



Living in the ACT

## IMPORTANT LEAVING CARE STUFF YOU NEED TO KNOW

**Did you know that there are supports in place for young people who exit out-of-home care (either when they become independent, their court orders expire or they turn 18)?**

This information sheet explains what transition from care plans are (leaving care plans), and what should go into a plan. It gives you extra information about the supports, rules and processes in the Australian Capital Territory (ACT).

### **Q. What does the law say about young people leaving care?**

- A. In the ACT there is legislation called the Children and Young People Act, 2008, this says how laws on transitioning from care are put into practice. The section relating to transitioning from care is Chapter 16, Part 538 – What is a transition plan?  
[www.legislation.act.gov.au/a/2008-19/current/pdf/2008-19.pdf](http://www.legislation.act.gov.au/a/2008-19/current/pdf/2008-19.pdf)

### **Q. Who is responsible for transition planning; who do I talk to if I don't have a plan?**

- A. Care and Protection case workers are responsible for developing your transition plan. If you don't have an assigned case worker you can still contact your local Department of Disability, Housing and Community Services (DHCS) office, or your placement provider to say you'd like to start planning. The phone number for your local centre is available at [www.dhcs.act.gov.au](http://www.dhcs.act.gov.au) or by calling 133 427.

### **Q. At what age does the leaving care planning start?**

- A. The accepted practise is that planning for leaving care should start at age 16.

### **Q. What happens after I turn 18?**

- A. Before you have left care, your plan should describe the supports in place for you, and who is responsible.

If you have left care and you need extra support that's not in your plan you can contact:

- the Department of Disability, Housing and Community Services, Care and Protection; either your worker specifically or else ask to speak to a Team Leader. If you explain your situation, they may be able to offer some assistance or advice.
- your Agency (Marymead/Galilee/Life Without Barriers/Premier Youth Works/Richmond Fellowship/Barnardos/etc and talk to your worker. If you explain your situation, they may be able to offer some assistance or advice.
- CREATE Foundation for referral and advice:
  - T** 1800 655 105 or 02 6253 1451
  - A** Belconnen Commercial Chambers, Cnr Lathlain and Cohen St, Belconnen, Level 1
  - E** [create@create.org.au](mailto:create@create.org.au)
  - W** [www.create.org.au](http://www.create.org.au)

1800 655 105

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

**Q. What if nothing happens when I ask for a plan? (making a complaint)**

- A. Sometimes these things take time. However, your plan is VERY important! If you have not had a response within a week, you could try writing the worker a letter, sending an email or ringing. It's good to keep records of how you tried to contact your worker and the date.

If your worker has not contacted you to set a meeting time within a month you should ask to speak with a Team Leader or Manager, telling them the steps you've taken, and saying you would like their help to set a date for planning.

If after *all* of this you still have not been involved in developing your transition plan then you can give feedback or make a complaint to either the Children's Advocate or the Public Advocates of the ACT there are three listed below:

**Consumer Advocacy and Quality Service staff at DHCS**

**T** 6205 0473 or 6207 4504  
**E** DHCSConsumerAdvoca@act.gov.au  
**W** www.dhcs.act.gov.au/complaints\_and\_advocacy

**Public Advocates of the ACT**

**T** (02) 6207 0707  
**A** Level 3, 12 Moore St, Canberra City, ACT 2601  
**E** pa@act.gov.au  
**W** www.publicadvocate.act.gov.au

**ACT Children & Young People Commissioner**

**T** (02) 6205 2222  
**A** Level 4, 12 Moore St, Canberra City, ACT. 2601  
**E** ACTkids@act.gov.au  
**W** www.hrc.act.gov.au/childrenyoungpeople

**What other supports should I know about?**

You might want to check out the Department of Disability, Housing and Community Services website at [www.dhcs.act.gov.au](http://www.dhcs.act.gov.au).

**TILA**

The Transition to Independent Living Allowance (TILA) is a national, one-off payment of up to \$1500 that helps people 15 to 25 pay for things like utility connections, moving expenses, appliances, education etc. Visit [www.tila.org.au](http://www.tila.org.au) or ask your case worker for more information

**There are also heaps of links and information about leaving care at  
[www.createyourfuture.org.au](http://www.createyourfuture.org.au)**

We hope this information and the *What's the Plan?* calendar have given you some handy hints about leaving care. As you move towards 18 you might have some more questions....

To make contact with your case worker you will need to call the Department's main number and ask to speak with your case worker directly: 133 427

If you have a question for CREATE, or need some more information contact us  
1800 655 105 or 02 6253 1451 or [act@create.org.au](mailto:act@create.org.au)  
or visit [www.create.org.au](http://www.create.org.au) and [www.createyourfuture.org.au](http://www.createyourfuture.org.au)