



Upcoming changes to Out of Home Care services

Information for Families

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.

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.

What will my role be?

Communities values and recognises the importance of family for children in OOHC. Any changes that impact on children will be discussed with the family first and you will be given an opportunity to have a say prior to any changes being made to care arrangements. You will be given an opportunity to be involved in any decision-making processes and you will be provided with relevant information to make informed choices about future caring options and support to manage any changes.

Will a new care arrangement impact my contact arrangements to see my children?

Any changes in care arrangements should not impact your contact arrangements to see your child or children. If changes impact you in any way, Communities will help you maintain contact.

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

ACCOs are well connected to their local community and the services delivered by Aboriginal people, are locally informed, place-based, and culturally appropriate. ACCOs aim to ensure that where possible, Aboriginal children are placed back with family, and well connected to their community; and 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 that more Aboriginal children in care will remain on country, with Aboriginal carers, connected to family, community, and culture.

For Aboriginal families, 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.

Will new carers have appropriate training?

Any new carers will be trained so they are able to meet the child or children's needs. They will have a Working with Children Check completed and will be able to provide the appropriate care in their new care arrangement.

What will happen to siblings who are in care together?

Communities tries to keep siblings together, however, at times this might not be safe, or possible due to the safety and needs of the child or children. Any concerns will be discussed with you and your child's or children's Care Team. 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.

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](#).

To find out more about upcoming changes to OOHC, please contact:

- **Email:** OOHCtransition@communities.wa.gov.au
- **Phone:** 1800 176 888 (Freecall)

Department of Communities

5 Newman Court, Fremantle WA 6160
Postal Address: Locked Bag 5000,
Fremantle WA 6959
Telephone: 1800 176 888
Email: enquiries@communities.wa.gov.au
Website: www.communities.wa.gov.au

Translating and Interpreting Service (TIS)
Telephone: 13 14 50

If you are deaf, or have a hearing or speech impairment, contact us through the National Relay Service. For more information visit: