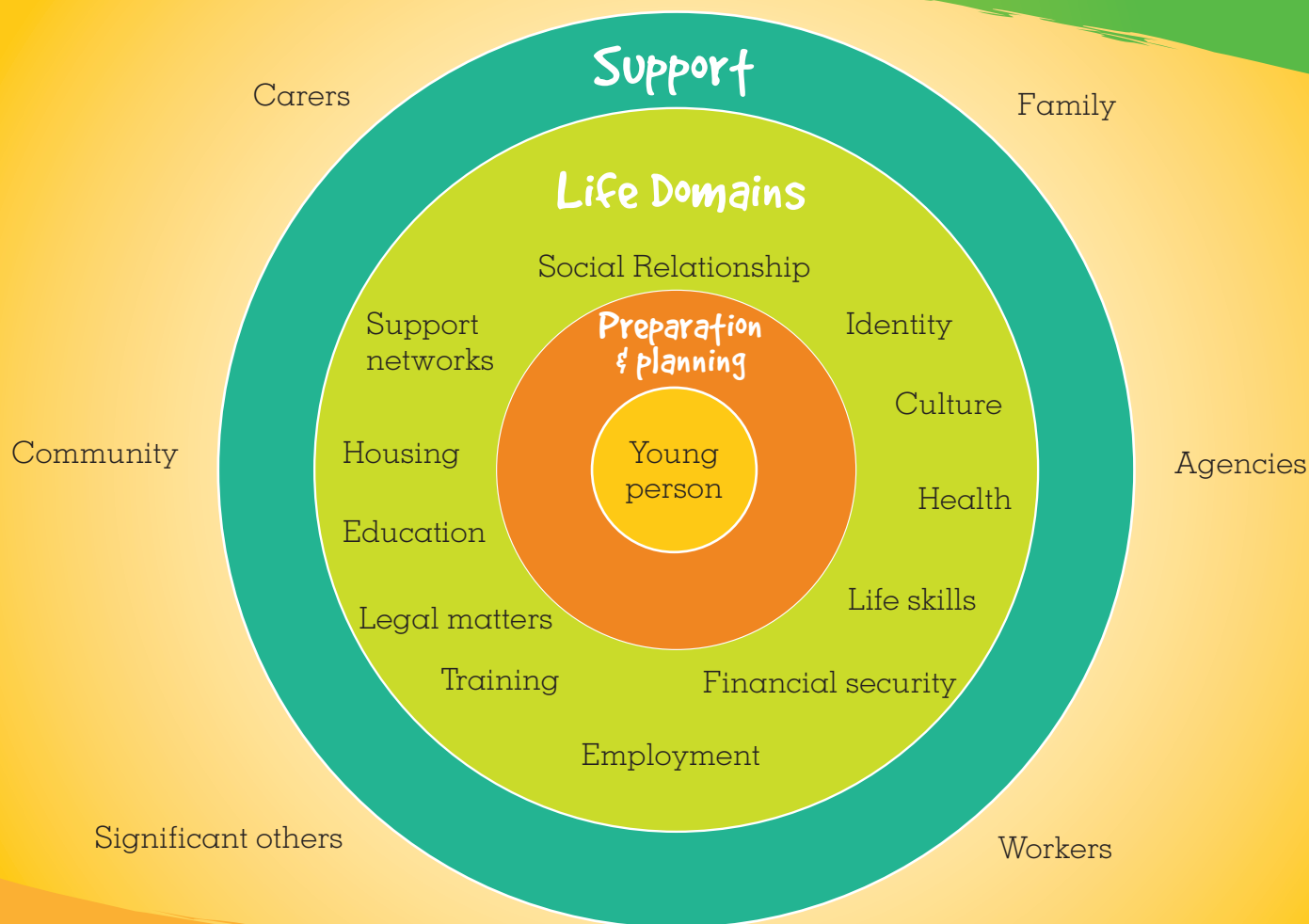


Supporting young people transitioning from out-of-home care to independence in Australia: good practice in 2011/12

A Priority under the National Framework for
Protecting Australia's Children





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The document must be attributed as the Department of Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs National Research Agenda for Protecting Children 2011-2014.



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All illustrations kindly donated by children, including some children living in care



Contents

Foreword	1
Introduction	2
Preparation phase	3
Transition phase	13
After care independence phase	23
Across the continuum	27
More information	29



Foreword

Transitioning from out-of-home care to Independence: A Nationally Consistent Approach to Planning (the Approach) was agreed by Ministers at the Standing Council on Community, Housing and Disability Services in October 2011. This is an important step towards ensuring that young people who are transitioning from out-of-home care are provided with consistent planning, no matter where they live.

The Approach was informed by the evidence of what constitutes best practice transition planning. An earlier discussion paper, *Transitioning from out of home care to independence* (December 2010), summarised the key evidence about the support requirements of young people leaving care. According to Mendes (2011)¹, best practice planning:

- > is an ongoing and dynamic process based on the levels of maturity and skill development of young people
- > is supported by flexible plans, monitoring of progress, and regular review
- > recognises the role relevant parties have to play.

The Approach (Attached Table 1) represents an evidence-based, whole of system response to the needs of these vulnerable young people to drive much needed improvements in the support provided to them through the transition process. Significantly, planning is to consider the needs and areas of support for these young people commencing no later than 15 years, up to age 25.

Based on the research evidence about what works for young people leaving care, the Approach identifies three core elements considered essential in the transition from out-of-home care to independence:

- > the participants to be included in the process
- > the planning and support processes to be undertaken
- > the life domains to be addressed.

As well as identifying the core elements to be considered throughout the process, the Approach also includes the particular focus of support to be addressed to provide young people leaving care with the practical help they need:

- > to prepare for their transition to independence effectively
- > as they make their transition out of the care and protection system into the broader support system
- > after they leave care, up to age 25.

The Approach is holistic, requiring child protection workers and others working with young people to address their needs across the following range of life domains:

- > Housing/accommodation
- > Health (physical, emotional – including self-esteem, mental, sexual and dental)
- > Education and training, employment or other suitable activity
- > Financial security
- > Social relationships and support networks
- > Life (and after care) skills
- > Identity and culture
- > Legal matters

Transitioning from out-of-home care to Independence: a Nationally Consistent Approach to Planning is available at www.fahcsia.gov.au under the 'Families and Children' subject area, then 'Publications and Articles'.

¹ Philip Mendes, Guy Johnson and Badal Moslehuddin *Young People Leaving State Out-of-home Care: Australian policy and practice* Australian Scholarly Publishing, Melbourne, 2011.

Introduction

In conjunction with their agreement to *Transitioning from out-of-home care to Independence: A Nationally Consistent Approach to Planning* (the Approach), Commonwealth and state and territory Community and Disability Services Ministers also committed to drive further improvement and national innovation through the production of a supporting online resource outlining good practice across jurisdictions.

Investments are being made across all jurisdictions to improve the effectiveness of the transition to independence for young people leaving out-of-home care and provide opportunities for them to reach their full potential. The nationally consistent approach to leaving care planning will be implemented by all jurisdictions and a wide range of programs and initiatives which support young people transitioning from out-of-home care to independence are already aligned with the Approach.

This good practice guide has been developed to document and share some of the initiatives that support young people transitioning from out-of-home care to independence across Australia in 2011/12. The primary target audience includes policy makers and non-government organisations, although the information may also be of interest to young people, carers, families and others.

Many elements of planning in the nationally consistent approach to transitioning from care are part of normal case management and may not be reflected by a particular program response that can be summarised for inclusion in this resource. Instead, this good practice guide includes some examples of specific programs or resources in each jurisdiction that support and complement case management. It shares information on examples of practice that align with the nationally consistent approach to leaving care planning. It also includes some initiatives for specific groups such as Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people, young people with disability and teenage parents. It is recognised that practice will change over time and this document is a point-in-time resource to assist in implementation of the nationally consistent approach.

The Approach conceptualises the transition from out-of-home care to independence as a process involving three overlapping phases, preparation, transition and after care independence, occurring along a continuum, commencing no later than age 15 years and continuing up to age 25 where the young person needs and/or desires ongoing assistance. Progression through the phases is based on the levels of maturity and skill development of the young person, rather than a particular age. While the core elements are to be addressed in planning across the transition, the particular focus of planning differs in each of the three phases.

This resource sets out examples of practice relevant to each phase of transition, followed by examples that traverse the continuum. The examples highlight key messages such as the importance of involving the young person as an active and empowered participant in the planning process, that adequate preparation and planning facilitate a successful transition, and that it is equally important to focus on both a young person's social as well as economic and financial transition. Case studies are incorporated to illustrate the benefits of particular support strategies in facilitating a successful transition to independence.

Preparation phase

The Approach recognises the importance of adequate preparation and planning for transition.

Case Plan (Qld)

In Queensland, case planning is undertaken by the Department of Communities (Child Safety Services) to ensure children and young people in out-of-home care receive the care and support they need. A case plan must be developed and regularly reviewed for each child or young person in need of protection (*Child Protection Act 1999*, section 51A). Case planning is a participative process that involves a cycle of assessment, planning, implementation and review. Structured Decision Making (SDM) was implemented across Queensland in 2005 to assist Child Safety Services practitioners in making decisions about children, young people and families. SDM assists decision-making by allowing a practitioner to organise facts and evidence gathered, and is used in conjunction with the practitioner's professional judgement. For young people transitioning to independence a young person's strengths and needs are continually assessed with the assistance of the Child Strengths and Needs SDM tool. The specific life domains assessed include relationships and connections, cultural and personal identity, placements and housing, employment, education and training, life skills and financial resources.

The Approach focuses on the young person as central to their leaving care planning, including through ensuring the young person is informed about the process and is empowered to be an active participant.

Children and Young People Act 2008 (ACT)

The *Children and Young People Act 2008* recognises the important role children and young people have in decision making processes regarding children and young people services. Decision makers are required to engage a child or young person and take into account their views and wishes when making decisions affecting their wellbeing, care and protection.

The Act has recently been amended to include specific provisions regarding transitioning from out-of-home care to adulthood. These provisions include transition planning, assistance after leaving out-of-home care, financial assistance and assistance to access records and information while in state care.

In practice, the ACT Office for Children, Youth and Family Support utilises case meetings, transition planning, annual reviews and family conferencing as mechanisms for engaging with children and young people.

Case and Care Plan (Tas)

In Tasmania, a case plan must be developed and regularly reviewed for each child or young person in a process that involves the case manager, the young person and the carer. Family members and other professionals involved in the young person's life are encouraged to participate in the development of the plans to support the transition from care. A detailed guide is available to staff to assist in developing Case and Care Plans for young people (15 years and above) who are preparing to leave care and/or for young adults who have left care.

What's the Plan? Campaign Materials (National)

The *What's the Plan?* campaign was initiated by CREATE Foundation in 2009 in an attempt to raise awareness about the importance of transition from care planning amongst young people 15-17 years old, and to motivate out-of-home care staff and carers to ensure that young people leaving care have a transition from care plan.

In 2010, 2011 and 2012 a suite of materials were developed and distributed directly to prospective care leavers with support from state and territory governments. The materials include information explaining what a plan is, why planning is important, what should go in a plan and how to go about developing or securing a plan. The resources also include links to services and supports that are relevant to preparation, transition and after care.

Your Next Step (NSW)

Your Next Step: Information for young people leaving care is an information booklet for young people leaving care provided by the NSW Government. *Your Next Step* provides basic information and referral options under each case planning area for transitioning to independence. The resource aims to ensure that young people understand their entitlements to a leaving care plan and casework support, and that they are aware of available supports and services and how to access them.

Children Youth and Families Act 2005 (Vic)

The Victorian *Children, Youth and Families Act 2005* (CYFA) requires the Secretary of the Department of Human Services (the Secretary) to provide support for young people who are, or have been, subject to Custody or Guardianship Orders, up to the age of 21 years. These supports are designed to ensure that young people leaving care do not enter adulthood isolated and unskilled, but rather that they are connected to appropriate support networks, their family, community and culture; have the skills and experience needed to lead an independent and good life.

Things That Matter Checklists (Vic)

Things That Matter checklists assist young people, case managers and carers when preparing and planning for young people transitioning from out-of-home care, and were developed with the assistance of CREATE and the Foster Care Association of Victoria. These prompt sheets have been developed to guide and prioritise the planning and support for young people who are transitioning from out-of-home care.

Leaving Care Mentoring (Vic)

The state wide *Leaving Care Mentoring* program aims to provide young people currently in out-of-home care aged from 15 years to post care with the opportunities to interact with adults in community settings and to promote personal relationships that mitigate against social isolation.

Leaving Care Support for Aboriginal Young People (Vic)

The Aboriginal Leaving Care initiative provides a state-wide model that ensures culturally appropriate support for Aboriginal young people between the ages of 16 and 21 years who are, or were, subject to a Custody or Guardianship to the Secretary order to transition to sustainable independence by providing:

- > Transition Support – expert advice on transition planning in consultation with the young person, their case workers and significant others. The identification of the young person's needs as well as the required actions to ensure the needs will be addressed must commence at least six months prior to the final cessation of their Custody or Guardianship order.
- > Post Care Assistance - to address challenges in young people's move to sustainable independence following the expiry of their final statutory order. This could include personal supports, housing, education/employment, parenting and family connection (or re-connection) supports.

Viewpoint (WA)

In WA, the *Viewpoint* tool provides additional opportunities for the young person's input. It is an interactive software program through which young people can provide feedback about their experiences, wishes and worries.

IgnitionWA Website (WA)

The website, *IgnitionWA*, is a one-stop shop for young people leaving care in Western Australia. The site is dedicated to assisting with the transition to independent living, providing useful information including links to services, advice as well as stories from young people about their leaving care experiences.

Transition from Care Kits

Time to Fly (ACT)

The *Time to Fly* resource kit is designed to assist young people when leaving care to transition to living independently. The resource is a joint initiative between the CREATE Foundation and the Office for Children, Youth and Family Support, based on the successful Tasmanian model, which provides practical life skills information.

My Stuff leaving care kit (SA)

The *My Stuff* leaving care kit was developed through a consultative process between young people, the CREATE Foundation, Alternative Care Service Providers, the Office of the Guardian for Children and Young People and Families SA, and launched in 2007. The kit was designed as a flexible exploratory planning tool and resource folder for young people (from 15 years of age) under the guardianship of the Minister. With assistance and support from a member of the care team, the kit is designed to assist young people collate appropriate information under the designated topics, prepare for their transition from care, and assist them when living independently. Families SA are currently reviewing the existing *My Stuff* Leaving Care Kit in collaboration with the CREATE Foundation.

Outta Here: Your Options, Your Choices (Tas)

In Tasmania, young care leavers are provided with the *Outta Here: Your Options, Your Choices* kit which has information to help them embark on the next steps to independence, including around further education, employment, managing money and sharing accommodation. The package was developed by key groups including the Foster Carers Association of Tasmania (FCAT), the CREATE Foundation, as well as the Office of Child and Youth Affairs, Beyond Blue, departmental and community based workers.

Go Your Own Way kits (Qld)

The CREATE Foundation, in consultation with Department of Communities (Child Safety Services), developed the *Go Your Own Way* kits which are given to young people in out-of-home care when they turn 17. The kit is delivered in a handy satchel and includes a cookbook, job guide, journal with words of advice and inspiration from CREATE young people who have already made the journey from care to independence. It also contains a folder with relevant information which will assist young people transitioning from out-of-home care by providing practical information to support them to live independently, seek appropriate assistance when required and manage their own affairs.

The Approach highlights the importance of a leaving care plan that is user friendly and guides the young person by addressing aspects such as goals, actions, responsibilities and timeframes.

Case Planning and Review template (NSW)

In 2011, Community Services introduced a new Case Planning and Review template to support consistent case planning. The template facilitates young people's participation in case planning for leaving care and records objectives, tasks, responsibilities and timeframes for key measures of wellbeing.

Preparation and planning for the transition to independence (WA)

In collaboration with community sector partner agencies, the Department for Child Protection WA has developed tools and case practice guidance to assist Child Protection Workers in planning with young people for leaving care. Preparation and planning around leaving care begins when a young person reaches 15 years of age. The case practice guide and Leaving Care Tip Sheets for staff highlight the focus on early engagement with young people in the preparation and planning for their transition to independence.

The department also funds 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.

Angela's Story – preparing for leaving care and becoming independent

My experience of being in care was quite positive.

I was 14 years old when I went into care and had a pretty stable time in placements and with my workers. I always knew who my worker was and how to contact them. The department was also very supportive of my needs and I found always acted in my best interests when it came to funding, opportunities and my support needs. This I found really helpful as I felt that the department and I were on the same team, not fighting against each other, which is how a lot of young people describe their care experience. Participation was at the core of my time in care. I participated in majority of the decisions being made from going to court, to case plan meetings, to where I would be living and the change over from old CSOs to new CSOs. Participation for me meant being asked about what I thought and what my goals and wishes were for the future. It was also important for me to be a part of the process, for example going to meetings and doing some of the work, not always having my workers doing all the work, but being able to do set tasks that my worker and I came up with. It gave me something to do and it helped in some way teach me life skills.

My transition from care was what I would describe a little slack and rushed. Whilst the process of talking about TFC began when I was 17 years old, I was able to find a positive with how the process occurred and the outcomes I received. I was lucky to have a CSO at the time that just focussed on TFC and was the guru of all TFC related things. Transitioning to Independence from care for me was a scary and daunting thing. I was nervous about if I could do it by myself and if the hopes and dreams I had as a child would be able to happen or if it would all fall apart.

As a 21 year old when I reflect on my transition process I often find that the support I received from the department was really beneficial, however I also think that my life skills weren't as developed as one would hope they would be when embarking on independent living. I wasn't shown or taught how to budget, clean, cook or look for housing. But I was given a fridge, washing machine, driving lessons and clothing allowances. But when I reflect I'm not sure how those items that were purchased were meant to help when I didn't know how to find a place to live or how to wash or clean those items. Whilst at 17 and a half I thought it was great to own these items, I also don't think it was thought through by my worker about what was actually going to be in my best interests.

I think I had a positive care experience because I had regular contact with my CSO, whether that was by phone, email or face to face. It always happened at least once a fortnight, but on the times that it couldn't happen, my worker would ring me and explain why it couldn't happen. I respected my worker for this, because I didn't think it was very nice to have a worker call someone else and cancel something that was about me. My CSO returned this respect and trusted me in my ability to make decisions for myself. When it came to purchasing items for my TFC she explained in detail what the department needed from me. We made a list of the items that I could get and she explained how many quotes I would need and didn't give me false hope about how long it would all take. I then went and got the quotes and put them in on time. I didn't become frustrated with the process because my CSO had explained that it wasn't her making the decisions but there were more people involved than just me and her.

The only thing I really wish had happened in my TFC process was having a regular mentor, who would be able to support me way after I turned 18 and wasn't time defined. Or having identified support people who aren't organisations, but people who I could rely on when it got hard. People who would be able to help me with teaching me to cook and clean and all the boring stuff that adults need to do.

My advice to workers and the department is that the budget for transition from care needs to be equal across all young people. It's not a very good feeling when you talk to other young people about their TFC package and knowing that you hardly got anything to help you compared to some. It needs to be equal care. Secondly, you need to be clear in your explanations to young people, explain the process and what's going to happen. This makes it easier to understand that it's not just the CSO who is involved but lots of people and the decision doesn't rest with them. Being involved and having things explained actually makes CSO workloads lighter. You then don't need to spend so much time returning calls from young people asking what's going on.

Angela, 21, Queensland

The Approach recognises the importance of a comprehensive assessment of individual needs, incorporating the young person's views and perspectives, and including special needs such as a young person with disability. It highlights the need for planning to be responsive to cultural backgrounds and to have flexibility in case of changing circumstances, with consideration given to a safety net, contingencies and regular review.

Ageing, Disability and Home Care Leaving Care Program (NSW)

The NSW *Ageing, Disability and Home Care (ADHC) Leaving Care Program* is a program delivered collaboratively by agencies within the NSW Department of Family and Community Services, particularly ADHC and Community Services, to plan in a timely and individual way for young people with disabilities leaving statutory out-of-home care.

Early intervention (NSW)

The NSW *Brighter Futures* early intervention program gives priority access to young care leavers who are parents or pregnant when leaving care. Smooth transitions are achieved between out-of-home care teams and Early Intervention teams by commencing liaison between the teams at least three months before a transition referral is made. Where not eligible for *Brighter Futures*, they are offered equivalent services and support, including child care, home visiting and parenting programs.

Cultural Support Plan (Qld)

In Queensland, a cultural support plan is required for every Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander child who is subject to ongoing intervention. The cultural support plan, which forms part of the case plan for an Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander child/young person ensures that the child maintains their links with safe and protective family, community and cultural supports. The child/young person's cultural support plan is vital to the delivery of culturally appropriate child protection services because it:

- > captures information about the child/young person's family, community and personal history
- > helps increase the knowledge and understanding of the child's place in their family, kinship and community structure
- > helps nurture and support the child while strengthening their cultural identity and connections
- > assists with the child/young person's understanding of their community networks and cultural heritage
- > documents arrangements for contact with family and significant community members
- > identifies opportunities for the child/young person's participation in activities and experiences that will maintain their links with family, community and culture
- > helps ensure that important cultural and family information is maintained for any child who is too young to contribute to their own cultural support plan or for a child/young person who does not want to identify with their community or culture.

My Journey in Care (Qld)

This booklet, aimed at 10 to 18 year olds, was developed by the Department of Communities (Child Safety Services) in collaboration with the CREATE Foundation and young people in care in 2006. The purpose of the booklet is to promote the rights of young people in care and to answer some of the common questions that young people have during their time in care. Transition from care is introduced into the discussions between young people and their Child Safety Officers through this booklet.

The *Child Protection Act 1999* requires that the Act is administered in a way that ensures the views of the child and the child's family are considered and the child and the child's parents have the opportunity to take part in making decisions affecting their lives.

Info kit for children and young people in care (Qld)

The info kit is a resource for children and young people in out-of-home care. It consists of seven child-friendly fact sheets that explain some of the key activities undertaken by the department and community organisations for children and young people in out-of-home care. Topics covered include:

- > Family group meeting
- > Case plan
- > Education support plan
- > Child health passport
- > Transition from care
- > Matters of concern
- > Steps to take if you have a complaint.

The info kit was jointly produced by the CREATE Foundation and the Department of Communities (Child Safety Services). The development of the info kit involved consultation with children and young people, Foster Care Queensland, PeakCare, the Queensland Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Child Protection Partnership and Legal Aid Queensland.

Supporting Young People Transitioning from Out-of-Home Care Program (ACT)

Recently the ACT Government extended services and supports for young people transitioning from out-of-home care beyond the age of 18 up to 25 years. This new outreach service aims to provide a one-stop-shop where young people and young adults can 'drop-in' to access information, supports and assistance. The outreach service will be delivered by a Youth Support and Transition Team and all young people at 15 years of age will be assessed regarding their needs, goals and plans for the future such as education, employment, accommodation, living skills and social skills. The team will work with the young person and their case worker to develop a transition plan, the young person's skills and support networks. The team will provide supports such as mentoring, counselling and access to their personal files and records.

The Approach also recognises that it is crucial to include a range of other people throughout the process, such as carers, workers, family, significant others, community and other agencies, both specialist and mainstream. In the preparation phase, it is important to identify, in consultation with the young person, who is to be involved in the transition process. The roles and responsibilities of all relevant participants are to be identified in the leaving care plan, to facilitate their involvement. The Approach recognises that planning processes will need to facilitate a whole of system response to the needs of these young people to support an effective transition into the broader support system.

Joint training (NT)

The Northern Territory Department of Children and Families has incorporated 'Leaving Care Planning' into core training for all staff. The Department of Children and Families is committed to delivering the training in partnership with CREATE NT and Anglicare NT.

Supporting Young People Transitioning from Out-of-Home Care Program (ACT)

Transition planning commences at 15 years of age whereby the young person's needs, goals and future plans are assessed. A planning conference is arranged to develop a comprehensive plan for the young person transitioning from out-of-home care. The young person is able to nominate who they would like to attend their planning conference such as their carers, a support person and family members. This process ensures transition planning is inclusive, that the views and wishes of the young person are taken into account and that the young person is supported in taking charge of decisions regarding their transition from out-of-home care and future.

Looking After Children (NSW)

The *Looking After Children* (LAC) project Australia is a joint venture of Barnardo's Australia and the UNSW and is managed by Barnardo's Practice Development Centre. The website and resources are available to services working with young people in care.

Family Group Meetings (Qld)

In Queensland, the involvement of those people the young person wishes to include is facilitated through *Family Group Meetings*. A Family Group Meeting is an inclusive and participative process for the child, family, Child Safety Services and service providers, to develop a case plan that is child-centred, family-focused, strengths-based and based on shared responsibility. It brings together family, extended family, services and support people in a forum that allows families to participate in planning for the protection of their children. A Family Group Meeting can be a forum in which to bring together the young person and the significant people involved, to develop, implement and review a young person's transition from care plan. The young person decides with their caseworker about whether a Family Group Meeting would be the most appropriate way to develop the transition from care plan. Involving family and significant others at the preparation phase will ensure that reconnection of family relationships are considered and incorporated within the plan, identify additional social and personal supports and could assist the young person and their family in having a greater sense of ownership of the plan.

Life Without Barriers Transition From Care program (Qld)

Queensland's *Life Without Barriers Transition From Care* program is jointly funded by the Department of Communities (Child Safety Services) and the Department of Employment, Economic Development and Innovation and is provided by Life Without Barriers in the Logan, Inala, Goodna, Beenleigh, Browns Plains and Hervey Bay areas. The aim of this program is to provide support and practical assistance which is targeted to meet the transition from care needs of young people. Central to this program is the focus on the casework relationship between the worker and the young person. This recognises that the matching of the worker with a young person and focusing on this relationship is critical to positive outcomes for the young person. This program has been successfully evaluated and will continue.

G-Force (Qld)

G-Force in Queensland is a cross sector working party made up of government and non-government organisations including the Department of Communities (Child Safety Services), CREATE Foundation, Foster Care Queensland, Peakcare, the Commission for Children and Young People and Child Guardian, Queensland Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Child Protection Peak, Youth Advocacy Centre, Legal Aid Queensland and Office for Youth. This group is strongly informed and grounded in the opinions of children and young people with an out-of-home care experience; the group aims to have at least one young person attending each *G-Force* meeting. The group focuses on building the capacity of the sector to facilitate engagement and participation of children and young people in decision-making about their own lives, and respond to the needs of young people transitioning from out-of-home care. *G-Force* successfully advocated for the commencement of *Transition from Care (TFC) Month* in 2009, and is the active body which coordinates and implements activities for TFC Month (held each November). The purpose of TFC Month is to raise awareness of the importance of engaging young people in developing a transition from care plan, recognising that young people transitioning from care to adulthood and independence need life skills, supports and services to assist them.

Transition from care champions (Qld)

Transition from care champions in Queensland promote local initiatives to raise departmental and non-government workers' awareness and understanding of leaving care planning, such as information sessions, coordinated forums for young people, skills based activities and participating in regional transition from care working groups.

Rapid Response (WA)

Rapid Response in Western Australia is an across-government framework and action plan that prioritises services to children and young people in care. Through the *Rapid Response* initiative, there are a range of partnerships that support young people in their transition from care to independence including:

- > an in-principle agreement with the Department of Housing that enables young people in care to register from 15 years of age on the priority Housing Needs Register.
- > The waiver of all course fees by State Training Providers (TAFE) for young people up to 25 years who are, or have been in care.

Leaving Care Forum (WA)

In 2011 the Department for Child Protection established an annual Leaving Care Forum bringing together people from a range of backgrounds (Government, Community Sector Organisation including CREATE, carers, ex-care leavers and young people approaching leaving care), to share their experience, knowledge and good practice regarding how best to support young people undertaking the transition to independence.

In the preparation phase of the Approach, the focus for planning includes ensuring the stability of existing care arrangements while introducing the idea of beginning to plan for the young person's life as an adult.

Youth Identified Accommodation and Support Program (ACT)

The *Youth Identified Accommodation and Support Program* provides accommodation and support to young people aged 16-20 within a family based environment. The program assists young people to maintain long term, stable accommodation. An important aspect is establishing support families and networks for the young person such as extended family and friends.

Crisis Mediation Service – Conflict Resolution Service (ACT)

The *Crisis Mediation Service* prevents young people aged 15-20 from entering into a cycle of homelessness by providing a responsive, timely and intensive mediation service at the point of crisis. Young people who are at high risk of homelessness due to family conflict are supported to remain within the family home where safe and appropriate to do so.

The preparation phase is the time to discuss changing relationships, and explore, develop or consolidate relationships with family and significant others.

Families SA Mentoring Program (SA)

The South Australian *School Retention Team* coordinates the Families SA Mentoring Program. This is a centralised program matching children and young people with approved mentors. Mentors provide one-on-one support to children and young people to assist them in reaching agreed goals.

Leaving Care Mentoring Program for young care leavers with a disability (NSW)

The *Leaving Care Mentoring Program* is a key element of the *Ageing, Disability and Home Care (ADHC) Leaving Care Program* for young people with a disability transitioning from statutory out-of-home care. The program, provided by Northcott Disability Services, matches young care leavers with a one-to-one mentor who supports and assists the young person during their transition from care by supporting them in decision making, teaching life skills and advocating on their behalf. The aim of the mentoring program is to help mentees to develop the confidence and skills they need to make informed choices, and lead fulfilling and productive lives. Young people are able to access their mentor on an ongoing basis, as needed.

Assisting Aboriginal Young People Leaving Care Project (NSW)

The *Assisting Aboriginal Young People Leaving Care Project* is based in the NSW South Coast local government area. It provides an interagency response for Aboriginal young people leaving out-of-home care by providing casework, supported referrals and help to reconnect with family and kin where appropriate.

Winnunga Nimmitjah Outreach Service (ACT)

The *Winnunga Nimmitjah Outreach Service* provides outreach to support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people connect with family, culture and community.

Transition from Care Month (Qld)

Queensland holds *Transition from Care Month* each November, which is coordinated through *G-Force*, a sector wide working party of the Child Protection Partnership Forum made up of government and non-government organisations including the Department of Communities (Child Safety Services), CREATE Foundation, Foster Care Queensland, the Commission for Children and Young People and Child Guardian, Queensland Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Child Protection Peak (QATSICPP), PeakCare, Youth Advocacy Centre, Legal Aid Queensland and the Office for Youth.

Transition from Care Month encourages government and non-government organisations who work with young people to consider that:

- > during this time of 'growing up', the relationships they have with significant adults in their life are of vital importance
- > time and resources should be set aside to support young people transition from care to independence
- > young people need all the adults in their life working in collaboration to provide support.

It is important to ensure the young person has access to their personal documents and is supported to understand the information and store it safely and securely.

Child Health Passports (Qld)

Queensland requires a health assessment or appraisal to be completed for all children who enter out-of-home care. The Child Health Passport is a comprehensive record of the child/young person's medical history, which ensures they receive appropriate health care and treatment throughout their time in out-of-home care and improves their health and wellbeing. Contents include immunisation details, annual health checks, health plans (if applicable), health records from follow-up appointments, outcomes of any referral to specialists, any health alerts (e.g. allergies, asthma, medications), a photocopy of their Medicare card, and any other information relating to specific health needs of the child. This folder is prepared by the Child Safety Service Centre and is provided to the carer. The passport moves with the child/young person when they move placement and a copy of the passport is provided to the parent when the child/young person returns home or to the young person when they exit care.

Child history folder (WA)

As part of record keeping in Western Australia, the Department maintains a child history folder containing personal material and documentation such as reports, education plans, care plans, photographs, certificates and the birth certificate. As part of leaving care, the child history folder is made available to the young person in conjunction with discussion between them and Child Protection Worker, to ensure they are supported to understand the information and assess options for its continuing safe storage.

Youth Support and Transition Team (ACT)

The *Youth Support and Transition Team* supports young people to access their files and records while in state care. The supports will be in a manner that assists in their wellbeing or healing and they will be able to access counselling as required.

Transition phase

In the Transition phase, the Approach emphasises reviewing progress and encouraging the young person to increasingly take responsibility for planning and making progress towards the goals of their plan.

Case Conferencing Team (ACT)

Young people transitioning from out-of-home care are referred to the *Case Conferencing Unit* for a leaving care conference. Each young person is empowered to take a lead role in the planning and is an informed participant in the entire process. The young person nominates the key people they would like to participate in the conference including family members, friends and relevant government and non-government agency officials. Any issues or concerns the young person has can be addressed in the leaving care conference and all young people are supported by the team to reach their goals. During the conference young people are made aware of all supports, programs and entitlements available to them both in the community and government sectors. The conference process results in a clear and concise action plan and each action has a nominated team member responsible for actioning.

Accommodation and support needs will vary for young people, and it is important to consider what will be the most appropriate for each individual.

Housing Support Service – CatholicCare (ACT)

The *Housing Support Service* will provide a sustaining housing approach to prevent cycles of homelessness and encourage long term positive outcomes. The service will support young people aged 15-25 to identify and respond to issues that may affect their ability to sustain long term accommodation. The service will operate an external provider model of housing support in which the accommodation is separate from the support.

Muggy's Youth Accommodation Service (SA)

South Australia's *Muggy's Youth Accommodation Service*, provided by The Salvation Army, offers accommodation and intensive support to young people to support them in their transition to independence. Support is offered 24/7 and accommodation options range from congregate care to individual housing in the community. Young people can enter the program at 16 years of age and can continue in the program up until the age of 19 years if needed.

Supported Independent Living (NSW)

The *Supported Independent Living* model is a supported transitional accommodation model for young people 16-18 years who are preparing to transition to independent living from out-of-home care. *Supported Independent Living* is an integrated accommodation and support program that aims to prepare and support young people in making a smooth transition from out-of-home care to independent living, self reliance and adulthood through the provision of public or private rental accommodation, case management and support services for up to 24 months. The goals of the program are:

- > to prevent young people transitioning from statutory care to homelessness services
- > to maximise young people's capacity to live independently in the community
- > to improve social, economic and health outcomes for care leavers.

Moving On Program (Tas)

Moving On is a supported leaving care program operated by Kennerley Children's Home, an established care provider with a long history of service to children and young people. Eight units are used to accommodate young people as they transition to independent living. The program operates using a lead tenant model to support young people to move from care to independence.

Leaving Care Housing and Support Initiative (Vic)

Housing and Community Building (H&CB) (ex Office of Housing), Department of Human Services funds the *Leaving Care Housing and Support Initiative* that focuses on young people in out-of-home care from 16 years of age who are at risk of homelessness when they leave state care.

This statewide program is provided by community based organisations whose staff work with young people in identifying appropriate accommodation and supporting their transition.

H&CB provide specific resources that focus on the response to Indigenous young people leaving care in the North & West Metropolitan, Gippsland and Loddon-Mallee Regions.

Lead tenants (Vic)

Semi-independent programs with lead tenants providing on-site support, and intensive out-reach support by dedicated case management and youth work multi-disciplinary teams.

MacKillop Family Services provides *Lead Tenant Services* in the Barwon South West, North West and Southern regions, supporting young people aged 16 to 18 years to have their first experience of semi-independent living after having been in residential care. Some young people are very keen for the opportunity while others struggle to adjust to the changes required. The *Lead Tenant Service* provides young people with accommodation and the help and support of volunteers who act as positive role models and mentors. Volunteers focus on assisting young people to develop independent living skills. Upon entry to the program, the young person receives furniture and household items that they are able to keep, including a TV, stereo or computer that have been donated by business or industry. In addition, MacKillop Family Services provides a specific enhanced life skills program called the *Way Out There Program* and a care team in response to the needs of some young people who leave the service without being fully equipped for independence. Many of the past lead tenants have commented on the value of this program and said they wished they had been given the opportunity to learn about many of the life skills required for independent living when they were younger.

Leaving Care Cluster Housing and Support Model (Vic)

Victoria's *Leaving Care Cluster Housing and Support Model* will provide accommodation and support for young people transitioning from care to develop and/or strengthen their capacity for independence. Children, Youth and Families and Housing and Community Building have worked collaboratively to develop, build and operate four demonstration models as the initial sites. The 'cluster units' are self-contained units with on-site and outreach supports.

The 'cluster' demonstration model aims to address the needs of a number of young people 16 to 18 years of age in out-of-home care who no longer need the highly structured models of residential care, or home based care, and yet still need support to live semi-independently as part of their transition to independence.

This model also has a small capacity for the continuation of accommodation and support for some young people to remain post the expiry of their Custody order or Guardianship order beyond 18 years of age. These young people would then become direct Transitional Housing tenants.

The 'cluster units' are self-contained units, built by the Victorian Housing & Community Building (H&CB) office, with on site and outreach supports funded by Children Youth and Families (CYF) division. The Victorian Department of Human Services (DHS) regions with H&BC and CYF have agreed on the following approach:

- > All residential stock will be managed within the Transitional Housing Management (THM) program
- > At a minimum 4 young people on CSO or GSO will be accommodated within each model
- > At a minimum 2 young people whose orders have ceased will be accommodated as THM clients within each model

- > The young people are intensively supported by dedicated outreach teams comprising a case manager, youth worker and education and employment support worker,
- > There will be at least one unit on each site that has a lead tenant or carers who will also provide support to all other young people on site
- > Other flexible combinations may be negotiated at the local level customised to meet the needs of the young people at any particular point in time.

'Foyer' Models (Vic)

Two 'foyer' like models, one in Ballarat and one in Warrnambool, that provide independent accommodation (small self-contained apartments) with on-site and outreach support for up to two years for young people who are at least 16 years and 6 months of age, on Custody or Guardianship orders. Young people's support plans have a focus on medium-long term planning for the development of independent living and life skills as well as structured supports to maintain engagement in study, training or work.

Transition Planning and Brokerage (Vic)

The Department of Human Services or Community Service Organisations who hold case management responsibility must ensure that a transition plan is prepared for each young person transitioning from care which clearly details what services and supports will continue after the young person has transitioned to independence. The format of the transition plan has been developed collaboratively and contains a focus on the needs of the child across the seven *Looking After Children* domains:

- > Health
- > Education /Employment
- > Identity
- > Family and Social Relationships
- > Social Presentation
- > Behavioural and emotional development
- > Self care skills.

To ensure appropriate arrangements are in place for the young person in their transition to independence, and in keeping with the *Looking After Children* domains, the following must be clearly articulated in the young person's transition plan:

- > Clarification of accommodation arrangements post care
- > Establishment of financial supports
- > Education, training and/or employment goals and arrangements
- > Counselling arrangements as required (including D&A, psychological etc)
- > Process for keeping the young person's significant relationships connected and maintained
- > Identification and wherever possible provision of resources required to achieve independence
- > Identification of areas requiring further living skills development to sustain planned living arrangements, e.g. problem solving, budgeting, consumer awareness
- > Mentor engagement where assessed as appropriate.

Brokerage (Transition and Post Care) (Vic)

Flexible support funding is available in each DHS region with two distinct budgets, one for young people still on Custody or Guardianship orders from 16 years of age, and the second managed by Post Care Support services for young people whose orders have expired up to 21 years of age. These budgets add to each region's capacity to deliver flexible responses to the care leaver population. Some general directions of the guidelines include that brokerage will have three components:

- > Brokerage directly related to the case plan/ transition plan which should be provided immediately before or after leaving care
- > Brokerage to allow flexible responses should be readily available for all eligible young people within a short time frame²
- > Brokerage for large levels of funding require endorsement by the Regional Leaving Care Alliance (comprising child protection, post care support agencies and representative out-of-home care agencies).

Housing for Young People Program (ACT)

Housing ACT provides specialist Youth Housing Managers to support young people aged 16 to 25 years who are transitioning from out-of-home care and/or justice settings into public and community housing. Young people who transition into public housing receive ongoing support from the Youth Housing Manager to sustain their tenancy, and engage in education and employment opportunities.

Friendly Landlord Service – Banardos (ACT)

The *Friendly Landlord Service* supports young people aged 16-25 years to develop the skills necessary to sustain a tenancy on their own. The service combines the provision of affordable accommodation with tenancy support and access to life skills training and mentorship opportunities. This is achieved through the provision of a head tenancy model of accommodation for suitably matched young people.

Parent Accommodation Support Program – St Vincent De Paul (ACT)

The *Parent Accommodation Support Program* provides staged support for young parents aged 16-25 years who are homeless. The program provides supported accommodation for homeless young parents and their children for up to 12 months, with a focus on developing life skills, parenting skills and how to manage a household. The program also incorporates an outreach case management support component.

An important domain to be addressed as a young person transitions to independence is education, training and employment.

School Retention Team (SA)

Families SA, in liaison with the education sector, encourages and supports the completion of an Individual Education Plan (IEP) for every child and young person under guardianship. IEP's include planning for educational transitions and take into account health and developmental needs that have an impact on educational attainment. The Families SA *School Retention Team* participates in and supports the process of IEP Meetings where the needs of children and young people aged 12 to 17 are complex and whose behaviour in the school setting can be difficult to manage. The program utilises key workers to provide wrap around services, focussing on providing individually tailored responses to both the social and educational barriers to young people's engagement in learning.

Evolve Transition Officer (Qld)

The *Evolve Transition Officer* program is a funded initiative (\$6 million over four years) under the Commonwealth and Queensland Government's *National Partnership Agreement on Homelessness*. Funding is targeted towards providing a continuum of care to young people with disabilities who are turning 18 years of age and transitioning from the care of the state to community-based living and independent adult life. The transition officers,

² Funding held by provider agency allowing payments eg in instances where young people require a new shirt/ shoes to attend an interview.

co-located with Evolve teams (a Queensland Government funded joint health/disabilities/child safety therapeutic program), services regions across the state, work directly with young people with disabilities once they turn 15 years to plan their transition from care and continue to work with them post care, until they are in stable and safe placements. Transition officers will work directly with young people to develop independent living skills, explore employment opportunities, provide assistance with behaviour support, and help facilitate and maintain ongoing support that is appropriate to the young person's needs.

Achiever Awards (WA)

The annual *Achiever Awards* provide 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. Award recipients receive funding to assist with further study and/or training in two amounts – the first half is presented at the award presentation event and the second half after the successful completion of the first semester of study or six months of an apprenticeship.

Young people can be nominated in three categories:

1. *University Achiever Award*
2. *Technical and Further Education Achiever Award*
3. *Apprenticeship or Traineeship Achiever Award*

17 young people were nominated and received awards in 2011.

Springboard Program (Vic)

Springboard is an intensive new education and employment program that will provide specialist outreach and intensive one-on-one ongoing support to help young residential care-leavers make informed choices about their education and training, find jobs and actively participate in the workforce. Funding will also be available to help with education and training expenses, equipment, transportation, individual tuition and other relevant supports. *Springboard* will be delivered from mid 2012 by selected community service providers currently engaged in the Commonwealth *Youth Connections* program.

Life skills are crucial for young people to move out on their own and successfully maintain independent living.

Leaving Care Services (WA)

Young people are referred to *Leaving Care Services* from age 16 years in the metropolitan area and from 14 years of age in regional areas to support the transition from departmental care to independent living. As part of preparation for leaving care, the leaving care services worker is linked to the young person in addition to their case worker, to establish a relationship and consider needs and support options that may be required up to 25 years of age.

Support to obtain a driver's licence (WA)

Obtaining a driver's licence is viewed as an important part of the young person's transition to adulthood. In recognition of this and the difficulties often faced by young people meeting the licensing assessment requirements, the Department in WA now provides funds for all stages of the process where necessary, for all young people in care.

Learner Driver Car (ACT)

The ACT Barnardo's *Learner Driver Car* program enables young people to learn to drive with a Rotary volunteer, worker, or mentor.

Obtaining a Driver's Licence (SA)

South Australia has committed to supporting young people up to the age of 25 years who are or have been in out-of-home care to obtain their driver's licence. Practice guidance has been developed to assist workers to facilitate young people obtaining a licence. The practice guidance covers a range of considerations including financial assistance, use of professional driving instructors and supervising drivers (e.g. carers, volunteers or case workers), and use of government vehicles.

Lead Tenant model (Vic)

Victoria's *Lead Tenant* model provides an opportunity for young people to learn and implement independent living skills in a safe and supported environment. Allan's story below demonstrates the results that can be achieved through the wrap around approach to enhancing and developing their skills. The importance of a central person with whom Allan had an ongoing and positive relationship with, in this case, a worker, is also evident.

Allan's story: moving to independence

Different perspectives from Allan and his practitioner Tanya.

Tanya: *Close your eyes and think back to when you were 16 years old. What was your life like? Where did you live? Who with? What were you asked to do in the family home? I was in Year 11 living with my mother, father, sister and brother – enjoying most weekends with friends and knowing that when I came home I would be welcomed with open arms, always with a meal on the table for myself and whoever I brought home with me. What would my life have been like if it been necessary for me to move into a home with total strangers and look after myself with a couple of residential care workers for support? Petrifying ...*

For many young people leaving care, 16 years is a very long time to be in the care of the Department of Human Services and for many, this translates to about 88 per cent of their life.

For most, a large part of this time is spent living within the out-of-home care system.

Allan: *I remember when I was 10 and 11 years old. I was stressed and I didn't know what to do, I was so worried and all I wanted was to have a family. I was restless and lashed out at people when they wouldn't do what I wanted or give me what I wanted. I had major trust issues. A lot of time I would push workers, bite them and throw things at them. By the time I was 14 or 15, I was thinking of suicide and I didn't listen to anyone. I would sneak out at night and steal, chrome, and do just stupid stuff. I misbehaved to the point that was not tolerable and I was just getting worse. Workers were scared of me and did not want to be around me. Then something shifted; I wanted to change because I was sick of how life was going. Workers started to speak to me about the lead tenant service but I did not think that I was ready and neither did some of my workers. I started to rebel against the idea. At 16, I went through the desire to end everything – I wanted to get charged for offences that I had wiped. These charges included assault, robbery and property damage, for which I was on a suspended sentence. At this time I was attending community school but I did not like it. I believe that at 16 and a half years old, I was a better person to be around and people liked me more. From the ages of 9 to 17, I was on medication but I can't really tell you what it was for. One day I just woke up and I was told that I needed to take the medication that I was given.*

Tanya: *When a referral landed on my desk, I looked at the name and I saw Allan. So many thoughts went through my mind. I wondered how Allan was going to cope in the Lead Tenant Service. Youth and social workers where Allan was living were very focused on helping Allan to be prepared for the program. One main concern I had was that Allan was on a number of medications for ADHD, conduct disorder and anxiety. With the assistance and guidance of Royal Children's Hospital, Allan was slowly weaned off the medication. Transition plans, skills development and regular consultations occurred for about six to eight months before Allan entered the program. All those who had worked with Allan including Take Two came together as a care team to ensure that his transition was as smooth as possible. One of the workers, Igor, with whom Allan had had a long-standing relationship, was to continue to work and support Allan in the lead tenant service.*

This additional support, which meant so much to Allan, was provided by the placement coordination unit until Allan moved out of the lead tenant service. At first it wasn't easy for anyone, especially Allan who had lived in residential care for the previous six years. But slowly and surely, with the support of his workers, which now included MacKillop Family Services, education support, Take Two and Igor, Allan built on his skills and developed new ones. The last six months saw astonishing progress. It was as if Allan just woke up one day and he was more responsible and respectful, and had a sense of direction in his life. He was also thankful for the support that he received.

***Allan:** Having Igor's caring support really helped with the transition into lead tenant and also throughout my placement. At 17 years old moving into the lead tenant service, I felt as though I coped with the change. I learnt to look after myself, clean and budget. I felt more respected as a person and that I had more control over life. One thing that I always wanted was to attend mainstream school. Now I attend tertiary college and I am completing an Information Technology diploma and doing well at this. My 18th birthday was celebrated by a dinner with 24 friends. Most were staff from the Department of Human Services, MacKillop, ex-foster carers and staff that had moved on but wanted to celebrate this tremendous occasion with me. My girlfriend and I have moved into student accommodation near college and the agency.*

***Tanya:** I questioned the suitability of the lead tenant service for Allan; and wondered how he was going to cope. However, he put in a lot of hard work and we are so proud of him. He will always be welcome to walk through our doors whenever he likes. Allan is truly an inspiration to all of us at MacKillop. Allan recommends that young people should move into the lead tenant service only if they are ready. It has made him more prepared for the life that he is now living than if he had continued to live in residential care and not had this transition to independence. When Allan moved into the lead tenant program, he felt as though he had to pull himself together. He did not trust people, and it took him three to six months to trust the lead tenant workers. Allan feels that the department can help if allowed to. Take Two are good helpers and are passionate about what they do and they just don't go away. The lead tenant service is a very useful service for young people placed in out-of-home care needing to prepare for independent living. Allan is a fine example of how this service, supported by a care team of committed people can ensure that young people build the skills, competencies and confidence necessary for independent living.*

Tanya Vella and Allan, Lead Tenant Service, MacKillop Family Services

CREATE Your Future (most jurisdictions, through CREATE Foundation)

CREATE Foundation is the peak body representing the voices of all children and young people in out-of-home care. As a national organisation, CREATE is better able to increase its reach to children and young people in care through its programs and events. As an advocate for children and young people in care CREATE ensures that their voices are heard by key decision makers in government and out-of-home care sector stakeholders.

CREATE Your Future is a program that encompasses four gateways to support young people transitioning from out-of-home care to independence: an intensive 8 week program, stand alone workshops, a website and a grant scheme. Workshop topics include:

- > **The Great Race** to encourage, engage and promote the services available to young people that will assist in their transition to independence and assist education, training, and employment goals
- > **Think Outside the Square** to challenge participants' attitudes towards learning, through fun activities and challenges, encouraging participants to "think outside the square"
- > **How to get a job and keep it (Job Readiness)** to assist young people to identify appropriate pathways to gaining employment, how to research job opportunities, prepare for and go through the application process to obtain suitable employment
- > **Pathways to Independence** to showcase supports to assist independent living, basic budgeting and practical tasks to assist young people manage their money, and access the supports they are entitled to.

Case study: Confidence to gain employment

Rose, an Indigenous, 22 year old young woman became involved with CREATE Foundation early on in life. She was placed in care when her mother, who was a foster carer, became ill and hospitalised for a period of time. "I guess now I know what it's like from both perspectives. I grew up with other children coming and staying in our house but I also know what it's like to have to go into care too. It's really unsettling," said Rose.

Rose has participated in many of CREATE's programs the most pivotal of all so far was the "CREATE Your Future Program" camp Rose attended. The workshop at the camp is named "How to get a job and keep it" and during the program, participants were taught about writing a CV, job interview skills, employee expectations and even how to navigate arranging important administration such as a tax file number.

Before attending the camp, Rose struggled with her lack of self-confidence. In spite of having achieved a good education and solid volunteering experience, she had not been successful in securing a job. "I had applied for over 300 or so jobs in the past few years, but I could never 'sell myself' at the interviews. When I got to job interviews, all I could think about were all the negative things people had said about me at school. Now, when I look back, I can see I couldn't point out any good things!"

Just days after arriving home from the "CREATE Your Future" camp, Rose was successful in securing an interview opportunity for what she viewed to be a 'real' job. With the new job finding skills learned on the CREATE Your Future camp, Rose went into the interview with newfound confidence. "After three rounds of nerve-wracking interviews I got the job! I know I wouldn't have got it if it wasn't for CREATE Your Future – I could sell myself well and I really believed what I was saying.

"I am now an Allied Health Assistant Trainee and I love my job so much! I am on a seven-week rotation through the different departments in the hospital and I learn by doing. Being a trainee, this really helps me relate the school work I am learning about, back to my job. My favourite department so far is physiotherapy. I knew when I first started it would be my favourite and one day I'd really like to be a physiotherapist. I think that learning about it in my current traineeship is a great first step."

The focus of planning for this phase also includes obtaining personal and household items the young person will need, facilitating access to financial support, addressing any ongoing health care needs, supporting the development of an independent sense of identity, and consolidating relationships.

Case Conferencing Unit (ACT)

Before a young person leaves care, a leaving care conference is held with the young person and other stakeholders to review and reassess their leaving care arrangements and update their transition plan where appropriate. This is undertaken by the *Case Conferencing Unit* which assesses key transition areas of the young person's life such as health, wellbeing, employment, education, accommodation, family connections, living skills and practical needs.

Young people are able to access a home starter package which provides financial assistance to buy furniture, white goods, linen and other necessities to assist in establishing a home.

Transition to Independent Living Allowance (National)

The *Transition to Independent Living Allowance* (TILA) provides one-off financial support to the value of \$1,500 for eligible young people aged 15 to 25 years who are about to, or have exited formal state based care and/or informal care such as juvenile justice, out-of-home care and Indigenous kinship care arrangements. TILA eligibility is in addition to the payments and services that young people transitioning from care receive from the relevant state and territory department and other Commonwealth departments.

TILA is designed to defray some of the costs associated with making the transition from care arrangements to independent living. It provides practical support to young people leaving care, enabling them to establish links in accordance with their transition plans and pursue pathways to, for example, education, employment, stable housing and health services. The \$1,500 allowance can be used very flexibly. For example it can be used to purchase whitegoods or furniture, course fees, work uniforms; basically whatever that particular young person and their youth worker agree is most needed to help them in their particular circumstances.

TILA is intended as a one-off support for those eligible young people who are at risk when leaving state-supported care. The intent of the program is to incorporate assistance with opportunities to identify and plan for short and longer term goals. The overall aim is to better support young people to achieve long term improvements in their prospects for health, employment, education and general wellbeing.

The Approach also recognises that at this time, carers may need support to enable them to assist the young person in their care through transition.

Leading the Way: Preparing young people for leaving care (NSW)

As part of the Keep Them Safe five-year action plan to improve child wellbeing in NSW, a suite of resources has been developed to assist carers supporting young people who are transitioning from out-of-home care to independence. Resources include *Leading the Way: Preparing young people for leaving care*, a guide for carers booklet and a carer training package on assisting young people transitioning to independence that is delivered across NSW by Connecting Carers.

Ministerial Guidelines (NSW)

The NSW *Guidelines on the provision of assistance after leaving out-of-home care* (the Ministerial Guidelines on leaving care) articulate the NSW Government's legislative responsibilities towards young people transitioning to independence from out-of-home care. The Ministerial Guidelines identify the key leaving care casework planning areas, give guidance on linking young care leavers with mainstream and specialist services, and outline expectations for after care service provision including follow-up casework support and financial assistance where appropriate.

Guidelines (NT)

The Northern Territory Department of Children and Families *Care and Protection Policy and Procedures Manual* provides guidance to staff preparing and supporting young people who are leaving the Chief Executive's care. Further guidance is provided in the *Leaving Care Planning Practice Guidelines* and the *Leaving Care Task List* which detail operational processes for leaving care planning and after care support.

Training for foster carers (Qld)

Foster Care Queensland developed a training package in 2010 focused on assisting carers to support young people through the transition from care process. Approximately 100 foster carers have participated in the training in the last 18 months and this training package will continue to be available to foster carers in the future.

Resources to assist in the transition process (Qld)

Queensland has three transition from care booklets which contain checklists, resources and information for young people and workers, developed by the Department of Communities (Child Safety Services) and young consultants from the CREATE Foundation. These booklets are:

- > Transition from care: Information to assist young people during meetings to plan their transition to independent living
- > Transition from care: Employment, education and training
- > Transition from care: Planning tips for CSOs.

Transition from care – Information to assist young people during meetings to plan their transition to independent living provides a directory of the full range of community services that are available to assist young people in their transition from care. It contains helpful information about registering for services and benefits, finding a job, finding a place to live, getting further education or training and access to health, counselling, support or legal services.

Resources (WA)

The Western Australian Department for Child Protection has developed a range of resources to assist staff supporting young people through the leaving care process, including *The Casework Practice Manual* entry on *Leaving the CEO's Care* which outlines the required practice relating to planning for and supporting young leaving care, *Leaving Care Checklists* and a *Leaving Care Planning and Procedure* flow chart.

Leaving Care to Independence: a Guide for Carers (WA)

A guide for carers that will assist them to support the young person throughout the transition to independence is currently under development.

After care independence phase

To ensure the young person has access to an appropriate and integrated service response in the longer term, the Approach highlights the role of other agencies in addressing any ongoing issues. The needs of the young person as they make their transition out of the care and protection system into the broader support system and after they leave care, up to age 25, are to be addressed in planning. Facilitating access to relevant services is a key consideration in planning both the transition phase and the after care independence phase. The Approach recognises that a whole of system response is required and that ongoing support of the young person may involve both specialist and mainstream services, if desired by the young person.

The ultimate goal of the Approach is for leaving care planning to build towards empowering the young person to achieve ongoing independence.

Post care support services (Vic)

Many young people who have left care have had limited opportunities to develop appropriate living skills and lack experience in navigating the adult world; they require ongoing support not only in developing their independence but also sustaining independence. The Department of Human Services has funded post care support services in each of the eight regions which are provided by community based agencies. These services also manage brokerage designed to assist young people achieve or maintain independence. The aim is to enable a stronger focus on supporting young people transitioning to independence. The programs provide support to young people aged 16-21 years who have been on either a Custody or Guardianship Order on or after their 16th birthday and have subsequently left care. Post care support services are flexible and responsive, able to meet young people's needs by identifying and building on their strengths. The services aim to provide a safety net that many young people in the broader community have with their families and friends throughout their lives. All post care services collaborate in regional leaving care alliances.

Berry Street's Post Care Support Information and Referral Program (Vic)

Berry Street's *Post Care Support Information and Referral Program* began in February 2010 providing Post Care Support Information and Referral services to the whole of the North and Western metropolitan region. The North and West Metropolitan Region is the most populous DHS region taking in the northern and western suburbs of Melbourne; with the two fastest growing urban corridors in the state.

Berry Street's *Post Care Support Information and Referral Program* recognises that all young people require ongoing support not only in developing their independence but also sustaining independence. By providing a flexible, responsive service that supports young people to identify and build on their strengths, encourages and underpins their attempts to transition into their communities, the Program aims to provide a safety net that many young people in the broader community experience throughout their lives. Nyah's story below is a case study detailing how ongoing advocacy and support provided to a young woman through years of housing instability and transience facilitated permanent housing for her.

Nyah's story: home at last (extract from *Good practice: a statewide snapshot 2011* – Victorian State Government)

At 20, Nyah was consumed by stress, had limited positive relationships, poor health, no place to call home, inadequate personal possessions and had not been able to create a sense of stability in the years following her leaving out-of-home care. "I give up on this world!" she said.

Nyah and her sibling were born with a mild intellectual disability and were removed from their parents' care by child protection when she was aged three years old. After numerous attempts at family reunification, Nyah and her sibling, then aged 10 and 7, were placed on Guardianship Orders. Nyah grew up in various placements including kinship care, foster care, residential care and lead tenant. Nyah reported that the best placement she had was her last, a lead tenant program. She was well supported by the lead tenants, provided with intensive case management, living skills support and access to 24-hour-on-call support. Despite her positive experience, Nyah struggled with independent living and was not adequately linked into other services. She lacked the skills to follow up with services and the service systems' complexity made it difficult to provide integrated, enduring follow-up with Nyah.

Subsequently Nyah was referred to a transitional housing accommodation program which did not address her complex support requirements. When she moved into the transitional property, she found it incredibly difficult to manage the tenancy. Nyah required more support than could be offered. Nyah, then aged 18, was evicted from the transitional property for antisocial behaviour and began her seemingly endless search for a home, feeling overwhelmed. She had no long-term housing applications, outreach support had stopped and no referrals to any other support services were in place.

In desperation Nyah reached out to a former case manager who referred her to Berry Street Victoria's post care support program. The post care support worker assisted Nyah to contact other accommodation and after many 'knock-backs', a vacancy was found in a caravan park. The post care program was able to financially support Nyah with funding to secure the vacancy and purchase items for the property including linen and kitchen items. The Post Care Support Information and Referral Program continued to provide intensive case management to Nyah over the next twelve months. Disability services were re-engaged, an application for disability services assessment completed and a request made for a long-term disability services case manager. Once her application was approved by disability services, it was anticipated that an individual service plan application would be completed.

Constant advocacy with the caravan park owner and other residents, intensive support to improve personal hygiene, social relationships and numerous brokerage applications to support and develop Nyah's independent living skills, educational activities and short courses, driving lessons, clothing, health and wellbeing including gym membership and social activities, meant that against all odds, Nyah was able to remain in her accommodation for nine months until she chose to move to a short-term boarding house. She again utilised brokerage funds to buy furniture, bedding and for set up costs.

Her post care support worker helped Nyah to continue to seek long-term accommodation options. Collaboration with disability services increased advocacy to accommodation services to prioritise Nyah's applications for housing.

In July 2011 after years of instability and transience Nyah was made an offer of permanent accommodation in a two bedroom unit in the area of her choice. At age 21, Nyah has finally found a home of her own. Berry Street's core value statement 'We never give up', has been clearly demonstrated by the ongoing advocacy and support provided by the post care support program. The ability to deliver responsive, flexible, committed supports with adequate financial aid to Nyah who had high support needs, is a critical factor in the program's successes with this young woman.

*Lyn Fletcher, Manager Youth Housing and Support Programs
Rebecca Prowse, Team Leader PCSIR Program, Berry Street Victoria*

Moving On (NT)

Moving On is a Northern Territory wide After Care Support, Case Management and Brokerage service provided by Anglicare NT in partnership with the Department of Children and Families. The service aims to assist young people who have transitioned from care of the Chief Executive of the Northern Territory Department of Children and Families. The focus is to provide the support and practical assistance outlined in section 86 of the Northern Territory *Care and Protection of Children Act 2007* which are accommodation, education or training, employment, legal services, health services and counselling services.

Young people who have transitioned from the care of the Chief Executive of the Department of Children and Families or those who are transitioning from care are able to access the service which provides information, assessment, referral, advocacy, support and limited case management. The services provided are individualised to meet the needs of the young person. The Service recognises that young people require different types and levels of support at various life stages and therefore, young people may continue to require support and assistance after they leave care at 18 years of age.

Youth, Housing and Reintegration Service (Qld)

The Queensland *Youth, Housing and Reintegration Service (YHARS)*, including the *After Care Service*, is jointly funded with the Commonwealth *National Partnership Agreement on Homelessness*. YHARS provides individualised support to assist young people leaving state care who may be at risk of homelessness, aged 12-20 years. One aspect of this program is the *After Care Service* which focuses on young people who have exited state care to achieve greater stability and independence through engaging young people in education, training and employment activities, as well as establishing and maintaining successful tenancies to ensure young people transition to greater independence and stability. This service is provided through a combination of brokerage funds and case management to young people. For young people who have left care and are homeless, after care housing and brokerage services are provided, for ages 17 to 21 years.

Post Care Services (SA)

Post Care Services is a Families SA service for adults who were in state care or out-of-home care in South Australia as children, and can provide information, advocacy, referral and support. *Post Care Services* is available to coordinate services for those young people aged 18 years and over who request assistance in:

- > developing opportunities to re-establish and/or strengthen their connection to family and community
- > accessing their personal records
- > accessing community services and programs including health, medical, education, housing and financial management, counselling, therapy, life and parenting skills and identity and relationships.

After Care Support Program (Tas)

The *After Care Support Program* provides support for young people aged 19-25 years who were in care for two or more years from the age of 14 years. The service provides access to personal files, referral to support organisations and can provide financial assistance of up to \$2500 to:

- > undertake further education or training
- > improve employment opportunities
- > develop and maintain relationships with family members
- > improve links to the wider community
- > access counselling services
- > participate in sporting and creative activities.

Support Service Case (Qld)

In Queensland, transition to independence assistance and support may continue to be provided once a young person leaves care or after they have reached their eighteenth birthday by way of a *Support Service Case*.

A *Support Service Case* can occur when existing case planning goals and outcomes are still to be achieved and is a voluntary written agreement between a young person and the Department of Communities (Child Safety Services) with the aim to link the young person with services and agencies in their local community that can provide support. The length of time for a *Support Service Case* varies and depends on a young person's identified needs and may last up to 12 months.

Leaving Care Services (WA)

Leaving Care Services provide after care assistance including advice, referral and support and are a point of contact so that occasional ongoing supports continue, if necessary, until the young person is 25 years of age.

Post care support (ACT)

The post care phase of the program includes a follow-up service and a safe base for young people and young adults to return to and seek occasional or ongoing practical and emotional support. Limited financial assistance, based on an assessment of need, will be available to young adults to fund one-off expenses not provided by other agencies. Young people may initially not require or want support. However, the service can be accessed at a later time should the young person or young adult choose to re-engage.

Specialist After Care services (NSW)

Community Services funds a number of non-government organisations to provide assistance to people who have been in care such as Relationships Australia, Burnside, Centacare, St Vincent's Adolescent Care, Stretch-a-Family and Wesley Dalmar Youth Services.

These services provide:

- > counselling, support and assistance for young people leaving care or who have left care
- > support in finding employment, health care, legal advice and education
- > assistance with access to personal history information
- > information and advice about financial assistance
- > advocacy on behalf of young people.

Across the continuum

Three phased model of leaving care (WA)

Western Australia uses a three phased model of leaving care, with key tasks to be undertaken in each phase. The preparation phase includes discussions about the process and what it means for each young person. The young person is central to the planning and preparation process and is empowered to be an active participant, with planning meetings structured to promote attendance and participation of the young person. Significant others are included in the preparation work. In this early stage, young people are supported to engage with life and independent living skills programs. In the Transition to Independence Phase, preparation for independence focuses on assisting young people to access and maintain suitable accommodation and entry into education, training or employment. The second phase is also about consolidating skills and the work undertaken in the preparation phase as well as linking the young person with community sector organisations including a Leaving Care Service. In this phase, the Department's Legal unit is consulted to ensure any potential legal claims are managed well in advance of leaving care. A submission for Leaving Care funding is also prepared.

The After Care phase includes a case worker working through the plan for leaving care with the young person to ensure it addresses their leaving care issues. The young person is provided with a copy of their plan as well as their Child History Folder containing all relevant original documentation. After care supports are explained to the young person and processes for seeking future support from the Department. Leaving Care Services provide after care assistance including advice, referral and support and are a point of contact so that occasional ongoing supports continue, if necessary, until the young person is 25 years of age.

Leaving Care Case Study (WA)

John is a 17 year old boy who has been in the care of the CEO of the Department for Child Protection since he was 13. John has had a number of placements. He has lived in his current placement for 12 months. As part of the transition planning for John, his Child Protection Worker (the worker) has arranged for a Leaving Care Service staff member to attend his Care Plan meeting to discuss specific issues around leaving care and John's ongoing support needs.

At the meeting, John is asked to discuss some of the things he identified in his responses to the ViewPoint questionnaire, which he completed a few weeks earlier. John talks about some of the things he wants to do when he leaves care. He identifies getting a driver's licence, undertaking further study, and getting a job as the three most important things in the next twelve months. This is an important step for John and the worker begins to help him plan how he can achieve these things.

With John's agreement, the worker contacts a local driving school instructor and sets up an initial meeting. The worker then drafts a submission for leaving care funding to ensure the costs of obtaining a licence can be covered. The worker also liaises with John's carer about assisting him to complete the learner driver hours and to provide additional support as he works toward getting his licence.

The worker discusses with John what courses he would like to study, what sort of job he would like to do and the range of options available. John suggests that he would like to get a job in the mines and would consider undertaking a course in mining. The worker helps John gather information on the courses available and John decides to undertake a Certificate 3 in Drilling Operations at Central TAFE. The worker approaches the TAFE to discuss John's enrolment and the course fees. As part of an arrangement between the Department and all State Training Providers (TAFE), as John is a young person in care, he is eligible for a full fee waiver for any course he wishes to undertake. John has indicated he hopes to go on to complete the Certificate 4 in Drilling Operations in the second semester.

During the year John successfully completes Certificate 3 and moves on to study Certificate 4. The worker nominates John for the Department's Achiever Awards which would help provide some funding for a laptop or other educational expenses to assist John with his studies in the future.

A few weeks later John attends the Achiever Awards ceremony to accept the 'Technical and Further Education Achiever Award' and uses the prize money to purchase a new laptop.

Rapid Response System (SA)

The South Australian *Rapid Response Framework* ensures a whole-of-government service response for children and young people in out-of-home care and post care to 25 years.

The *Rapid Response Framework* is underpinned by a set of principles which include a commitment to ‘the best interests of the child’, ‘equitable outcomes’ and ‘priority access to services’ to ensure children and young people under guardianship receive relevant supports and services, such as housing, education and training and healthcare. A recent focus has involved enhancing service responses for care leavers to access further training and education.

The Rapid Response Framework requires annual reporting from partner agencies across government and includes capacity for continuous improvement through monitoring and evaluation by the Across Government Guardianship Steering Committee. The Across Government Guardianship Steering Committee includes representation from all relevant government agencies and the Guardian for Children and Young People.

Youth Support Teams (SA)

South Australia’s *Youth Support Teams* operate within Families SA. Youth workers from *Youth Support Teams* engage with young people from the age of 15 and liaise with their allocated case manager throughout the young person’s transitioning process. The youth worker can provide support and practical assistance, assisting the young person to gain knowledge and skills required to live independently. *Youth Support Teams* offer TAFE accredited tenancy and life skills training and will work with young people up to the age of 25 years if required.

More information

Where to find further information on the programs and initiatives discussed in this resource:

Jurisdiction	Program/Product/Service	Where to find further information
Australian Capital Territory	Time to Fly Transition from Care kit	www.create.org.au/act
	Children and Young People Act 2008 (ACT)	Janet Plater, Senior Manager Community Services Directorate P: 02 6205 9225 E: janet.plater@act.gov.au
	Youth Support and Transition Team	As above
	Learner Driver Car	As above
	Youth Identified Accommodation and Support Program	As above
	Crisis Mediation Service – Conflict Resolution Services	As above
	Winnunga Nimmitjah Outreach Service	As above
	Case Conferencing Unit	As above
	Housing Support Service, Youth Identified Accommodation Support Program	As above
	Housing for Young People Program	As above
	Friendly Landlord Service	As above
Parent Accommodation Support Program	As above	
New South Wales	Your Next Step	Community Services: www.community.nsw.gov.au
	Ageing, Disability and Home Care (ADHC) Leaving Care Program	ADHC: www.adhc.nsw.gov.au
	Leaving Care Mentoring Program for young people with a disability	NorthCott Disability Services www.northcott.com.au
	Looking After Children	www.pdc.org.au/lac/index.php
	Assisting Aboriginal Young People Leaving Care Project	Illawarra Aboriginal Corporation Telephone: (02) 4226 3358
	Brighter Futures early intervention	Community Services: www.community.nsw.gov.au
	Leading the Way	Community Services: www.community.nsw.gov.au
	Case Planning and Review template	Community Services: www.community.nsw.gov.au
Ministerial Guidelines on the provision of assistance after leaving out-of-home care	Community Services: www.community.nsw.gov.au	

Jurisdiction	Program/Product/Service	Where to find further information
New South Wales continued	Supported Independent Living	Community Services: www.community.nsw.gov.au
	Specialist After Care Services	Community Services: www.community.nsw.gov.au/parents_carers_and_families/for_young_people/are_you_in_care/are_you_leaving_care/after_care_support.html
Northern Territory	Moving On After Care Support and Brokerage Service	Anglicare NT Tel: (08) 89850000 E-mail: anglicare-nt@org.au Department of Children and Families Tel: (08) 8999 2673. Fax: (08) 8999 2546
	Joint training	Department of Children and Families Learning and Development Unit Tel: (08) 8944 8655
	Care and Protection Policy and Procedures Manual Leaving Care Planning Practice Guidelines & Leaving Care Task List	Department of Children and Families Tel: (08) 8999 2673
Queensland	Family Group Meetings	www.communities.qld.gov.au/childsafety/protecting-children/ongoing-intervention/family-group-meetings
	Transition from care champions	Department of Communities, Child Safety, Youth and Families, Child Protection Development Transition from Care Program Officer (07) 3405 4957
	My Journey in Care	www.communities.qld.gov.au/childsafety/foster-care/rights-and-responsibilities/charter-of-rights-for-a-child-in-care#secbooks
	Info kit for children and young people in care	www.communities.qld.gov.au/childsafety/foster-care/children-and-young-people/info-kit-for-children-and-young-people-in-care
	Transition from Care Month	Department of Communities, Child Safety, Youth and Families, Child Protection Development Transition from Care Program Officer (07) 3405 4957
	G-Force	As above
	Resources to assist in the transition process	www.communities.qld.gov.au/childsafety/foster-care/case-planning-for-a-child-in-care/transition-from-care
	Training for foster carers	Department of Communities, Child Safety, Youth and Families, Child Protection Development Transition from Care Program Officer (07) 3405 4957

Jurisdiction	Program/Product/Service	Where to find further information
Queensland continued	Evolve Transition Officer	www.communities.qld.gov.au/childsafety/partners/our-government-partners/evolve-interagency-services
	Youth, Housing and Reintegration Service	www.communities.qld.gov.au/communityservices/youth/support-services-for-young-people/youth-housing-and-reintegration-service-yhars
	Cultural Support Plans	Department of Communities, Child Safety, Youth and Families, Child Protection Development Transition from Care Program Officer (07) 3405 4957
	Case Plan	As above
	Child Health Passport	www.communities.qld.gov.au/childsafety/foster-care/case-planning-for-a-child-in-care/child-health-passport
	Go Your Own Way Transition from Care Kits	Department of Communities, Child Safety, Youth and Families, Child Protection Development Transition from Care Program Officer (07) 3405 4957 www.create.org.au
	Support Service Case	www.communities.qld.gov.au/childsafety/child-safety-practice-manual/chapters/7-support-service-cases
	Life Without Barriers – Transition from Care Program	www.lwb.org.au/Services/Family%20Support/Pages/links-4-life-transition-support Program Manager (Transition from Care) Life Without Barriers— South East Region Floor 1, 96 George Street Beenleigh PO Box 713 Beenleigh QLD 4207 Ph: 07 3440 6330 Fax: 07 3807 3261
South Australia	Post Care Services	Post Care Services 1800 188 118 (freecall) 08 8207 2653
	School Retention Team	Statewide Services Directorate, Families SA, Department for Education and Child Development, Phone: 08 8226 6662
	Rapid Response System	Practice and Policy Directorate, Families SA, Department for Education and Child Development, Phone: 08 8124 4185 If seeking more information for a young person in care, please contact the young person's allocated case worker.
	My Stuff kit	As above
	Youth Support Teams	Northern Youth Support Team: 08 8256 2756 Southern Youth Support Team: 08 8371 1984

Jurisdiction	Program/Product/Service	Where to find further information
South Australia continued	Families SA Mentoring Program	Statewide Services Directorate, Families SA, Department for Education and Child Development, Phone: 08 8226 6662
	Muggy's Youth Accommodation Service	As above
	Obtaining a Driver's Licence	Practice and Policy Directorate, Families SA, Department for Education and Child Development, Phone: 08 8124 4185 If seeking more information for a young person in care, please contact the young person's allocated case worker. For young people aged 18 to 25, please contact Post Care Services on 1800 188 118 (freecall) or 08 8207 2653
Tasmania	Case and Care Plan	Planning and Program Development, Children and Youth Services, Tasmanian Department of Health and Human Services. Email: diane.caney@dhhs.tas.gov.au
	Moving On	Planning and Program Development, Children and Youth Services, Tasmanian Department of Health and Human Services. Email: diane.caney@dhhs.tas.gov.au
	Outta Here: Your Options, Your Choices Transition from Care kit	www.create.org.au/tas
	After Care Support service	Email: adoption.service@dhhs.tas.gov.au
Victoria	Things That Matter Checklists	www.vic.gov.au/leavingcare
	Post care support services	www.vic.gov.au/leavingcare
	Berry Street's Post Care Support Information and Referral Program	www.berrystreet.org.au/LeavingCare
	Lead tenant model	Email – maria.trombin@dhs.vic.gov.au
	Leaving Care Cluster Housing and Support Model	Email – maria.trombin@dhs.vic.gov.au
	Springboard Program	Email – maria.trombin@dhs.vic.gov.au
	Leaving Care Mentoring program	Email – maria.trombin@dhs.vic.gov.au
Western Australia	Viewpoint	manuals.dcp.wa.gov.au/manuals/cpm Pages/21ViewpointandCarePlans- helpingchildrenincaretohavetheirsay.aspx
	The IgnitionWA website	www.ignitionwa.com/
	Three phased model of leaving care	www.dcp.wa.gov.au/ChildrenInCare/Pages/ Leavingcare.aspx
	A guide for carers	In development
	Rapid Response	www.dcp.wa.gov.au/Resources/Pages/ PoliciesandFrameworks.aspx
	Leaving Care Services	www.dcp.wa.gov.au/ChildrenInCare/Pages/ Leavingcare.aspx
Leaving Care Forum	www.childprotection.wa.gov.au	

Jurisdiction	Program/Product/Service	Where to find further information
Western Australia continued	Preparation and planning – case practice guide, leaving care tipsheets, leaving care services	www.dcp.wa.gov.au/ChildrenInCare/Pages/Leavingcare.aspx
	Child history folder	www.dcp.wa.gov.au/ChildrenInCare/Pages/Leavingcare.aspx
	Achiever Awards	www.dcp.wa.gov.au/CHILDRENINCARE/Pages/Ida%20Curtois%20Achiever%20Awards.aspx
National	What's the Plan? Campaign Materials	www.create.org.au/whats-the-plan-resources www.createyourfuture.org.au/leaving-care/whats-your-plan/
	Transition to Independent Living Allowance (TILA)	http://www.deewr.gov.au/Youth/OfficeForYouth/YouthPrograms/Pages/YouthPrograms.aspx#tila
Most jurisdictions	CREATE Your Future	www.createyourfuture.org.au/

Table 1 Transitioning from out-of-home care to Independence: A Nationally Consistent Approach to Planning

Core elements of planning included in all phases

Participants

- young person
 - » is central
 - » is empowered to be an active and informed participant:
 - » has the opportunity to be involved in planning such as identifying those people they would like included; setting goals; identifying actions, responsibilities and timeframes; and giving input into how the planning and review processes could occur
 - » is guided by a user friendly transition from care plan that covers aspects such as goals, actions, responsibilities and time frames
 - » has access to practical and emotional support throughout the transition process
 - » is supported to reconnect with/or establish effective relationships with family, where necessary and appropriate.
- workers
 - » the young person has an allocated caseworker who facilitates the young person’s participation and engagement in the planning process and their access to supports during the transition
 - » a primary worker with whom the young person has a positive relationship is available to provide support.
- carers
 - » are involved, where appropriate, and support the young person’s engagement and participation in the planning process
 - » are informed participants in the transition process
 - » are supported, so that they can effectively support the young person
- family members
 - » the young person’s family is supported to work towards safe and effective reconnections, and to be involved in transition planning, where possible, appropriate and desirable. Support is provided to maintain existing connections.
- significant others and community
 - » are supported to be involved in the planning process, where appropriate and desirable
 - » relationships are supported and fostered to encourage broader support and social networks.
- other agencies
 - » are made known to the young person who is assisted to constructively engage with specialist and/or mainstream services, appropriate to their identified needs.
 - » all agencies work together in a coordinated way to support the young person to access an appropriate and integrated service response with the consent of the young person.

Focus through Preparation phase 

Holistic baseline assessment identifies the young person’s strengths and areas requiring development, as well as possible ongoing needs. Develop clear and documented goals, actions, responsibilities and timeframes for identified needs and life domains. Young person participates in the planning process.

Focus

- stability of care arrangements
- health care needs — including therapeutic support needs and parenting information and supports, where applicable
- engagement in education, training, employment or other suitable activity
- relationships
 - » identify positive relationships in the young person’s family of origin and significant others
 - » family members — reconnections are facilitated where appropriate and effective relationships are re-established
 - » explore, develop or consolidate relationships with significant others. This may be through a variety of means such as face to face contact, telephone, email, or online social networking, with consideration given to the safety of the young person
- core life skills development including managing money, meal preparation, preparing for employment, transport, accessing health services, legal services and advocacy, social and relationship skills
- personal and other documents - for identification, independent living and citizenship (where relevant). Practical support is provided to understand the information and secure it in safe and accessible storage
- cultural needs and connections
- special needs — in relation to risks, vulnerabilities or disengagement are acknowledged and relevant agencies are engaged, for example, Disability Services, Mental Health and Alcohol and Other Drug providers.
- services — are identified, clear information is provided and engagement is facilitated

Key actions

- introduce the concept and idea of the young person beginning to plan for their life as an adult, including discussions about changing relationships
- for young people with special needs, early referrals and discussions with specialist support services
- clarify with the young person who is responsible, with them, for their preparation and planning. Consider strategies, for example, mentoring.

<p>Planning and support processes</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> □ assessment <ul style="list-style-type: none"> » is comprehensive and based on individual needs » considers needs against life domains » incorporates young person’s views and perspectives □ planning <ul style="list-style-type: none"> » is tailored to individual needs » is responsive to cultural backgrounds and needs » is responsive to changing circumstances: flexible, provides a safety net and includes contingencies that are based on assessment of need » directly involves the young person where possible » supports regular review of the transition from care plan and updates of the plan as required. □ support processes <ul style="list-style-type: none"> » goals of the plan are monitored and reviewed by a key person/s » roles and responsibilities are clearly identified to ensure that the planning includes all relevant participants and facilitates their involvement » the young person is supported to increasingly take responsibility for progress towards goals 	<p>Life domains</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> □ Housing/accommodation □ Health (physical, emotional (including self-esteem), mental, sexual and dental) □ Education and training, employment or other suitable activity □ Financial security □ Social relationships and support networks □ Life (and after care) skills □ Identity and culture □ Legal matters
<p>Focus through Transition phase </p> <p>Review progress with young person having greater responsibility for the planning process.</p> <p>Focus</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> □ securing safe, affordable and appropriate accommodation and living arrangements after the order expires □ health care needs that require ongoing attention into adulthood are attended to □ consolidate engagement in education, training, employment or other suitable activity □ financial support — facilitate access to income support and other financial entitlements such as: TILA, Youth Allowance, Rent Assistance, and Brokerage (where available) □ identity and culture — supporting the young person with their emerging independent identity □ relationships — continue and consolidate with significant others (includes mentoring where appropriate) and/or family members □ carers — support needs are addressed to enable them to assist the young person in their care through the transition □ independent community engagement and connections □ core life skills are further developed and consolidated □ personal and household items are obtained □ other agencies <ul style="list-style-type: none"> » disclosure of care leaver status is discussed and skills developed to support safe disclosure for those who choose » individual vulnerabilities are raised with relevant service providers and agencies (with the young person’s consent) » young person is aware of post care support and other services and how to contact them <p>Key actions — consolidate efforts from Phase 1 supported by ongoing assessment of needs. Confirm support of relevant services.</p>	<p>Focus through After Care phase</p> <p>Review progress</p> <p>Focus</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> □ accommodation — support to access or retain suitable accommodation □ relationships important to the young person are supported or mediated □ after care needs — assessed against relevant life domains. Relevant information is provided. Where required and desired by the young person; access to relevant services and/or supports is facilitated, including referrals □ other agencies — relevant services are engaged to continue support after the young person has left out-of-home care. Focus is on clear goals identified by the young person. Services may include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> » specialist and/or mainstream including financial support services and payments » targeted, intensive, specialised support and/or counselling specific to pre- or in-care experiences <p>Key actions — maintain and build on progress from Phases 1 and 2 based on individual needs and desire for ongoing assistance. Empower the young person to achieve ongoing independence</p>