Title: Transitioning from care into adulthood
Policy No: 349-8

Policy Statement:

The Department of Child Safety, Youth and Women (Child Safety) is committed to the safety, belonging and wellbeing of young people throughout their transition to adulthood. Child Safety will:

- support young people who are in the chief executive’s custody or guardianship to transition from care into adulthood; and
- support young people aged 15 to 24, who have been in the chief executive’s custody or guardianship, to successfully transition into independent adulthood.

Child Safety will work collaboratively with young people to ensure adequate preparation and planning is conducted, over time, as a young person grows towards independence.

Child Safety recognises that the transition to independence is not achieved simply because the young person reaches 18 years of age. The transition to independence is not a point in time occurrence, but a developmental process.

Through effective transition planning and support, Child Safety’s best hopes are that young people will have strong connections with support networks, be connected to family, community and culture, have necessary life skills, have plans for education, training or employment, be able to access safe and stable accommodation, and know who to contact for assistance.

Child Safety will provide for young people to participate in decision-making about their transition to adulthood to the fullest extent possible, having regard to their age and ability to understand. This may include opportunities to access a support person or advocate, as required. Child Safety will ensure that young people are provided with the information they need to participate and make informed decisions about their future.

Child Safety recognises that the circumstances of some young people mean that they may require greater assistance and support in their transition to adulthood. This may include those at a greater risk of mental health issues, homelessness and social exclusion and isolation. This may also include young people who are Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander, who are parents, from a culturally and linguistically diverse background, living with disability, young pregnant women, young people questioning their sexual or gender identity and young people who are lesbian, bisexual, gay or transgender. Child Safety will provide or arrange additional targeted support for young people with particular needs to ensure their successful transition to adulthood.

Principles:

- The safety, wellbeing and best interests of a child, both throughout childhood and for the rest of the child’s life, are paramount.
• Young people will be active participants in the development, implementation and review of their goals and aspirations in preparation for leaving care and planning for their future.

• Transition planning will be a holistic, inclusive and collaborative process that engages the young person, people of importance to the young person and relevant service providers in supporting the young person move towards adulthood.

• Young people are entitled to be connected to appropriate support services and assisted to establish and maintain social, community and cultural networks.

• Young people have a right to be given information about their personal history.

• Young people will supported to safely connect with their family and community.

• Maintaining and strengthening the cultural identity of Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander young people is integral to their preparation for leaving care.

• Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people have a right to be supported to develop and maintain connections with family, community, culture, traditions and language.

Objectives:

This policy aims to ensure that:

• young people in the custody or guardianship of the chief executive receive the necessary planning and support to successfully transition from care to adulthood.

• young people aged 15 to 24, who have been in the chief executive’s custody or guardianship, receive the necessary support to successfully transition into independent adulthood

Scope:

This policy applies to transition planning for:

• a young person in the custody or guardianship of the chief executive

• a young person who is no longer residing in the direct care of his or her guardian (under a long-term guardianship order or permanent care order) and who is no longer being supported by the guardian.

This policy applies to the provision of support for a young person (aged 15 to 24) who is or has been in the custody or guardianship of the chief executive.

Roles and Responsibilities:

Transition planning and preparation

Child Safety will assist and support young people in the custody and guardianship of the chief executive from the age of 15 through ongoing casework and case planning, to effectively transition the young person from care to adulthood.

When developing or reviewing a case plan with a young person who is 15 years or older, Child Safety will include a planning process that:

• is informed by joint planning with the young person, and participants nominated by them, to identify and address their developing needs for transitioning to an adulthood, enriched with strong connections to support networks, promoting a sense of belonging, attachment and wellbeing

• is delivered through the development, implementation and regular review of a case plan for the young person
- responds to the key life areas of relationships and connections, cultural and personal identity, placements and housing, education and training, employment, health, life skills and financial resources
- takes into account a young person’s level of maturity and development, building upon their personal strengths, goals and needs
- aims to provide or engage appropriate services and supports in a timely manner
- recognises that leaving care and transitioning to adulthood is an ongoing process that must be gradual, flexible and aimed at maintaining and building strong and supported emotional relationships and physical connections to community
- gains clarity and intensity by age 17 to coincide with their planned exit from care at age 18
- continues after the age of 18, if required, where support is required to meet outstanding case plan goals, through the delivery of support service casework and planning
- promotes ongoing connection to family, community and culture, as appropriate in the circumstances
- recognises that help is available to assist the person in the transition from being a child in care to adulthood, at any time until they turn 25.

Further information about roles and responsibilities in relation to transition planning is in the Child Safety Practice Manual.

**Young people who have been victims of crime**

Child Safety will provide a young person in the custody or guardianship of the chief executive who has been a victim of crime with assistance to access support and assistance that may be available through Victim Assist Queensland to help them recover from the experience.

When developing and reviewing a case plan, Child Safety will review whether the young person may have been a victim of an act of violence, whether information about Victim Assist Queensland has been provided and whether the incident has been reported to Queensland Police, as applicable.

Where it appears that information about Victim Assist Queensland has not been provided, Child Safety will provide the child or young person, or their parent, carer or guardian, as applicable, with information about Victim Assist Queensland and make an application on behalf of the young person, wherever possible. Child Safety will report the incident to Queensland Police Service if it has not already been reported.

The young person’s transition plan will include information about any application to Victim Assist Queensland, or plans for a potential future application for assistance.

**Children and young people sexually abused whilst in care**

Child Safety has a responsibility to provide a holistic response to children and young people who have been sexually abused whilst placed in out-of-home care, irrespective of who is responsible for the sexual abuse. The policy *Response to children and young people sexually abused whilst placed in out-of home care (627-1)* outlines roles and responsibility for responding to children and young people in care who have sexually abused in care. This policy does not apply to adults who were former children in care.

**Children and young people who have experienced significant detriment**

Child Safety will provide a respectful and comprehensive response to children and young people who have experienced significant detriment caused by the actions or inactions of Child Safety. The policy *Response to children who have experienced significant detriment caused by the actions or inactions of Department of Communities, Child Safety and Disability Services (634)* defines
significant detriment and outlines roles and responsibilities, including consideration of matters of redress and potential compensation.

After-care support

Where there are outstanding case plan goals that have not been met at the time the young person reaches 18, and they wish to receive ongoing casework support, this will be provided through a support service case. Further information about roles and responsibilities in relation to support services cases is in the Child Safety Practice Manual.

In addition, Child Safety ensure that help is available for a person who has been in the custody or guardianship of the chief executive. Young people will be assisted in accessing services, entitlements and supported in establishing and maintaining relationships with their family or carer.

Young people aged 15 to 21 years who have been in care may be eligible for support from Next Step After Care services. Next Step After Care can help young people access advice and help with money management, accommodation, training and employment, health and relationships.

Young people aged 15 to 25 who are in care or who exited care after the age of 15 years may be eligible for the Transition to Independent Living Allowance (TILA) administered by the Commonwealth Department of Social Services.

Access to information

Child Safety will provide young people who are in care or who have been in care with access to information that Child Safety holds about them. Assistance will also be provided, in accessing information relating to their time in care, and as part of this process, where required access to counselling and support.

Further information about providing personal information to young people who are in or have been in the custody or guardianship of the chief executive is in the Child Safety Practice Manual.

Young person in the care of a long-term guardian or permanent guardian

Parental responsibility for a child or young person is fully assumed by the long-term guardian or permanent guardian from the date of the making of the order. The aim of such an order is to provide the young person with a life-long family arrangement, and it is the guardian’s responsibility for preparing a young person for adulthood.

In unforeseen circumstances, a young person who is no longer residing in the direct care of the guardian and who is no longer being supported by the guardian is eligible for transition from care casework and financial support by the department.

All young people subject to a child protection order granting guardianship to a person under a long-term guardianship order or permanent care order are eligible for the Commonwealth Government’s Transition to Independent Living Allowance (TILA).

Authority:

Child Protection Act 1999
Child Protection Regulation 2000

Delegations:

Refer to instruments of delegation for details of delegations under the Child Protection Act 1999.
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**Office:** Operational Support, Child and Family Operations  
**Help Contact:** Operational Support

**Links:**

**Related policies:**  
Participation by children and young people in decision-making (369)  
Case planning (263)  
Complaints Management  
Child Related Costs – Client support and family contact (598)  
Child Related Costs – Long-term guardian support (608)  
Supporting children in the care of long-term guardians (607)

**Related procedures**  
Child Safety Practice Manual, chapter 5 and 7

Michael Hogan  
Director-General