

Transition Program Office

OOHC Transfer of Community Services carers and case management transfer of children and young people

For non-government organisations

Background

The prescribed stages, outlined below, represent an agreed framework for transfer of case management for existing Community Services (CS) carers and children and young people in out-of-home care (OOHC) to non-government organisations (NGOs). To ensure transfers across NSW occur consistently and efficiently, CS and NGOs will need to adhere to these five stages as the minimum requirements.

The Guiding Principles detailed in the NSW OOHC Transition Plan underpin these procedures. The procedures and underlying principles aim to facilitate and support the transition of OOHC to the non-government sector.

The Transition Program Office (TPO) endorsed these procedures following extensive consultation with CS and NGOs.

The timeframe for completion of these procedures is four weeks to commence on the day that CS receives the Consent for Release of Information form through to the date when case management transfer occurs.

Stage 1: Carer Engagement

The initial stage relates to the engagement of carers to the transfer process.

Process

There are many ways in which carers will find out about the OOHC services and supports that an NGO provides. This may include the representation of NGOs at carer conferences and forums to promote the range of services the NGO has to offer or carers may contact the NGO direct for information, including any pamphlets the NGO has available.

Tools

Two brochures were developed by the TPO to guide discussions with carers about transfer:

- Moving to a new agency brochure
- Moving to a new Aboriginal agency brochure

These brochures can be located on the ACWA website (Association of Children's Welfare Agencies)

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<http://www.acwa.asn.au/kts/mag.html>

The TPO also developed the Moving to a new agency guide, available to carers online:

http://www.community.nsw.gov.au/docswr/_assets/main/lib100062/moving_to_a_new_agency_guide.pdf

In addition, any carer information packs that the NGO has developed could be used as a resource for discussions with prospective carers.

Stage 2: Carers making a decision about which NGO to transfer to

The second stage involves carers gathering information and making a decision about which NGO to transfer to with the support of NGOs and CS.

Process

Carers will consider information about the available NGOs in their region, engage in conversation with CS and / or the NGO and determine which NGO they would prefer to transfer to. A carer can gather information about NGOs utilising one or all of the below options:

- Website information
- Printed material
- Carer Information Sessions
- Agency specific carer information sessions
- Carer Expo
- Carer Support Groups

NGOs should address general questions about what carers and children and young people should expect during the process of transfer,

Tools

Generally, NGOs have a Registration of Interest form available for prospective carers to complete. This will enable the carer's details to be recorded on a Carer Register held by the NGO and to enable further contact to be made with the carer by an NGO representative. The Carer Register will be useful to facilitate contact with the relevant Child and Family Regional Unit (C&FRU) and / or CSC about numbers and details of carers expressing an interest in transferring.

The relevant C&FRU and / or CSC will maintain a Carer Transition Register with a record of all carers that have been identified as willing to transfer. This will be monitored and where appropriate, discussed with NGOs to assist with enhancing capacity to meet contracted numbers in accordance with the Regional Implementation Plans.

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Carers can be directed to the following websites for further information:

Fostering NSW - <http://www.fosteringnsw.com.au/>

Transition Program Office - www.tponsw.com.au

NGOs can also direct carers to Connecting Carers NSW on 1300 794 653 or Aboriginal Statewide Carer Support on 1800 888 698 for support.

Stage 3: Exchange of Information and initiating transfer

An exchange of information between the NGO and CS will enable the carer transfer to progress.

Process

NGOs and the relevant C&FRU and/or CSC will have regular conversations about the carers that have expressed an interest in transferring. It is during these conversations that any emerging issues or challenges relating to the transfer of a carer should be discussed and addressed.

Once a carer chooses the NGO they want to transfer to, the carer will need to sign a *Consent to Release Personal Information* form provided to the carer by the NGO. The NGO should speak with the carer about the purpose of this form and that it relates to the NGO gaining access to the carer's records. If there are other adult household members living with the carer, they are required to complete the *consent for probity checks – household members aged 16 and over* form.

When the form is signed by the carer, the NGO will provide the form to the relevant C&FRU and/or CSC. From this date, it will take 4 weeks for the transfer of a carer and children and young people in their care from CS to the NGO.

CS will arrange for the following documents listed on the File Transfer List to be provided to the NGO¹. This information will assist with re-authorising the carer:

- Carer assessment and associated documentation
- Carer case transfer form
- Home safety assessment
- Medical checks
- Reference checks
- Initial training record

¹ In accordance with the Information Protection Principles set out in the Privacy and Personal Information Protection Act 1998, carers may access and amend (if necessary) documents that relate to their personal information.

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- Authorisation letter
- Signed Code of Conduct
- Confirmation of placement letter for each child / young person in the placement
- Working with Children Check (WWCC) application number and 'clearance' number from the Office of the Children's Guardian (OCG) for carer/s and adult household members

Please refer to the File Transfer List for the full list of documents.

Please note: Transfer of authorised carer (foster/relative/kinship) from CS to NGO form must be completed by CS in addition to providing the required items and additional required items. There is no requirement of CS to create any of the additional items if they are not in existence on either KiDS or the carer's file. The only exception is if there is no record of a WWCC, CS must arrange for a WWCC to be done by the OCG and record number and result on the carer's records before transfer.

At this stage, the relevant C&FRU and/or CSC will also provide the NGO with information about the outcome of the Child Assessment Tool (CAT) for each child and young person placed with the carer.

The NGO may arrange for an initial home visit to commence planning for the carer authorisation process and transfer. NGOs should speak with the relevant C&FRU and/or CSC if the NGO would like to conduct a joint home visit (optional) with CS to address any concerns or to assist with preparing for the transfer.

Tools

- *Consent to Release Personal Information form and consent for probity checks – household members aged 16 and over form*
- Transfer of authorised carer (foster/relative/kinship) from CS to NGO

Stage 4: Transfer progression and carer authorisation

The relevant C&FRU and/or CSC will commence preparing the child/young person's information to be provided during the case management transfer (CMT) meeting.

The NGO will complete the formal authorisation of the carer/s.

Process

The authorisation process will vary slightly for each NGO, refer to your NGO's guidelines and procedures for information. Carers need to be authorised by the NGO prior to the CMT of children and young people.

The requirements for authorisation of carers are set out in the Children and Young Persons (Care and Protection) Regulation 2012 (the Regulations). The Regulations

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require NGOs as designated agencies to assess the suitability of an individual to be a carer, and sets out minimum screening requirements for this purpose.

http://www.austlii.edu.au/au/legis/nsw/consol_reg/caypaper2012533/s30.html

The NGO, as a designated agency, may refer to previous assessments conducted by CS as part of conducting its own assessment to authorise a carer. The NGO is also responsible for decisions regarding whether or not a carer should be authorised and any terms and conditions related to the authorisation.

As part of the authorisation process, the NGO is required to verify the carer's WWCC clearance online so that carers can be matched to the NGO by the OCG. This means that if (at some later stage) a carer becomes barred, the NGO will be notified by the OCG.

Online verification by the NGO is compulsory and it is the only way a designated agency can confirm a WWCC result for a carer and adult household members .

There are a number of outcomes as a result of the carer authorisation process:

1. If both the NGO and carer agree to continue, an agreement will be made to proceed with authorisation. The NGO will request that the carer complete any other relevant paperwork such as signing the Carer Code of Conduct and banking details. Once the authorisation is finalised and approved by the NGO, an authorisation letter will be sent to the carer by the NGO.
2. The carer may decide to withdraw from the authorisation process, if this occurs, the NGO should have a conversation with the carer about their reasons for withdrawing and feedback any transfer concerns or issues to the TPO and/or relevant C&FRU and/or CSC.
3. If outstanding competencies are identified that require development, the NGO is responsible for developing a support plan for the carer and provide this feedback to the carer and CS – the carer will have the option as to whether they agree to proceed or withdraw at this point.
4. If the decision of the NGO is to not proceed with the authorisation of a carer, the NGO will be required to provide that information to the carer and CS with an explanation.

Tools

- Working with Children's Check

<http://www.kids.nsw.gov.au/Working-with-children/New-Working-With-Children-Check/Child-related-employers>

Remember to be clear with carer/s about timeframes of authorisation and what they should expect during this process. Ensure that carer/s are actively engaged in the transfer process. It's important for the NGO to have a conversation with each child and young person placed with the carer/s to advise them of the changes occurring and address any questions or anxieties about the transfer process.

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Some carer/s may require more reassurance than others, it's a great opportunity to establish effective communication and feedback strategies with the carer/s at this stage to build their confidence in the transfer and what support they will be provided by your agency.

Stage 5: Case management transfer of children and young people placed with transferring carers

Upon agreement between the NGO, the relevant C&FRU and/or CSC, the child or young person and carer, CMT will proceed.

Process

The NGO and the relevant C&FRU and/or CSC will arrange for a case meeting between all stakeholders to determine the future case plan for each child and young person placed with the carer. CMT of children and young people in the placement should occur concurrently with the transfer of the carer.

During the CMT meeting, the relevant C&FRU and/or CSC will provide the following documents to the NGO for the child or young person:

- Child/Young Person Case Transfer form (Attachment A), including a copy of the child's case plan/review
- Child Assessment Tool (CAT) or report
- Care Plan
- Final or interim court order (only the most recent)
- Original birth certificate
- Genogram

Please refer to the File Transfer List for the full list of documents.

Please note: Transfer of OOHC case management for a child or young person from CS to NGO form must be completed by CS in addition to providing the required items and additional required items. There is no requirement of CS to create any of the additional items if they are not in existence on either KiDS or the child or young person's file.

The CMT meeting should be minuted and a copy of these minutes made accessible to both the NGO and CS to keep on file. The agency responsible for recording and distributing this information should be negotiated during the CMT meeting. It should be noted that there are no forms required to be completed by the NGO or carer to facilitate the transfer of financials. CS is responsible for managing the financial transfer and updating KiDS with the relevant details.

Please note: An agreed date is to be set at this meeting about the formal transfer of financial management and case management responsibility. These dates are to align as closely as possible to allow a smooth transfer. Payments will commence within two weeks of the CMT meeting. If for any reason there is

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a delay in this process, please contact the CS staff responsible for finalising the financial management and case management transfer.

The CMT meeting may incorporate a joint case planning/review meeting including the child or young person, carer, CS staff and the NGO. This provides an opportunity to clarify roles and expectations for the child or young person and their carer and for CS to provide input into the case planning process which will become the responsibility of the NGO following CMT. This is no requirement for CS to update the child or young person's case plan prior to transfer.

Tools

- *Transfer of OOHC case management for a child or young person from CS to NGO form*

***** It should be noted that the timeframe guidelines for transfer is four weeks which commences at the time that CS receives the Consent to Release Personal Information form through to the time when CMT occurs.***