

Leaving and Aftercare – Conversations

“Be there when we need you, show urgency and make us feel like we are worth it.”



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Care Leavers Charter of Rights NSW



- *Listen to what we want and need, ask questions, help us understand ourselves and our options so we can make good decisions*
- *Let us know where things are up to, the outcome of a decision and reason. It's our life, we're relying on you.*
- *If I have to chase you, I feel like I'm not important.*
- *Give us the right information, explain things more than once using words we understand.*

TIP: Be persistent and consistent and build a good relationship.

Planning that is hopeful and realistic



Assess capacity, strengths, goals and hopes. What are the 'steps' during the teen years? e.g Living skills, build confidence, complete school.



Talk about support and entitlements, financial and other support.
Tailor planning – not a 'cookie cutter' approach.



Study, training and employment are game changers for young people.
Warm referrals to other programs and services.



Personal support network.
Community and culture.
Mentoring, hobbies, sport, social skills.



Mental health supports, key health and wellbeing needs and NDIS supports.
Don't forget sexual health and safety.

Planning, support and guidance – tailoring planning based on need, strengths and capacity

Start early with preparation –stepping stones

Preparation and tailored planning

Early *preparation* with teenagers can make for a brighter future.

Leaving Care Planning includes the support and financial assistance the young person will need e.g. ILA/SOA, mental health support, warm referrals.

Who is doing the ‘doing’ of the plan?

Things change. Plans are not static documents that remain fixed once the young person leaves care. Reviews and amendments are to be expected as the young person’s circumstances change or new issues arise (up to age of 25).

Tips:

- *Good evidence – support letters / treatment plan*
- *Explain what the change in circumstance is*
- *Rule out why the need cannot be met within the community*



Conversations

Who calls the Care Leavers Line and what are some of the more common questions or help asked for?

Things are always changing. What supports and programs are out there for NSW care leavers?

What are the opportunities and challenges?

Options for care leavers

– know what's out there and on your patch!

Quality
planning with
financials

Specialist
Aftercare
Program

Fee-free courses
Smart & Skilled

Fines / Victims of
Crime / Legal help

Allowances to
age 21

SIL/TSIL

Free Safer
Driving Course

NCAT Guardianship
or financial
management order

TEP / PCEFS /
TILA

Youth Initiative

DCJ University
Scholarships

NDIS referral

Aftercare
Allowance

Foyer Central

Targeted
traineeships
Services NSW

Community
e.g. cultural
connections,
mentoring,
local sporting
clubs, youth
clubs, Park
Run, footy
team, open
days

Collective approach to care leavers

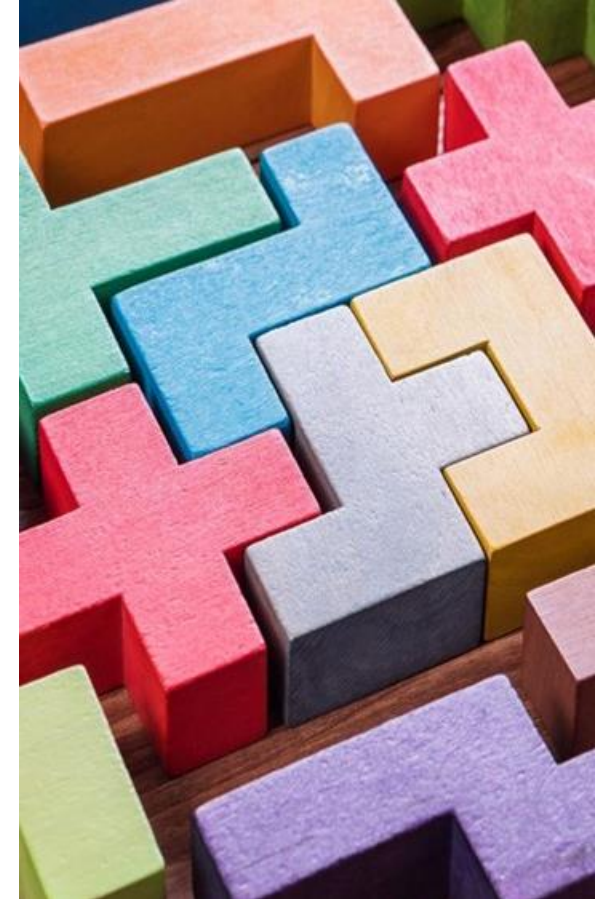


- **Game changers** – stable living, help with study and training, mentoring, cultural connection, personal support networks.
- **No wrong door** – don't send young people around our large complex service system; please help them and sort it out.
- **Timely support** – preparation and clarity about who does what in the plan, timely release of funds, communication with young person.
- **Amendments are to be expected** as circumstances change. Things change!
- **Know the Ministerial Guidelines** and get familiar with resources available.

Examples of what can be included in plans

Here are some examples of what can be included:

- Education – support to achieve goals, for example, it might include laptop and course fees.
- Mental health, health and wellbeing – counselling, access to gym/hobbies, support to connect with Family Planning/good GP.
- Family and culture – help with cost of travel to see family and maintain cultural connection.
- Housing – help with costs to set up (‘establish’) own home.
- Driving – learning to drive, cost of driving tests and licence fees.
- Warm referrals to other services or programs such as Foyer Central, Specialist Aftercare Program or Youth Initiative, mentoring or living skills course, or budgeting/financial counselling.



Financial assistance for NSW care leavers

There is a range of entitlements and allowances that they may be eligible for, depending on their situation.

- Independent Living Allowance (age 18 to 21)
- Staying on Allowance (for carers, age 18 to 21)
- Aftercare allowance (from age 21 and time limited)
- Transition to Independent Living Allowance (TILA) \$1,500
- Post Care Educational Support (for carers of those over 18 but still at school)
- Teenage Education Payment (for carers of 16 to 18 year-olds)



More information and training

- THRIVE – DCJ course for caseworkers
- PSP Learning Hub – psplearninghub.com.au
- DCJ Care leavers Line – call 1800 994 686 or email Careleavers@dcj.nsw.gov.au
- **For young people** – nsw.gov.au/living-in-nsw/young-people/leaving-care
- **For carers** – nsw.gov.au/community-services/foster-relative-and-kinship-care/caring-for-children-and-young-people
- *Your next step* – booklet to help young people prepare for leaving care (go to nsw.gov.au and search for ‘Your next step’)
- *Leading the way* – a guide for carers
- Independent Living Skills checklist – inform conversations, not just a list!
- CREATE and DCJ Youth Consult for Change – young people’s voices

