

## INQUIRY INTO CHILD PROTECTION

**Name:** Name suppressed

**Date received:** 1 July 2016

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Partially  
Confidential

I am concerned that the Department of Community Services may be seeking to move young people, with server disabilities, currently in Out of Home Care foster placements, into high medical needs group homes run by NGOs, when the young person turns 18 and is no longer directly the responsibility of the Minister. This is happening even where the current foster carers are keen to act in the young person's best interest, and continue to care for the young person in the home that they have grown up in. In the past the young people have remained with their foster carers, if that was the wish of the carers. The Department then continued to support the young person in the placement, till the young person was 25 years old, as part of a "Leaving Care Plan". This move by the Department seems to be motivated by a desire to move a cost from the State budget to the Federal budget, given that the NGOs running the group homes will be able to claim most of their costs for providing care, over and above the relatively small contribution coming from the young person's Disability Pension, from the NDIS as it is rolled out. Clearly it is better for a young person with server disabilities, to remain in the family they have grown up in for as long as possible, rather than being moved prematurely into an institution.

The above is based on the personal experience of my wife and myself and that of our foster daughter, who we have cared for since 7 months of age and who will turn 18 in November of this year. I am not sure if our family's experience is an isolated occurrence or indicative of a change of Departmental policy to place support for the State budget, above the best interests of those with server disabilities. I would like the Committee to investigate the issues I have raised here, as under item "(i)" in the terms of reference of the "Inquiry into Child Protection".