

CARER INFORMATION AND SUPPORT SERVICE (CISS) MID-YEAR RESULTS

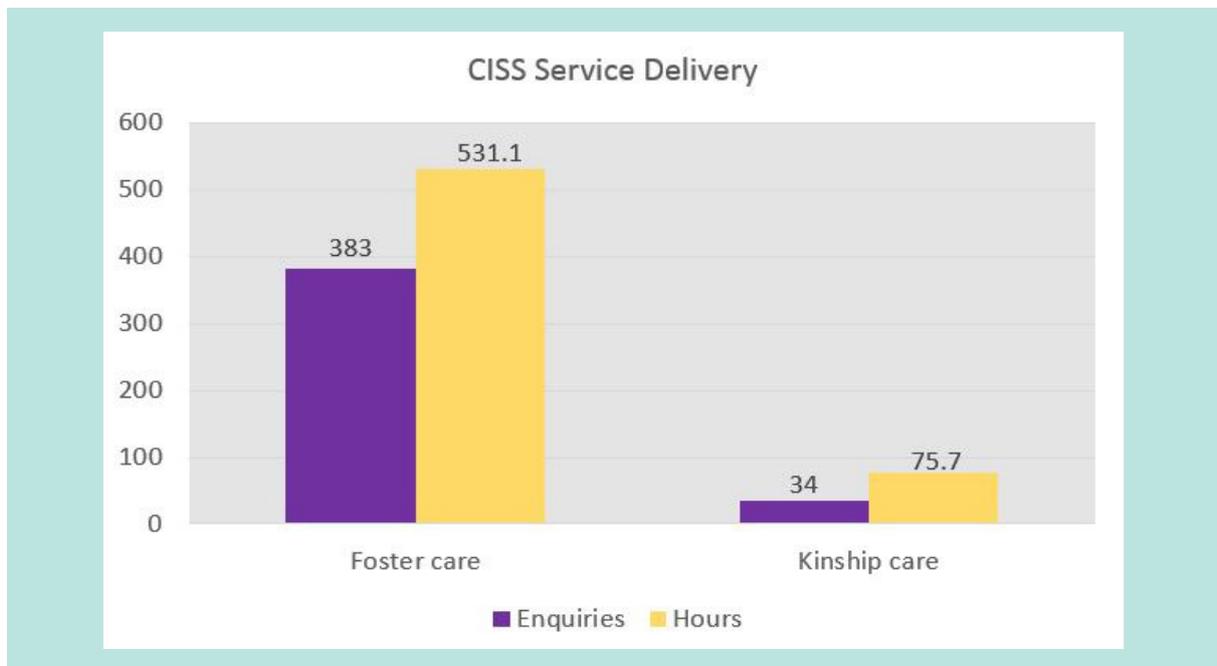
1 JULY – 31 DECEMBER 2018

CISS Service Delivery

In the six month period the Carer Information & Support Service (CISS) responded to and closed 383 foster care enquiries, delivering 531.1 hours of service. In addition, the CISS team responded to and closed 34 kinship care enquiries, delivering another 75.7 hours of service.

When a kinship carer calls they are directed to Kinship Care Victoria (KCV). If the matter requires individual support or advocacy the carer calls back to seek CISS support. It is interesting to note that on average, the hours required to support a kinship carer is higher than a foster carer.

* An enquiry can involve multiple calls, emails and meetings to support carers.

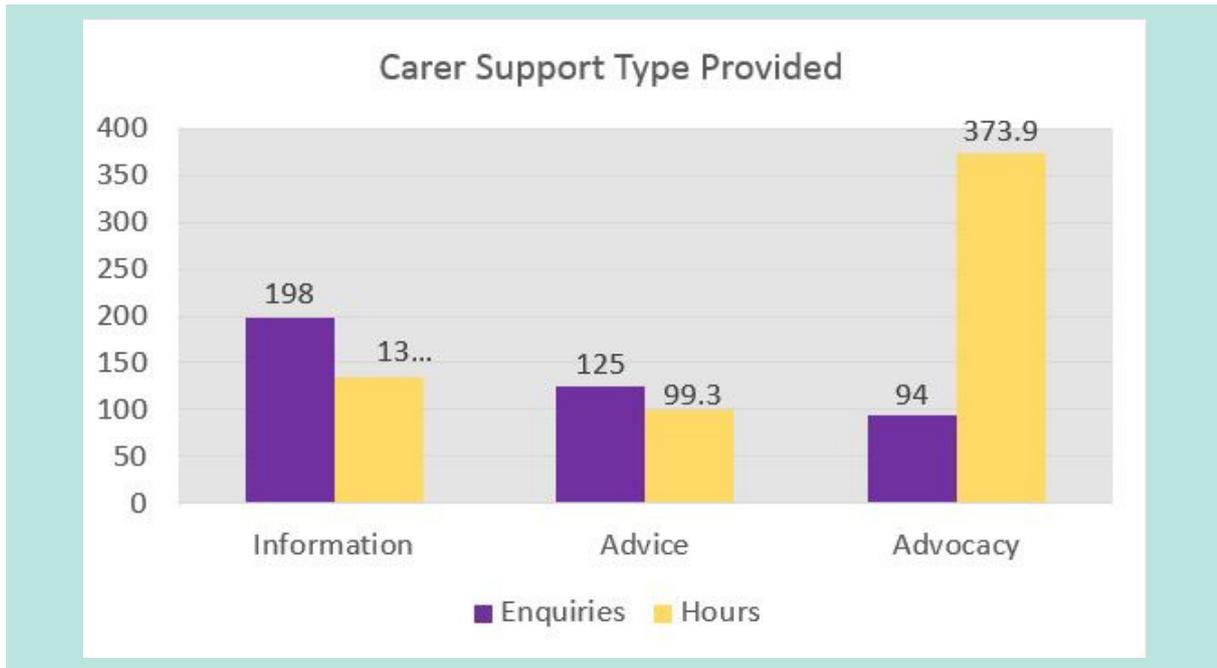


Carer support provided

The CISS team offer three types of support for carers. CISS provide accurate and clear information, advice in navigating the Care System and a significant amount of advocacy support. This can involve conversations with carers, advocating on their behalf directly with agencies and DHHS and attending meetings to be a support or advocate for the carer.

All three types of support include emotional support and carers see the CISS team as an independent resource, readily available to them.

FCAV has been able to offer alternative types of support for carers through new mediums, including webinars, forums and (Carer Kafe funded) retreats. FCAV hosted two wellness retreats in June and December 2018, with a focus on self-care, emotional intelligence and strategies for managing stress.



Issues raised

The majority of issues raised by foster carers continue to be in relation to CIMS investigations and relationships with their Agency and DHHS.

The most common themes are lack of communication, planning and support, workers not following procedure, not returning carers calls and excluding them from decision making. CISS continue to work with Agencies to resolve these issues.

Enquiries relating to accreditation and obtaining passports and birth certificates for children in care were also frequent.

Foster care issues

Category	Foster care issues	Service Hours
<i>CIMS Investigation</i>	62	233.7
<i>Agency - Issues</i>	76	89.5
<i>DHHS - Issues</i>	51	64.9
<i>DHHS - Entitlements</i>	63	56.6
<i>FCAV General Enquiries</i>	59	21.5
<i>Permanent Care & Adoption</i>	22	20.2
<i>Cultural support needs</i>	7	16.1
<i>Access</i>	12	10.6
<i>Financial - Centrelink</i>	19	7.2
<i>Legal</i>	8	5.9
<i>Placement Support Needs</i>	6	3.5
<i>Education/Health/Mental Health</i>	3	1.4
Total	388	531.1

Kinship care issues

Category	Kinship care issues	Service Hours
<i>CIMS Investigation</i>	5	50.4
<i>Carer support required</i>	5	8.9
<i>DHHS - Entitlements</i>	4	5.6
<i>DHHS - Issues</i>	3	5.1
<i>Enquiry referred to Kinship Carers Vic</i>	8	3.6
<i>Research enquiry</i>	1	1.3
<i>Adoption enquiry</i>	1	0.5
<i>Legal</i>	1	0.3
Total	34	75.7

CIMS (Client Incident Management System)

The CISS team provided support to 62 foster care enquiries (233.7 hours) and 5 (50.4 hours) kinship care enquiries relating to CIMS; incident investigations to determine whether there has been abuse or neglect of a child or young person in care, pursuant to an allegation in a client incident report.

Most of the issues discussed with carers consistently highlight an absence of the CIMS guiding principles being adhered to. The CIMS Policy details its guiding principles are:

- Procedural fairness
- Transparency and accountability
- Impact of alleged incident to the child governing decision making
- Timelines for investigation – 28 business days
- Supporting positive client experiences and outcomes

Carers have frequently reported that children are being urgently removed from the placement, without any information given to carers regarding allegations or the pending investigation (even when police are not included) and that there is a lack of transparency in the process.

Agencies have provided feedback that they are overwhelmed by the CIMS investigation process. Whilst some agencies have dedicated teams managing this, others have a less structured or informed response which appears in conflict with their role as support/advocate of carers.

Even where there are dedicated teams, the interagency communication is poor which also compromises the relationship with carers. In all cases, carers have declared feeling devalued and unsupported by the agency.

As part of the advocacy, FCAV have met with the Performance, Reporting, and Systems Division of DHHS. There was discussion of the review processes and FCAV being involved to gain greater clarity of the intention of the CIMS process.

Foster care CIMS issues

<i>CIMS Issues</i>	Issues Raised	Service Hours
<i>Incident reported</i>	7	6.6
<i>Investigation commenced</i>	17	91.3
<i>Investigation Delays</i>	11	49.1
<i>Guide for carers for CIMS</i>	1	13.4
<i>CIMS Experience - Agency Not Supportive</i>	4	10.1
<i>Outcome Review</i>	5	14.1
<i>Suitability Panel (Processes and Outcomes)</i>	11	40.3
<i>Delay in Outcome Sign Off</i>	6	8.8
Total	62	233.7

Kinship care CIMS issues

<i>CIMS Issues</i>	Issues Raised	Service Hours
<i>Not getting support required</i>	2	27.4
<i>Investigation commenced</i>	1	13.3
<i>Investigation Delays</i>	1	0.8
<i>Outcome Review</i>	1	9.0
Total	5	50.4