



Leaving Care - Checklist for Staff

Phase 1 Preparation – 15 years of age

Practice Requirements:

Assessment and Planning

When a child in the care of the CEO turns 15 years of age or where a child enters care after the age of 15 years, the officer responsible will begin the process of modifying the *Care Plan* (the Plan) to reflect a focus on leaving care requirements.

Preparation should be appropriate to the emotional and developmental stage of the individual young person. It also needs to be timely.

Planning must ensure the care dimensions outlined in the Plan are addressed; including the therapeutic supports that will assist in addressing issues such as grief and loss, anxiety, trauma, unresolved anger and/or juvenile justice issues. The Plan for leaving care should detail the goals, actions required and person/s responsible to implement each action.

Planning should focus on supporting the young person to:

- Obtain appropriate and ongoing after care accommodation, including basic personal items and furniture;
- The development of core life skills and independent living skills;
- Access income support and other financial entitlements such as TILA, rent assistance, Youth Allowance and the Department's leaving care fund;
- Continue or re-engage with education, training, employment;
- Develop an awareness of their entitlements and how to seek after care support from the Department, including access to personal records, information and financial support;
- Establish a positive link with a leaving care service and other appropriate support services;

- Reconnect with/or re-establish effective relationships with family members where appropriate and establish a support network to ensure the young person has a range of avenues to seek assistance in the future.

Young person's involvement

The young person must be central to the planning and preparation process and empowered to be an active participant. Conversations should commence with the young person regarding what they see themselves doing as an adult. These conversations should occur incrementally to allow the young person time to deal with these life decisions in a supported manner.

Preparation work must also actively involve appropriate members of their family as well as relevant significant others. Participation should be viewed as an ongoing process and young people should be encouraged to provide continuous feedback on their experience and satisfaction regarding the process and outcomes.

Partnerships

The care team surrounding the young person, whether it be parents or relatives, foster carers, Department staff or non government agency staff share a responsibility to ensure the young person is supported to develop the life skills and knowledge they need to move towards independence. Young people should be supported by someone with whom they have a positive relationship.

Skill development

Young people need to be encouraged and supported to access the full range of education, training and employment opportunities.

The initial focus of planning should be on an assessment of the young person's current life and independent living skills. Field workers should develop strategies to assist further development of these skills to ensure a smooth

transition from care. The following areas must be considered in the assessment of skills;

- Safety
- Accommodation
- Health
- Education and employment
- Social and family relationships
- Recreation and Leisure
- Emotional and Behavioural development
- Identity and Culture

- Financial and Legal

Engagement with appropriate services

Young people should be supported to access and engage with a range of support services.

The checklist below is designed to assist staff to identify and consider leaving care needs.

GENERAL	
1.	Has an assessment of the young person's independent living skills, including practical, social and emotional skills been undertaken?
2.	Does the young person have a Mentor or would they benefit from one?
3.	What areas require further skill development to sustain living independently?
4.	Does the Department hold copies of documents the young person will need as adult? What needs to be done to arrange these for the future? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Birth certificate • Health care card • Vaccination record • Medicare card • Student card • Learners/Drivers licence • Tax File Number and returns Does the young person have sufficient documentation to meet a 100 point identification check?
5.	What services is the young person currently engaged with?
6.	How is the young person providing input to the plan? And how are they kept aware of any changes to the plan?
7.	Are all stakeholders, including the young person, aware of their roles and responsibilities in relation to tasks outlined in the Plan for leaving care?
IDENTITY AND CULTURE	
1.	Does the young person identify with a particular culture or people?
2.	What Language does the young person speak, do they need help from interpreters, translators or a support person?
3.	Does the young person have a significant person in their life that could support the development of identity and culture?
4.	Does the young person have a cultural plan? Does this plan support the young person's wishes in relation to their connection with culture?
SOCIAL AND FAMILY RELATIONSHIPS	
1.	Is the young person having regular contact with family or people significant to them?
2.	Is an ongoing plan developed and understood by the young person?
3.	Is there someone who could help support the development of social and life skills?
4.	Does the young person have solid support networks? Is there someone who may be able to help with the preparation for leaving care and ongoing after care support?
5.	Is there someone suitable who, if required could provide emergency support? (a bed for the night, assist with paying a bill, etc.)
SAFETY	
1.	Are there any ongoing safety needs for the young person? How are these being addressed?
2.	Does the young person know how to contact relevant people in an emergency?

3.	Do they have a list of emergency contacts?	
HOUSING		
1.	Is the current placement supporting the development of living skills? How?	
2.	Does the young person currently have stable accommodation? Is it likely to remain stable?	
3.	What services are involved that may be able to provide ongoing or one off assistance to the young person?	
4.	What are the long term accommodation needs and goals?	
5.	Has contact been made with the Department of Housing regarding available options?	
HEALTH		
1.	What are the young person's ongoing medical and dental needs? How are these being addressed?	
2.	Is the young person engaged with counselling or any other therapeutic service?	
3.	Does the young person have a Health Passport?	
4.	Does the young person need ongoing medication? If yes, do they understand how to manage this, including obtaining prescriptions from a Doctor, filling prescriptions at a Chemist, etc.	
5.	Does the young person understand their sexual health and how to manage this?	
6.	Does the young person have alcohol or drug issues? If yes, how are these to be managed?	
EDUCATION/TRAINING/EMPLOYMENT		
1.	Is the young person engaged in an education program, is it stable, likely to remain stable and how is it supported?	
2.	Does the young person have a current Documented Education Plan?	
3.	What are the young person's plans for the future in terms of education or employment?	
4.	Does the young person have a resume, and do they know how to write a job application?	
5.	Is the young person aware of Job Support Agencies?	
FINANCIAL AND LEGAL CONSIDERATIONS		
1.	Is the young person eligible for income support?	
2.	Does the young person receive any income?	
3.	Have you assisted the young person to apply for: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Youth Allowance • Centrelink payments • Student Card • Health Care Card • Disability Support Pension • Tax file number? 	
4.	Does the young person have a bank account? Do they know how to use it?	
5.	Does the young person know how to budget, or do they require financial counselling?	
6.	Are there any outstanding legal or financial issues?	
7.	Is the young person registered with the Disability Services Commission (DSC) or likely to require a Guardianship and/or Administration Order upon leaving care due to a decision-making disability? If so, contact the Department's Civil Litigation Unit.	
8.	Have you contacted the Civil Litigation Unit yet, to determine if there are any outstanding or potential legal or financial claims? Email CivilLitigation.UnitQuery@dcp.wa.gov.au or phone (08) 9222 2888.	

ⁱ Department for Child Protection – November 2011