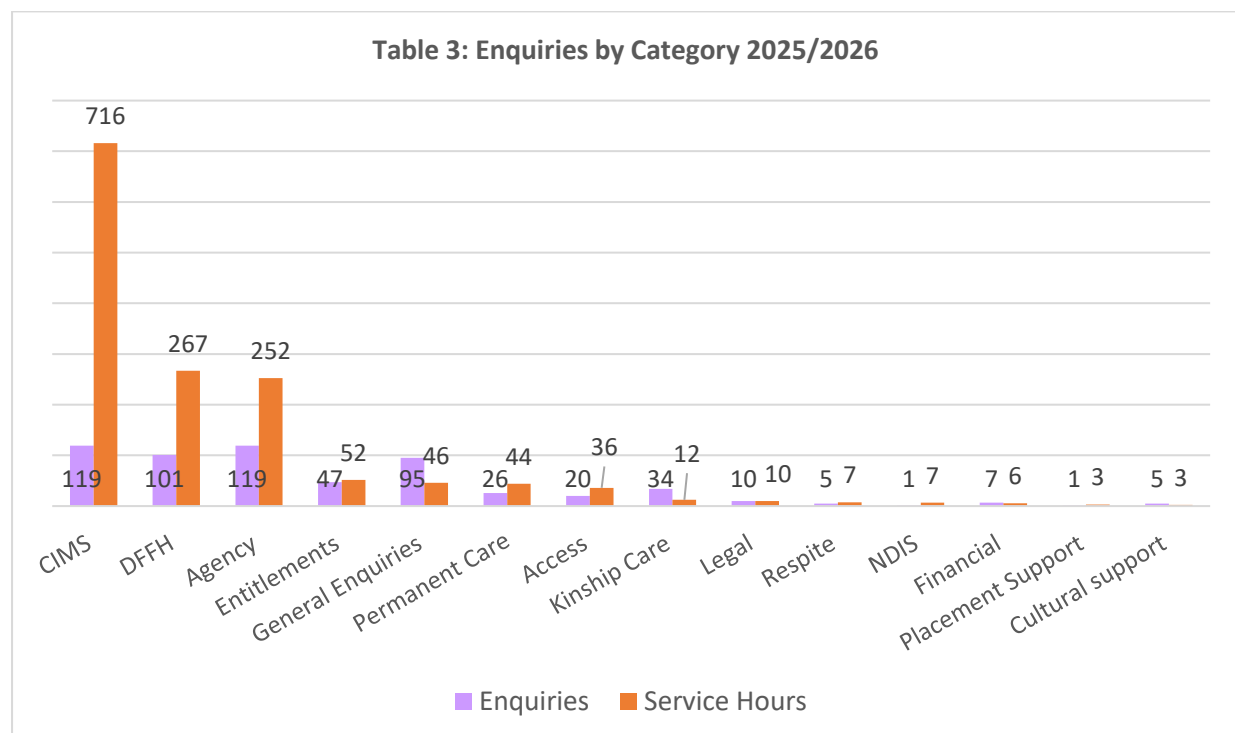
Matters can include the assessment and reaccreditation of carers at their allocated Agency or ACCO.

An issue often raised by carers is asking to change their agency or ACCO and Carer Advocates spend considerable time navigating those discussions and processes. The focus is often attempting to support a carer to work through their issues with the agency and attempting to resolve the matter.



Enquiries by Category

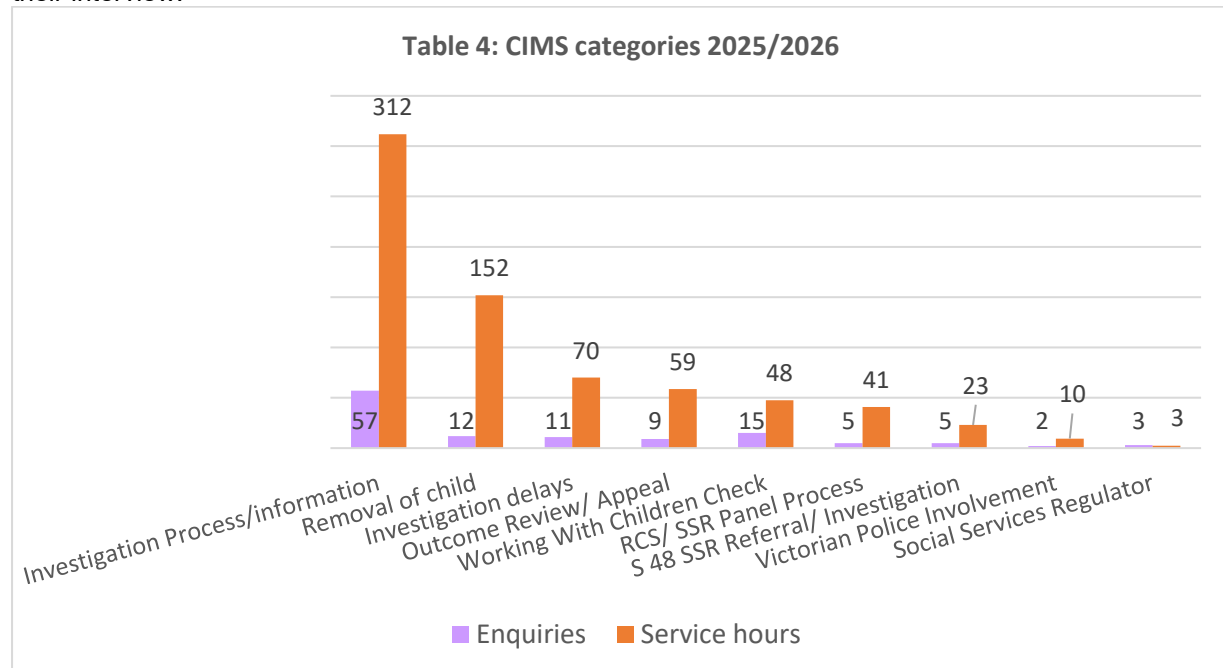
Carer Advocates spent the most time responding to enquiries relating to CIMS investigations, issues with DFFH and Agency matters. As already mentioned, CIMS investigations are time consuming with many delays, so it takes many hours to provide support and information to resolve issues and receive outcomes from the investigations.



CIMS categories

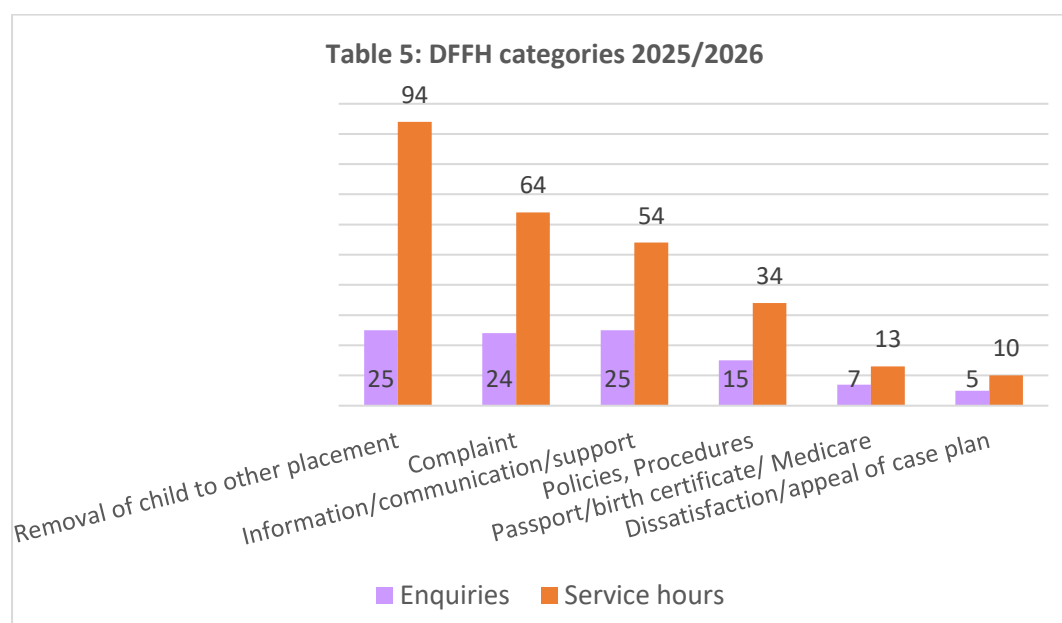
The Carer Advocate provides independent, confidential support to carers involved in, or affected by, CIMS processes. This includes helping carers understand investigation procedures, clarifying their rights and responsibilities, supporting them to prepare documentation, attend investigation interviews and ensuring carers are afforded procedural fairness.

Importantly, the Carer Advocates aim to reduce carers feelings of isolation during what can be a highly stressful experience, while also identifying systemic issues and escalating concerns where required to promote fair and timely processes. Many carers take up the opportunity to have a debriefing session post their interview.



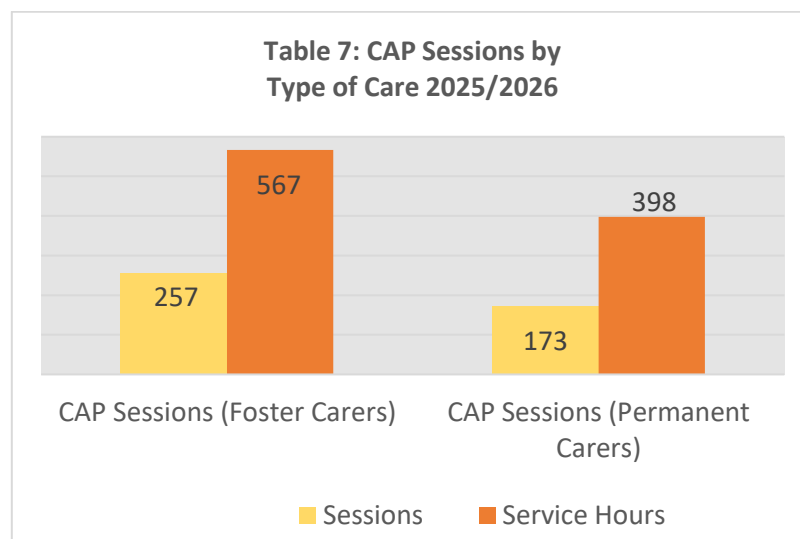
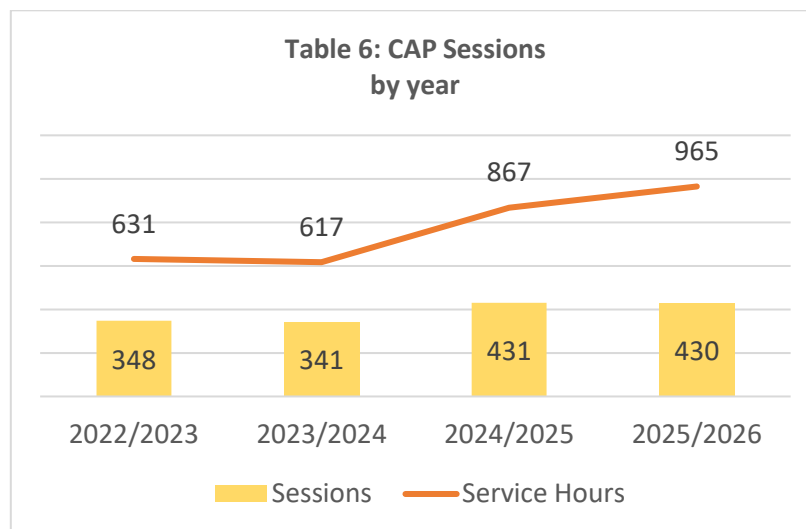
DFFH categories

Most service hours were spent assisting carers with information about the investigation process and issues stemming from the removal of children from their care. Many carers sought support when a child was removed from their care and placed with another carer, often in a rushed and unplanned manner. DFFH complaints and lack of information and support were also key issues this year, like previous years.



Carer Assistance Program (CAP)

CAP delivered **430** sessions of therapeutic short-term counselling, delivering **965** hours of service in the year.



CAP Categories for foster carers

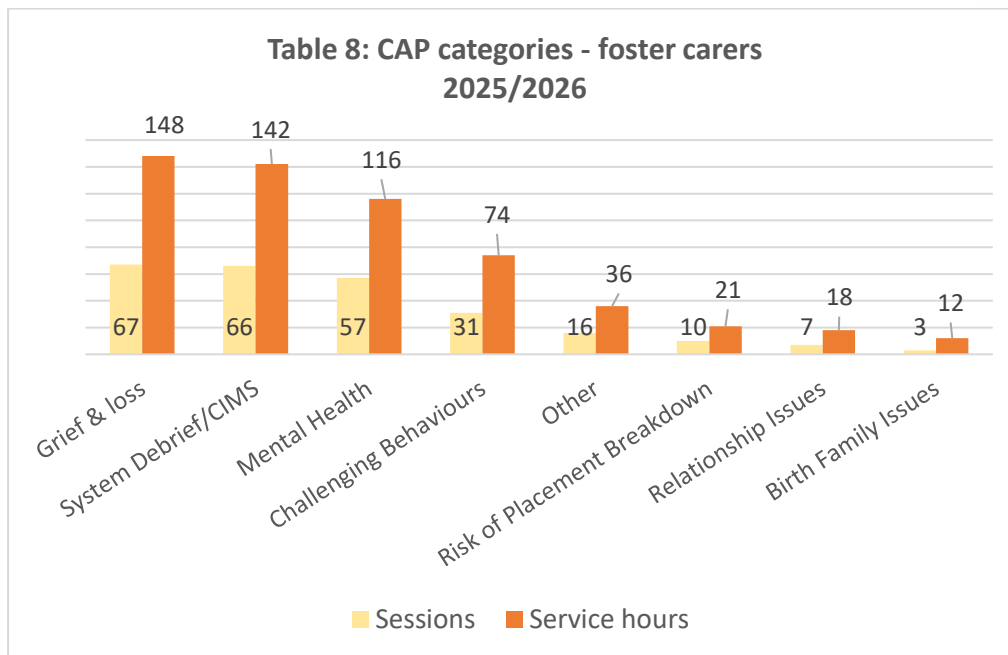
CAP counsellors delivered **257** sessions for foster carers, delivering **567** hours of service.

Many foster carers access CAP for the emotional support while involved in a CIMS investigation and for complex loss and grief issues. They often express frustration with the system and a lack of support, particularly when they identify significant issues for the children in their care.

It continues to be challenging to navigate the NDIS system and many children in care have challenging behaviours, often associated with childhood trauma and attachment issues.

The issues raised by carers in relation to the children in their care and complex and multifaceted.

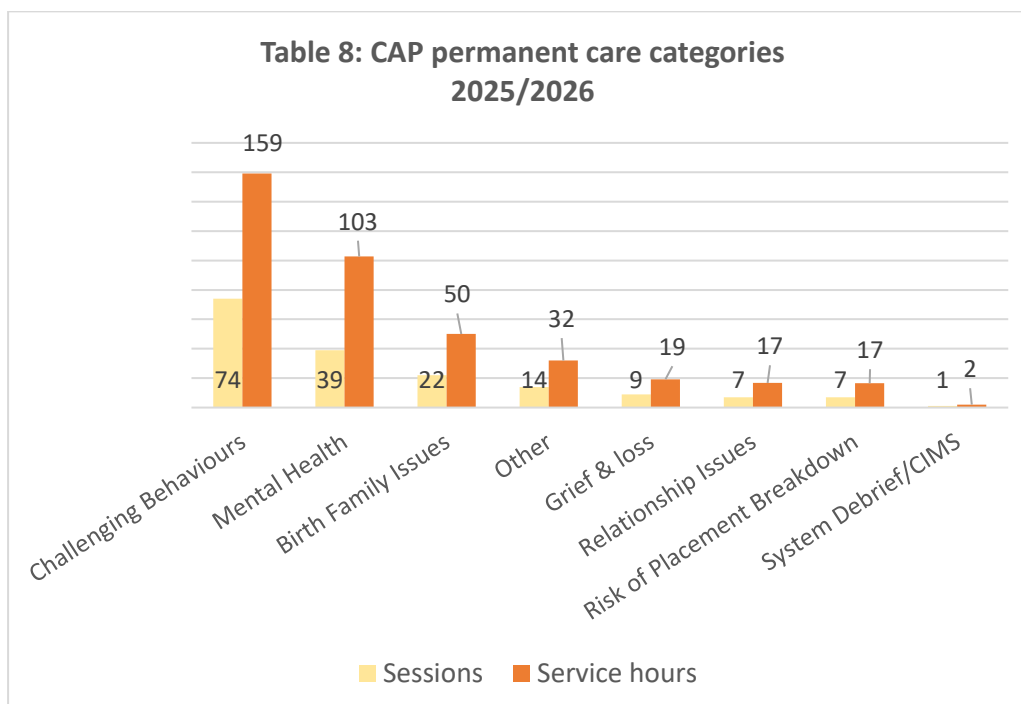
When placements breakdown this can be challenging for the child and the carer. Carer's can question their capacity to continue to care and feel undermined by the experience.



CAP categories for permanent carers

CAP counsellors delivered **173** sessions for permanent carers, delivering **398** hours of service.

For permanent carers seeking therapeutic support, the challenging behaviours of children in their care, mental health and birth family issues were the most common issues in the year.



Permanent Carers often discuss the impact caring has had on their mental health and wellbeing. Strategies to manage this are identified in sessions and carers are provided with appropriate resources as required.

For all carers the validation and normalisation of the issues they experience is hugely beneficial to each of them. The program is focussed on supporting carers to continue to provide care to the children and young people in the Out-of-Home Care system.

When appropriate there will be discussions in relation to other appropriate mental health support and contact with their GP to ensure adequate supports offered to the carer.

Carer Advocates feedback 2025/2026

- *Biba provided invaluable advice and support. I'm not sure we would've had anywhere near the same outcome if I had not called FCAV*
- *FCAV provides such a key service to foster carers in times of hardship. Thank you FCAV and please keep up the wonderful work you all do*
- *Leigh was our FCAV support person. I deeply appreciated her empathetic approach, positive support and tremendous guidance through an emotional process. Leigh assisted us to reduce our feelings of despair*
- *Deb provided friendly non-judgmental conversation with advice, and I felt heard*
- *Always value the support of the FCAV team*
- *It would be good to maybe book an appointment as sometimes it's difficult when working as only available on lunch break*
- *Friendly non judging, offers good advice, listens.*

CAP feedback 2025/2026

- *We found this service so valuable. Tonya helped us to organise our thoughts and plan for the future with our young child. She put our minds at ease by setting us up with the skills and resources needed to support our child. Such a worthwhile service. It would be so great to have it available for out of work hours for full time workers*
- *Jake has been extremely helpful during an emotionally trying time. He is level-headed, knowledgeable, approachable whilst still maintaining professional boundaries. He is simply a wise and caring human being*
- *Jake has been excellent in all aspects. Extremely helpful, understanding, unbiased, and someone who has time to listen and help formulate positive ways forward*
- *Was nice to be able to talk to someone who was understanding and who wasn't judgmental*
- *Good friendly understanding, supportive and no judgment*
- *Worker helped me identify and work through difficult situations. I gained confidence in keeping boundaries to look after myself and child. Dealing with incongruous circumstances is very difficult. Very quick to identify issues which was needed*
- *My two sessions with Tonya were very helpful in that she understood the complexity of the multiple issues we are dealing with as a permanent care family*
- *Greatly appreciated as no one else gets the system we must work within*
- *Would be good to have more access to this service, long delays to receive an appt at times*
- *This was so helpful as I have so much to deal with at the moment. I felt heard and understood.*