

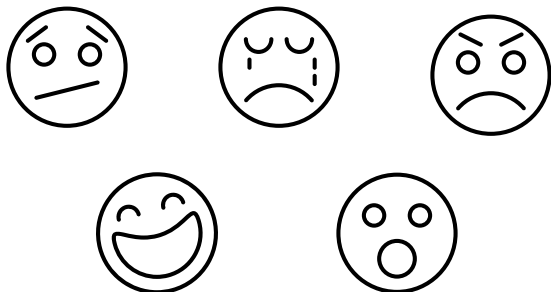


# LEAVING CARE

Continuum Consulting Australia PTY. LTD.

## How do young people feel?

The process of leaving care can affect young people in various ways. These emotions can be both positive and negative, depending on the situation.



## Statutory requirements.

The rights and responsibilities of a carer are outlined in the Children's and Young Persons (Care and Protection) Act 1998, section 61, 165, 166.

The minimum requirements for young people to successfully transition to living independently are also detailed in the Standards 12 of NSW Child Safe Standards for Permanent Care.

## The Leaving Care Plan.

Between the ages of 15 and 17, the Leaving Care Plan focuses on building a young person's confidence, and connecting them with people who will provide guidance and support in the years ahead.

Beyond 17 years of age, the emphasis shifts to making sure the young person is working towards future goals like education and employment. The Leaving Care Plan stays in place until they turn 25.

A Leaving Care Plan can include:

- Social support networks including connection or reconnection with family and community
- New and ongoing cultural connections
- School and future study through TAFE, university or apprenticeships
- Career goals and job readiness, including resumes and job interview skills
- Setting up bank accounts and a tax file number
- Organising driving lessons and getting a drivers licence
- Living arrangements
- Collecting identification documents including birth certificate and certificate of Aboriginality.

## Carer and Young Person: Involvement in the Leaving Care Plan.

Carer:

- As the carer of the teenager, you are in an incredible position to influence that young person's future!
- Your involvement in the Leaving Care Plan shows the young person in your care that you believe in them and their potential to live a rewarding adult life.

Young Person:

- Make sure they know about *YOU: A booklet and website produced by FaCS (DCJ)*. *YOU* inspires young people to take control of their future plans and stand up for their rights. It also explains how they can get the support they need to make informed decisions regarding things such as money, education and housing.

## Preparing for independent living.

You will play a critical role in helping young people prepare for adulthood and independence.

This includes helping them develop skills such as:

- Cooking
- Cleaning
- How to save money
- Building healthy relationships
- How to look after their wellbeing and health.

## Personal information & belongings.

Young people are entitled to keep all of their possessions. This includes clothing, furniture, and medical equipment. They are also allowed to access any personal information held by you (the carer), including school reports, medical reports, and personal photographs.

If Care Allowance has been used to pay for essentials such as a bed, wardrobe, or desk, then these items belong to the young person.



## Renegotiating the rules.

If the young person continues to stay with you after reaching 18 years of age, you will both need to adapt to having another adult in the house.

If staying  
in the  
home

- Will they be expected to pay board or contribute to bills?
- Will it be alright for them to bring someone home for the night or to stay out without letting you know beforehand?
- What will and won't change?

If leaving  
the home

- How will the two of you stay in touch in the future?
- Will they be able to come to you to talk about what's going on in their lives, the good and the bad?
- Will they have to take their belongings with them or can they leave some with you?
- Will they have a key to your house?
- Are they welcome to drop in any time for a meal or to do their washing?

## Financial Support options to help you

### Care Leavers with a disability

The NDIS Plan and Leaving Care Plan work together to achieve positive outcomes for the young person.

The NDIS can provide:

- Access to community programs, services and activities
- Support for participation in further education
- Job seeking assistance
- Provision of aids such as wheelchairs and communication devices
- Support for travelling to appointments or activities in the local community
- Support for staying connected with culture.



### After Care Assistance

After Care Assistance is when DCJ or the non-government agency involved in their care will provide support after the age of 18 years.

This involves reviewing the Leaving Care Plan and providing assistance, advice and referrals to mainstream and specialist services until the young person turns 25.

After Care Assistance can include:

- Referral and financial assistance for accommodation, further studies, counselling, job seeking support, legal advice, health services or professional services.
- Help for young people to access personal documentation such as birth certificates and paperwork relating to their time in care.

### Youth Allowance:

This is a Commonwealth benefit that provides financial support for young people aged 16 to 24 years, who are studying full time, undertaking a full time apprenticeship, training, or looking for work.

### Contingency Payments.

Care leavers may be eligible for one-off contingency payments as part of their approved Leaving Care Plan. These payments are provided to help cover the costs of things such as:



Driving lessons



Buying books/materials for work or study



Getting accommodation

- Dental treatment not covered by public dental hospitals
- Counselling
- Independent living or social skills training
- Fees for accessing identity documents.

### Transition To Independent Living Allowance (TILA).

Most young people leaving care are eligible for this one off payment. The young person cannot access this TILA payment directly, the caseworker will assess their eligibility and make the application on their behalf.

It is intended to cover costs including:



Transport to and from school / work



Food Bills



Education

- Moving expenses
- Appliances and furniture
- Utilities (electricity, gas).