Extending care
Supporting young people’s transition from out-of-home care to adulthood

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• Let us know if you don’t want your question published on the online forum following the presentation.
Webinar resources

• All our webinars are recorded.

• The slides are available in the handout section of GoToWebinar.

• The video will be shared during the webinar and a Youtube link to the video will be included in the resources for this webinar.

• The audio and transcript will be posted on our website and YouTube channel in the coming week.
Care leavers

• Young people transitioning from out-of-home care (often called care leavers) are universally a vulnerable group who have generally not received the ongoing and holistic support that they require to transition successfully into adult life.

• Care leavers generally experience accelerated and compressed transitions to adulthood, and consequently often face significant barriers to accessing educational, employment, housing, health and other development and transitional pathways and opportunities that are readily available to their non-care peers.

• Historically, most countries have provided only limited leaving care or post-care support services. However, over the last two decades there has been growing international awareness of the needs of care leavers, and an expectation of ongoing care beyond 18 years. In this webinar, we specifically examine reforms in England and the USA.
Children leaving Care Act 2000

- The Act was intended ‘to improve the life chances of young people living in and leaving care’, and to replicate the supports that responsible parents would be expected to provide for their children. It extended the expected age of leaving care from 16 to 18, and obliged local authorities to continue to provide advice and support for young care leavers up to the age of 21, and even to 24 years for those still in education and training.
- In short, the intention was to delay the transition from care until young people are prepared and ready to leave. The Act introduced an expectation of corporate parenting responsibility to provide ongoing support to care leavers in order to promote better outcomes. Both positive and negative outcomes.
Staying Put

- England introduced a form of extended care: the Staying Put program which ran as a pilot from 2008-11 in 11 local authorities, and was later legislated as an ongoing duty on all local authorities in England on 13 May 2014, in part 5 Welfare of Children (98) of the Children and Families Act 2014.

- This requires local authorities in England to facilitate, monitor and support staying put arrangements for fostered young people until they reach the age of 21, where this is what they and their foster carers want unless the local authority considers that the staying put arrangement is not consistent with the welfare of the young person.
Staying Put evaluation

• Emily Munro and colleagues completed an evaluation of the Staying Put trial in 2012. They cited systemic benefits of the Staying Put extended foster care program such as: stable and supportive relationships providing ongoing emotional support to young people who are not developmentally ready for adulthood at 18 years; and housing and associated stability which facilitates engagement in EET, and enables young people to undertake a gradual transition that mirrors the pathways of their peers in the general population.

• Specific positive outcomes included: greater housing stability, and higher engagement in education or training and employment which should lead to higher future earnings and less reliance on public benefits.

• To date, there has been no formal evaluation of the ongoing program. But informal reports by researchers and policy advocates emphasize the importance of duties being backed up by adequate resources to ensure sufficient information is available to young people and foster carers, plus consistency of service delivery across regions to facilitate access to the option of Staying Put.
Foster Care Independence Act

• The USA introduced the Foster Care Independence Act in December 1999 which expanded assistance including room and board for young care leavers aged 18-21 years, expanded access to Medicaid for care leavers, provided additional funds for education and training, and increased state accountability for care leavers outcomes.

• The Act was a significant improvement in terms of offering greater support to meet care leavers’ needs around access to housing, health services in particular mental health services, and education and training.

• However, funding remained inadequate to meet the needs of most care leavers, take-up by states in regards to health care was discretionary, and optimal implementation of the Act depended on their willingness to match federal funds with required levels of state funding.
Fostering Connections Act in 2008

• Consequently, the US enacted the Fostering Connections Act in 2008 as a form of extended care which aimed to extend the Foster Care Independence Act by giving states the option of maintaining young people in foster care until 21 years.

• There is a requirement that young people are completing secondary school or equivalent, or enrolled in postsecondary or vocational school, or participating in a program or activity that promotes or removes barriers to employment, or employed 80 hours a month, or incapable of school and/or work requirements due to a documented medical condition.

• Mark Courtney and colleagues in California cite specific benefits of extended care such as: enhanced educational outcomes, improved earnings and less economic hardship, fewer early pregnancies, lower levels of homelessness, reduced mental health difficulties or involvement in the criminal justice system, and greater involvement of noncustodial fathers with their children.
International evidence

• Additionally, the New Zealand-based researcher Iain Matheson (2018) completed a mapping exercise of the international evidence base for extending care. He cites evidence of consistent positive outcomes in education, reduced criminal justice involvement, housing stability, and more positive transitioning overall. However, the results concerning earnings, delayed pregnancies, and engagement with training/employment seem to be more varied.

• Matheson argues that extended care works because it offers: continuity and stability, a nurturing environment, helps engagement in education, employment and training, and empowers young people and gives them greater choice and control over the timing and process of their transition. He notes that outcomes may be fluid depending on a range of factors such as whether extended care is offered universally or not, includes residential care, allows those who left earlier than 18 years to return before 21 years, and includes strict conditions such as full-time involvement in EET.
Lessons for Australia

• Extended care should lead to improvements in key areas such as education and employment, housing, health, and reduced involvement in offending and criminal justice system.

• Effective implementation requires detailed planning, sufficient funding, and ongoing monitoring and evaluation.


What is ‘Out of Home’ care?

Out of Home care refers to statutory care of children and young people who are unable to live with their parents. Children in Out of Home care are, in most cases, also on a care and protection order.

There were 46,450 (17% increase since June 2012) children and young people in Out of Home care across Australia as at June 2016.

- 6.4% are in residential care or group homes
- 93.6% are living in home based care (foster & kinship care)
- 36.2% or 16,846 are Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children
3,000 young people between the ages of 15-17 years are exited from state care each year in Australia
What happens to young people leaving care in the first 12 months?

Swinburne University of Technology in 2015, found that 63% of homeless youth have a state care history, nationally.

- 35% had 5 or more places of stay
- Were involved with the Justice System: Male 46%, Female 22%
- 29% unemployed national average 9.7%
- 28% were already parents

#makeit21
Whilst 85% of 18 – 21 year olds in Australia are still at home (HILDA)
All states and territories terminate care to the young person before they turn 18.

**NT**
- Exit care at 18.
- Planning exit begins at 15.

**WA**
- Exit care at 18.
- Planning exit begins at 15.

**SA**
- Exit care at 18. Planning exit begins at 15.

**TAS**
- Exit care at 18. Planning exit begins at 15.

**QLD**
- Exit care at 18.
- Planning exit begins at 14 years 11 months.

**NSW**
- Exit care at 18.
- Planning exit begins at 15.

**ACT**
- Exit care at 18.
- Planning exit begins at 15.

**VIC**
- Exit care at 18.
- Planning exit begins at 15.
What do governments do internationally for ‘care leavers’?

- **United States** – Extended care to 21 years in 46 states.

- **England** – ‘Staying Put’, extended care to 21 years for foster and kinship placements.

- **Scotland** – has extended the age of leaving care (from April 2015) until 21 for both foster and residential care.

- **Canada** – Ontario has extended care to 21 years.

- **New Zealand** – extending care to 21 years, with non-financial transition support and advice available up to 25.

#makeit21
International evidence of Continued Care to 21 years
(Evaluations from United States and United Kingdom)

- Halved homelessness
- Doubled education participation
- Doubled odds of employment
- 38% reduction in youth pregnancies
- 54% reduction in arrests
- Federal and state tax savings estimated at US$ 320 million

#makeit21
...the most significant child welfare reform in the United Kingdom in a generation.

Amanda Cumberland
Policy and Parliamentary Adviser at The Adolescent and Children's Trust
What are the costs and benefits state by state, if care were extended to age 21 in Australia

Deloitte Access Economics:
The financial impact of the current cohort of care leavers aged 18 to 21 years due to higher usage of government services is estimated to be **$1.8 billion for the Commonwealth Government and $0.6 billion for the state and territory Governments** over the next 10 years, giving a total impact of **$2.4 billion**.
Deloitte Access Economics:

National Cost Benefit Ratio

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Jurisdiction</th>
<th>BCR return on $1 invested</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>NSW</td>
<td>3.40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>QLD</td>
<td>2.69</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TAS</td>
<td>2.69</td>
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<tr>
<td>WA</td>
<td>2.17</td>
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<tr>
<td>NT</td>
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<tr>
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<td>1.40</td>
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<td>Federal</td>
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Deloitte Access Economics:

Social outcomes if care was extended to 21 years in Australia

- Homelessness halved: 39% to 19.5%
- Rate of teen pregnancy reduced: 16.6% to 10.2%
- Educational engagement increased: 4.5% to 10.4%
- Interaction with the criminal justice system reduced: 16.3% to 10.4%
- Mental illness reduced: 54.4% to 30.8%
- Smoking reduced: 56.8% to 24.5%
- Hospitalisation reduced: 29.2% to 19.2%
Likely pathway if care was extended past 18 years

Current placement

- Foster/Kinship placement
- Residential/Lead Tenant placement
- Those that have left care and need support again

Continued care arrangement

- Remain in foster/kinship placement if young person and carer agree
- A guaranteed Supervised Independent Living Arrangement

Continued care support past 18 years would include:

- Ongoing carer reimbursements or housing subsidy
- Case management worker
- Financial brokerage available for education and employment

#makeit21
## Recent commitments to extending care to 21 years in Australia

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>State/Territory</th>
<th>When</th>
<th>What the agreement entails</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Tasmania</td>
<td>February 2018</td>
<td>Committed to extend care to 21 years.</td>
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<tr>
<td>South Australia</td>
<td>June 2018</td>
<td>Foster care and kinship care reimbursements continued until young person in care reaches the age of 21.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Victoria</td>
<td>September 2018</td>
<td>Committed to extend care to 21 years for 250 young people over five years.</td>
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<tr>
<td>West Australia</td>
<td>October 2018</td>
<td>Committed to trial extended care to 21 years for 20 young people.</td>
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Further Home Stretch work

• The Home Stretch Campaign recommends:

• legislative change to ensure young people in care have the option of extended care to 21 years in each state and territory

• a federally co-ordinated approach for extended care to 21 years to bring all states and territories up to the same starting line and to realise the full social and economic benefits for young people leaving care

• an increase in numbers of eligible young people to have the option of extended care to 21 years in Victoria.

• Planned Symposium August 2019, on extended care: informing Australian policy development, program implementation and evaluation to extend care to 21 years.
For more information about the Home Stretch campaign, visit our website:

thehomestretch.org.au
Continue the conversation...

Please submit questions or comments on the online forum following today’s webinar:

aifs.gov.au/cfca/news-discussion