

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 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 Western Australia.

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

- A. In WA there is legislation called the *Children and Community Services Act 2004*. This says what the law is about leaving care, and it's put into practice through government policy called the *Policy on Leaving Care 2008*
www.community.wa.gov.au/DCP/Publications/PoliciesAndStrategicPlans

Q. Who is responsible for leaving care planning? Who do I talk to if I don't have a plan?

- A. Your case worker is responsible for developing your leaving care plan with you. If you don't have an assigned case worker you can still contact your local Department for Child Protection office to say you'd like to start planning for leaving care.
The phone number for your district office is available at www.community.wa.gov.au/DCP/ContactUs or call (08) 9222 2555. You can also get help from the Advocate for Children in Care - (08) 9222 2518.

Q. At what age does the transition planning start?

- A. Government policy says planning should start when a young person is between 14 and 17 years old.

Q. What happens after I turn 18?

- A. Your leaving care plan should describe the supports that will be in place for you once you have left care. If you have already left care, and you need extra support that's not in your plan, you can go back and ask for help at any time until you reach the age of 25. Contact your District Office, your Transition Support Service, or the Advocate for Children in Care.

Q. What if nothing happens when I ask for a plan?

- A. Sometimes these things take time. However, your plan is VERY important! If you have not heard anything within a week of asking for a plan to be organised, 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. Another option is to contact the Advocate for Children in Care, who can help you do these things or contact the office on your behalf to make sure you get a response.

If you've chosen to try on your own and your worker still hasn't contacted you to set a meeting time within a month, you can 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. Again, the Advocate for Children in Care can help you do this, talk to them for you, or help you to make a formal complaint if that's your choice.

1800 655 105

www.create.org.au

You can give feedback and get support to make a complaint by contacting either:

The Advocate for children in Care

T 1800 460 696, 0429 086 508 or (08) 9222 2518

E judith.garsed@dcd.wa.gov.au

W www.childprotection.wa.gov.au

Department for Child Protection - Complaints Management Unit

T (08) 9222 2594 or 1800 013 311

A 189 Royal Street, East Perth, WA 6004

W www.childprotection.wa.gov.au

A flow chart is enclosed showing how you can go about this; giving you the necessary contact details.

What other supports should I know about?

- You might want to check out the Department for Child Protection at www.childprotection.wa.gov.au. There is some information there for young people leaving care.
- You can contact the Advocate for Children in Care at any time before you reach 25 for information and support to get the help you need.
- Western Australia has special leaving care services which provide case management, accommodation and support to young people during their transition and after they have left care. These services are:
 - Salvation Army, Crossroads West (08) 9328 1655
 - Wanslea Family Services (08) 9581 5843 (My Place, PEEL District and South Rockingham)
 - Mission Australia (Naig8, South West & Great Southern District) (08) 97224600
- **TILA:** The Transition to Independent Living Allowance (TILA) is a national, one-off payment of up to \$1500 that helps young people 15 to 25 years old who have been in care or have exited care pay for things like utility connections, moving expenses, appliances, education etc. Visit www.tila.org.au or ask your case worker for more information
- The Department of Education and Training provides various options for financial assistance for prospective Vocational Education and Training (VET) students, based on the student's concession status, unemployment status, or their capacity to pay. Ask your case worker about this or ring VET on (08) 99238 2441.
- Ida Curtois Awards: The annual Ida Curtois Achiever Awards provides financial assistance to young people aged 15 to 25 years who have been in the Department's care and are continuing with their further education. Have a look at www.community.wa.gov.au/DCP/Resources/Awards/Ida_Curtois_Award.htm

If you are a young person with a disability you may be eligible for lots of different supports.

Talk to your case worker or ask for information and advice support from the Disability Services Commission on (08) 9426 9200 or at www.dsc.wa.gov.au

There are also heaps of links and information about leaving care at 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...

If you want to speak with your case worker contact the Department on (08) 9222 2555 and ask to speak to your case worker.

Call the Advocate for Children in Care on (08) 9222 2518.

Call CREATE with questions or for need more information on 1800 655 105 or (08) 9470 6155.

E wa@create.org.au **W** www.create.org.au and www.createyourfuture.org.au