



# Intensive Therapeutic Care and Residential Care: COVID-19 Leaving Care Guidance

## Leaving care planning is critical during COVID-19

During COVID-19, it's critical that all young people in, or preparing to leave, care are supported and have a safe place to live. [Leaving care planning](#) and high quality aftercare support are essential. Make sure you follow [Ministerial Guidelines](#) for both.

This guidance is for Department of Communities and Justice (DCJ) staff and service providers providing residential and intensive therapeutic care (ITC) services to young people. It reinforces existing practices to ensure that young people get any necessary changes to their Leaving Care Plan during this period.

Supporting young people with Leaving Care planning and transition remains an essential service during COVID-19. Young people may be experiencing more uncertainty and worry about their own supports. We know that service providers are working hard to provide reassurance and support as needed.

## What if a young person needs support that isn't currently in their Leaving Care Plan?

If service providers identify more needs based on change of circumstances, Leaving Care Plans should be updated to reflect any changes. This may include changes to the:

- Type of support they require, and/or timeframe to achieve Leaving Care goals.

## How do service providers notify DCJ about changes to Leaving Care planning and/or transition activities?

There are a range of existing ways to support young people's changing needs, including as a result of COVID-19.

If service providers have concerns about a young person's access to supports, capacity to transition, or need for additional support, they should:

- Contact the Child and Family District Unit (CFDU) that has secondary case responsibility for the young person to discuss the young person's needs and options
- Include DCJ's lead contract manager and the Central Access Unit (CAU) on any emails.

During COVID-19, we will work with you to deliver responsive and flexible supports for young people.

## What are the placement priorities during COVID-19?

- **Transitioning to Supported Independent Living (SIL) or Therapeutic Supported Independent Living (TSIL)** – where appropriate and possible, young people should be supported to transition from ITC homes to SIL or TSIL placements.
- **Continued support in SIL and TSIL** – for young people and adults in TSIL and SIL placements, the current Permanency Support program level agreement (PLA) can provide support for up to 24 months from the time of entry. This can extend to after the young person turns 18.



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- **Flexible monitoring for young adults over 18 in SIL and TSIL** – DCJ contract managers will be flexible with placement monitoring during COVID-19.
- **Supporting capacity in ITC homes** – It’s important that new children and young people can continue to be placed in ITC homes as needed. So, where possible, young adults aged 18 years and over should be supported in other placement types, including SIL and TSIL. Of course, there is flexibility to extend ITC placements on a case-by-case basis where needed.

### Who should I contact if a young person’s Leaving Care Plan or transition timeframe needs to change?

CFDUs are responsible for overseeing any changes to a young person’s Leaving Care Plan. For care leavers 18 years and over who need changes to their support and/or timeframe for transitioning to independence, refer to the below table for guidance on DCJ contacts:

Type of change	Who to contact	Approval and Monitoring
Leaving Care Plan update, including Financial Plan change	CFDU	Director Community Services/Operations/State-wide Services (depending on location) to <b>approve</b> any Financial Plan changes
Extension to timeframe for Leaving Care transition - young people over 18 years	<p><b>CAU</b> – For residential care and ITC placements</p> <p><b>CFDU</b> – For other placement types including Supported Independent Living</p>	<p>CAU to <b>approve</b> placement timeframes for young people over 18 years in residential or ITC placements</p> <p>Director Community Services/Operations/State-wide Services to <b>approve</b> placement timeframes for other placements types</p> <p>DCJ contract manager to <b>monitor</b> through existing contract meetings</p>

### Who do I contact if I need more information?

Please contact your contract manager or email [OOHCRecontracting@facns.nsw.gov.au](mailto:OOHCRecontracting@facns.nsw.gov.au) if you have any questions specific to your service.

For general queries and questions about COVID-19, you can email [COVID19.Support@facns.nsw.gov.au](mailto:COVID19.Support@facns.nsw.gov.au)