

## Leaving Care Monitoring Program and Report – COVID-19

Dear Principal Officer

I am following up on the letter sent by the Children's Guardian on 3<sup>rd</sup> June 2020 regarding the Office of the Children's Guardian's (OCG) monitoring program of care leavers and young people eligible to access aftercare assistance during COVID-19 in 2020.

As you are aware, the challenges posed by COVID-19 are unprecedented, leading to additional uncertainty and concern for young people leaving care. This review will include monitoring focusing on individual young people leaving care plans and overall agency practice. The review will culminate in a report that identifies sector systemic issues, with a view to further collaboration with Association of Children's Welfare Agencies (ACWA) and NSW Child, Family and Community Peak Aboriginal Corporation (AbSec) to build resources to support the sector to improve practice in this very important area. We will be looking at the supports young people have been provided leading up to and after they've left care and expect agencies to provide us access to any documentation that demonstrates this information.

The monitoring program will initially focus on the following groups of young people:

- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people
- CALD young people
- Young people with disabilities
- Young people that are parents or pregnant

and the following placement types:

- ITTC/ITC/ITC-SD/TSOP/TSIL/THBC
- Refuges
- NHBEC
- Special Care
- Incarcerated in Youth Justice Facilities (or with Youth Justice involvement)
- Sherwood House
- Self-placed with family/friends or other members of the community (Unauthorised placements)
- Restorations with the young person currently living with a parent but still under PRM legal orders
- Current location unknown or reported as missing

To enable the OCG to commence this important piece of work, the Children's Guardian requested that agencies consider how they would provide remote access to their electronic file systems. We are working in collaboration with our IT Team to facilitate this remote access. Information obtained from the Department of Communities and Justice (DCJ) and their ChildStory system will also be included as part of this monitoring program.

The OCG is requesting the following be provided by email to [oohcmonitoring@kidsguardian.nsw.gov.au](mailto:oohcmonitoring@kidsguardian.nsw.gov.au) by Monday 29<sup>th</sup> June 2020:

- Information to enable the OCG to arrange remote access to your electronic file system. This is the preferred option and will greatly assist the efficiency of this review given the urgency for young people leaving care this year and the challenges of completing this review during COVID-19
- If your agency has already provided the OCG remote access, please confirm this access is still available
- Name and contact details of a person for the OCG to direct any enquiries regarding remote access to your electronic file system, and any enquiries regarding the location of key leaving care/aftercare information within the system
- Please advise if you are using a paper-based system
- A copy of your current policy and procedure for Leaving Care and After Care (NSW Child Safe Standards for Permanent Care, Standard 12: Living Independently)
- If your agency is unable to provide remote access to your electronic file system, please advise the reason/s this is not possible
- A list of young people case managed by your agency that have turned or are turning 18 in 2020. Please identify on this list if these young people are part of the target groups or placement types listed above
- Please advise if your agency does not have any young people leaving care in 2020 (in this circumstance, none of the requested information listed above is required)

Thank you for your ongoing support and commitment to care leavers and young people eligible to access aftercare assistance, particularly during COVID-19. If you have any questions or require further information, please email [oohcmonitoring@kidsguardian.nsw.gov.au](mailto:oohcmonitoring@kidsguardian.nsw.gov.au) . If you wish to you can speak to a staff member working on this monitoring program, please send an email to this address and a member of the team will return your call.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in blue ink, consisting of a stylized, cursive 'L' followed by a horizontal line extending to the right.

**Larissa Johnson**  
**A/Director OOHC Systems and Regulation**

16 June 2020