



# WHAT'S THE PLAN?

Australian Foster and Kinship Carers Partnership  
*Connected We Move Forward*





## Background

### CREATE Report Card 2009 – Transitioning from Care: Tracking Progress

- Literature review
- Government survey (Legislation and Policy)
- Young persons' survey

# Report Card 2009 findings: Planning

## Who told YP about leaving care?

No One:	21.9%
Caseworker:	35.7%
Carer:	26.1%

## Does YP have a Leaving Care Plan?

Yes/Being prepared:	36.4% (33% little/no involvement)
No/Don't know:	<b>63.6%</b>

## Areas covered in Plan that were of little help:

Education:	46.2%
Employment:	61.3%
Driver's license:	61.1%
Financial planning:	59.4%
Emotional support:	48.1%

# Report Card 2009 findings: Leaving care

Required to leave placement:

**50.5%**

- those who did, told average of 11 days before
- 40.6% of this group did not know to where

Homeless in first year:

**34.7%**

(Homeless: without safe and adequate housing for 5 nights)

- Average number of homeless episodes: 3
- Average total duration of homelessness: 31.3 days

Number of places lived per year since leaving care:

**4.9**



# Report Card 2009: Recommendations

## Planning

All care leavers must:

- have a TFC Plan
- be involved in its development
- have support to national standards
- have their individual needs assessed and met
- have their support reviewed periodically

# Report Card 2009: Recommendations

FOUNDATION

## Employment

- Reduce unemployment to national average
- Special consideration when applying “earn or learn” policies

## Housing

- No young person will exit care into homelessness

## Life Skills

- Adopt a multifaceted approach to life skills development (in school curriculum, specialist programs)

# Report Card 2009: Recommendations

FOUNDATION

## Training

- Special training and support should be given to carers to help them discuss the issues of transitioning with care leavers

## Monitoring

- Effective monitoring of transition outcomes must be introduced



## Caseworkers must:

- Assess young person's needs (short- and long-term);
- Consult with young person as to solutions;
- Prepare Plan;
- Check (with young person) that Plan is feasible;
- Provide young person with a copy of Plan as a “living” document;
- Establish a Plan-review timeframe

# How do we improve the situation?

## Key questions

### 1. What has been done before?

- Previous Report Card 2008
- Advocating (state and national level) to government and policy makers
  - CREATE Workers
  - Young people – NYAC Delegates

### 2. What do we need to change?

### 3. Who are the key stakeholders that can make change happen?



# A unique approach

## Ground up

- Empowering young people
- Ensuring that young people have the information they need to get a plan

## Holistic

- working in partnership with government, non-government, caseworkers, carers and young people

## Resourced

- Resources and tools developed



# What's the plan campaign?

Desired outcome:

- **All** young care leavers must have an appropriate Leaving Care Plan (only about one-third have one at present)
- **All** young people should be involved in developing their plan



## Key stakeholders:

- Young care leavers
- Caseworker/s
- Carers
- Government Departments
- Sector agencies
- Children's Commissioners/Guardians
- National peak bodies



# Strategies (first 6 months)

## Young care leavers

- Intervention
  - Provide information
    - » State information sheets (hard copy, CREATE web site)
    - » Calendar (sent to all young people 15 – 18 years through Department)
  - Promote campaign
    - » through *clubCREATE*
    - » NYAC delegates contact Ministers
- Motivation
  - Will have a LC Plan that outlines support for the future
  - Prizes (e.g., T-shirts, phone-socks for involvement in planning consultations and completing benchmark survey)



# Strategies (first 6 months)

## Foster Carers

- Intervention
  - Provide information
    - » Information sheets (hard copy, CREATE web site)
    - » Calendar (available foster care conferences Tas, and Vic)
  - Promote campaign
    - » Through Foster care newsletter
- Motivation
  - To further support young people in the future
  - Acknowledgement from young people for the CREATE Champion Awards that is also provided to ministers in each state/territory
  - Acknowledgement through the CREATE Honour Board



# Strategies (first 6 months)

## Caseworkers

- Intervention
  - Provide information
    - » WTP Poster
    - » Newsletters (hard copy and E-news)
    - » CREATE staff visit offices for campaign promotion
- Motivation
  - CREATE Champion Award (and entry on CREATE Honour Board)
    - » Acknowledge best practice
    - » Nominations by young people
    - » Minister advised quarterly of workers receiving nominations

# Example of Calendar



**What is a transition plan?**

Well it's a plan about what is going to happen in **YOUR** future that you should be involved in developing.

**Create**  
FOUNDATION

# Example of Calendar

## MARCH 2010

1 : LABOUR DAY (WA)  
2 : KING ISLAND SHOW DAY (TAS)  
8 : CANBERRA DAY (ACT)  
8 : LABOUR DAY (VIC)  
8 : EIGHT HOURS DAY (TAS)  
8 : ADELAIDE CUP DAY (SA)

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
	1	2	3	4	5	6
7	8	9	10	11	12	13
14	15	16	17	18	19	20
21	22	23	24	25	26	27
28	29	30	31			

## Example of Calendar

The graphic features a green background with a white line-art illustration of a street lamp and a building. A large, light-green speech bubble with a dark blue outline contains the question. Below it, a yellow rectangular box with a dark blue border contains the answer. The overall design is clean and modern.

**How do I know if I have a plan?**

You can contact your Case Worker, Agency Worker, Resi Care Worker, or speak to your Carer and they should be able to tell you.

## Example of Calendar

# What is so important about having a plan?

## Good Question!

When you start to think about your future and moving on from being in care (sometimes called transitioning from care) you need to think about what you want to do in the future. If you don't have a plan then it is hard to know what you need.

The benefit of having a plan is that you know what you need to do, when you need to do it, who will help you and how you can do it.



## Example of Calendar

# What should go in the plan?

This is really different for each person, and you should think of what your needs are and make sure that all areas are covered. Some things that should be included are:

- Education – do you want to continue at school, go to TAFE or Uni, take up a course?
- Housing – where are you going to live, with friends, family, carers, by yourself?
- Health – are there specific health concerns that need ongoing treatment?
- Connections – who will support you?
- Life skills – do you know how to look after yourself if you live independently? Can you wash, cook, clean, budget and pay your bills, and if not how will you learn these skills before you leave care.
- Financial – how will you support yourself?
- Employment – what type of job do you want, how will you get a job or traineeship?



## Example of Calendar

# How long does a plan last?

Each plan is different, and state legislation is also quite different – check out the Information package to learn more.

Generally plans last for the duration of your transition; some start at 15 and some start 6 months before you turn 18.



## Example of Calendar

A young child in a blue hoodie is riding a bicycle. Above the child's head is a thought bubble containing the word 'WHO'. The background is a vibrant blue with white splatters and a pair of blue sneakers in the top right corner.

# WHO

can help me to develop my plan?

Well this can be different for each young person. Check the Information package for more information but generally the following people are responsible.

- Your Case Worker
- Your Resi Care Worker

Foster carers are also able to help you if you are in a Foster Care placement.

## Example of Calendar

# What does a plan look like?

In most cases they tend to be documents that have sections for the Case Worker and you to fill out. They are different in each state/territory.

When you are talking with your Case Worker you should make sure that you understand what's written and if you don't understand, ask them to write it in a way that you can. Sometimes this is called "plain English" or "jargon free".

It's your plan and

**YOU**

should understand it.



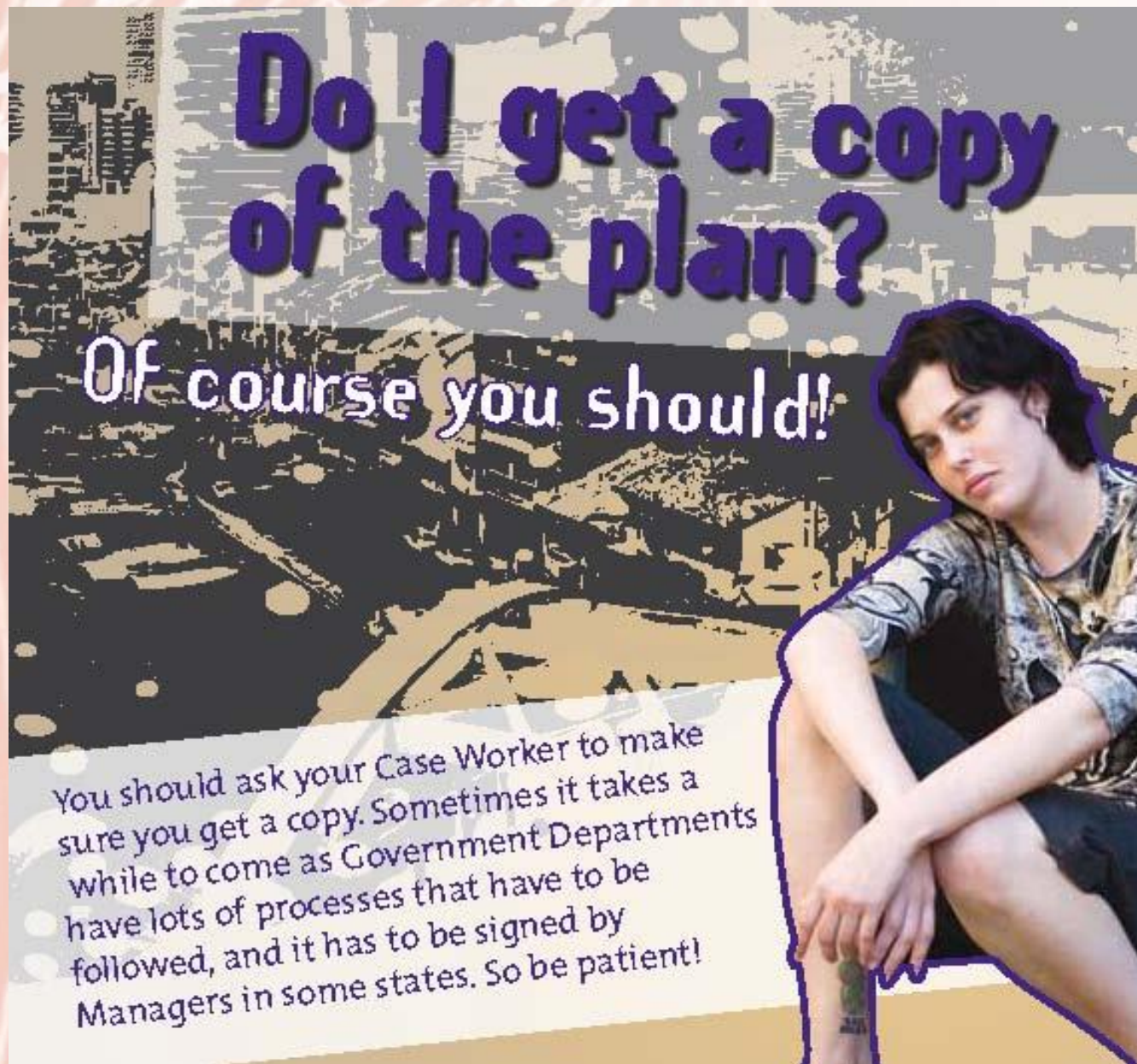
## Example of Calendar

**What happens if I change my mind and I want to do something different and it is already in my plan?**

This happens all the time, and young people's circumstances, and choices are expected to change. It is part of life. The best thing is to talk to your Case Worker and let them know that you would like to make some changes. You could try emailing or ringing them to let them know that you would like to meet to talk about changing the plan.



## Example of Calendar



**Do I get a copy of the plan?**

**Of course you should!**

You should ask your Case Worker to make sure you get a copy. Sometimes it takes a while to come as Government Departments have lots of processes that have to be followed, and it has to be signed by Managers in some states. So be patient!

## Example of Calendar

# Can they develop a transition plan without me?

You should always be actively involved in the development of your transition plan. Sometimes workers do lots of background work before they meet with you and they might have started to fill out parts of the plan before they come. Some Case Workers welcome young people's participation as it makes their job much easier, and gets a much better result for the young person.

Remember it is YOUR plan, and you should have a say about what happens in your life. If you do not feel that you have been involved enough tell your Case Worker, or ask your carer or support person to help you let them know if you are not comfortable doing so.

## Example of Calendar

# What if I cannot get my worker to develop a plan?



This can be a problem for some young people. Usually it happens when workers leave, or when you change workers. Sometimes it can also take a while due to the workload of the workers. If you do not have a worker you can ask to be assigned one.

Sometimes you need to be patient, and ask several times. CREATE suggests that you should keep a record of who you spoke to and the date of your request, and try several times.

You could also ask your Carer to advocate for you if you are in a foster care placement.

Each state has support people that can help you. Refer to the Information package for details.



# Example of Calendar





## Progressing the issue

Transition From Care Sub-group of the National Framework Implementation Working Group

CREATE has been commissioned to do a consultation project to develop a Work Plan to identify pathways to successful transition

- A major goal will be to identify those factors that make it difficult for this to happen (i.e., what makes successful planning hard to achieve)

**This is where we need your help!**

# Understanding the Barriers/obstacles

## Possible barriers:

- Apathy
- Excessive work load
- Lack of resources
- Poor communication
- Care leavers low priority
- Other??????

## Possible solutions:

