

16 June 2020

Home Stretch support for young people in care turning 18 years in 2020

A fact sheet for people who work with young people in care

Young people in care turning 18 years old between 16 March 2020 and 31 December 2020 may be eligible for additional support until 30 June 2021 via the coronavirus (COVID-19) Home Stretch initiative.

Young people in kinship, foster or residential care (including lead tenant) on a Care by Secretary Order, a long-term care order or a family reunification order immediately prior to their 18th birthday may be eligible to receive support via the coronavirus (COVID-19) Home Stretch initiative.

A young person must be turning 18 years between 16 March 2020 and 31 December 2020 and be engaged, or demonstrate a willingness to engage, with their Better Futures worker and work towards goals for independence.

Young people who plan to return to their biological family upon leaving care are not eligible for support via this initiative; however, they remain eligible for case work support and flexible funding via Better Futures.

The coronavirus (COVID-19) Home Stretch funding means that:

- young people and their foster and statutory kinship carers will have the option for the young person to remain in their current living arrangement beyond their 18th birthday, supported by a care allowance, case work and flexible funding until 30 June 2021,
- young people turning 18 years in residential care may be eligible to receive an allowance to transition to community housing options, along with case work and flexible funding until 30 June 2021,
- young people who are unable to remain with their kinship or foster carer may also be eligible to receive an allowance to transition to community housing

options, along with case work and flexible funding until 30 June 2021,

- young people turning 18 years in residential care assessed as likely to transition to homelessness, despite access to this initiative, may be eligible for a range of supports beyond their 18th birthday while alternative housing is found.

Young people should contact their case manager prior to their 18th birthday to ask about eligibility. There are two types of payment:

Home Stretch Allowance (Home-Based Care)

Young people and their kinship and foster carers will have the option for the young person turning 18 years to remain with their carer, supported by an allowance. This allowance, known as **Home Stretch Allowance (Home-Based Care)**, contributes to the day-to-day costs incurred caring for a young person aged 18 years. For example, costs of accommodation, utilities, phone and Internet.

Home Stretch Allowance (Independent Accommodation)

Young people in residential care, kinship care or foster care have the option of moving to independent living, supported by a **Home Stretch (Independent Accommodation) Allowance**.

The Home Stretch (Independent Accommodation) Allowance contributes to the day-to-day costs of housing (including rent), utilities, phone and Internet. Other costs that have a direct, positive impact on a young person's ability to maintain stable housing, including education-related costs, training and employment may also be funded via the allowance.