



Upcoming changes to Out of Home Care services

Information for Carers

The Department of Communities (the Department) is changing the way it delivers Out of Home Care (OOHC) services in Western Australia (WA) to achieve the best outcomes for all children and young people.

The Foster Care Association of WA is available to provide support to carers during the transition period. Please contact 9242 4222 or 1800 497 101 or email enquiries@fcawa.com.au if you would like assistance.

Frequently asked questions

What is the goal of the OOHC Reform?

For the Department, Community Service Organisations (CSOs) and the Aboriginal community, there is a shared goal to work together to develop an OOHC system that is evidence based and trauma informed. The key priorities have included creating greater stability for children entering care; siblings remaining together; improved opportunity for early reunification to family; young people leaving care well prepared to enter adulthood; and a system that is culturally safe and meets the needs of Aboriginal children and young people.

What are the key changes caused by the OOHC Reform?

The OOHC system key changes include:

- Delivery of stable and culturally safe care arrangements; in some instances, this may mean carers transitioning to new organisations.
- Targeted resources for organisations and carers to meet the needs of children.
- Care arrangements focused on improved outcomes for children and young people.

Will I be included in decision making?

The Department values and recognises the important role carers play in OOHC. You will be provided with relevant information to make informed choices about future caring options and necessary support to manage any change. Ultimately, the best interest of each child or young person is paramount in all decision making and decisions will be made in consultation with their Care Team.

Why has increasing the number of ACCOs providing Out of Home Care Services been a priority for the reform?

ACCOs are well connected to their local community. The services are delivered to Aboriginal people, are locally informed, place-based, and culturally appropriate. They are best placed to find and assess family to care for children who are not able to return to their parents. By increasing the number of ACCOs providing OOHC care services, it is hoped more Aboriginal children in care will remain on country with Aboriginal carers, connected to family, community, and culture. For Aboriginal families and carers caring for Aboriginal children, this means working with a provider that has the best local cultural awareness, and can provide cultural security in their policies, practices, skills, knowledge and mindset.

What will happen if my current provider was not awarded a contract?

If your current provider was not awarded a contract, a transition to another provider will be required so you can continue to provide foster care. Options may include transition to an ACCO, another CSO or, finally, to the Department. You will be able to choose which provider you engage with and will receive information from your current provider to help you decide which new provider to transfer to.

What will happen if I am caring for an Aboriginal child?

If you are caring for an Aboriginal child you will be matched with a service provider tailored to best meet the needs of the child and appropriate support will be provided by the Department's Care Team throughout the transition process.

What will happen if I have Aboriginal children and non-Aboriginal children in my care?

Aboriginal children and their carers, including any other children in the care arrangement will be provided the opportunity to transition to an Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisation (ACCO). Ultimately, the best interest of children is paramount in all decision making and decisions will be made in consultation with the child's care team.

What will happen if I am caring for a child with a disability?

If you are caring for a child with a disability your service provider options will be matched with a service provider tailored to best meet the needs of the child and appropriate support will be provided by the Department's Care Team throughout the transition process.

If carers have siblings in their care, how will the transition impact their placements?

Our commitment aligns with the overarching goals of sector-wide reform, which place a strong emphasis on providing greater stability for children entering care, with a special focus on keeping siblings together whenever possible. [The Transition Guide](#) provides guidance for addressing such situations on a case-by-case basis, allowing for individualised responses that cater to the unique needs of each sibling group. Sibling groups will be placed together in one care arrangement when it is deemed to be in their best interest and safe to do so.

Will a carers subsidy change?

The recommended subsidy rate as determined by Communities remains unchanged.

How can I find out more?

To find out more about OOHC changes and more useful information for carers, please visit our website or send an email to the OOHC team at the Department (OOHCtransition@communities.wa.gov.au).

How do I contact the Advocate for Children in Care?

Office hours (9am to 5pm, Monday to Friday)
0429 086 508 (you can call, text or leave a message)
Free call 1800 460 696 (charges may apply for some mobile plans)
Email: advocate@communities.wa.gov.au

What if I need urgent help?

If you need urgent help and you can't get hold of your District Office or the Advocate for Children in Care, there are other options:

- Crisis Care (24 hours/7 days) Telephone (08) 9223 1111 Free call 1800 199 008
- Kids Helpline (24 hours/7 days) Free call 1800 55 1800
- Police 131 444 or 000 (emergency only).

Know your rights

Children and young people have human rights. Know your rights by downloading the [Charter of Rights for Children and Young People in Care](#) and the [United Nations Declaration on the Rights of the Child 1990](#).

Department of Communities

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If you are deaf, or have a hearing or speech impairment, contact us through the National Relay Service. For more information visit:
www.communications.gov.au/accesshub/nrs