

**PROTOCOLS AND PROCEDURES
FOR
PREPARATION FOR LEAVING AND
AFTER CARE SERVICES**

Department for Community Development
Government of Western Australia

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INTRODUCTION

Background

The Department for Community Development¹ has the major responsibility for services which enhance the wellbeing of the community by strengthening families and protecting children from harm. The Western Australian *Children and Community Services Act 2004* and the Department's Strategic Plan 2005 - 2009 place a renewed emphasis on collaboration between the government and non-government sectors to fulfil this responsibility.

Young people in care

Children in the CEO's care include those who are subject to protection orders (time limited), protection orders (until 18), negotiated placement agreements and those who receive placement services under Section 32(1)(a) of the *Children and Community Services Act 2004*. In addition, children in transitional consented placements are in the CEO's care under the *Children and Community Services Act Regulations 2006*²

Leaving care

For the purposes of this document, the term *leaving care* refers to young people aged between 15 and 25 years who are leaving, or have left, the care of the CEO and are moving to independent living.

Young people in families have a tendency to remain reliant on their family for support as they make the transition to independent adulthood. Generally, young people leaving the care of the CEO of the Department do not have these supports in their transition to independent living.

Evidence worldwide shows that children who have been in care face increased risks when they make the transition towards independent living and adulthood³. Statistics show that young people who leave care are at risk of homelessness, lost attachments with family, poor educational attainment, unemployment, dependency on social welfare, imprisonment, young parenthood and incidence of self-harm. These young people who are most vulnerable move to independence with less supports than those who have not experienced out of home care.

The Western Australian *Children and Community Services Act 2004* Part 4, Division 6, Provisions about leaving the CEO's care places an obligation on the Department to ensure that any child leaving care is provided with any social services considered appropriate having regard to the needs of the child as identified in the Care Plan (Section 98 of the Act). The Department must ensure that the young person who qualifies for assistance is provided with services to assist with one or more of the following: obtain accommodation, undertake education and training obtain employment, obtain legal advice, access health services and access counselling services.

A person who qualifies for leaving care assistance is under 25 years of age, has left the care of the CEO and at any time after the person reached 15 years of age was the subject of a protection order (time limited or until 18), a negotiated placement agreement (for a continuous period of at least 6 months) or was provided with a placement service under section 32(1)(a) (for a continuous period of at least 6 months) (Section 96). This assistance can be provided directly by the Department or by referral to the Transitional Support Services or a Preparation for leaving and after care service⁴.

¹ Hereafter referred to as "the Department"

² This refers to transitional arrangements for children in consented placements prior to the proclamation of the *Children and Community Services Act 2004*

³ Patricia Kelleher, Carmel Kelleher and Maria Corbett (Focus Ireland, 2000) 'Left Out on Their Own'

⁴ Hereafter referred to as "Leaving Care service"

Funded services

The non government sector has always played a crucial role in providing services to the West Australian community.

In 1999, a Transitional Support Service was funded through the State and Australian Governments Supported Accommodation Assistance Program (SAAP) to provide a service to young people between the ages of 16 and 25 in their transition to independent living from long periods of supported accommodation and care. In 2002, in response to findings of the State Homelessness Taskforce, the Government of Western Australia expanded the number of these services, and increased the geographical area covered by the services and the age at which young people could be referred.

There are currently four Leaving Care services to which young people can be referred. Between them, the services take referrals from throughout Western Australia 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.

The services are:

Service Name: **Leaving Care and Aftercare Service**
Auspice Organisation: Mission Australia
Contact: Anthony Cook, Leaving Care Co-ordinator,
Phone: 9721 1122, Fax: 9721 1133
Address: PO Box 6073, 103 Clarke Street, Bunbury, WA, 6230
Client Target Group: Young people 14 to 25 years who are, or have been in the care of the Department for Community Development
Catchment Area: A Bunbury based service covering the south west including Bunbury, Collie, Busselton, Margaret River, Manjimup, Katanning, Gnowangerup and Albany.

Service Name: **Wanslea Leaving Care Service**
Auspice Organisation: Wanslea Family Services
Contact: Nikki Blasioli, Manager
Phone: 9581 5843, Fax: 9535 3163
Address: PO Box 3182, Library Road (off Third Avenue), Mandurah East, WA 6210
Client Target Group: Young people 14 to 25 years who are, or have been in the care of the Department for Community Development
Catchment Area: A Mandurah based service covering the Peel region and Rockingham, south of Safety Bay Road.

Service Name: **Transitional Support Service: Moving to Independence**
Auspice Organisation: Salvation Army Crossroads West
Contact: Sylvia Mollasi, Manager
Phone: 9328 1600, Fax: 9328 1655
Address: Level 3, 333 William St, Northbridge, WA, 6003
Client Target Group: Young people 16 to 25 years who are leaving long term periods of supported accommodation/care, or have done so in recent years (note, this accommodation may be from SAAP services).
Catchment Area: Metropolitan area

Service Name: **Transitional Support Service: Statewide**
Auspice Organisation: Salvation Army Crossroads West
Contact: Sylvia Mollasi, Manager
Phone: 9328 1600, Fax: 9328 1655
Address: Level 3, 333 William St, Northbridge, WA, 6003

Client Target Group:	Young people 14 to 25 years who are or have been in the care of the Department for Community Development
Catchment Area:	A Perth based service providing support to young people in the metropolitan area and in regional WA; the Wheatbelt, Goldfields, Murchison, Pilbara and Kimberley.

Because independent living skills are most commonly developed while living in a stable family setting, young people who have experienced multiple placements or who lack established networks may be at risk of missing, or may have already missed, the development of important life skills that assist in the transition to living independently. The Leaving Care services draw on the strengths of young people and assist them to develop and enhance skills and help build support networks.

Stages of preparation for leaving care and after care

There are three distinct stages to preparation for leaving and after care and referral depends on the age and circumstances of the young person being referred. The various stages require effective inter-agency collaboration and rely on cooperation between the Department's carers, case workers, the Leaving Care services and other agencies. Young people may be referred by youth agencies as well as the Department and they may enter, re-enter or leave the service at any stage.

Stage 1. Preparation for leaving care

Stage one focuses on young people aged between 14 and 17 years who are currently in care, and ensures they are receiving appropriate education and life skills training to enable a successful transition to independent living in the future. It is important that this stage include discussions with the young person about the leaving care process and what it means for them.

Stage 2. Moving to independent living

Young people may enter this stage directly or following the first stage. Moving to independent living is particularly relevant to young people over 16 years of age and assists them to access and maintain suitable accommodation and entry into education, training or employment. Leaving Care services ensure the actual move to independent living is supported and assist in developing positive linkages and support.

Stage 3. After care whilst living independently

Once the young person is living independently, Leaving Care services provide aftercare assistance including advice, referral and encouragement in areas of employment, housing, health and other matters. Leaving Care services provide a point of contact so that occasional ongoing practical and other support continue, if necessary, until the young person is 25 years of age. This includes support to maintain safe connection with their biological family and connection to culture.

Purpose of this manual

This manual is intended to assist staff from the Department, Leaving Care services and other relevant agencies.

The manual contains a number of standard forms and protocols including:

- Referral form
- Common assessment form
- Consent form
- Case management protocols
- Protocols for transferring young people

- Agreed practices for the release and exchange of information between the Department and services and between the services themselves
- Protocols for services' involvement in planning for leaving care
- Protocols with the Department where the Leaving Care service has a concern about the safety or development of the client's children
- Reference to the Transition to Independent Living Allowance (TILA) guidelines

The manual has been developed in the context of the new *Children and Community Services Act 2004* and the Department's Strategic Plan 2005 - 2009. This context places children and young people at the centre of all service delivery which is guided by four key principles of engagement, inclusiveness, collaboration and capacity building.

Government departments and non-government agencies share responsibility for the welfare of children and young people in their care and it is through collaboration and a strengths based approach that the best outcome will be achieved.

It is hoped that this manual will facilitate the delivery of services to young people by offering a consistent understanding of procedures and protocols related to the referral, assessment and delivery of Leaving Care Services. Considerable collaboration and networking already exists between the funded Leaving Care services and Department. It is anticipated that this supportive practice will continue and that it has the potential to develop into a forum for the review and continual updating of this manual.

GUIDELINES FOR REFERRING A YOUNG PERSON TO LEAVING CARE SERVICES

Which young people can be referred?

Any young person aged 14 to 25 who is currently in, or who has been, in the care of the CEO of the Department for a minimum of six months can be referred⁵. Current Leaving Care service specifications stipulate that the priority for non-government services is those young people who have experienced multiple placements, lack established networks or are associated with multiple risk factors⁶.

Who can make a referral?

Referrals can be made by:

- Field officers from the Department
- young people themselves
- a government or non-government agency including Indigenous agencies
- carers.

When to refer?

Referral to a Leaving Care service may be made as part of the young person's Care Plan prior to the young person leaving the CEO's care. Case workers are encouraged to make referral to a service at least twelve months prior to the young person leaving the CEO's care. The earlier the referral, the better the ability of the service to engage and work more effectively with the young person.

It is strongly recommended that young people be referred as young as 14 years of age to assist in the development of supportive relationships with the Leaving Care service staff. If appropriate, the service may also work directly with foster or residential carers.

How to make a referral

The referring officer must make contact with the Leaving Care service to discuss the referral. A formal, written referral is then submitted to the service if appropriate. A referral form is included at Appendix B.

Provision of accurate and detailed information on the referral form will facilitate a thorough assessment. Inclusion of the young person in the referral process is crucial to ensure his or her engagement in the program. It is also important to gain the young person's consent to the referral. The referring officer must consider any cultural and linguistic issues that may have an impact on the referral, assessment and service delivery.

The foster family or residential carers and biological family, if appropriate, should be informed about the aims of the service and involved in the referral to the service.

It is important that discussions occur with the Leaving Care service regarding ongoing involvement by the Department (if any) and what this would be. This is relevant for those situations where post leaving care services are planned or warranted. Discussions should include the provision of services, ongoing liaison and information sharing. Comprehensive sharing of information is critical to the successful planning and implementation of leaving and after care services.

⁵ Refer to *Children and Community Services Act 2004*, Section 96 for definition of those who qualify for assistance

⁶ Definition included in Glossary of Terms, Appendix A (p. 16)

BRIEF GUIDELINES FOR ASSESSMENT

Leaving Care services assessment process

The assessment process undertaken by the Leaving Care service identifies the strengths of the young people and helps them to enhance their skills, set goals and build support networks.

The assessment form is part of the process of engaging and working with the young person. A common assessment form is included at Appendix C.

The assessment form is designed to be a shared activity with information obtained from the young person, referring agency, carer and other agencies.

The foster family or significant others in the young person's network may be included in the assessment process if the young person wishes.

The Leaving Care service ensures the young person understands the purpose of the assessment form which is a tool to assist in the development of a mutual understanding of the young person's areas of strength, habits and interests.

Confidentiality⁷

Confidentiality is not to be interpreted so as to create an obstacle to disclosing or sharing relevant information. Rather, information should be shared appropriately to inform relevant decision making and support positive outcomes for the young person. It is critical to ensure that the young person understands:

- Why the information is being collected
- The confidentiality of that information and how that information may be used
- Issues of consent and the purpose of the consent form on the front page of the assessment form which should be signed by the young person.

The young person should understand that he or she is able to view the assessment form at any time.

⁷ Definition included in Glossary of Terms, Appendix A (p. 16)

CASE MANAGEMENT PROTOCOLS

The Department for Community Development and Preparation for Leaving and After Care Services have a shared client group of young people and shared responsibility for meeting the needs of these young people.

PRINCIPLES

A collaborative relationship between the Leaving Care services and Department

Collaboration will ensure that common issues and any overlap or gaps in agency response can be dealt with effectively to enhance the service received by clients. A commitment to effective collaboration and co-ordination is important at and between all levels including:

- strategic policy and planning
- service planning and management
- service delivery.

The young person is the focus of case management

All agencies, including the Department, involved in the case management of the young person should work together for the benefit of the young person and adhere to the following practice principles:

- accessibility of services
- client driven service delivery
- holistic approaches to service delivery
- working collaboratively
- culturally and contextually appropriate service delivery
- ongoing review and evaluation
- building sustainability, and
- strengths based philosophy and practice.

Clear communication between the Leaving Care services and other agencies including the Department

There should be clear communication between all agencies involved in preparing the young person to leave care and supporting them afterwards.

There should be clarity about the role of the Leaving Care service in regard to direct service provision and advocacy and where the Leaving Care service coordinates the service provision by other agencies. This should include the forging of necessary links with other services to ensure that the needs of young people are met and they are supported to access mainstream services.

Leaving Care services need to be provided with comprehensive information by the Department and/or referring agency concerning the young person in order that appropriate service provision can occur.

Table of Case Management Protocols

Issue	Intent	Practice
Clients of the service receive timely and professional assistance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clear process for referral and assessment • Standardised referral practices • Strengths based support 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The services will receive referrals from the Department and discuss the urgency and appropriateness of the referral. Special provisions will be addressed. • Common referral processes will be used and information required for assessment will be supplied. • Teleconference referrals involving clients are available on request. • Service provision will have an emphasis on capacity building and be implemented using a strengths based approach to practice.
Information on Leaving Care services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Availability of accurate and up-to-date information about Leaving Care services 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Department will have up-to-date information about the Leaving Care services (service specification attached at Appendix E).
Access to DCD	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensuring access for Leaving Care services seeking case assistance 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Department provides a prompt enquiry and referral service in advertised office hours. • The first point of contact for a crisis situation is through the Case Worker who will: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➢ Discuss options over phone or make appointment ➢ Refer to departmental worker or service as appropriate. • After hours access and consultation is available through the Crisis Care Unit. • The CDFO can be contacted to informally discuss service specification issues. • Agencies have autonomy in decisions in relation to intake and service provision where the young person is no longer in the care of the CEO.
Confidentiality	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clients and agencies to be advised of policy and practice 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Each client is informed about confidentiality policies and practices including limitations to confidentiality. • Reasons for limit to confidentiality may include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➢ Legal, eg. subpoenas ➢ Ethical, eg. the need to protect children or the young person where risk issues are present ➢ Obligations of Freedom of Information Act ➢ Where there is clear possibility of self harm or harm to others ➢ Risk to young person, their family, support networks or peer group, or any other individual.
Information sharing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The services and Department will provide accurate client information at the point of referral and during assessment 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • With client consent the referrer, where there is significant involvement with the young person, will provide detailed and concise information about the situation which led to referral. • All relevant information including any known risk factors, protective factors⁸, specific needs, previous history, ongoing case work, concerns for children will be discussed at the point of referral and during assessment.

⁸ Definition included in Glossary of Terms, Appendix A (p. 16)

Duty of care	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Department has a duty of care to disclose all relevant information where a young person poses a risk to themselves or others 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A risk management plan for those young people who pose a risk to themselves or others will be developed by the Department and agreed upon by the Leaving Care service. On referral, the client is made aware of requirements and consequences should difficulties arise.
Protection of children of the young person (refer to Protocols re safety of client's children, p.14)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Where it is alleged a child has been harmed or is considered 'at risk' of maltreatment, the service is to refer to the Department 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The services may discuss protection concerns with a departmental officer. The Department may request a written referral from the Leaving Care service regarding protection concerns. The officer will receive referrals and process in accordance with Department Policy and Procedures. The referring organisation will be advised of the outcome of the referral. The Department will provide training and support to service staff in child protection issues.
Joint planning and review	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mutual clients receive appropriate support from the service and Department Openness and transparency is needed in decision making between stakeholders 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Where the Department has case management the Leaving Care service will be involved in the planning and review processes. The Department and services are to determine the continued involvement of the Department where the young person is no longer in the care of the CEO. Support and specialised services are provided in a coordinated and collaborative manner with maximum client input from the young person.
Strengthen local networks and establish collaborative relationships between the Department and Leaving Care services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Local departmental District Offices and Leaving Care services understand and know what each can provide 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Local departmental District Office and Leaving Care service staff will arrange ways in which teams can meet and understand each working environment. This may involve networking forums, visits to local agencies and joint training.
Resolution of differences	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Resolve differences speedily and professionally at local level. Identify points of contact 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The departmental District Office grievance procedure will be followed. This includes discussion with the field officer they have been dealing with and that officer's Team Leader or Manager. In cases where the situation is unable to be resolved within the District, the relevant Director may then be contacted.

PROTOCOLS FOR TRANSFERRING YOUNG PEOPLE BETWEEN SERVICES (EASTERN STATES AND NEW ZEALAND)

Transfer of a young person in the care of the CEO of the Department

Where a young person is in the care of the CEO, the Leaving Care service must ensure that any planned transfer to an Australian state/territory or New Zealand is made in full consultation with the Department. The procedures set out in the Field Worker Guidelines for interstate transfer of orders must be followed.

Where the Leaving Care service becomes aware that a young person intends to move to another state, the service will collaborate with the Department to ensure the safety of a young person. Where appropriate, the Leaving Care service will assist the young person to make contact with a similar service in the receiving state.

Information to support the transfer

Before initiating a transfer to a service in another state the service must first consult the receiving service.

Supporting information should be sent to the receiving service as soon as possible after a decision has been made to transfer a young person to another service or interstate.

When a young person from another state presents to a Western Australian Leaving Care service without the involvement of the Department and where the young person is in the care of the CEO of the corresponding child protection department in another state, the Leaving Care service must liaise with the department in that state and, if necessary, refer the young person to the Department for Community Development as soon as possible.

When a young person from another state presents to a Western Australian Leaving Care service and is not in the care of the CEO of the corresponding child protection department in another state, the Leaving Care service may choose to seek assistance from the department in that state and/or provide limited assistance to the young person.

The Leaving Care service must ensure that all immigration requirements are met where the transfer of a young person is planned between a Leaving care service and New Zealand, and the young person is not in the care of the CEO of the Department.

RELEASE AND EXCHANGE OF INFORMATION

Between the Department and Leaving Care services

The Department and Leaving Care Services will operate in a spirit of collaboration and cooperation in relation to the release and exchange of information according to Sections 22 and 23 of the *Children and Community Services Act 2004*.

At the point of referral to a Leaving Care Service and during assessment, the Department will provide accurate and relevant client information. Relevant information includes the specific needs of the young person, previous history, ongoing care plans and any known risk factors relating to the young person, their family, support and peer networks. It also includes articulation of the Department's Leaving Care Plan as reflected in the young person's final Care Plan meeting.

The Leaving Care service will provide any information requested by the Department while the young person is in the care of the CEO.

Between the Leaving Care services

The Leaving Care Services will operate in a spirit of collaboration and cooperation in relation to the release and exchange of information about a young person who may be transferring to another Leaving Care service or participating in a particular program offered by that service.

All relevant information will be discussed including the specific needs of the young person, previous history, ongoing care plans and any known risk factors relating to the young person, their family, support and peer networks.

Issues of confidentiality and gaining client consent

- The Leaving Care service will respect the privacy and confidentiality of the young person and the Department will be very clear from the start as to what information it intends to share with the Leaving Care Service.
- The young person will be given the opportunity to participate in decisions about the referral to a Leaving Care Service.
- While receiving assistance from a Leaving Care Service, the young person will be informed of situations where the service is required to notify the Department or other government agency. These situations may include where the young person is at risk, where a child or other vulnerable person is at risk or where the service has information that would potentially inform the Department's decision making about a child or young person.
- The young person will be asked to consent to the release of information. This information is released for purposes of assessment and case management and will be used in confidence by the Leaving Care service.

PROTOCOLS REGARDING YOUNG PERSON'S LEAVING CARE PLANNING MEETING

- At the time of referring a young person to a Leaving Care service, the Department will inform the service of the proposed date when it is anticipated that the young person will leave the care of the CEO.
- The Leaving Care service will participate in Care Plan meetings from the time of referral to the Leaving care service (as agreed with the young person).
- A final Care Plan meeting will occur prior to the young person leaving the care of the CEO. The outcome of the final Care Plan meeting will be a written Care Plan which will identify the needs of the young person who is preparing to leave the care of the CEO and outline steps or measures designed to assist the young person to meet those needs. It specifies the role of the Department and the Leaving Care service.
- A copy of the final or modified Care Plan⁹ will be provided to the Leaving Care service.

⁹ *Child and Community Services Act 2004* Division 5, Sub Division 3, Section 89.

Please note: Case planning decisions within the Care Plan are appealable to the Case Review Panel and State Administrative Tribunal.

PROTOCOLS WHERE THE LEAVING CARE SERVICE HAS A CONCERN ABOUT THE SAFETY OR DEVELOPMENT OF A CLIENT'S CHILD/REN

- Services are required to promote the wellbeing, including safety, of children. Where a young person who is a parent is accepted into a Leaving Care service and where the service has a concern about the development of a client's children, the Leaving Care service will discuss the situation with the young person and support them to seek appropriate assistance from a relevant agency. The service may provide assistance in the form of a referral to Parenting Services, Family Enhancement Service, Child Health Service or Child Development Centre.
- If a service becomes aware that a child has or is likely to experience sexual abuse or significant harm through other forms of abuse or neglect, and the parents have not, are unwilling or not able to protect the child, then the Department for Community Development or the Western Australia Police must be consulted and the matter referred. The service will also provide a written report to the Department as a matter of urgency.

TRANSITION TO INDEPENDENT LIVING ALLOWANCE (TILA)

Who can get TILA?

To qualify for TILA the young person must:

- be a permanent Australian resident; and
- be aged at least 15 years old and less than 26 years old; and
- be approaching or experiencing transition to independent living; and
- be at risk of an unsuccessful transition to independent living; and
- not have received TILA before; and
- have been in, or currently in, *formal care*¹⁰; and/or
- have been in, or currently in, *informal*¹¹ care.

Information about TILA

- TILA is a flexible and discretionary one-off payment up to the value of \$1000 provided by the Australian Government to help young people who are leaving, or have left, care arrangements move to independent living. It is designed to complement other support services for eligible young people.
- It is administered by the Leaving Care services and can be used to buy essential items such as furniture and bedding or to meet the costs of education.
- TILA is not made as a cash payment. Goods or services are usually purchased on behalf of the young person by a community organisation (or any other supporting organisation) helping the young person move to independent living.
- To obtain TILA, the young person and administering organisation (all Preparation for Leaving and After Care Services) must complete a referral assessment form which outlines what support is being sought. The administering organisation then processes the form and funds are provided to the community organisation to purchase goods and services on the young person's behalf.
- Further information can be obtained direct from the Australian Government Department of Family and Community Services.

- **Website:** <http://www.facs.gov.au> (click on 'Youth');
- **Phone:** 1300 653 227 (charged at the local call rate);
- **Email:** Helpdesk.TILA@facs.gov.au; or
- **Write:** to a FaCS office at GPO Box 9820 in your capital city.

¹⁰ To be considered to have been in, or to be currently in, *formal care* the young person must be the subject of a care and protection order that places him/her in the care and custody of someone who isn't the parent; or have been the subject of a care and protection order that placed the young person in the care and custody of someone who wasn't the parent and the order has ceased/expired because of their age.

¹¹ To be considered to have been in, or to be currently in, *informal care* the young person must have *Independent Status* for Centrelink payments; and currently be in, or have previously been in, informal out-of-home care; and / or currently be in, or have previously been in, Indigenous kinship care.

GLOSSARY OF TERMS

Agencies

Government departments, commissions, authorities, local government authorities, as well as non-government organisations such as incorporated associations, businesses, etc.

Confidentiality

The rules governing the release of an individual's personal information, that is, what information will be shared with whom, under what circumstances and for what purpose.

In the Care of the CEO of the Department for Community Development

A child is in the care of the CEO if they are in provisional protection and care, the subject of a care and protection order (time limited) or protection order (until 18), the subject of a negotiated placement agreement or is provided with placement services under Section 32(1)(a) of the *Children and Community Services Act 2004*. In addition, children in transitional consented placements are in the CEO's care under the *Children and Community Services Act 2004* (Regulations)¹²

Leaving Care

Leaving the care of the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of the Department for Community Development and moving to independent living.

Protocol

An agreement between agencies to enable all parties to gain maximum benefits and outcomes.

Protective factors

Those factors (individual, familial, community and environmental) that decrease the likelihood of adverse life outcomes. These may include attachment to family, school achievement and connectedness, positive view of oneself and the world, social support and ability to be adaptable and flexible.

Risk factors

Those factors (individual, familial, community and environmental) that increase the likelihood that particular negative life outcomes will occur. For young people this may include: suicide attempts and ideation, violence, alcohol and/or drug use, poor academic achievement or school failure, early sexual initiation, early pregnancy, criminal behaviour, antisocial behaviour and separation from parents and/or family.

Service

An activity or strategy which a service provider is contracted to provide as defined in the service agreement with the Department for Community Development.

Service provider

An organisation which has entered into an agreement with the Department for Community Development to provide a service and which is accountable for the provision of the service in accordance with the Service Agreement.

¹² This refers to transitional arrangements for children in consented placements prior to the proclamation of the *Children and Community Services Act 2004*

REFERRAL FORM

Date of referral ____/____/____

DETAILS OF YOUNG PERSON

Name _____ M / F

Age _____ Date of birth ____/____/____ Country of birth _____

Cultural identity _____

Has the young person agreed to this referral? Yes No

Address _____

_____ Post code _____ Phone _____

Please indicate if young person is living:

with parent/s	<input type="checkbox"/>	in residential care	<input type="checkbox"/>	other	<input type="checkbox"/>
In foster care	<input type="checkbox"/>	independently	<input type="checkbox"/>		
In relative care	<input type="checkbox"/>				

Proposed date for final care plan or date on which young person left the CEO's care¹³: _____**DETAILS OF YOUNG PERSON'S PARENTS**

Mother's name _____

Address _____

_____ Post code _____ Phone _____

Father's name _____

Address _____

_____ Post code _____ Phone _____

¹³ See Appendix A: Glossary of Terms

DETAILS OF CARER/S OR SIGNIFICANT OTHER

Name _____ Relationship _____

Address _____

_____ Post code _____ Phone _____

Please provide details if the young person has any dependants: _____

DETAILS OF REFERRER

Name of referring person _____

Please indicate if this is a referral made by:

Self

Preferred contact times and phone number _____

Agency

Name and address of agency _____

Telephone _____

Email _____

DCD

DCD office and address _____

Telephone _____

Email _____

PLEASE PROVIDE A BRIEF SOCIAL HISTORY OF THE REFERRED YOUNG PERSON INCLUDING REASONS FOR DEPARTMENTAL INVOLVEMENT AND ANY RISK FACTORS AND PROTECTIVE FACTORS THAT YOU PERCEIVE MAY BE ASSOCIATED WITH THIS YOUNG PERSON:

Please indicate the areas where you believe the young person needs assistance
 (also provide information on young person's strengths)

Life skills development _____ _____ _____ _____	<input type="checkbox"/>	Social development _____ _____ _____ _____	<input type="checkbox"/>
Communication skills _____ _____ _____ _____	<input type="checkbox"/>	Hygiene / Self Care skills _____ _____ _____ _____	<input type="checkbox"/>
Employment, education or training _____ _____ _____ _____	<input type="checkbox"/>	Medical management skills _____ _____ _____ _____	<input type="checkbox"/>
Accommodation/home maintenance _____ _____ _____ _____	<input type="checkbox"/>	Legal issues _____ _____ _____ _____	<input type="checkbox"/>
Budgeting/money management skills _____ _____ _____ _____	<input type="checkbox"/>	Other _____ _____ _____ _____	<input type="checkbox"/>

Please confirm that you have included with this referral form:

- Care plan details relating to leaving care

- A summary of any risk factors relating to the young person

- Details of any risk factors which may be associated with the young person's family, support networks or peer group

COMMON ASSESSMENT FORM

(For use by Preparation for Leaving Care and After Care Services)

- All information in this form is confidential and will be treated with respect
- Only information that will enable support to be provided will be requested
- Information will not be released to other people without the young person's consent
- The young person has a right to view the information that is recorded in this form.

YOUNG PERSON'S DETAILS

NAME_____	MALE / FEMALE
DATE OF BIRTH___/___/___	AGE_____
ADDRESS_____	
_____	POSTCODE_____
Please specify if this is the address of a relative, friend, agency or other: _____	
PHONE (____) _____	
MAIN LANGUAGE SPOKEN_____	
RELIGION_____	
CULTURE_____	

Please sign below to indicate that you agree with and consent to the service having access to the information in this form:

Date ___/___/___

FAMILY DETAILS

Do you have regular contact with members of your family? Yes No

If yes, which members do you have contact with?

Mother's name	Father's name
Address	Address
Post Code	Post Code
Phone (work)	Phone (work)
Phone (home)	Phone (home)
Mobile	Mobile
Occupation	Occupation
Partner if not father	Partner if not mother
Relationship information if applicable	Relationship information if applicable

Brothers and sisters

Name	(Please tick)			DOB	School name and year level/ OR occupation	Current residence
	Full	Step	Half			

Any other details

Do you have a partner? Yes No

Name of partner _____

Is your partner living with you? Yes No

Please give some details of this relationship (eg how long, how good)

Next of kin

Address
Post Code
Phone (work)
Phone (home)
Mobile
Occupation

Children

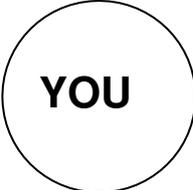
(If you have children, please complete the following)

<i>Child's name</i>	<i>M / F</i>	<i>DOB</i>	<i>Currently living with</i>

Please give details of any areas where you would like support or information about your parenting role:

SUPPORT NETWORKS

Please draw a map of your support network and significant relationships and write something about what is good about your relationship with those people.



SUPPORT NETWORKS

Who do you go to first when you need help? (eg. family member, friends, youth worker etc)

How accessible is this person/s?

When this person is not available, where do you go?

When was the last time you contacted someone for support?

INTERESTS, RECREATION LEISURE TRANSPORT

Please give details of your hobbies or interests and how you like to spend your spare time

Name any sporting clubs, groups or organisations that you belong to or attend

What do you do best? _____

Is there anything you don't like to do? _____

TRANSPORT

Please indicate if you ever

Catch a bus Catch a train Drive a car

Is there anything else about yourself that you would like to share?

COMMUNICATION SKILLS

How do you feel in the following situations?

	Great	Good	Not so good	Awful
Talking about yourself				
Discussing things with your family				
Communicating with friends				
Communicating with other people				
Talking about your situation with government agencies				
Communicating with teachers/employers				

Please describe how you would deal with the following:

Getting help if you needed it

Resolving a disagreement with a friend

Getting yourself out of debt

Missing an appointment

INDEPENDENT LIVING SKILLS

Can you:	Yes	Partially	No
Prepare a meal			
Plan daily / weekly menu			
Prepare a shopping list			
Shop for food			
Wash dishes			
Wash clothes, hang out, bring in and put away, iron clothes			
Clean house including toilet and bathroom			
Change linen and keep bedroom neat and tidy			
Maintain the property			
Maintain gardens			
Pay your own rent and bills			
Know what to do with noisy guests			
Know your rights and responsibilities as a tenant			
Get on with your neighbours			
Attend appointments on time			

Do you know where to pay the following bills?

	Yes	No
Electricity		
Gas		
Phone/mobile phone		
Water usage		
Insurance		
Rent		

ACCOMMODATION / HOUSING

	YES	NO	
1. Are you currently living independently?			If NO, go to Q3
2. Is your accommodation safe and secure?			
3. Have you ever lived independently?			If YES, please complete ACCOMMODATION HISTORY chart
4. Did your independent living work out?			If NO, give details
5. Why did you stop living independently?			
6. Are you thinking about living independently in the next 12 months?			If you answered NO, you might prefer to go straight to ACCOMMODATION GOALS
7. Do you know where you want to live?			If yes, please state where and why
8. Do you have adequate finances for the bond and an adequate income to move into independent accommodation?			
9. Do you know where you can access bond assistance?			
10. When living independently, have you ever been evicted?			Please give details
11. Do you owe money for past rentals?			If YES, how much? How are you arranging to deal with the debt?

ACCOMMODATION HISTORY

Date	Reason for accommodation	Accommodation type	Length of stay	Reason for leaving

ACCOMMODATION GOALS

I would like to learn more about the following (eg Bond assistance, using Real Estate Agents)

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

HEALTH

Please complete this section to assist in the case of sudden illness or hospitalisation while with the Leaving Care service (provide information only if available and young person is under 18 years of age).

Medicare Number: _____

Name on Medicare card _____

Name of General Practitioner _____ Phone _____

Please describe your current health including any medical conditions such as allergies, medication required, special dietary requirements, disability:

Do you suffer from any infectious diseases? Yes No

Details: _____

Please give details of any psychological or psychiatric issues including ADHD and medication, if required:

Do you use substances drugs or alcohol? Yes No

Please provide details including type of substance/drug of concern:

Does the young person pose a risk to other children/young people/adults? Yes No

Details: _____

Health problems

Name of health problem	Person who treats you for this problem	I take the following medication for this problem	I need a prescription for the medication Y/N

Do you look after your own medications? Yes No

If someone helps, please give details:

If you have ever been hospitalised, please give details:

Do you use, or have you ever used, alcohol or any other drugs? Yes No
(If No, move straight to Hygiene section),

Please give details about your alcohol/drug use:

Is your alcohol/drug usage likely to affect your ability to live independently? Yes No

Please give details _____

Have you ever asked for help for your drug/alcohol usage? Yes No

Please give details of help received including professional counselling, if any:

What do you think you could do to improve your health?

HYGIENE

How often do you?	Daily	Several times a week	Once a week	Hardly ever
Clean your teeth				
Shower or bath				
Wash your hair				
Wash your hands				
Wash your clothes				
Change your underwear				

Is there anything you would like to improve with regard to your personal hygiene?

FOOD AND NUTRITION

How often do you eat the following foods?	Never	Once a week	1 to 3 times a week	4 to 6 times a week	Daily
Fruit					
Vegetables					
Dairy products					
Bread and cereals					
Poultry					
Fish					
Meat					
Take away eg hamburgers, pizza					
Snacks eg chips, chocolate					
Skip a meal					

Do you have any goals regarding the types and amounts of food you eat?

EDUCATION, EMPLOYMENT AND TRAINING

Please complete appropriate section.

NB. If the young person is of compulsory school age¹⁴, sections A or B must be completed.

A. Do you attend school?

School name _____

School address _____

School Year level (eg Year 9) _____

Date of last attendance ____ / ____ / ____

Area of educational strengths (eg woodwork, art, history) _____

Special educational needs (eg speech therapy, tutoring) _____

Name of DCD Education Officer, if applicable _____ Phone _____

B. If you are of compulsory school age but not attending school are you part of an alternative educational program? Yes No

If yes, what program? _____

C. Do you attend TAFE (or other vocational program)?

Name of program/course _____

Address _____

Progress on program _____

D. Are you employed?

Place of employment _____

¹⁴ From 1 January 2006 the school leaving age will be at the end of the school year in which a child turns 16 years of age and from 1 January 2008 at the end of the school year in which a child turns 17 years of age.

Details of employment or training:

Date	Employer / Training Institution	Position / Course	Reasons For Leaving

LITERACY

How good are you at the following?

	Good	OK	Not good
Reading a book			
Reading a comic, magazine or newspaper			
Writing a letter			
Writing a story or poem			
Filling in forms			
Reading a road map			
Reading and following written directions			
Reading the telephone directory			
Using the computer			

Would you like to improve your skills in any of the above?

NUMERACY

How good are you at the following?

	Good	OK	Not good
Telling the time (digital and face clock)			
Reading a timetable			
Using an ATM			
Multiplying and dividing			
Adding and subtracting			
Using a calculator			
Measuring and weighing things			
Checking on change when shopping			
Knowing how much you have spent			

Which of the above skills would you like to improve?

Do you have a CV or Resumé? Yes No

Have you found it difficult to keep a job? Yes No

Details: _____

JOB SEARCH SKILLS

How confident do you feel doing the following?

	Good	OK	Not good
Filling out forms eg. Centrelink			
Writing a job application			
Looking for work			
Preparing for interviews			
Writing a resume			
Preparing for interviews			
Performing at interviews			
Speaking with potential employers			
Working out training options			
Finding relevant courses			
Applying for courses			
Completing courses			

What are your education, training and job search goals?

ASSETS

To live independently, you might need some or all of the following.
Please indicate if you have any:

	Yes	No		Yes	No		Yes	No
Whitegoods			Crockery			Bed		
Pots/pans			Tables/chairs			Linen		
Cutlery			Lounge setting			Blankets/towels		

Do you need assistance to get these items? Yes No

Details: _____

FINANCIAL DETAILS

Tax File Number (if you have one) _____

Do you get a benefit from Centrelink?

Yes Type of benefit _____

No I receive money from _____

Do you have your own bank account?

Yes Details of account (optional) _____

No My money is looked after by _____

I would like help or information about starting a bank account Yes No

Do you pay your own bills?

Yes How do you do this? _____

No My bills are paid by _____

Do you have any debts? Yes No

If yes, details _____

Do you have a budget? Yes No

I would like help to set up a budget Yes No

LEGAL ISSUES

Are you involved with a Juvenile Justice team? Yes No

Detail of bail conditions/supervision orders _____

Are you required to attend court? Yes No

Date/s of appearance _____

Court _____

Juvenile Justice Officer _____

Phone Number _____

Please provide further details (for example history of conviction, any pending court cases):

Have you lodged a civil claim and or a Criminal Injuries Compensation Claim? Yes
No

Do you have any outstanding fines? Yes No

Details: _____

YOUR IDENTITY

Do you have any of the following documents?

Primary documents

- | | | | |
|---------------|--------------------------|--------------------|--------------------------|
| Passport | <input type="checkbox"/> | Birth Certificate | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Birth Extract | <input type="checkbox"/> | Drivers Licence | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 18+ card | <input type="checkbox"/> | Immigration papers | <input type="checkbox"/> |

Secondary documents

- | | | | |
|----------------------|--------------------------|-------------------|--------------------------|
| Bankbook / statement | <input type="checkbox"/> | Health Care Card | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Pension Card | <input type="checkbox"/> | Group Certificate | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Tax Assessment | <input type="checkbox"/> | Utility Accounts | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Marriage Certificate | <input type="checkbox"/> | | |

Are there any identification documents you would like help or advice to obtain?

APPENDIX D

CONSENT FORM

I, _____ (name of young person) give permission for
the staff of _____ (name of service)
to release information regarding:

to the staff of _____ (name of service).

This may be done verbally or in writing, whichever is appropriate for the situation.

Permission will cease upon client case closure or at the request of the young person.

Young person's signature _____

Date _____

Witness _____

Name _____

Position _____

SERVICE SPECIFICATIONS

GENERIC SERVICE SPECIFICATION FOR PREPARATION FOR LEAVING AND AFTERCARE SERVICE

The Department for Community Development has the major responsibility for services which enhance the wellbeing of the community by strengthening families and protecting children from harm. The vision of the Department is improved social well being for all individuals, families and communities in Western Australia.

The Department is committed to ensuring equity and access to services. Not-for-profit organisations funded by the Department should endeavour to provide services which are appropriate and accessible to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and people from cultural and linguistically diverse backgrounds.

This service falls within the Department for Community Development output area of Care and Safety Services.

Description of the Funded Service and its Purpose

The State Homelessness Taskforce (2002) found that young people leaving the care of the state often lack the support networks available to other young people and are particularly vulnerable to homelessness.

The Government of Western Australia has responded with funding for Preparation for Leaving and Aftercare Services focussing on young people in state care who engage in high risk behaviour, have had multiple out of home placements and have limited support networks.

Young people in state care are wards and non-wards placed in out of home care by the Department. A significant proportion of young people in state care are Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and the service has particular skills and links to effectively work with them.

Young people have said it is important to acquire daily living skills preparatory to leaving care. These skills should include the ability to sustain safe and stable living arrangements, manage and plan finances, prepare meals (buy economically and cook food), and practical organisational skills such as housekeeping, completing forms and making appointments.

The service engages and works intensively with young people; helps them to enhance their skills, build support networks, develop social skills and improve relationships and community links to assist them to successfully move on to independent living. The service draws on the strengths of young people and assists them to develop and use those strengths and skills. It provides practical support such as helping to find and maintain accommodation, dealing with legal issues and matters relating to the young person's health and wellbeing.

The Preparation for Leaving and Aftercare Service has three distinct elements. Young people may enter, re-enter or leave the service at any stage. The various elements of the service have effective inter-agency collaboration particularly between the Department's carers, caseworkers, the service and other agencies. The service receives referrals from Child Placement Agencies as well as the Department for Community Development.

The three elements are:

1) Preparation before leaving care

Preparation before leaving care is a key focus of the service. It is a planned approach developed with the active involvement of the young person, the Department and other significant people. The service becomes involved before at-risk young people leave care and works closely with the Department, placement agencies and foster parents to enhance the young person's readiness for a shift to independence. The Department's Looking After Children Assessment and Action Record is a planning tool used at this stage.

2) Moving to independent living

This element of the service supports the young person in the transition phase. It includes assistance to access and maintain suitable accommodation and entry into employment, training or education. The service ensures the actual move to independent living is well organised and assists in developing positive linkages and continuing support.

3) Aftercare whilst living independently

Once the young person is in independent living, the service provides aftercare assistance including advice, referral and encouragement to pursue pathways to employment, housing, health and other endeavours. The service provides a point of contact so that occasional ongoing practical and emotional support continues, if needed, until the young person is aged in the mid 20's.

Local descriptive details should be added here

This includes the location of the service, the geographical area to be covered and where appropriate local requirements including days and hours of operation.

Target Groups

- Young people aged between 14 to 25 years who are in the care of the Department¹⁵ or who have recently left the care of the Department with priority to those who have experienced multiple placements, or lack established networks, or are associated with multiple risks.
- Young people who meet the above criteria and are preparing to leave care.
- Young people over 16 years who have left the care of the department and are moving to independent living.
- Referrals from the Department for Community Development.

Service provision should reflect, where appropriate, the cultural make up of the target group.

Outcome Objectives

1. Young people have increased knowledge, skills and confidence to support their progress toward independent living and to reduce the likelihood of crises on leaving care.
2. Young people access alternative safe supportive long-term living if a return to family is not appropriate.
3. Young people improve their relationships with their families or communities where appropriate (as perceived by the young people).
4. Young people have links with appropriate services (eg employment, training, education, accommodation, counselling and recreational) and maintain their involvement for a minimum specified period.

¹⁵ Wards and non-wards placed in out of home care by the Department.

5. Young people develop a network of social and personal support systems to assist them to manage in independent living.

Service Activities

- Collaborative work with the Department for Community Development, the young person, foster parents, other carers and services
- involvement by the young person in case management and support planning
- emotional support and practical assistance
- one to one supportive contact with the young person on a regular basis
- ongoing contact
- peer mentoring
- activities to identify and build daily living skills including
 - managing money and savings
 - preparing meals (buying and cooking food)
 - housekeeping
 - practical organisational skills such as completing forms and making appointments
 - positive coping skills, decision making skills, independent living skills
- information, brokerage and liaison with a range of services which assist towards independent living
- family liaison
- assistance to access other services including:
 - accommodation
 - budgeting, income entitlements and financial assistance
 - education, employment and training opportunities
 - recreational activities
 - medical care
 - treatment services
- assistance to develop social networks and personal support systems to assist in maintaining independent living.

Output Measures

1. The number of weeks, days and hours per week the service was available in the reporting period.
2. The number and proportion of case plans developed with young people in the reporting period.
3. The number and proportion of young people assisted in the reporting period, including a breakdown by:
 - age
 - ethnicity
 - Aboriginal and Torres Straight Islander
 - gender
 - disability
 - the number of out of home placements of each young person.
4. The number and proportion of young people who use the service at the stage of:
 - preparation before leaving care
 - moving to independent living
 - aftercare whilst living independently.

5. The number and proportion of young people for whom referrals to other services were made in the reporting period, by service type.
6. The number of young people provided with different types of support by support service type in the reporting period.

Outcomes Measures

1. The number and proportion of young people who demonstrate increased knowledge and skills in the areas indicated in their case plans as assessed by the young person and the worker.
2. The level of confidence of consumers to manage in the future.
3. The number and proportion of young people requesting assistance to obtain accommodation who have their needs for accommodation met in accordance with case plans.
4. The number and proportion of young people who indicate that family or community relationships have been maintained or improved where appropriate (as perceived by the young people).
5. The number of young people who have links to appropriate services (eg employment, training, education, accommodation, counselling and recreational) and who maintain their involvement for a minimum specified period. (The specified period should refer to a reasonable expectation for each consumer).
6. The number of young people who report they have developed improved personal and community support networks as a result of the services provided.

Service Standards and Principles

The service adopts principles based on a strengths based approach and active participation by young people. The service includes young people in all decisions that affect them and gives practical application to this principle as they grow to self-sufficiency.

Service standards include those relating to:

- **Care and protection principles**

Standards and practice adopted by the service promote the ongoing care and protection of young people leaving care.

- **Best practice worker selection principles**

The service employs staff with relevant skills and competencies and makes criminal and Department for Community Development record checks prior to the employment of all workers (including students and volunteers) where a duty of care for children or young people exists.

- **Clear information**

The service provides clear information about the services it offers and a document describing the standards of service young people can expect to receive. This includes attention to privacy and confidentiality.

- **Other relevant standards and protocols including case management protocols**

Case management is based on the identification of goals in collaboration with the young person and the development of support plans to achieve these. The Department retains case management responsibility for young people in the Department's care. The service has case management responsibility for young people no longer in the Department's care. The service achieves the *SAAP Service Standards for the Delivery of Services in Western Australia* and the *WA SAAP Protocols*.