

Specialist Aftercare Program

Factsheet for carers

The Specialist Aftercare Program is for eligible young people aged 17-24 years who might need some additional support. This service helps the young person work towards their goals by offering tailored assistance based on identified needs. This can include general and intensive aftercare support, mentoring, group work, remote outreach support, and Aboriginal cultural consultation for leaving care planning. The program is not for all care leavers – it is for those who need additional support and extra assistance.

What support can they get?

The support the young person will receive is tailored to their needs, so the help they get can change depending on their situation. For example, the support could include things like:

- Help to access entitlements and financial support – this could be fortnightly allowances to 21, the Transition to Independent Living Allowance (TILA), or help with Centrelink.
- Reviewing or amending their aftercare plan.
- Referrals to programs and services – this could be support with accommodation and housing, education, training and employment, support with health and wellbeing, and more. They may need assistance to find and connect to services, someone to advocate on their behalf, or take them to their initial appointments.
- Help build skills and confidence in things like budgeting, job readiness, interpersonal skills and more.
- Goal setting, planning and guidance – help to work through the steps needed to reach identified goals, or some guidance about how to manage these things.
- Help to access mental health support and other health and wellbeing services.
- Support to improve connection to family, culture and community.
- Assistance with legal matters or fines – help to navigate making a victim of crime claim, a legal issue, or working through options to pay off a fine.
- Support to access files about their time in care, and support while they review those files.

Who is eligible?

- Young people aged 17-24 years who have been in the care of the Minister.
- Young people aged 17-24 years old who have moved and can no longer be supported by their Agency.

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Further eligibility information is completed on the referral form by the caseworker, who will determine if the young person is considered medium to high needs, as this program is not suitable for all care leavers. Speak to the caseworker for further information.

Who is NOT eligible?

- Young people who access Supported Independent Living (SIL) or Therapeutic Supported Independent Living (TSIL).
- Young people who access the DCJ Youth Initiative program.
- Young people may not be eligible if they are already supported by DCJ (the Department/local Community Service Centre) or an Agency, and their needs are not moderate to high.

How does the young person get referred?

- If the young person is already being supported by a caseworker, either with DCJ or an Agency (service provider), the caseworker can refer them with their consent.
- You can also contact a provider directly with the young person – see the list of Specialist Aftercare providers on the [NSW Government's Youth Hub](#).
- Young people who need assistance (or you as their carer helping them) can call the DCJ Care Leavers Line on 1800 994 686 or email careleavers@dcj.nsw.gov.au.

Other programs, support and help

You can support the young person to talk to their caseworker (at their Agency or DCJ) about support options or, if things have changed, the caseworker can review and update the leaving care plan.

The young person may also be eligible for other programs and support including:

- [Financial assistance and entitlements](#) such as the Independent Living Allowance.
- [Accommodation options](#) such as referral to programs like Youth Initiative or Foyer Central.
- Help with obtaining their driver's licence and free access to the [Safer Drivers course](#).
- [Help with education and training](#) including 'Smart & Skilled', and DCJ care leaver university scholarships.
- Resources like [Your Next Step](#) and [Ask Izzy](#).
- [Leading the way](#) for carers.