

The logo for Túsla, featuring the word 'Túsla' in a stylized font with a green-to-blue gradient. The 'T' is green, 'ú' is light green, 's' is light blue, and 'l' and 'a' are dark blue. The logo is set within a white circular background.

Túsla

An Ghníomhaireacht um
Leanaí agus an Teaghlach
Child and Family Agency

National Aftercare Policy for ALTERNATIVE CARE

THIS POLICY SHOULD BE READ IN CONJUNCTION WITH
THE SUPPORTING GUIDANCE DOCUMENTS FOR AFTERCARE





**National
Aftercare
Policy for
ALTERNATIVE
CARE**

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1.0 Introduction

Tusla - Child and Family Agency welcomes the introduction of the Child Care Amendment Act 2015 which will lead to a strengthened legislative basis for the provision of aftercare services. Aftercare services are in the main an adult service but are integral to the continuum of alternative care.

This document aims to make some clear policy statements with regard to the provision of aftercare services. It is essential that this document is read in conjunction with Tusla's Best Practice and Guidance Documents for Aftercare Services, 2017.

Aftercare services are support services that build on and support the work that has already been undertaken by many including, foster carers, social workers and residential workers in preparing young people for adulthood. Everyone has a key role to play in preparing young people to reach their developmental milestones. Therefore the provision of aftercare services should not be seen as an event, but a service that builds on the skills and capacity that young people have learned and developed during their time in care.

Not only does a comprehensive aftercare service rely on the full participation and informed consent of young people/young adults in the development and implementation of their aftercare plan, it also relies on cooperation and partnership with other key stakeholders, including the HSE, the Department of Social Protection, the Department of Education, SUSI, voluntary groups, community groups, the Department of Environment, the Department of Children and Youth Affairs etc.

This document is for all staff, carers and key personnel involved in caring for and supporting young people in their transition from childhood into adult life.

Please refer to the 'National Informed Consent Policy for Aftercare, 2017'.

2.0 Mission Statement

Tusla is committed to delivering and implementing an aftercare service for young people and young adults which is responsive, inclusive and relevant to each young person's circumstances. This will provide an equitable, holistic and integrated service to young people and young adults to support their changing needs and their pathway to adulthood.

3.0 Statement of Purpose

Tusla is committed to promoting and achieving the best outcomes for young people in care in keeping with the role of the "good parent". Tusla is committed to maintaining support to care leavers through the delivery of programmes which enable young people to adequately prepare for leaving care and in ensuring consistency of support to these young people/young adults in aftercare from 18 years and up to 21 years of age. This may be extended if a young adult is in full time education or accredited training to the age of 23 years.

In doing so Tusla seeks to promote better outcomes, which can be measured and defined as:

- * The young people leaving care have developed the necessary life and social skills.
- * Young people have developed a level of resilience to cope with the adversities that many young care leavers face in adult life.
- * Young people are encouraged and supported in training, employment and continuing in further and higher education.
- * Young people establish themselves in suitable accommodation which can afford them stability and integration into communities.
- * Young people have appropriate social networks.

It is essential that service delivery works within an agreed, standardised framework, which clearly defines the eligibility of access to aftercare services, the nature and level of the services available, the terms and conditions for the allocation of aftercare workers, financial supports, and arrangements for the closing of aftercare supports, and specific guidelines to cover particular aspects of aftercare provision.

4.0 Principles

Legislation underpins the guiding principle: the welfare of the child is the first and paramount consideration, having regard to the rights and duties of parents, the child's wishes, and the principle that children are generally better off when brought up in their own family.

PRINCIPLES OF BEST PRACTICE


'The Children's rights constitutional amendment and the Child Care (Amendment) Act 2015'

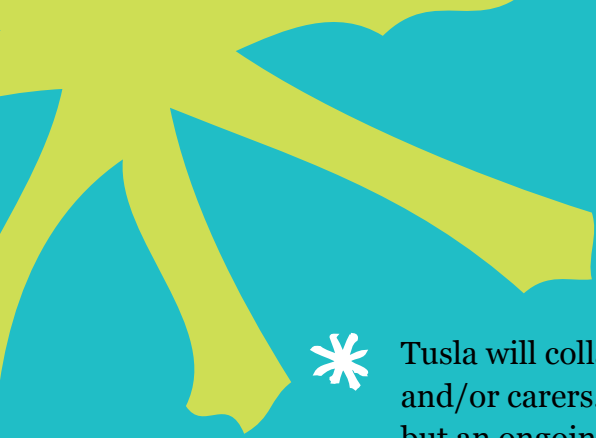
Following the referendum in 2012 and the signing into law of the Constitutional amendment in 2015, Article 42A (1) of the Constitution now contains an explicit statement that the State recognises and affirms the rights of all children and shall provide for the protection and vindication of the rights of those children. In addition, article 42A commits to introducing legislation to ensure that the best interests of the child are the paramount consideration in child protection and care proceedings brought by the State and that the views of the child will be heard and taken into account in these proceedings.

The Child and Family Agency Act 2013 and the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child

Two fundamental principles of The UN Convention on the Rights of the Child were incorporated in The Child and Family Agency Act 2013. This means that in the performance of its functions, including in relation to aftercare, Tusla has the statutory obligation to:

- * Regard the best interests of the child as the paramount consideration – Section 9 (1), (2) of 'The Child and Family Agency Act 2013' and Article 3 of the UNCRC.
- * Ensure that the views of the child are taken into consideration, ascertained and given due weight – Section 9 (3), (4) of 'The Child and Family Agency Act 2013' and Article 12 of the UNCRC.
- * The welfare of the young person is paramount.
- * The young person has the right to informed, meaningful consultation.
- * Young people will be provided with all relevant information in order to enhance their participation in decision making regarding their future life plans.

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- * All young people have the right to be supported in their transition to adulthood. Tusla will strive to ensure that young people in care are provided with the best chances to be confident, positive and successful.
 - * Tusla will endeavor to expedite this right on behalf of young people who are unable to access support within their own community or family of origin.
 - * Preparation for leaving care will begin on entry into care, and support will be given and continue until the young person has made the transition to independence, or is in some other appropriate arrangement.
 - * Preparation and planning is essential to achieving positive outcomes for care leavers, with young people engaged in this process. Their views about when they feel ready to move on will be listened to with care and consideration.
 - * Tusla will seek to enable young people leaving care to reach their full potential as independent adults.
 - * Stability and continuity are important prerequisites to achieving positive outcomes for care leavers. The option of staying on in a care placement beyond conventional leaving care ages will not be dismissed lightly. Many young people will have formed significant emotional and psychological ties. These should not be severed as a consequence of the young people leaving care at 18 years.
 - * Tusla will endeavor to work in a collaborative manner to achieve a wide network of support for young people. Strong partnerships will be developed with a range of other statutory and voluntary services.
 - * Service development will reflect the diverse characteristics of the various populations of young people in need of support, enshrining the concepts of gender and cultural equity.
 - * Service development will ensure that contingency planning is an inherent component of local planning.
 - * Tusla will ensure that each young person in need of support is the subject of a detailed holistic needs assessment. This assessment will be subject to regular review or more frequently in consultation with the young person.

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- * Tusla will collaborate with young people and their families and/or carers. Process participation is seen as not an event but an ongoing integral element of individual planning.
 - * The aftercare service is a voluntary service. Young people have the right as adults to decide if they want to engage with the aftercare service or not. Young people can re-engage with the service at any point up to the age of 21 years.
 - * The aftercare process will incorporate contingency plans, as a backup for supporting young people, in the event of initial leaving care arrangements breaking down, including arrangements for respite care.
 - * Staff will be supported to ensure successful implementation of the policy.
 - * Leaving and aftercare services will be monitored and evaluated on a regular basis to ensure quality and inform service development
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5.0 Legislation

Section 45 of The Child Care Act 1991 places a statutory duty on Tusla to form a view in relation to each person leaving care as to whether there is a “need for assistance” and if it forms such a view, to provide services in accordance with the legislation and subject to resources. Young people who have had a care history with Tusla are entitled to an aftercare service based on their assessed needs. The core eligible age range for aftercare is from 18 years up to 21 years. This can be extended until the completion of a course of education in which a young person is engaged, up to the age of 23 years.

This legislative provision is strengthened by The Child Care Amendment Act 2015. This legislative provision imposes a statutory duty on Tusla to undertake an assessment of need for an eligible child or eligible young person. The aim is to create an explicit, as opposed to implicit, statement of Tusla’s duty to satisfy itself as to the child’s or young person’s need for assistance by preparing a plan that identifies those needs for aftercare supports.

‘CHILD CARE ACT 1991’ PROVISION

Within Section 45 of the Child Care Act 1991 there are some defined parameters within which such services may be delivered:


-  Where a child leaves the care of Tusla - indicating that the provision of aftercare relates to those young people currently in care and are of an age where leaving is indicated.
 -  The HSE may “assist him/her for so long as the board is satisfied as to his/her need for assistance” – requiring that there must be an assessment (ongoing) of need for aftercare assistance.
 -  “He/she has not attained the age of 21 years” meaning that the service is only open to those under 21 years at the start of the provision of service.
 -  And, where “that person attains the age of 21 years, the board may continue to provide such assistance until the completion of the course of education in which he/she is engaged” which extends a person’s eligibility for support beyond 21 years up to the age of 23 years or to the end of the academic year.
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‘CHILD CARE AMENDMENT ACT 2015’

Section 45A of the Child Care Amendment Act 2015 places a statutory duty on Tusla to form a view in relation to each person leaving care as to whether there is a “need for assistance” and if it forms such a view to provide services in accordance with the section and subject to resources.

The extent as to what service is provided will be based on assessment of need, age and the length of time the young person was in care. Section 6, Section 45A “Assessment of Need”, Child Care Amendment Act 2015’ provides that an assessment of need will be carried out in order to identify the support and services appropriate to an aftercare plan and sets out the domains to be considered in such an assessment.

It is emphasised that the most important requirements for young people leaving care is for secure, suitable accommodation as well as further education, employment or training and family support. These core requirements will be prioritised in the provision of aftercare services.



‘The Child Care Amendment Act 2015’ provides additional definitions of those eligible for an aftercare plan. Young people in care or who have been in care may be eligible for an aftercare plan and an aftercare service should they meet the following criteria:

- * A child who has spent 12 months in the care of the State (with either the Child and Family Agency or the HSE) in the 5 years between the ages of 13 and (up to) 18 years old will be eligible for a statutory aftercare plan.
- * The criteria employed to determine the eligibility for an adult (i.e. a person aged 18, 19, 20 years) for the purposes of an aftercare plan requires that person to have spent 12 months in the care of the State (with the Child and Family Agency or the HSE) between the ages of 13 and 18.
- * Where a child or adult has been in care (for a period of time between the ages of 13 and 18) and has also been accommodated, between the ages of 13 and 18 under Section V of the Child Care Act 1991, then any periods of time spent in accommodation, under Section V and that spent in care can be combined to meet the 12 month threshold stipulated.
- * References to care also include periods of time spent in Special Care under Part IVA of ‘The Child Care Act 1991’.
- * For young people in care who have spent time in detention, the time spent in detention can be combined to meet the 12 month threshold stipulated.

Other key legislation and reports that inform and guide aftercare provision includes the National Review Panel Reports, the Ryan Report, and National Standards for Foster Care and Residential Care.

6.0 Eligibility

The provision of an appropriate needs led aftercare service has been highlighted as one of the key elements in achieving positive outcomes for young people upon leaving care. It is essential that young people leaving care are provided with the type of support that their individual situation requires.

The term ‘young person’ refers to an eligible child and an eligible adult for the purpose of this document. Eligibility is defined within ‘The Child Care Amendment Act 2015’. The eligibility criterion applies to young people who have been adopted from care.

6.1 Categories of Referral

There is a clear mechanism for referral to the aftercare service. To be referred to the aftercare service for an assessment of need as an eligible child or an eligible adult the following criteria applies:

“eligible child” means a child aged 16 years or over whom –

is in the care of Tusla and has been in the care of that Agency for a period of not less than cumulative 12 months [in the previous 5 years], or

was in the care of Tusla for a period of not less than 12 cumulative months in the 5 year period prior to attaining the age of 18 years and who is no longer in the care of that Agency.

“eligible adult” means a person aged 18, 19 or 20, (inclusive) who was in the care of Tusla for a period of not less than 12 cumulative months in the 5 year period prior to the person attaining [the age of 18 years].

UNDER 18 YEARS YOUNG PERSON IN CARE

Who can make a referral?

Referrals can be made by:

- * Allocated social worker for young person in care.
- * A social work department for a child who had previous care experience.
- * An agency with or on behalf of a young person.
- * Family/foster family member/any other concerned adult.
- * A young person.



When to refer?

Once the allocated social worker has determined possible eligibility of a young person they should make a referral to the aftercare manager on the Tusla standardised referral form from 16 years of age. If a young person is admitted to care after the recommended age of referral, i.e. over 16 years and it is determined they will spend 12 months in care it is advised that a referral is submitted to the aftercare team as soon as possible.

How to make a referral?

- * A formal, written referral must be submitted to the aftercare manager by the allocated social worker.
- * Social work referrers must use the Tusla standardised referral form.
- * Provision of accurate and detailed information on the referral form will facilitate a thorough consideration to determine eligibility.
- * Inclusion of the young person in the referral process is crucial.
- * Informed consent is a requirement to this process and all referral forms must be signed by the young person.
- * In the event consent is not given by the young person and they are eligible for aftercare, referrals will be accepted by the Aftercare Service. **The social worker must state on the referral that consent has been refused by the young person.**
- * The social worker must consider any cultural and ethnicity issues that may have an impact on the referral, assessment and service delivery.

All referrals must include the following documentation:

- * Referral form, social history.
- * Previous child in care review minutes
- * Care plan
- * Placement plan if applicable
- * Birth certificate
- * Court orders including GAL reports
- * Genogram
- * Specialist reports
- * Documentation from Department of Justice, if applicable.

Note: Comprehensive sharing of information is critical to the successful planning and implementation of aftercare service provision.

BEST PRACTICE

It is important that all professionals ensure that the leaving and aftercare process is broached in a sensitive manner with young people in care and their carers so as not to invoke feelings of anxiety, insecurity and rejection. The process for aftercare must be child centred and full participation is paramount. Only completed referrals will be considered.

UNDER 18 YEARS YOUNG PERSON RETURNED HOME

Who can make a referral?

Referrals can be made by:

- * Allocated social worker for child/family.
- * A social work department for a child who had previous care experience.
- * A young person.

When to refer?

The young person on reaching 16 years of age or a person on their behalf can contact the child protection and welfare team or the children in care team in the area in which they were admitted to care to make a referral on their behalf. It is the role of the social work department to validate the length of time in care for the purpose of determining eligibility.

How to make a referral?

- * Young people may be referred to the aftercare manager via their previous social work department. In this case the Tusla standardised referral form should be used.
- * If a young person self refers then the aftercare manager must assist the young person contact the social work department in order for them to support the young person refer with validated information.
- * Provision of accurate and detailed information on the referral form will facilitate a thorough consideration to determine eligibility.
- * Inclusion of the young person in the referral process is crucial.
- * Consent is a requirement to this process and all referral forms must be signed by the young person. Consent is also required from their legal guardian to process the referral.
- * The social worker must consider any cultural and ethnicity issues that may have an impact on the referral, assessment and service delivery.

Note: This includes young people who have been adopted but have spent 12 cumulative months in care between 13-18 years of age.

All referrals must include the following documentation:

- * Referral form, social history
- * Previous child in care review minutes
- * Care plan
- * Placement plan if applicable
- * Birth certificate
- * Court
- * Genogram
- * Specialist reports
- * Documentation from Department of Justice, if applicable

YOUNG ADULT OVER 18 YEARS

Who can make a referral?

Referrals can be made by:

- * A social work department for a young adult who had previous care experience.
- * Young adults themselves over 18 years.
- * An agency with or on behalf of a young adult.
- * Family/previous foster family member/any other concerned adult.

When to refer?

Any young adult over 18 years eligible for referral to the aftercare manager can self-refer or have someone make a referral on their behalf up to the age of 21 years.

These referrals can be made directly to the aftercare services or via the drop in services.

All referrals for young adults over 18 years must be made to the aftercare manager and the decision in relation to eligibility for an assessment of need and an aftercare plan will be made by the aftercare manager, Tusla within three months from the date of referral.

How to make a referral?

Young adults who have reached the age of 18 years and who had an experience of alternative care can refer by contacting the local social work department or self-refer directly through the aftercare service or the aftercare drop in service. In this case the young adult will need to provide details of their time in care to determine eligibility. This information will need to be validated by the aftercare manager.

It is important that all relevant information of experience is given and sought to determine eligibility. Referrals can also be made by a person or agency acting on behalf of the young adult. It is the role of the aftercare manager to establish a link with the previous social work department to validate and determine eligibility.

7.0 Assessment of Need

‘The Child Care Amendment Act 2015’, Section 2 places a statutory responsibility on Tusla to provide for an assessment of need for young people and young adults who meet the eligibility criteria for an aftercare service.

If eligibility is affirmed an assessment of need will be undertaken by an aftercare service within four months of affirmed eligibility or six months prior to their 18th birthday if referral is late. The service offered will be determined based on each young person’s/young adults assessment of need. The aftercare service is mainly an adult service which is dependent on the cooperation, and participation of the young person/young adult. The young person/young adult will be asked to sign a service agreement on their initial engagement with the aftercare service. This agreement will provide an outline of the expectations of the young person/young adult and the aftercare service. It also includes a commitment from the young person/young adult, the social work department/key personnel, foster carers and the aftercare service to work in a respectful and collaborative partnership in the development of the aftercare plan.

The assessment of need assists the aftercare service to determine the level of support which the young person/young adult will require as part of an Aftercare Plan. It encompasses all categories of need including ('Child Care Amendment Act 2015'):


- * Education.
- * Financing and budgeting matters.
- * Training and employment.
- * Health and wellbeing.
- * Personal and social development.
- * Accommodation.
- * Family support.

The assessment of need document will determine the requirement for the allocation of an aftercare worker. *(Please refer to Allocation of Aftercare Worker Guidance Document 2017)*. The assessment of need will be completed within four months of referral to the aftercare service once eligibility has been determined.

This assessment is undertaken with the young person/young adult and will assist and support the development of the aftercare plan.

In the event of a referral from a young adult over 18 years of age an assessment of need will be completed within three months of referral once eligibility is affirmed.

Depending on the complexity of the case an assessment of need can be undertaken in one visit with the young person/young adult or multiple visits.



Following an assessment of need the aftercare service provided can include:

- * An allocated aftercare worker from the age of 17 years up to the age of 21 years and up to 23 years if in education/training. Please refer to ‘Guidance Note on Allocation of Aftercare Worker, 2017’.
- * A drop-in service which will provide advice guidance, support and signposting when required to all young people/young adults eligible for aftercare provision.
- * Financial support based on a financial needs assessment and eligibility for those in education or accredited training up to the age of 21 years, or until completion of their course up to the age of 23 years (please refer to financial support guidance document).
- * A determination of service provision will be clearly outlined in the aftercare plan.

Note: Section 45A of ‘The Child Care Amendment Act 2015’ places a statutory duty on Tusla to form a view in relation to each person leaving care as to whether there is a “need for assistance” and if it forms such a view to provide services in accordance with the section and subject to resources.

BEST PRACTICE

Aftercare managers should where possible assign an aftercare worker who has capacity to be the allocated worker if the assessment of need determines allocation as a need. This is important in terms of establishing a relationship with the young person/young adult.

8.0 Appeals Process

ELIGIBILITY

In the event that a young person is deemed not to be eligible for an assessment of need upon referral, this should be put in writing by the aftercare manager to the referrer. If the social worker/referrer is of the opinion that they have a case for appeal they should contact the aftercare manager to discuss their query and receive further clarification. If still not satisfied, they can appeal the decision in writing or verbally to the local area manager on the young person's behalf.

A young person can also make an appeal directly to the area manager. This appeal can be made in writing or a record of a verbal appeal can be recorded in writing for consideration by the area manager.

If a young adult is self-referring over 18 years and are deemed not to be eligible for an aftercare service they should be informed in writing by the aftercare manager with reasons why. They should contact the aftercare manager for further clarification if required. In the event they are not satisfied with the decision they can appeal the decision. This appeal can be made in writing or a record of a verbal appeal can be recorded in writing for consideration by the area manager.

AFTERCARE PLAN

If any young adult or young person is dissatisfied with any aspect of the aftercare plan this can be appealed through the aftercare manager either in writing or verbally or through an advocate on their behalf.

If they remain unhappy this can be referred to the area manager for further appeal.

COMPLAINTS

If a young adult is dissatisfied with any aspect of the aftercare service they can make a complaint through 'Tell Us': Tusla's feedback and complaints policy: <http://www.tusla.ie/get-in-touch/feedback-and-compl/>

9.0 Preparation for Leaving Care

Preparation for leaving care occurs within the care planning process. The care plan should reflect the work to be undertaken to support the young person commence the transition to adulthood from the age of 16 years. Preparation for adulthood is part of childhood development from the stage of admission and the child in care review process and care planning should consider these developing needs. Foster carers and residential staff have key roles in supporting young people in their preparation and transition for adult life. Statutory planning for children in care is the function and responsibility of the child's social worker.

The aftercare service will support the preparation for leaving care by completing the assessment of need which will compliment the care plan by identifying key tasks, actions and skills required to support the young person in a successful transition to adulthood.

Please refer to: 'Roles and Responsibilities in Aftercare, 2017' and 'Residential Care Guidance in Aftercare, 2017'.

10.0 Aftercare Plans

'The Child Care Amendment Act 2015' (see explanatory memorandum section 6) places a responsibility on Tusla to prepare an aftercare plan following an assessment of need. The aim is to create an explicit, as opposed to implicit, statement of Tusla's duty to satisfy itself as to the child's or young person's need for assistance by preparing a plan that identifies those needs for aftercare supports. Every young person leaving care who meets the eligibility criteria is entitled to an aftercare plan. This includes young adults whose primary support may be from a specialist service and not aftercare services (Tusla).

Good practice guidelines should be adhered to, to ensure a smooth transition from the children in care team to the aftercare service. This may include a formal transfer meeting/handover whereby the child in care file is now closed. This occurs when the young person is 18 years of age and no longer in State care.

10.1 What is an Aftercare Plan?

An aftercare plan is a written plan that is prepared by the aftercare worker and the young person/young adult in conjunction with their social worker and other key people in their lives. The plan is based on the assessment of need and aims to outline clearly the supports required for the young person in their transition into adulthood. An aftercare plan will be developed for all young people/young adults who are eligible. This includes young people/young adults whose primary care will be with another service. Please refer to 'Special Considerations Guidance, 2017'.

- * The plan outlines the following needs:
- * Education, training and employment.
- * Health and wellbeing.
- * Personal and social.
- * Accommodation.
- * Finance and budgeting.
- * Social network and supports.
- * Family access and contact.
- * Supports from other services.

AFTERCARE PLAN FOR YOUNG PERSON IN CARE UNDER 18 YEARS

The plan for those less than 18 years of age will be developed and completed in conjunction with the social worker six months prior to the young person's 18th birthday. The young person will participate in all aspects of the development of the plan.

AFTERCARE PLAN FOR YOUNG PERSON RETURNED HOME UNDER 18 YEARS

The plan for those less than 18 years of age will be developed in conjunction with the referring social work department.



AFTERCARE PLAN FOR YOUNG ADULT OVER 18 YEARS

For those over 18 years following the assessment of need an aftercare plan will be prepared within three months. This plan will be developed in conjunction with the young adult.

10.2 Review Aftercare Plans

Tusla shall consider all requests to review an aftercare plan. When it is determined that a plan requires review this will occur within three months.

- * A young person, young adult or a person acting on their behalf can request a review of the aftercare plan.
- * The circumstances under which a review of an aftercare plan may take place are:
 - * There has been a significant change in circumstances of the young person/young adult.
 - * The assistance being provided under the aftercare plan no longer meets the identified needs.
 - * Additional support requirements for the young person/young adult have arisen.
 - * A young person/young adult decide to re-engage in the service.

Aftercare plans may be updated following a review and these updates shall have due regard to the resources available to Tusla to implement the updated plans.

All plans shall be signed and dated by the young adult and an aftercare worker and aftercare coordinator/service manager.

HOW TO REQUEST A REVIEW OF AN AFTERCARE PLAN?

Not all young people or young adults applying for, eligible for or engaged in aftercare services will have an allocated aftercare worker, as per the assessment of need. The role of the aftercare worker in aftercare plan reviews is to facilitate and support the review process through active engagement and participation with the young person/young adult (please refer to the 'Lundy Model of Participation').

REQUEST FOR REVIEW OF AFTERCARE PLANS FOR YOUNG PERSON IN CARE LESS THAN 18 YEARS




The child and family social worker can request a review of the aftercare plan from the aftercare manager.

REQUEST FOR REVIEW OF AFTERCARE PLANS FOR YOUNG PERSON WHO RETURNED HOME

The social work department who referred the young person to the aftercare service can request a review of the aftercare plan from the aftercare manager.

REQUEST FOR REVIEW OF AFTERCARE PLAN FOR YOUNG ADULTS

A young adult can request a review of their aftercare plan through the following:

-  Allocated worker.
-  Drop in service.
-  In writing/verbally to the aftercare manager.

A request can be made by a family member/previous foster family member/any other concerned adult.

HOW WE REVIEW AFTERCARE PLANS?

The review of any plan can take place within a structured meeting or as part of a process. The key element to any review is the participation of the young person and young adult. When the person is less than 18 years of age the review will include social workers, and other professionals involved in the young person's life that may contribute to the planning process. Foster carers and/or residential staff play a key role in supporting this process.

When a review is requested by a young adult the aftercare worker will be guided by the young adult in how they wish their review to take place.

Please refer to 'Special Considerations Guidance Document, 2017,' 'Interagency Aftercare Steering Committee, 2017'.



BEST PRACTICE

The review of an aftercare plan can be a process and not an event. A review should be an analysis of the period since the last review or when the plan was drawn up. It should not be a statement of events. Timing of reviews should accommodate the young person/young adult. It should aim to be a positive experience. Reviews should be held locally to accommodate the young person/young adult. There is no policy or legislation that states that the review should be carried out in a meeting style around a table and therefore efforts should be made to ensure that the review takes place in a manner that is conducive to a positive outcome (please reference the ‘Lundy Model of Participation’).

11.0 Transfer of Aftercare Cases from other Areas

Aftercare service provision is co-ordinated and delivered from the area of origin. Supports provided are outlined in the aftercare plan and may include advice and guidance and/or financial. Area of origin for the purpose of this document refers to the area in which the young person was admitted to care. The only exception to this is whereby the case is transferred under ‘The National Transfer Policy, 2016’. Young adults who are living in an area that is not their area of origin can access the drop in services for the purpose of advice, guidance and support in the area they are residing.

12.0 Young People who are placed out of Area

This refers to children and young people in care who by virtue of need are placed outside their area of origin. In most cases these placements are residential placements and are not subject to ‘The National Transfer Policy 2016’.

All services provided to the young person in a residential placement including the child’s social worker is provided for by the area of origin. This remains the case in aftercare service provision whereby the assessment of need indicates that the young person will require an allocated aftercare worker as part of the aftercare plan. It remains the responsibility of the area of origin to decide how best to deliver this service especially when the geographical distance is significant.

Allocation of aftercare workers from the ‘new area’ is not a consideration in this instance unless the aftercare service has capacity to provide this resource. This includes all organisations providing aftercare on behalf of Tusla.

It is recommended that aftercare workers manage caseloads which are weighted in terms of complexity. This guidance will determine capacity to provide additional resources. Young people who have been placed in care in their area of origin are prioritised for allocation of aftercare workers.

All financial support will be provided by the area of origin.

Drop in clinics/services can be offered to young adults who live in an area that is not their area of origin.



13.0 Young People/Young Adults who move out of area

This refers to young people and young adults who move from their area of origin for a variety of reasons including college, employment, and training or just to be closer to some family members.

Where the assessment of need indicates that the young person/young adult will require an allocated aftercare worker as part of the aftercare plan the area of origin will remain responsible for deciding on how best to deliver this service. Allocation of aftercare workers from the 'new area' is not a consideration in this instance unless an aftercare service has capacity to provide this resource. This includes all organisations providing aftercare on behalf of Tusla. If this young person/young adult does not require an allocated aftercare worker as part of the aftercare plan, the young person/young adult can link in with local drop in services to avail of advice, guidance, support and signposting.

All financial support will be provided by the area of origin.

Drop in clinics/services can be offered to young adults who live in an area that is not their area of origin.

BEST PRACTICE

Young people and young adults when developing their aftercare plan should be encouraged to identify realistic and sustainable supports that best meets their needs. Social workers and aftercare workers have a professional responsibility to guide young people and young adults in making informed decisions in planning their futures.

14.0 Case Closure

Aftercare service is predominately an adult service and therefore young adults can choose if they wish to avail of the aftercare service. This decision should be respected.

NATURAL CLOSURE (18-21 YEARS)

At 21 years of age young adults will naturally age out of the aftercare service provision. Young adults may have availed of an allocated a aftercare worker or a drop in service for the duration of their engagement with the service and at 21 years of age they will be formally discharged from the service.

IN FULL TIME EDUCATION/ACCREDITED TRAINING (21-23YEARS)

In this instance the young adult's file will remain open until financial support ceases in the 23rd year of the young adults life and the case will close naturally at this point.

YOUNG ADULTS WHO CHOOSE NOT TO ENGAGE (18-21YEARS)

For the purpose of the document this group includes those who:
Refuse to provide informed consent to avail of a service at 18 years.
In this instance the aftercare referral, assessment of need and aftercare plan will be recorded and held on the aftercare file. A closure summary will outline service refusal.

Refuse a service offered, contrary to the assessment of need and aftercare plan

In this instance the aftercare service will make written and/or phone contact with the young adult every three months for a period of six months. This contact will advise them of services available to them should they wish to re-engage. After a 12 month period this file will close if the young adult continues to refuse a service or has not engaged. Please refer to 'Aftercare Service National Consent Information and Guidance Document, 2017' for guidance on sharing of information without consent of the young adult where there are serious concerns for safety and welfare.



Advise they do not wish avail of the service

In this instance the Aftercare referral, assessment of need and aftercare plan will be recorded and held on the aftercare file. A closure summary will outline service refusal.

Refuse to engage and have no apparent need for support

In this instance the aftercare referral, assessment of need and aftercare plan will be recorded and held on the aftercare file. A closure summary will outline service refusal.

Will receive their aftercare support from another statutory organisation

In this instance the aftercare referral, assessment of need and aftercare plan will be recorded and held on the aftercare file. A summary report on the transfer of the case will be held on file. This case will be considered closed once the transfer has taken place.

ON THE DEATH OF A YOUNG ADULT

An aftercare service file will be closed upon the death of the young adult.

BEST PRACTICE

The aftercare plan should reflect the young adult's participation and view on service provision.

In the majority of the above instances the decision to close a case can be reviewed following engagement by the young adult or at the request of the young adult.

Young adults can self refer or be referred to the aftercare service through the aftercare drop in service or the aftercare steering committees.

Please read this policy document in conjunction with all supporting guidance documents for aftercare.





TÚSLA
An Ghníomhaireacht um
Leanaí agus an Teaghlach
Child and Family Agency