

Transition Program Office

OOHC transfer of Community Services carers and case management transfer of children and young people

OOHC Transition Process: Community Services Carers

Background

Non-government organisations (NGOs) and Community Services (CS) have made a commitment to support you and the children and young people in your care to transition. The aim of the transition is for carers, CS and NGOs to work together to improve the lives of children and young people in out-of-home care.

Stage 1: Carers becoming informed

There are a number of ways that you can be connected to what's happening such as attending carer information sessions and forums. Your CS worker may contact you to invite you to an information session or you can contact Connecting Carers on 1300 794 653 to find out when an information session is on in your area. You can also contact NGOs to obtain information about the range of services that NGOs have to offer.

Make sure you ask any questions you have so that you and the children and young people in your care know what to expect during the process of transfer from CS to an NGO.

If you don't have a contact at the local Community Services Centre, you can call the Carer Transfer Line in your region:

- Metro Central: 83036376
- Metro South West: 87137982
- Metro West: 93541607
- Hunter & Central Coast: 49851558
- Southern: 42228467
- Northern (includes New England): 66861990
- Western: 69379456

There is also the *Moving to a new agency guide* at <http://www.connectingcarersnsw.com.au/> that answers many questions you may have. It also provides a list of NGOs available to accept carers transferring from CS.

Stage 2: Making a decision about which NGO to transfer to

You will be supported by NGOs and CS to ensure that you have the information you need to help you make a decision about which NGO to transfer to.

You can gather information about the transition and NGOs by:

- Visiting NGO websites and calling them direct
- Requesting printed information or an information pack from NGOs
- Attending a Carer Information Session or expo when there is one in your area

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- One-on-one information sessions with the NGO – ask for the foster care team
- Talking to other carers who have already transferred or are with an NGO
- Joining a carer support group and asking information from them

TIP: If you feel overwhelmed or confused talk to CS about which NGO in your area has a placement to suit the child or young person in your care.

Each NGO has a Registration of Interest form for you to complete. Your details will be placed on the NGO Carer Register, this is a list of carers willing to transfer to the NGO, and further contact will be made with you by an NGO representative.

You can also access the following websites for information:

- Fostering NSW - <http://www.fosteringnsw.com.au> - click on the 'Transferring to a non-government agency' section under the 'Apply today' tab.
- Transition Program Office - www.tponsw.com.au

You can talk to Connecting Carers NSW on 1300 794 653 or Aboriginal Statewide Carer Support on 1800 888 698 for support.

Stage 3: Exchange of Information and initiating transfer

The NGO and/or CS will contact you about transferring when you decide which NGO to transfer to. The NGO will speak with you about signing the *Consent to Release Personal Information* form. The purpose of this form is for the NGO to gain access to your CS carer records. A copy of the consent form is available on the Community Services website -

http://www.community.nsw.gov.au/docs_menu/parents_carers_and_families/out_of_home_care_transition/policies_procedures_and_tools/transfer_process.html

The transfer should take four weeks from the time the signed form is received by CS.

If there are other adult household members living with you, they are required to complete the *consent for probity checks – household members aged 16 and over form*.

Once the form is signed, the NGO will provide it to CS and CS will arrange for a number of documents relating to your role as a carer for CS to be provided to the NGO, including:

- Carer assessment and reports
- Working with children Check (WWCC) clearance status
- Annual carer reviews
- Carer development plan, with details of training to be undertaken
- Community Service authorisation letter
- Any letter regarding changes to authorisation, decisions of the administrative decisions tribunal or finalisation from the reportable conduct unit

CS will also provide the NGO with brief information about each child and young person placed with you, including the outcome of the Child Assessment Tool (CAT). The CAT is used by CS to determine the care level and support required for each child and young person in your care.

A CS worker may visit you or talk with you on the phone about your current situation and care arrangements and ask questions to ensure your file is up to date and ready for transfer to the NGO. The NGO may also arrange an initial home visit to begin planning for your carer authorisation process with the NGO.

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Stage 4: Transfer progression and carer authorisation

Once the transfer has started, CS will prepare information for the case management transfer of the children and young people placed with you. The NGO will complete the carer authorisation process with you.

The authorisation process will vary slightly between NGOs and most will have a simpler process so it won't mean starting from scratch. Each NGO is required to authorise every carer that transfers from CS.

The NGO will explain the steps, which will include a home visit/s and an assessment. During this time, you will be able to talk about the child or young person's needs and your needs as a carer. It is also an opportunity for you to ask questions about what services and supports the NGO can offer you and the children and young people in your care.

Outcomes of authorisation:

- You and the NGO will make an agreement about continuing with the authorisation. You may then be required to complete additional forms such as signing the Carer Code of Conduct. Once the authorisation is approved then you will receive an authorisation letter from the NGO.
- If the decision of the NGO is to not proceed with the authorisation, the NGO will be required to provide you and CS with information explaining this decision.
- If you decide to withdraw from the authorisation process, have a conversation with the NGO and / or CS about your reasons for withdrawing at this time.
- If there are particular areas of training that are identified, the NGO is responsible for developing a Carer Support Plan for you and you will have the option as to whether you agree to proceed or withdraw at this point.

TIP: You should be actively engaged in the transfer process with the NGO and where appropriate the children and young people placed with you should also be involved.

Stage 5: Case management transfer for children and young people from CS to NGO

Upon agreement between the NGO, CS, the child or young person and carer, case management transfer will proceed.

It's important for the NGO to have a conversation with you and each child and young person placed with you to provide information about the changes occurring and address any questions about the transfer process.

CS and the NGO will arrange for a case meeting to discuss the future case plan for each child/young person placed with you. Case management transfer of a child or young person should occur at the same time as your transfer.

During the case management transfer meeting, CS will provide a series of documents to the NGO for the child or young person including recent Children's Court order and a copy of the child or young person's care plan and case plan.

Well done – you have moved agency!

It's natural to have questions so talk these through each step of the way.