



Upcoming changes to Out of Home Care services

Information for Providers

The Department of Communities (the Department) is changing the way it delivers Out of Home Care (OOHC) services in Western Australia (WA) to achieve the best outcomes for all children and young people.

Frequently asked questions

What is the goal of the OOHC Reform?

For the Department, Community Service Organisations (CSOs) and the Aboriginal community, there is a shared goal to work together to develop an OOHC system that is evidence based and trauma informed. The key priorities have included creating greater stability for children entering care; siblings remaining together; improved opportunity for early reunification to family; young people leaving care well prepared to enter adulthood; greater cultural connection; and a service system that is Aboriginal led, flexible and needs driven with improved accountability and regulation.

What are the key changes caused by the OOHC Reform?

The OOHC system key changes include:

- Delivery of stable and culturally safe care arrangements; in some instances, this may mean carers transitioning to new organisations.
- Targeted resources for organisations and carers to meet the needs of children.
- Care arrangements focused on improved outcomes for children and young people.

What will happen now that contracts have been awarded?

Now that contracts have been awarded, the OOHC reform project has moved into the transition phase of the project. You will receive a formal invitation to attend a Contract Meeting with the Department to discuss your OOHC contract and the activities required to transition children and carers. At this meeting the Department will work collaboratively with you to jointly develop and agree to Transition Plans for children and/or their carers.

This transition will be complex and will require cooperation between you, the sector, the Department, and families. The Department acknowledges the focus and willingness to prioritise the best interests of each child in care and their circumstances to enable a seamless transition.

When will the Transition occur?

The transition process will begin after the Contract Meeting in October 2023 with a meeting between you and the Department to jointly develop and agree on Transition Plans. The transition planning process will take time and change will not happen immediately. It will be an inclusive and collaborative process that includes families, children and you in the process.

Contracts with existing providers will expire in December 2023. Some exiting providers will be extended to support the transition of carers and children to new providers.

How can I find out more about transition?

A comprehensive [Transition Guide](#) has been developed in collaboration with the sector including Child and Family Alliance WA, community service organisations, ACCOs and Yorganop.

There is also information available on our webpage for carers, families and children.

Will carers get to see information that is shared between the exiting provider and the new provider?

Disclosure of relevant information between all parties will be in the best interest of the child and in accordance with legislative and confidentiality requirements. Exiting Providers will notify carers of any changes and obtain their consent to release their information and agreement to participate in the transition process.

If exiting providers have new potential carers on pause due to the tender process, what will happen to these carers if the provider does not receive a new contract?

If individuals interested in becoming carers have not yet undergone an assessment process, they will need to initiate the assessment procedure by applying through an Incoming Provider. Exiting services should inform carers about the modifications to service delivery and offer information and guidance on where to access information on their options, including other available Out of Home Care Providers.

What processes are in place for conflict resolution?

An inclusive decision-making approach is to be implemented throughout the transition process. Working together is the best way to fix many problems. In most instances, disputes are best resolved if relevant parties sit down and discuss the issues. Differences of opinion in relation to decisions for children will be worked through in a collaborative way with all relevant stakeholders in the child's Care Team including the child, where appropriate.

How will placement stability and consistency be ensured during the transition process to minimise disruptions for the children?

Placement stability is a key focus during the transition process. The primary goal is to enable children and young people to continue, whenever feasible, to remain in their current care arrangement with the only change being to the carer management. This will

be achieved through a collaborative care team approach, where everyone involved, including the child, will have the opportunity to provide input into the process.

How can I find out more?

To find out more about OOHC changes and more useful information for carers, please visit our website or send an email to the OOHC team at the Department (OOHCtransition@communities.wa.gov.au).

How do I contact the Advocate for Children in Care?

Office hours (9am to 5pm, Monday to Friday)
0429 086 508 (you can call, text or leave a message)
Free call 1800 460 696 (charges may apply for some mobile plans)
Email: advocate@communities.wa.gov.au

What if I need urgent help?

If you need urgent help and you can't get hold of your District Office or the Advocate for Children in Care, there are other options:

- Crisis Care (24 hours/7 days) Telephone (08) 9223 1111 Free call 1800 199 008
- Kids Helpline (24 hours/7 days) Free call 1800 55 1800
- Police 131 444 or 000 (emergency only)

Know your rights

Children and young people have human rights. Know your rights by downloading the [Charter of Rights for Children and Young People in Care](#) and the [United Nations Declaration on the Rights of the Child 1990](#).

More information

To find out more about upcoming changes to OOHC, please contact:

- **Email:** OOHCtransition@communities.wa.gov.au
- **Phone:** 1800 176 888 (Freecall)

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Telephone: 13 14 50

If you are deaf, or have a hearing or speech impairment, contact us through the National Relay Service. For more information visit:
www.communications.gov.au/accesshub/nrs