

End of Placement Policy

1. Purpose

Inala Community House (ICH) is committed to planning the end of a placement wherever possible to promote the safety, wellbeing and best interests of a child and to support the needs of the carer.

This policy aims to ensure that ICH Out of Home Care (OHC) workers understand ICH's role in accordance with the *Child Protection Act 1999*, *Child Protection Regulation 2011* and the Qld Out-of-Home Care Outcomes Framework.

2. Scope

This policy applies to all people working with Out of Home Care and includes employees, volunteers, students, trainees and contractors. For the purpose of this policy, these persons shall be referred to as workers.

3. Definitions

Child: A child is an individual under 18 years as per the *Child Protection Act 1999 (Qld)*.

Carer: A carer refers to both foster carer and kinship carer.

The Act: The Act refers to the *Child Protection Act 1999 (Qld)*

The Department: The Department refers to the Government department responsible for child safety

Child Safety Practice Manual: The Manual provides the principles, values, procedures, approaches, and systems that inform the delivery of Qld child protection services by the Department.

4. Policy

This policy aligns with the Department's procedures guiding the end of a placement or care arrangement as per the Child Safety Practice Manual.

ICH works in partnership with the Department to facilitate the planned ending of a placement wherever possible, which should happen in alignment with the child's case plan and in a way that maximises support for the child during their transition.

The safe care and connection of Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander children with family, community, culture and country will be a key consideration when a placement ends. Where appropriate, ICH will advocate for the child placement principle to apply to processes, decisions and actions taken for an Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander child.

4.1 Planned end of placements

A planned ending to a placement or care arrangement may be due to a range of circumstances, for example:

- A child is reunified to their family, or their care order expires.
- A carer may become the legal guardian of a child.
- A child turns 18 and leaves out of home care. Note that carers can access financial support if the child remains living with them, but ICH casework support ceases.
- A carer chooses to resign and not renew their carer approval (refer to Carer Renewal Policy).

The Department is accountable for supporting the child to leave their placement. ICH contributes to this process by:

- Reviewing the child's statutory case plan and referral information (where available) to help inform the transition process
- Advocating for the OHC worker to contribute to the transition planning process and the development of the transition plan
- Advocating to commence planning for a child's transition to adulthood and independence when the child turns 15 years as per the Department's case planning process
- Helping to decide on the support the carer provides to the child during the transition.
- Advocating for the carer's views to be considered as part of the transition planning process.
- Helping to arrange for the child, carer and household members to say goodbye to each other.
- Advocating for the carer to have an ongoing relationship with the child, if this is in the best interests of the child and important for the child's emotional wellbeing.

Where placements are identified as vulnerable to a placement breakdown, ICH OHC will follow the Department's guidance and process, and will also assess the placement needs and advocate for individual placement support where appropriate.

ICH OHC may also be able to offer respite care to promote placement stability. Refer to ICH OHC Supporting Placement Policy for further guidance.

4.2 Unplanned end of placements

ICH OHC strives to always plan for the ending of a placement or care arrangement. However, there are circumstances where the ending of a placement may be sudden and urgent, for example:

- To ensure the child's immediate safety and wellbeing (refer to ICH OHC Identifying and Reporting Harm [standards of care] Policy).
- When there is a significant change in carer circumstances (refer to ICH OHC Carer Renewal Policy).
- A child unexpectedly leaves their care arrangement (refer to ICH OHC Missing Child Procedure).
- When ICH, the carer or another entity requests an immediate end to the placement in response to a crisis that could not be resolved (refer to ICH OHC Incident Reporting and Management Policy).

In the event of an unplanned ending of a placement, ICH OHC will work collaboratively with the Department to prioritise the safety, wellbeing and best interests of a child while supporting the needs of the carer.

ICH OHC will work in partnership with the Department and carers to finalise any post-placement requirements:

- ICH OHC can support the carers when the child's personal items are collected and to complete a Conclusion of Care Arrangement Form for lodgement with the Department.
- The Department may instruct carers that the caring allowance for the child will cease.
- Carers must inform Centrelink of the conclusion of the child's placement.

The Department and/or ICH OHC may discuss the outcomes of the placement including:

- Demonstrated strengths in managing the care arrangement
- Learning and support needs for future arrangements.

Refer to the ICH OHC Carer Renewal Policy for further guidance about Carer Suitability Reviews.

Where reviewable decisions apply, carers may seek a review through the Queensland Civil and Administrative Tribunal (QCAT). The Queensland Foster and Kinship Care may also be able to support the applicant through the Foster Care Advocacy and Support Team (FAST).

5. Review

This policy shall be reviewed every 2 years.

This policy remains in effect unless otherwise determined by resolution of the Board of Directors.

6. Related Documents

Policies

ICH OHC Philosophy of Care
ICH OHC Pre-Placement Policy
ICH OHC Supporting Placement Policy
ICH OHC Identifying and Reporting Harm (Standards of Care) Policy
ICH OHC Incident Reporting and Management Policy
ICH OHC Managing High Risk Behaviour Policy
ICH OHC Positive Behaviour Support Policy
ICH OHC Supporting Placement Policy
ICH OHC Carer Renewal Policy
ICH Privacy Policy
ICH Human Rights Policy
ICH Feedback and Complaints Policy
ICH Confidentiality Policy
ICH Client Protection Policy

Other Documents

ICH OHC Caseworker Guide
Child Safety Conclusion of Care Arrangement Form

References

Qld Child Protection Act 1999
Qld Child Protection Regulation 2011
Qld Out-of-Home Care Outcomes Framework:
<https://www.cyjma.qld.gov.au/resources/campaign/supporting-families/qld-out-of-home-care-outcomes-framework.pdf>
Qld Child Safety Practice Manual: <https://cspm.csyw.qld.gov.au/>
Qld Human Services Quality Framework
Record Keeping Guide for Funded Non-Government Organisations
Queensland Foster and Kinship Care: <https://www.qfkc.com.au>