

Pathways of Care Longitudinal Study of Children in Out-of-Home Care (POCLS)

Dashboard 11 – Leaving Care Cohort

What is included in Dashboard 11?

The POCLS dashboard summarises the data collected on young people aged 15-17 years and their caregivers in the POCLS. These young people are referred to as the leaving care cohort in the study (the Cohort). The dashboard explores how the leaving care cohort will deal with issues after leaving care (e.g., leaving care plan and future plans), where they can seek after care services and support groups, and how they will manage independent living. It specifically reports the following **study topics**.

- Being informed of future changes after turning 18 years
- Having a leaving care plan
- Written supportive information and documents, after care services or support groups, and accommodation plans for the Cohort
- Staying in touch with the Cohort
- Having enough assistance to make decisions about future
- Areas of assistance needed and people who would help after turning 18 years
- Reaction to leaving care discussions and worry about turning 18 years
- Ability to manage independent living

The responses of relevant study questions from young people aged 15-17 years and their caregivers at the time of either the Wave 2, Wave 3 or Wave 4 interview are included with their most recent responses shown if they have participated in multiple waves. Data are broken down by demographic characteristics (Aboriginal and CALD status) and out-of-home care (OOHC) placements.

Why is Dashboard 11 needed?

Figures are used to answer key study question and to measure if services and support to children and young people in OOHC meet the NSW Standards of Statutory OOHC below.

- NSW OOHC Standard 12 – Independent Living: Young people have leaving care plans that support their transition from OOHC.

Summary of Dashboard 11 findings:

Study Topic 1 – Characteristics of the leaving care cohort

This study topic presents the number and percentage of the leaving care cohort aged 15-17 years by various characteristics with responses from their most recent wave shown if they have participated in multiple waves.

- A total of 127 young people aged 15-17 years were in the leaving care cohort. About one third (33.9%) of the cohort were Aboriginal young people (n=43). Around one in five (18.9%) young people were from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds (CALD) (n=24).
- Of these 127 young people, 48 or 37.8% were in foster care at the time of interview.

Another 48 (37.8%) young people were in relative/kinship care. A further 31 young people were in residential care, representing 24.4% of the leaving care cohort.

- Two-thirds of these 127 young people (66.1%) were aged 6-11 years at their first entry into OOHC (n=84). Around one third (33.9%) of the cohort were aged 12-17 years when they first entered OOHC (n=43).
- More than half (51.2%) of the leaving care cohort had 15 and more ROSH reports prior to their first entry into OOHC (n=65).
- Prior to their first OOHC entry, the top three Helpline assessed issues for the leaving care cohort were neglect (94.5%), physical abuse (93.7%), and emotional abuse (92.9%).
- Hunter and Central Coast district had the highest percentage of young people in the leaving care cohort (22.0%) and South Eastern Sydney, Northern Sydney and Sydney districts had the lowest (7.1%).

Study Topic 2 – Young people were informed about what will happen after turning 18 years

This study topic presents the percentage of young people aged 15-17 years in the leaving care cohort who have been provided with information about their change in legal order when they turn 18 years old and who have started talking with their caseworker about their leaving care plan.

- A total of 63 young people aged 15-17 years reported that it was explained to them that their Children's Court order will end when they turn 18 years old. This translates to 70.8% of young people aged 15-17 years in the leaving care cohort who responded to this question (n=83).
- Almost half (49.4%, n=44) of young people aged 15-17 years in the leaving care cohort reported that they have started talking with caseworkers about their leaving care plan.
- More than half (55.6%) of Aboriginal young people aged 15-17 years in the leaving care cohort have started talking with caseworkers about their leaving care plan. Please note that percentages derived from small cohorts of less than 20 are suppressed so the figures for 'explanation of change in legal order' are not shown.
- Approximately three-quarters (73.7%) of the leaving care cohort in foster care had been told that their Children's Court order will end when they turn 18 years old and almost half (47.4%) had started talking with caseworkers about their leaving care plan.
- Around two thirds (64.1%) of the leaving care cohort in relative/kinship care were told that their Children's Court order will end when they turn 18 years old and less than half (41.0%) had started talking with caseworkers about their leaving care plan.

Study Topic 3 – Caregiver reports of leaving care plan

This study topic presents the percentage of young people aged 15-17 years in the leaving care cohort who had a leaving care plan as reported by their caregiver. It also provides the results by Aboriginal and CALD status. Results by placement type are not shown due to small numbers.

- Half (48.8%) of young people aged 15-17 years in the leaving care cohort were reported by their caregivers as having a leaving care plan at the time of the interview.
- This pattern is evident for all sub-groups in the leaving care cohort.
 - Aboriginal young people (46.5%)
 - CALD young people (45.8%)

Study Topic 4 – Having supporting documentation and information

This study topic presents the percentage of young people aged 15-17 years in the leaving care cohort who had been given the resource book titled 'Your Next Step: Information for young people leaving care'. It also provides the results by Aboriginality, CALD, and placement type at interview.

- Around a third (29.1%) of young people aged 15-17 years old in the leaving care cohort had been given the resource book titled 'Your Next Step: Information for young people leaving care' as reported by their caregivers.
- The percentage was higher amongst Aboriginal young people (39.5%), young people in foster care (35.4%), and young people in residential care (35.5%).

Study Topic 5 – Caregiver reports of after care services or support groups that the leaving care cohort were told about

This study topic presents the percentage of young people aged 15-17 years in the leaving care cohort by the aftercare services and supports they have been told about.

- 'Create Foundation' was the most frequently reported after care service or support group that young people aged 15-17 years in the leaving care cohort had been told about, accounting for 33.9% of the total number of young people aged 15-17 years in the leaving care cohort.
- The most commonly mentioned after care service or support group that Aboriginal and CALD young people in the leaving care cohort had been told about was the Local Community Services Centre offices (DCJ) (39.5% and 29.2% respectively).
- Create Foundation and Local Community Services Centre offices (DCJ) were the most frequently reported after care service or support group that young people aged 15-17 years in foster care in the leaving care cohort had been told about (both 16.7%).
- The most commonly mentioned after care service or support group that young people aged 15-17 years in relative/kinship carer and residential care in the leaving care cohort had been told about was the Create Foundation (29.2%).
- Around two-thirds of young people in residential care in the leaving care cohort had been told about the Create Foundation (67.7%) and Local Community Services Centre offices (DCJ) (64.5%).

Study Topic 6 – Young person reports of accommodation plans after turning 18 years

This study topic presents the percentage of young people aged 15-17 years in the leaving care cohort who plan to stay on living with current caregivers after they turn 18.

It also provides the results by placement type at interview. Results by Aboriginality and CALD status are not available due to small numbers.

- Around half (48.2%) of young people aged 15-17 years in the leaving care cohort indicated that they would stay on living with their existing caregivers after they turn 18.
- The percentage was higher for young people in foster care (57.9%) and lower for young people in relative/kinship care (43.6%). The figures are not publishable for young people in residential care due to small numbers.

Study Topic 7 – Young person reports of staying in touch after turning 18

This study topic presents the percentage of young people aged 15-17 years in the leaving care

cohort who indicated that they will stay in touch with each of the following individuals after they turn 18.

- Current caregivers
 - Previous caregivers
 - Caseworkers
- The majority (92.9%) of young people aged 15-17 years in the leaving care cohort indicated they would remain in contact with their current caregivers after they turn 18.
 - According to 61.9% of young people aged 15-17 years in the leaving care cohort, they would remain in contact with their previous caregivers after they turn 18.
 - Around a third (32.1%) of these young people aged 15-17 years indicated that they would remain in contact with their caseworkers after they turn 18.
 - More than 90% of Aboriginal young people aged 15-17 years in the leaving care cohort indicated they would stay in touch with their current caregivers after they turn 18. Note that the exact number and percentage are not displayed in the chart to maintain the confidentiality and privacy of the small number of young people who did not indicate this would be the case.
 - Half (50.0%) of Aboriginal young people in the leaving care cohort indicated that they would remain in contact with their previous caregivers after they turn 18.
 - More than a half (54.2%) of these Aboriginal young people aged 15-17 years indicated that they would stay in touch with their caseworkers after they turn 18.
 - More than 90% of young people aged 15-17 years in foster care in the leaving care cohort indicated they would stay in touch with their current caregivers after they turn 18. The exact number and percentage are not displayed in the chart to maintain the confidentiality and privacy of the small number of young people who did not indicate this would be the case.
 - Around a half (44.7%) of young people in foster care in the leaving care cohort indicated that they would stay in touch with their previous caregivers after they turn 18.
 - Around four in ten (42.1%) young people in foster care in the leaving care cohort indicated that they would stay in touch with their caseworker after they turn 18.
 - More than 90% of young people aged 15-17 years in relative/kinship care in the leaving care cohort indicated they would stay in touch with their current caregivers after they turn 18. The exact number and percentage are not displayed in the chart to maintain confidentiality and privacy of the small number of young people who did not indicate this would be the case.
 - The majority (82.1%) of young people in relative/kinship care in the leaving care cohort indicated that they would remain in contact with their previous caregivers after they turn 18.
 - Less than one in five (15.4%) of these young people in relative/kinship care aged 15-17 years indicated that they would stay in touch with their caseworkers after they turn 18.
 - Figures for young people in residential care were not presented due to small numbers.

Study Topic 8 – Young people reports of the level of help they have received to make decisions about their future

This study topic presents the percentage of young people aged 15-17 years in the leaving care cohort by the level of help they have received to make decisions about their future. It also

provides the results by placement type at interview.

- Overall, 46.8% of young people aged 15-17 years in the leaving care cohort indicated that level of help they received to make decisions about their future was 'as much as needed'.
- The percentage of young people in foster care receiving as much help as needed (56.0%) was higher than for the total cohort (46.8%). However, two-thirds (66.7%) of young people in relative/kinship care required more help.
- Figures are not shown for Aboriginal or CALD young people due to small numbers.

Study Topic 9 – Young people and caregiver reports of areas of assistance needed after turning 18 years

This study topic presents the percentage of young people aged 15-17 years in the leaving care cohort by the areas of assistance required after they turn 18. It includes the responses from young people aged 15-17 years and their caregivers. Results are not available by age group, Aboriginality, CALD status, placement type or district due to small numbers.

- According to young people aged 15-17 years in the leaving care cohort, the main areas of assistance needed after turning 18 years were 'finding somewhere to live' (46.6%), 'learning to drive' (45.5%) and 'finding a job' (40.9%).
- The main areas of assistance needed by young people in the leaving care cohort according to their caregivers were 'finding somewhere to live' (75.6%), 'accessing financial support' and 'finding out courses/where to study' (both 74.0%). Caregivers also felt that the young people would need assistance with 'learning to drive' (71.7%).

Study Topic 10 – Young people reports of who would help them after they turn 18 years

This study topic presents the percentage of young people aged 15-17 years in the leaving care cohort by people who they think will help them after they turn 18.

- Overall, the majority (83.3%) of young people aged 15-17 years in the leaving care cohort indicated that their 'current caregivers' would provide help after they turn 18 years old. This is followed by 'friends' (50.0%) and 'birth family' (37.5%). Other suggestions were their 'caseworkers' (29.2%) and 'teacher or school counsellors' (10.4%).

Study Topic 11 – Caregiver reports of young people's reaction to the leaving care discussion

This study topic presents the caregiver reports of the percentage of young people aged 15-17 years in the leaving care cohort by their reaction to the leaving care discussion. It also provides the results by Aboriginality and placement type.

- Around two-thirds (63.3%) of young people aged 15-17 years in the leaving care cohort were happy to discuss leaving care matters with their caregivers.
- A slightly lower percentage of Aboriginal young people (57.7%) and young people in residential care (60.7%) were described as happy to discuss leaving care with their caregivers.

- Almost two-thirds of young people in foster care (65.4%) and 64.0% of young people in relative/kinship care were described as happy to discuss leaving care with their caregivers.

Study Topic 12 – Young people reports of their level of worry about turning 18 years and their future

This study topic presents the percentage of young people aged 15-17 years in the leaving care cohort by their level of worry about turning 18 and their future.

- Less than half (43.2%) of young people aged 15-17 years in the leaving care cohort did not worry at all about turning 18 and their future.
- 42.3% of Aboriginal young people aged 15-17 years in the leaving care cohort did not worry at all about turning 18 and their future.
- Two in five (39.5%) young people in foster care did not worry at all about turning 18 and their future.
- A higher percentage of young people in relative/kinship care (46.2%) did not worry at all.

Study Topic 13 – Caregiver reports of young people’s ability to manage independent living

This study topic presents the percentage of young people aged 15-17 years in the leaving care cohort by their caregivers assessment of how well the study child will manage to live independently after leaving care. It also provides the results by Aboriginality, CALD status and placement type.

- Overall, caregivers reported that 28.3% of young people aged 15-17 years definitely will be able to manage independent living.
- This percentage was higher for Aboriginal young people (37.2%), CALD young people (33.3%) and young people in relative/kinship care (33.3%). One-quarter (25.0%) of young people in foster care definitely will be able to manage independent living according to caregivers.

Explanatory notes:

1. Statistics presented are based on the responses of young people aged 15-17 years in the study at the time of either Wave 2, Wave 3 or Wave 4 interview. For those who have been interviewed at multiple waves, the information from the most recent interview is reported.
2. Aboriginal is used throughout this dashboard and is inclusive of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.
3. Data for the non-Aboriginal cohort also include children with Aboriginal status of 'not stated'.
4. Caution should be practiced when interpreting CALD status due to poor data quality.
5. Districts reflect where the case plan of children and young people in the study was held at the time of interview.
6. 'Not publishable' replaces small numbers less than 10 for the Aboriginal cohort and less than 5 for other cohorts to protect privacy and confidentiality.
7. '90% or over' is used to prevent disclosure risk. 'Less than 10%' is for the counterpart, if

needed.

8. 'Not shown' replaces large percentages derived from small numbers less than 20 to avoid misinterpretation.
9. This refers to the number of ROSH reports prior to the young people's first entry to OOHC.
10. This refers to Helpline assessed issues in reports prior to the young people's first entry to OOHC.
11. Few caregivers reported no concern/other areas of concern (i.e., alcohol and drug misuse, criminal behaviour, low self-esteem, personal safety, stable accommodation, and stable moods/mental health). Due to small numbers, these data are not presented to protect privacy and confidentiality.