

## Fact sheet

### Youth Initiative: Personal Advisor

July 2024

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## Information for Caseworkers about working with Personal Advisors

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### Purpose of this factsheet

This factsheet provides information on the relationship between the Youth Initiative Personal Advisor and the role of Caseworkers working young people leaving Out of Home Care.

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### About the Youth Initiative

The Youth Initiative (YI) identifies and targets young people leaving Out of Home Care (OOHC) who are likely to be homeless or at risk of homelessness on exit from care. The program builds the long-term capacity and resilience of young people with the aim of permanently diverting them from the homelessness service system.

YI provides eligible young people with a Personal Advisor and Education/Employment Mentor. Some young people will also receive support from a Transitional Support Worker to help them establish a tenancy and a portion may be offered subsidised accommodation for a limited time.

For further information about YI and a list of lead YI providers by DCJ District please see the **Youth Initiative Information for Caseworkers fact sheet**.

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### What is the role of the Personal Advisor?

All young people participating in YI will have a Personal Advisor for the duration of their participation in the program. The Personal Advisor role is managed by the lead YI provider. The primary role of the Personal Advisor is to provide mentoring advice to a young person as they transition from Out of Home Care to independent living. The goal of this support is to help the young person implement aspects of their Leaving Care Plan, provide advice and advocacy, strengthen their pro-social personal support networks and support them to build confidence and establish independence as young adults. Ultimately the Personal Advisor should be supporting the young person to establish, maintain and grow their network to the point where the young person can access advice from their network and the Personal Advisor is no longer needed.

To ensure a smooth transition to post-exit support, the Personal Advisor will usually begin developing a relationship with the young person (including providing some mentoring advice) before the young person leaves Out of Home Care. Where appropriate, the Personal Advisor should be invited to participate in the development or review of the young person's Leaving Care Plan, in addition to significant others in the young person's life. It is not the role of the Personal Advisor to formally case manage the young person or develop the Leaving Care Plan.

The Personal Advisor links the young person with other Youth Initiative services including Education and Employment mentoring, Transitional Accommodation Support and private rental accommodation as required.

Examples of the Personal Advisor role are outlined in Appendix 1.

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## What is the role of the Caseworker?

The Caseworker provides a critical link in establishing the young person's involvement in YI. Lead YI providers will contact Caseworkers of eligible young people to discuss the program and provide them with the opportunity to discuss the benefits of the program with the young person before contacting them directly. At times when the contact details of the young person in ChildStory are not current, the Caseworker will enable contact to be made with the young person.

If a young person chooses to participate in the Youth Initiative, the Caseworker will continue to provide all mandated care and support services to the young person in preparation for leaving OOHC and access to entitlements, education and health pathways and relevant after care services. The Caseworker will continue to ensure the best outcomes for the young person, inclusive of casework and case management responsibilities. This includes ongoing responsibility for the development and review of the young person's Leaving Care Plan<sup>1</sup>.

Examples of the Caseworker role compared to the Personal Advisor are outlined in Appendix 1.

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## For more information

Please refer to the Youth Initiative Program Specifications or contact us at [Youth.Homelessness@dcj.nsw.gov.au](mailto:Youth.Homelessness@dcj.nsw.gov.au)

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<sup>1</sup> Note: All young people accessing Youth Initiative services are required to have a finalised Leaving Care Plan

Appendix 1: Examples of out of home care caseworker and YI personal advisor roles and responsibilities

Example area of responsibility	Pre/Post OOHC Exit	Out of Home Care Caseworker Role	Personal Advisor Role
Leaving care plan	Pre OOHC Exit	Develop Leaving Care Plan (LCP) in consultation with the young person	Where appropriate, participate in the development or review (advice only) of the Leaving Care Plan with the young person and their caseworker
		Confirm required funding	
		Provide approved LCP to Personal Advisor and invite the Personal Advisor to review meetings (as appropriate)	
		Review and update the plan to reflect the needs and goals of the young person	Provide support and advocacy to support implementation of the Leaving Care Plan and for review or change where appropriate as things change for the young person
		Ensure the young person has access to health and education pathways and other entitlements and opportunities	Find and share available options for the young person and support them to engage with it e.g scholarships, university pathways, cooking courses
	Consider safe relationships and sexual health as part of ongoing conversations with the young person	Support advocacy and advice around sexual health and safety and safe relationships, in the context of vulnerable young people	
	Post OOHC Exit	Review LCP activities and related funding (as things may have changed for the young person) and as requested by the young person	Provide advice to the young person on LCP activities with a view to supporting the young person to implementing the plan (including advice on how to locate, access, navigate service systems)
		Confirm any additional funding amounts	Provide advice to the young person on how to seek a review of their LCP, including a review of funding attached, if required or if circumstances change and new needs emerge that are not included in the current plan
Housing	Pre OOHC Exit	Manage Out of Home Care placements	Through mentoring and advice, assist the young person to think about their post care housing needs, including any capacity or network building activities that need to occur to support a positive transition
		Discuss the option of staying with their existing carer if that is appropriate and possible	

Example area of responsibility	Pre/Post OOHC Exit	Out of Home Care Caseworker Role	Personal Advisor Role
	Post OOHC Exit		<p>If PYI accommodation is available, link the young person to the transitional support worker to access PYI accommodation</p> <p>If PYI accommodation is not available (where capacity allows) link the young person to the transitional support worker to access and/or receive support in alternative accommodation.</p> <p>If neither PYI accommodation nor transitional support worker services are available, provide advice to the young person with the view to supporting their capacity to access and engage with services that can address accommodation needs (including supporting the young person to engage with their caseworker and/or to access help from their personal network as appropriate)</p>
Accessing Out of Home Care personal files	Pre OOHC Exit	Provide advice to young person on aspects of their care	N/A
	Post OOHC Exit	Provide access to personal files as per Freedom of Information (FOI) process.	
Personal and Family Networks and Social supports	Pre OOHC Exit	Connect or reconnect the young person to family and/or significant others to support long term support networks ('forever network').	Provide advice to the young person to assist them in establishing and building safe and supportive personal and social networks they will need post care and how this should link in with their LCP. May include connecting with sporting clubs, volunteering, youth groups, cultural or religious groups – building on the young person's interests and existing networks.
		Consider family finding and community networks that may assist the young person into adulthood.	Coordinate with the caseworker as needed to strengthen networks they can access post care.

Example area of responsibility	Pre/Post OOHC Exit	Out of Home Care Caseworker Role	Personal Advisor Role
		Links to identity/cultural planning	Begin planning strategies with the young person to strengthen the young person’s existing networks to support transition to independence
	Post OOHC Exit	Connect or reconnect the young person to family and/or significant others to support long term support networks ('forever network').	Provide advice and mentoring with the aim to support the young person to establish a range of personal networks (social/personal, community and service level) that can be leveraged to support wellbeing and to manage crisis and change post care.
		Consider family finding and community networks that may assist the young person	