

Roles and Responsibilities in Leaving Care and After Care

Preparing a young person to transition to adulthood is a big task. Everyone in the young person's life has a role to play to make the transition from care to independence as smooth as possible. You will need to work closely with young people to plan and prepare for their future after care. It is important you help them develop a vision for their future that is hopeful and realistic, based on their strengths and interests, as well as their hopes and goals. You will also need to work with the Department of Communities and Justice (DCJ) and other services, as well as the important people in the young person's life, to plan and advocate for their leaving care needs.

Knowing who is responsible for what in the leaving and after care process is critical. This will help you to collaborate with others and ensure nothing is missed, and tasks are completed on time.

PSP Service Provider Roles and Responsibilities

- Your agency can access the PSP funding specialist packages for leaving care and the 15+ years old reconnect.
- Develop an individualised [leaving care plan](#) for the young person leaving care, if managing their placement. This begins from age 15 (when the goal in ChildStory changes).
- Begin with an assessment of the young person's strengths and skills and gaps to help inform the plan and what preparation may be required. For example, a young person can't attend TAFE if they have anxiety about public transport. Planning early allows time to address gaps or issues. You can use the [Independent Living Skills Checklist](#).
- Working closely with the young person, their carers and family and/or significant others, to participate in the development and implementation of the leaving care plan. Build rapport with the young person to understand their needs and strengths is critical.
- Check out the [Casework Practitioners Guide to Leaving and Aftercare](#) for key tasks to support young people at different ages (15, 16 and 17, and from 18-25 after they leave care).

- Give the young person [*Your Next Step*](#) and CREATE's [*Go Your Own Way*](#).
- Give the carer a copy of [*Leading the Way*](#) to help them support the young person to transition to independence (or weblink).
- Review the leaving care plan every three months to make sure the plan is on track, and amend as needed, to meet the young person's needs as they change. Leaving care plans are a living document, tailored to suit each young person.
- Assist with family finding and establish or grow the young person's personal support network to last them beyond their time in care.
- Complete the [NGO referral form for a legal audit](#) and email to the [Child and Family District Unit \(CFDU\)](#) when the child turns 15. A legal audit can help identify potential eligibility for Victims of Crime Support or other legal claims. For more information, see: [Victims of Crime](#).
- Identify programs and services that will assist the young person as they transition to adulthood to address any gaps and to help them achieve their goals. Provide warm referrals and/or written information about available universal and specialist resources, services and referral points depending on their age and stage of transition. You might connect the young person to a job readiness program, life skills workshop, mentoring or mental wellbeing program. See the [Leaving care planning – referrals, collaboration and connections](#).
- Arrange or support the young person to apply for entitlements and allowances. For more information, see: [Foundations of Leaving Care](#) and [Foundations of After Care](#).
- Submit the finalised leaving care plan with any financials (and letter to the Minister) to the local CFDU, for review and feedback, at least six months before the young person exits care. Remember that financials should include a rationale.
- Support the young person to have any DCJ decision they disagree with in relation to their leaving care plan reviewed, by advocating for the young person, and supporting them in discussions with DCJ.
- Give the young person a copy of their final leaving care plan, their Life Story work, and original documents. You must also talk to them about accessing their out-of-home care files, should they wish to do this.
- Remind young people they are entitled to support up the age of 25. In some exceptional cases after care can be provided beyond 25 and provide them with the phone and email details for the care leavers line

- Provide after care support and update or amend the plan when things change for young people.
- If you have helped a young person set up a new home, follow up and check how they are going.
- Each PSP Service Provider will have their own process for documenting interactions with a young person after they turn 18 years old.

“If I have to chase you, I feel like I’m not important”.

- Care Leaver, [Care Leavers' Charter of Rights](#)

DCJ Roles and Responsibilities

- Work with PSP casework staff to finalise the leaving care plan and to discuss any changes that may be required.
- Review and approve leaving care plans. Once the young person, you, and the CFDU are happy with the plan, it is progressed for approval by the DCJ District Director.
- Provide any approved financial assistance that needs to be met by DCJ to support leaving care or after care i.e. one-off payments or allowances.
- Provide after care support or, if the young person needs additional assistance or does not wish to engage with your service, they may be eligible to be referred to the Specialist Aftercare Program.
- Operate the Care Leavers Line that young people can contact for support on 1800 994 686 or email CareLeavers@dcj.nsw.gov.au for assistance.
- Assess applications for Victims of Crime and conducting file audits. DCJ lodges all applications to the [Victims Support Scheme](#) for children in the care of the Minister and advises you of the outcome.

Young Person's Role

- Lead the development of their leaving care plan with your support.
- Attend meetings to develop their case plan or 'transition plan'.
- Write or record any comments and views before a meeting.
- Engage with services and resources identified to help support them to transition to independence.
- Ask for help, when needed, and raise any concerns they may have, with you or their carer, or others.
- Contact their last PSP Service Provider, the Care Leavers Line, or DCJ for support after they leave care.

“Being a leader is better than participation”.

- Care Leaver, [Care Leavers' Charter of Rights](#)

Remember, sitting down to create a leaving care plan is an unnatural process that most young people do not go through in life. Some young people may be resistant, act out or refuse to participate in their leaving care planning. Be mindful that 'leaving care' is the legal term for aging out of care. You may prefer to use 'future' planning in discussions.

Leaving care is a vulnerable and uncertain time, it is understandable that a young person may feel overwhelmed. If the young person is not participating, those best placed to understand their needs participate in the consultation on their behalf.

Birth Family Role

- Be a part of leaving care planning if the young person wants this.
- Support the young person to achieve specific goals they set as part of the leaving care plan.
- Support the young person to develop independent living skills.
- May provide somewhere to live after the young person turns 18 years old, and/or being a part of the young person's support network.

- Help the young person to grow into a capable and confident young adult.
- Support the young person's education.
- Encourage respectful relationships.
- Connect them with other people who care about them and nurture their sense of identity and belonging.

Carer Role

- Take part in leaving care planning conversations if the young person wants this.
- Support the young person to achieve specific goals they set as part of the leaving care plan.
- Support the young person to develop independent living skills.
- May provide somewhere to live after the young person turns 18 years old, and/or being a part of the young person's support network.
- Help the young person to grow into a capable and confident young adult.
- Support the young person's education.
- Encourage respectful relationships.
- Connect them with other people who care about them and nurture their sense of identity and belonging.