



# Upcoming changes to Out of Home Care Services

## FAQs for individualised placement providers

The following information is to support individualised placement providers who are exiting the Out of Home Care system.

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

### **We received an extension on our current panelled contract, does this mean we will continue to be a provider?**

An extension of your Panel Agreement will ensure you can continue to provide care for the children placed with you until they can transition to another provider. There may be occasions during this transition phase when we will need to seek additional services from you. This will be in exceptional circumstances only. Upon expiry of the Panel Agreement, no further agreed orders will be issued meaning there will be no further referrals and you will no longer be delivering Out of Home Care Services for the Department of Communities (Communities).

### **What will happen past 31 December 2023 when my service agreement / agreed orders end?**

A review of the panel agreements and agreed orders is currently being completed to determine whether care arrangements for specific children are needed beyond 31 December 2023. Where a child is not likely to transition to a successful provider before this date, an extension is likely. Communities will be in contact to negotiate any extensions needed.

### **If children are stable and are doing well, do they still have to move?**

If a provider was successful in the recent commissioning of OOHC services, then it is Communities goal is to enable children and young people to continue, whenever feasible, in their current care arrangement with the only the change being the management of the care arrangement. However, if the Provider was not successful or did not tender for OOHC services then the primary goal is to transition the child and where possible their living arrangements to an incoming OOHC Provider. 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.

### **When will children be transitioned out / what is the time frame?**

The transition timeline for each child will be mapped out at the Transition Meeting. Transition Meetings will commence following the Contract Meeting. The purpose of the Transition Meeting is to jointly develop and agree to a Transition Plan for the child and/or carer. It will also be a forum to discuss any potential issues regarding the transition of a child and/or carer arrangement.

### **Does the child have a say in whether they move?**

Communities and the OOHC provider are jointly responsible for engaging children in the transition process and to provide options which are appropriate to their age and stage of development, culturally appropriate and trauma informed.

### **What if Communities cannot find a suitable arrangement for a child to transition to?**

Communities has completed significant mapping and matching for the children who need to transition to a new care arrangement. In addition to the new care arrangement, Communities may utilise residential care and Departmental Foster Carers.

### **Is there an expectation that staff (caring for children) move with the child to the new agency?**

The primary goal is to enable children and young people to continue, wherever feasible, living with the same carers. Where children and young people are being cared for by staff carers, the opportunity for staff to transition with the child, will be a matter for the incoming provider in consideration of their recruitment policies.

### **What happens to carers who are in the process of a standards of care assessment?**

If a carer is moving providers, the new provider will have its own process in place to determine whether a carer needs to be assessed again. For carers wishing to transition to an incoming provider or to Communities, the outgoing provider will be required to complete a carer transition template ten days prior to the transition meeting. A carer review may be required where gaps are identified and/or in cases where competency concerns have arisen, such as any non-compliance, standard of care concern or an allegation against a carer.

The outgoing provider will provide the following documents to assist the incoming provider to determine whether further information is required:

- Consent for release of carer assessment report;
- Confirmation of attendance at training relevant to caring;
- Foster carer reviews (completed within the previous twelve (12) months);
- Any standard of care reports;

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- Carer support plans;
- Any other relevant information.

### **How can I find out more?**

To find out more about OOHC changes and more useful information, 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](mailto: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](mailto:OOHCtransition@communities.wa.gov.au)
- **Phone:** 1800 176 888 (Freecall)