



Government of **Western Australia**  
Department for **Child Protection**

# LEAVING CARE TO INDEPENDENCE

A guide for carers supporting young  
people leaving care and transitioning  
to independence

## Table of contents

Introduction .....	3
What is leaving care? .....	4
What is a leaving care plan? .....	5
What supports are care leavers entitled to? .....	5
What is a leaving care service? .....	6
Aftercare support provided by the Department .....	7
Where else can we get support from? .....	7
Appendix 1 - Skill development for young people .....	8

## Introduction

The Department for Child Protection (the Department) is committed to supporting young people who leave the care of the CEO to make a successful transition from care to independence. The Department is guided by the Children and Community Services Act 2004 and aims to ensure adequate preparation and planning for leaving care is undertaken incrementally throughout the leaving care process. It is also committed to providing support and assistance for young people after leaving care up to the age of 25 years.

The Department recognises the important and valuable role of foster carers caring for children and young people in the care of the CEO. The formation of sound, quality relationships is essential to helping these children and young people move from isolation to connection. Foster carers have a pronounced impact on a young person's well-being because they are the people immediately responsible for their day to day safety, nurturing and support. The Department is also committed to supporting foster carers caring for these children and young people.

Supporting a young person preparing to leave care is a very important role. Teaching young people the skills, knowledge and common sense to survive and thrive on their own once they leave home is a big responsibility. The transition to adulthood is often not achieved simply because the young person reaches 18 years of age. It can often take many years to reach full independence.

A key part of the transition to adulthood is the development of life skills. These may involve simple and ordinary tasks such as learning to cook, maintaining a healthy lifestyle, or managing money and working. However, these are skills that need to be learned as they are vitally important to becoming independent.

Carers are often the most influential people in the lives of young people and are therefore well placed to teach these skills. Teaching practical life skills and values are important parts of developing young people into well rounded and happy adults.

Opportunities to teach young people in the course of everyday life are everywhere. The key is to be

aware that you have the capacity to teach young people in everything you do. 'Teachable moments' occur in everyday activities, in and around the home. Managing time, doing the shopping, cleaning the house, managing and maintaining relationships are everyday tasks that young people need to learn and involving them is an easy way to pass these skills on. It's also important to remember that a young person's ability to cope with increasing responsibility is often enhanced by a carer's willingness to support them as they face new challenges.

This guide is designed to provide carers with information and tools to help prepare young people leaving care. It sets out some of the areas to be considered by the young person and their carer, case worker, leaving care service worker (if they have one), extended family members and a range of people from other government and non-government agencies.

The guide is not designed to be the only source of information on leaving care, but rather a flexible information tool to assist in developing young people's understanding and skills. It is hoped that this will help carers support young people to build their confidence in negotiating the issues that will confront them as adults. The content contained in this guide complements work being undertaken by the young person's case worker and leaving care service worker. We know that young people learn in different ways and at different paces, so providing a number of opportunities helps cover all the bases.

Leaving care arrangements must be flexible and developed over many years. The earlier we start assisting young people to develop the necessary skills the better prepared they will be.

## What is leaving care?

For the purposes of this guide, the term leaving care refers to young people aged between 15 and 25 years who are leaving, or have left, the Department's care<sup>1</sup> and are moving to independent living.

Generally young people remain reliant on their family for support as they make the transition to independent adulthood. Many young people leaving care do not have these supports in their transition to independent living.

Evidence worldwide shows that children who have been in care face increased difficulties when they make the transition towards independent living and adulthood.

Young people who leave care are often at greater risk, particularly in areas of:

- homelessness,
- poor attachments with birth family and/or carer family,
- low educational attainment,
- unemployment,
- dependency on social welfare,
- imprisonment,
- young parenthood, and
- incidence of self-harm.

Often these young people, who are most vulnerable, move to independence with less supports than those who have not experienced out of home care.

### The three phases of leaving care:

#### Preparation (phase one)

The preparation stage focuses on ensuring that young people in care aged 15 years and over receive appropriate education and life skills development to enable a successful transition to independent living in the future. It is important this stage include discussions with the young person about the leaving care process and what it means for them. Case workers will support the young person to engage with life and independent living skills programs as part of the preparation stage.

#### Transition to independence (phase two)

Depending on the age at which a young person enters care, the transition to independence phase may occur at the same time as phase one. Planning for independence assists young people to access and maintain suitable accommodation and entry into education, training or employment. During this stage it is important to consolidate the development of life and independent living skills and build on the work undertaken as part of the preparation phase.

Case workers will also refer young people to a Leaving Care Service, where they are available, during this stage (see page 6). These services are funded by the Department and designed to support the move to independent living. They can also assist in developing linkages with other relevant agencies. Young people may be referred by youth agencies as well as by the Department and may enter, re-enter or leave the service at any stage.

Planning the young person's future and ongoing accommodation arrangements is a key task for those supporting young people transitioning from care.

#### After care (phase three)

Once the young person has left the CEO's care and is living independently, Leaving Care Services provide aftercare assistance including advice, referral and support in areas of employment, housing, health and other matters. These services also provide a point of contact so that ongoing supports continue, if necessary, until the young person is 25 years of age.

As part of the young person's plan for leaving care, after care goals will be clearly defined and planned.

The case worker will also explain to the young person what aftercare supports are available and the process for seeking future support from the Department (see page 7).

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<sup>1</sup> A child or young person is no longer in the care of the CEO if the child or young person:

- is made the subject of a Protection order (supervision) or Protection order (enduring parental responsibility) or Protection order (Special Guardianship); or
- is no longer in provisional protection and care, or the subject of a Protection Order (time limited), or Protection Order (until 18); and/or
- no longer lives in placement services as provided by the CEO under section 32(1)(a)
- is made the subject of an Adoption Order.

## What is a leaving care plan?

From around the time a young person reaches 15 years of age, their case worker will be talking to them about what they are going to do when they leave care.

The process of moving out of care is called 'transitioning from care' and it's important that young people are assisted to plan what they want to do and what supports they will need.

When a young person leaves care, they will have to think about things like:

- where they're going to live,
- whether to study at TAFE or university, do an apprenticeship or get a job,
- how they'll earn money,
- what supports they'll need, and
- what help they can get to set up their own home.

Every young person leaving care must have a plan that addresses their individual leaving care needs. When a young person reaches 15 years of age their case worker will discuss and plan with them and relevant others the leaving care needs in the following areas;

- health,
- education and employment,
- housing and accommodation,
- family and social relationships,
- life skills development,
- financial supports,
- identity and culture,
- legal and financial matters, and
- support networks.

The case worker will then modify the Care Plan, in consultation with the carer and other people significant to the young person, to reflect leaving care requirements; this is called the 'Leaving Care Plan'.

## What supports are care leavers entitled to?

Young people leaving the Department's care are entitled to assistance through a number of avenues<sup>2</sup>.

### Leaving care services

The Department funds three community sector organisations to provide four leaving care services across the state. These services take referrals of young people aged between 14 and 25 years who are in, or have left, the care of the CEO, with priority given to those most at risk and who have experienced multiple placements. More information on these services can be found under the leaving care services section of this guide.

### Transition to Independent Living Allowance (TILA)

TILA is administered on behalf of the Commonwealth Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations by a number of non-government organisations in each State and Territory.

TILA assists young people to make the transition from some types of out-of-home care to independent living. TILA is a one-off allowance of up to \$1,500 in goods and services. The TILA grant is available for up to 24 months from the date of leaving the CEO's care. Young people leaving care should be assisted to apply within this time frame.

TILA can be used for a range of things, including:

- White goods - fridge, washing machine
- Kitchen appliances - microwave, toaster, blender, mixer

*continued...*

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<sup>2</sup>To qualify for assistance a person must have:

- left the CEO's care;
- be under 25 years of age; and
- any time after the age of 15 years, have been the subject of a protection order (either time - limited or until 18), or in a negotiated placement agreement or provided with a placement service for a continuous period of at least six months.

- Furniture - lounge room and dining room suites, coffee table, TV stand/entertainment unit, bed and bedroom furniture
- Bedding and manchester - mattress, sheets, pillows, doona, rugs, towels
- Food and clothing
- One-off transport expenses - driving lessons, car or motor-cycle purchase, registration, insurance, car/motor-cycle repairs to make it roadworthy, push-bike
- Educational expenses - laptop or desktop computer, clothing for school, textbooks, enrolment fees for school, TAFE or University, broadband connection
- Employment expenses - work tools, interview and work clothes
- Bus and train passes
- Utility connection fees - phone, electricity and gas connections.

For further information on how to access TILA in Western Australia contact:

#### **Mission Australia**

51 - 55 Forrest Avenue, Bunbury 6230  
Telephone: (08) 9722 4600

#### **Salvation Army**

Crossroads West Transitional Support Services  
Level 3, 333 William Street, Northbridge 6003  
Telephone: (08) 9328 1600

#### **Wanslea Family Services**

Library Road, Mandurah 6210  
Telephone: (08) 9581 5843

#### **Information can be found on the TILA website.**

The Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations (DEEWR) who administers the program, have also established a TILA helpdesk for enquiries. Email [helpdesk.tila@deewr.gov.au](mailto:helpdesk.tila@deewr.gov.au).

## **What is a leaving care service?**

Four services are funded by the Department to provide assistance to young people leaving care (some of these services are available in country areas):

- **Leaving Care and Aftercare Service - Mission Australia**  
Bunbury based, covering the South West including Bunbury, Collie, Busselton, Margaret River, Manjimup, Katanning, Gnowangerup and Albany
- **Wanslea Leaving Care Service - Wanslea Family Services**  
Peel region
- **Transitional Support Service: Moving to Independence - Salvation Army Crossroads West**  
Perth metropolitan area
- **Transitional Support Service: Statewide - Salvation Army Crossroads West**  
Perth metropolitan area, Goldfields/Murchison/Pilbara/Kimberley/Wheatbelt.

These services can start to work with young people from 16 years of age in metropolitan areas and 14 years of age in country areas and it is the responsibility of the case worker to provide information about these services, make a referral and facilitate engagement if it is the young person's wish to do so.

These services can help with a range of supports to assist young people. Priority is given to those young people who are most at risk of poor educational, employment and independent living outcomes.

## Aftercare support provided by the Department

Under s.97 and s.98 of the *Children and Community Services Act 2004* (the Act), all children who leave the CEO's care are entitled to be provided with any personal material held by the Department and any social services the Department considers appropriate to meet the child's needs as identified in the Care Plan.

Young adults who qualify for financial assistance may also receive funding support from the Department after they leave the CEO's care.

Young people seeking aftercare assistance may approach any Department district office, at any time, until 25 years of age. Each departmental district has a formal process for assisting young adults who return for support. Young people can discuss aftercare assistance with the duty officers in their local district who will be able to direct them to the appropriate worker for ongoing assistance.

The Advocate for Children in Care can also provide advocacy services to help care leavers resolve issues and have decisions reviewed, and support them in using formal complaints and review processes.

## Where else can we get support from?

### CREATE Foundation

The CREATE foundation is the peak community sector organisation advocating for, and supporting young people in care in Australia. CREATE's main focus is connecting children and young people to each other, CREATE and their Community and empowering children and young people to build self-confidence, self-esteem, and skills that enable them to have a voice and be heard.

More information on CREATE and its programs can be found on the website:

[www.create.org.au](http://www.create.org.au)

CREATE has also established a leaving care program for young people in care called CREATE Your Future. More information on what they offer can be obtained from the website:

[www.createyourfuture.org.au](http://www.createyourfuture.org.au)

## Skill development for young people

This section of the guide is designed to offer points for discussion, as well as opportunities for skill development for young people. Much of it is part of everyday life, and many carers will already be focusing on helping prepare young people for adult life. Therefore, you are probably doing, or have done, most of the things outlined in this section.

The suggestions below are intended to supplement the things you are already doing. They may help fill in the gaps and assist in identifying and discussing some of the areas that need to be considered by young people as they prepare for leaving care and become adults.

## Life and daily living skills

### Some things young people need to know about...

- Home management, maintenance and house cleaning
- Security and safety
- Food, nutrition, cooking and recipes
- Shopping
- Food storage
- Hygiene.

### Getting started...

Part of preparing a young person for living independently is teaching those seemingly ordinary everyday things. It's often simple things that make the biggest difference, things like doing a proper grocery shop, meal planning, shopping with a list and comparing prices. Learning this stuff can save time and money.

Below are some suggestions on how you can help young people develop skills they will need to use every day once they are living independently.

### Healthy food and nutrition

- Talk to the young person about food and nutrition during your meal times, discuss what you've made for dinner or lunch and what the nutritional benefits of each food is. Talk about high fat and high sugar foods and why we need to eat a balanced diet.
- Try to include young people in meal preparation.
- Help them develop a recipe book of their favourite meals and over time help them learn how to prepare and cook them.

### Food shopping

- Keep a shopping list on the fridge; ask the young person to write down when they use the last of something (milk, bread, bananas, etc.). Take them food shopping with a calculator and ask them to keep track of how much you're spending on the shopping. Show them how to choose the best produce available; how to make sure the fruit and vegetables are clean and fresh, etc. Talk to them about being sensible in their food shopping, find the good value specials and talk to them about how this can help save money.

## Housing

### Some things young people need to know about...

- Looking for a suitable house
- Where to look and what to look for
- Moving house
- Furniture
- Legal rights and responsibilities.

- If possible, inspect a few properties with the young person to get an idea of what they might want out of a place to live.
- It's important to talk to young people about emergency options if they get into trouble with their housing. Information about emergency options can be obtained from the young person's case worker.

### Getting started...

Housing is one of the most critical things for young people leaving care. It's important that young people are assisted to understand how to organise and manage stable housing and accommodation. Whether the young person in your care moves out when they turn 18 or later, at some point they will need to learn how to find somewhere to live.

Below are some ways that you can help young people develop skills they may need regarding housing and accommodation once they are living independently.

- Show the young person where to look for houses to rent on the internet, in the paper or at a real estate agent office.
- Talk about how to consider what options are available including, what's within their budget, sharing accommodation, proximity to transport and amenities, proximity to family and friends, what's suitable and realistic in terms of size, and what pitfalls to avoid. It's important to talk about the difference between needs and wants.

## Health and wellbeing

### Some things young people need to know about...

- Healthy lifestyle
- Doctors, hospitals and medical emergencies
- Medicare
- Health Care Cards
- Health insurance
- Chemists and medication
- Dental care
- Immunisations
- Mental health
- Sexual health.

### Getting started...

Good health is a valuable thing to have. Eating healthy food and maintaining a healthy lifestyle is an easy way to look after ourselves and it's key to leading a happy and full life.

Young people often need support to develop their understanding around the importance of being healthy, and developing a healthy lifestyle.

### Exercise

It is recommended that young people get one hour of physical activity each day. This can be built up throughout the day with a number of different activities. Regular exercise is important for overall fitness and health.

Some good moderate activities include brisk walking, bike riding with friends, skateboarding and dancing. More vigorous activities include football, netball, soccer, running, swimming laps or training for sport.

Joining a local sporting club is a great way to keep fit and develop new friends.

### Doctors

It will be important that young people are aware of when and how to see a doctor. The teenage years are a good time for young people to build up independent relationships with their GP. You can help by setting up opportunities for them to talk to their GP alone. This should help prepare them for relating to doctors and other medical professionals in the future. Next time you're organising a visit to the doctor or dentist ask the young person to make the appointment so they begin to become familiar with how to do it.

Talk to the young person's case worker about Medicare cards, health care cards, Health Passports, and immunisations records.

### Sexual Health

As young people mature it's important that they get the right information in terms of sexual development. For young people who are in care and who may have experienced abuse, conversations about sexuality may be difficult or even traumatic.

There is plenty of information out there for young people; it is important to make sure they have all the information they need to make informed, responsible decisions about reproductive health and safe sex.

A good resource for young people to consider is, *Relationships Sex and Other Stuff* which is produced by the Department of Health and the Department of Education. This and other useful information on sexual education can be found at [www.gdhr.wa.gov.au/resources](http://www.gdhr.wa.gov.au/resources).

## Identity and self-care

### Some things young people need to know about...

- Identification
- Keeping records
- Confidentiality and disclosure
- Emotional wellbeing and self-esteem
- Hygiene and personal appearance
- Emergencies
- Personal safety
- Culture and identity
- Religion
- Political interests

### Getting started...

Understanding who we are and being able to look after ourselves is another skill we need to continue to learn and develop as we become adults. Some young people find it hard to develop a healthy identity and self-care skills, particularly young people who are recovering from traumatic experiences in their past.

Given the right information and opportunity to do so, young people are usually capable of making good self-care decisions. By involving young people as full participants in their self-care, they're more likely to choose healthy behaviours throughout their lives.

Smoking, abusing alcohol, or taking illegal drugs can have a significant impact on young people who may have had negative experiences with these things in the past. With effective role modelling young people will learn that these activities jeopardize health and well-being.

Encourage the young person to think independently and express their own thoughts. This will help build a healthy sense of self and greater resilience.

## Personal Documents

When a young person leaves care they will receive their Child History Folder containing all relevant original documentation. The young person will be advised by their case worker that they will receive this information as part of the process of developing their Care Plan modified for leaving care.

Talk to the young person about why it's important to keep track of important documents and suggest some good places to store these types of things.

For details on personal information held by the Department, and how and when the young person will receive these, speak with the case worker.

## Family and relationships

### Some things young people need to know about...

- Family history
- Foster family
- Establishing and maintaining contact
- Reunification
- Family obligations and expectations
- Positive relationships and friendships
- Extended family
- Support networks and services.

### Getting started...

Relationships are important to all of us, and positive relationships are one of the most rewarding things in life. It's important that young people develop strong and positive connections.

Successful relationships take time to build and maintain and are based on trust, respect, care, support and friendship.

### Communication

One of the most important life skills is communication, and one of the most important parts of good communication is listening. If a young person feels properly listened to, they feel understood and validated.

### Conflict

Often the teenage years can be a time of increased conflict between adults and young people. Conflict is a normal part of relationships, and the teenage years can often be more intense because of many changes occurring for young people.

During adolescence these changes can happen quickly. Young people need to feel that we are accepting and assisting this change. Focusing on the positive changes in young people will more often than not promote further positive changes.

## Education and training

### Some things young people need to know about...

- Career options and linking training
- Traineeships and apprenticeships
- University
- Secondary School
- TAFE
- Government financial assistance.

### Getting started...

A good education is a key factor in overcoming disadvantage. Young people leaving care generally experience poorer outcomes in terms of education than their peers. It's important to set young people on the right path to a positive future and a good education can provide the right stepping stones.

All young people, in Western Australia must participate in some form of education, training or employment until they're 17 years old. Young people who decide not to continue with normal full-time schooling have other options they can choose. If young people decide not to stay in full time school for year 12 they have three options:

- Option 1) Participate in a full-time training program, apprenticeship or traineeship. This must be at a registered training organisation such as a State Training Provider (TAFE).
- Option 2) Participate in a combination of school, training and/or employment (e.g. part-time schooling and part-time training).
- Option 3) Participate in full-time employment rather than full-time schooling.

### TAFE – State Training Providers

Under a new agreement between the Department for Child Protection and State Training Providers all young people leaving care and those up to the age of 25 who have already left care, can have the associated fees waived for most of the courses offered through TAFE.

Instruction on how to get a TAFE fee waiver for a young person can be obtained from the case worker or through the Department's *Casework Practice Manual – Chapter 10.17 Leaving the CEO's Care* available via the Department for Child Protection website ([www.dcp.wa.gov.au](http://www.dcp.wa.gov.au)).

## Employment

### Some things young people need to know about...

- Career options
- Traineeships
- Apprenticeships
- Government financial assistance
- Job searching
- Centrelink obligations
- Work experience and volunteer work
- Superannuation
- Job Network Providers
- Maintaining a job.

### Getting started...

Finding a job can be challenging at the best of times. However, once young people know how to look for them they'll be easier to find. The suggestions below may help:

- Use word-of-mouth, family and friends particularly, talk to people about the young person looking for a job.
- Help the young person call up, or visit, organisations that they may like to work for and see if they have any positions currently available. Consider leaving some details or a resume there in case something comes up later.
- Look in the community newspaper and or the West Australian Newspaper, particularly on Wednesdays and Saturdays which have large employment sections.
- Get the young person to go on to job search websites such as [SEEK](#) and [Career One](#).
- Check out the government jobs board at the Western Australia government jobs [website](http://www.jobs.wa.gov.au/), [www.jobs.wa.gov.au/](http://www.jobs.wa.gov.au/).
- Centrelink's [Looking for work](#) webpage provides links to jobseeker services and other resources, [www.centrelink.gov.au/](http://www.centrelink.gov.au/).

- Information can also be found on the Job Services Australia [website](#) to help find the right service.
- Centrelink also provides access to phones, photocopiers, fax, job guides, pamphlets, a noticeboard and computers for typing up resumes and letters.

Once young people have a job, in the eyes of employers, they are often much more employable from that point on.

It's also important for young people to understand workplace expectations and norms, and participation and collaboration in the workplace. Young people need to be aware of how to operate in functional work environments and to know what they can do to assist resolving workplace grievances.

## Money and finances

### Some things young people need to know about...

- Budgeting
- Banking
- Income
- Paying bills
- Consumer protection
- Credit
- Grants
- Tax File Number and tax returns
- Gambling
- Compensation
- Emergency financial assistance.

### Getting started...

Financial stability is one of the most important elements of achieving stability in other areas of life. Learning money management skills like saving, credit cards and loans, and budgeting and spending can help young people learn important lessons before they become independent.

Many young people learn what's important about money from the adults around them. This helps develop an understanding of what's important and what's a priority in terms of what they spend their money on.

Young people might be eligible for allowances or other help with money either before or after they leave care. The young person can talk with their case worker about the services and supports available and how to apply for them.

### Budgeting

Teaching young people about budgets and more importantly how to stick to them can be difficult. Young people need to learn about competing priorities when it comes to money. If they have an income, talk to them about what they want to spend their money on, how long the money needs to last, what they actually spend it on, and how they might handle their money better in the future.

### Credit

One of the toughest lessons many young people face is learning the hard way about credit and its pitfalls. Talk to them about how credit works and consider mapping out a 'dummy' credit repayment system and show them how much the original item cost and how much it will cost by paying it back with interest.

## Drugs and alcohol

### Some things young people need to know about...

- Effects of alcohol
- Types of drugs and their effects
- The law
- Personal safety
- Smoking
- Drugs, alcohol and medications.

### Getting started...

It's important young people understand the dangers involved with drug and alcohol use so that they can make informed decisions which can help keep them and others safe.

As they get older young people will make their own decisions about whether or not they will drink alcohol. It is important that we teach them how to stay safe, and minimise the effects, if they do end up drinking.

Carers can help make the situation easier by encouraging open discussion about alcohol and drug use.

While most young people won't have a problem with alcohol or drugs, a supportive environment, where they can openly discuss difficult issues, reduces the risk of problems arising.

The facts are that alcohol use is very risky for young people and evidence suggests the longer they delay alcohol use, the less likely they are to develop problems associated with it. That is why it is so important to help young people avoid or limit any alcohol use.

It's important to remember that many young people in care may have been significantly affected by negative experiences around alcohol and drugs in the past.

## Personal and social development

### Some things young people need to know about...

- Hobbies and interests
- Social contact
- Sports
- Volunteering
- Presentation
- Personal development
- Social behaviour
- Social media and cyber safety
- Limits and boundaries
- Public transport
- Taxis
- Bicycles
- Walking
- Cars and motorcycles
- Learning to drive and licences.

### Getting started...

One of the most important things for young people is strong social inclusion. Encouraging young people to be involved in activities that include other people and particularly other young people will help.

Spending too much time alone can be counterproductive for some young people.

Many young people now use online social networking for much of their communication with friends. It's a great way to stay connected with your friends, provided it's done safely.

Cyber safety and social networking may not be part of your everyday life, but it will be part of the young person's. Understanding how to be safe and avoid pitfalls is important.

Information on cyber bullying and cyber safety can be found at [://www.cybersmart.gov.au/](http://www.cybersmart.gov.au/).

### Learning to drive

Learning to drive is also a great skill to have. The Department can help young people learn to drive and get a licence. Just ask the case worker for more information on how.

## Legal rights and responsibilities

### Some things young people need to know about...

- Legal Aid
- Legal rights
- Court systems
- Prosecutions
- Lawyers, solicitors and barristers
- Police
- Voting

### Getting started...

Rights and responsibilities change when we become adults so it's important to know what we can and can't do legally.

While young people will be able to do many things for the first time, such as vote, the penalties will also be much harsher if they break the law.

Young people's rights include the right to know about their time in care, to have a leaving care plan and to know who is responsible for providing them with aftercare support.

The young person's case worker can tell them how to see records about their time in care. Not everyone wants to do this and it can be upsetting, but they can be provided with a support person who can help if they wish.

The leaving care plan should include the young person's goals and record who is doing what to help achieve them. This might include agreements to help buy furniture, pay for textbooks or see a counsellor.

Ask the case worker what the young person might be entitled to and to explain who can help if things don't go according to the plan.

### Voting

By law, all Australian residents over the age of 18 must vote. It's an important right for all Australians, getting to have a say in who runs their country. Failing to vote may result in a fine. Before being able to vote you need to register with the Electoral Commission and this can be done by getting forms from the post office. Some schools will do this for young people in year 12 so ask a teacher about it. For further information on voting, check out the Electoral Commission's website.

The Department for Child Protection would like to thank all foster carers for their continued commitment to supporting young people undertaking the transition from care. The vast majority of carers will already be doing most of the things that are outlined in this guide and it is hoped that with a renewed focus on leaving care, these young people will develop into strong, resilient adults who contribute positively to their community.