

Transition to independence

Policy

Document title	Transition to independence	Version 1.0
Contact details	Department of Territory Families, Housing and Communities Operational Policy tfhc.policy@nt.gov.au	
Approved by	Executive Leadership Board	
Date approved	24/02/2022	
Document review	24 months from date of approval	
TRM number	61:F2022/376	

Version	Active from	Author	Changes made
1.0	4/03/2022	Operational Policy	Merging of the Transition to Independence Policy and the After Care Support Policy to better align with the Act. Updated information to align with legislative reform s85B of the Act.

Acronyms	Full form
CEO	Chief Executive Officer
CMS	Client Management System (refers to Community Care Information System – CCIS, or CARE)
Department	Department of Territory Families, Housing and Communities
NT	Northern Territory
the Act	Care and Protection of Children Act 2007

1. Policy Purpose

To ensure that children and young people are engaged in collaborative planning, preparation, and meaningful support to make a successful transition from the CEO's care, and be provided with information and assistance when accessing after care support.

2. Policy Statement

2.1. Transitioning from care

Pursuant to sections 70 and 71 of the [Care and Protection of Children Act 2007](#) (the Act), a young person's *My Care Plan* must identify their needs, and how their needs will be addressed. A *My Care Plan* or *Leaving Care Plan* must be developed for children or young people reunifying with family, to prepare them for leaving care, and to provide assistance and support to enhance their ability to be self-sufficient and become independent adults.

The *Care Plan* must be written in clear and plain language and in a manner that can be understood by all participants. The plan must outline the needs of the child or young person including their cultural needs and the actions that must be taken to address the identified needs. The *Care Plan* must be reviewed at least every six months.

A young person's *My Care Plan* must adopt a long term view to identify their needs and the supports they will require after they leave care. For all children in care collaborative planning for their transition to independence must commence from 15 years of age. From age 15 this information is recorded in the young person's *My Leaving Care Plan*. The plan must articulate the level of practical or financial support that the Department must provide to meet these needs. Planning must focussed on the young person's circumstances and the support required to develop essential life skills. For an Aboriginal young person, an Aboriginal Community Worker or Aboriginal Practice Advisor must be involved in the planning including attendance at every '*best interest of the child mapping*'.

Planning for a young person's transition to independence is an inclusive process. Their *My Leaving Care Plan* or *My Care Plan* must be developed in collaboration with the young person, their family, their Carer and any person identified by the young person as significant in their life. The young person's wishes and views must be taken into account where reasonable and appropriate to do so.

Some young people may have the capacity to transition to independence before they leave the care at 18, e.g. an employed young person living who is no longer living with their carer. In these circumstances, the young person will be supported to live independently and to maintain their independence until they attain 22 years of age.

Young people who leave the CEO's care at age 18 must be provided with practical and financial assistance to maintain appropriate living and support arrangements (e.g. payments to their carer if the young person is able to continue living with the carer family; assistance to connect with family and community; financial assistance for cost of training or further education; assistance to receive health care or pursue employment opportunities). Refer to s85B of the Act.

The young person must be notified about their entitlement and be provided with information on how to request the assistance when they turn 18 and as considered appropriate, until they turn 22.

A young person in the care of the CEO who is attending a course of education or training at the time they turn 18 must be provided with the necessary assistance (including financial assistance) to maintain their

living arrangements until they have completed the course. The arrangements must be recorded in the *My Leaving Care Plan* or *My Care Plan*.

Assistance to a child or young person The Department is able to provide practical and financial assistance to young people who are aged between 15 or over to assist them in transitioning to independence. Refer to s85A of the Act. Section 68 of the Act provides a definition of a young person.

The young person is entitled to receive practical and financial assistance to maintain appropriate living and support arrangements from when they leave care at aged 18 until they turn 22 years of age. Refer to s85B of the Act.

The CEO may request a public authority (e.g. health, housing) to provide prioritised access services to a child or young person who has left the CEO's care or a member of their family, if the child or young person is at risk of significant harm. Refer to s43 of the Act.

Unplanned practical or financial assistance may also be provided to a young person up to the age of 25 years when they contact the Department for assistance. An assessment is undertaken by a Transition from Care Officer, or allocated Department staff member to determine the level of assistance that should be provided having regard to the young person's situation, safety and wellbeing.