

# HOME STRETCH WA TRIAL

## REPORT 2021



"I never felt heard whilst in the system or when dealing with the Department as an adult. That is until I became a part of the Home Stretch WA Trial, I got involved and also attended the first Youth Advisory Group. "

19 year old Trial participant  
& Youth Advisory Group Member



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**“Being part of the Youth Advisory Group (YAG) for Home Stretch has been a fantastic project for me because it is ensured that my voice has been heard.”**

Home Stretch WA is a project particularly close to my heart. Home Stretch is about ensuring young people in the out of home care system (OOHCS) are able to have the support many young people not in the OOHCS have. And it can help them ensure they have a proper standing to live their life to the fullest.

To change the OOHCS a project has to have the voice of young people, this voice ensures that any ideas and movements are applicable to people who have been through the system that is trying to be changed.

Without the voice of young people with lived experience, projects can fly blind and rely too much on the perspectives and best intentions of professional “experts” which can be outdated and miss the most important issues.

Being part of the Youth Advisory Group (YAG) for Home Stretch has been a fantastic project for me because it is ensured that my voice has been heard and proper consultation is adhered to.

This means the opinions of the YAG are not tokenistic and make real changes as to how the project is rolled out to people across WA. The main goal of Home Stretch WA is in my opinion to help as many young people to achieve their best as possible.

My hope is that the Australian Government helps young people in the foster system to the best of their ability and therefore lead to a reduction of young people experiencing homelessness, depression, incarceration and unsafe living after they leave the care system.

Working with Anglicare WA and discussing the main principles of Home Stretch as they are: Staying on agreement, housing subsidy, invest in me, smooth transition, transition coach and support circles ensures that every young people in the YAG are able to put their lived experience and opinions into helping ensure these principles not only work for young people but also for on the ground youth workers.

Making a program that is sustainable and workable for all, while also helping people with a disadvantaged start to life, through no fault of their own.

The principles of Home Stretch WA have been discussed heavily with young people and youth workers when the model was first developed and as the model has been tested in the trial. It is my hope that the principles that the YAG and the Anglicare WA team have developed are maintained as the trial is rolled out across WA.

This ensures everyone is treated fairly, and equity is maintained. The amount of work that has gone into to developing the principles and ensuring they can work for everyone, has been massive.

It is my opinion that the best way to help young people after they leave the OOHCS is to follow these principles.

Darcy Garrett

Youth Advisory Group Member

**“The establishment of Home Stretch across Western Australia will be a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity for social change that will last for generations.”**

The establishment of Home Stretch across Western Australia will be a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity for social change that will last for generations.

Around 85 per cent of 18-year-olds across the country still live at home with their parents. It makes no sense for states and territories to terminate support for foster care and other types of state care at the age of 18 for the most vulnerable young people in our society. More than 55 percent of WA children in state care are Aboriginal, despite only being three percent of the state’s total population.

We at Anglicare WA are enormously proud to have had the opportunity to lead the Home Stretch WA Trial.

The Trial has been a unique opportunity to design and test a model for an extension of care for young people aged 18-21 years and has involved a significant number of key stakeholders – young people, carers and community service organisations. The Trial has worked in trusted partnership with the WA Department of Communities and with Yorganop Aboriginal Corporation to design, test and develop a model that is now ready for scaling across Western Australia.

The Home Stretch WA Trial has provided an exemplar of the benefits of youth participation in governance and decision making, a commitment to power sharing with the community services sector, and an ongoing dialogue between young people as service users and the future systems that will support them.

This report summarises the design process, those involved and the core elements of the Home Stretch WA model. Embedded in a Human Centred Design process, and with prototypes tested and refined with young people and other key stakeholders, the model that has emerged from the Trial will ensure that the offer of an extension of care for young people in Western Australia is consistent with the needs and desires of these young people.

Importantly, this work would not have been possible without the partnership and engagement of Yorganop, currently WA’s only Aboriginal Community Controlled provider of out-of-home-care services. The trust that

the team at Yorganop placed in the Home Stretch WA Trial team and the strong collaborative effort has brought unique and important insights through the Nitja Nop Yorga Nulla Mia (Our Girls and Boys Are Staying Home) project.

This is the first time Yorganop has partnered with another service in its nearly 30-year history, and we are honoured to have shared this with you.

We are grateful for the Grant funding received for the Trial from both the Department of Communities, and Lotterywest. Thank-you to Dr Lynelle Watts and her evaluation team from the School of Allied Health at Curtin University, for embracing the opportunity to learn with the Trial, and to actively involve young people in the evaluation methodology.

The Youth Advisory Group for the Home Stretch WA Trial have drawn from their personal stories in powerful ways, and have shown generosity, strength and resilience - thank you, team.

Particular acknowledgment should be given to Home Stretch Lead Andy Kazim, and his leadership of the Trial and unwavering commitment to prioritising the voice of young people with a care experience and the perspectives of the Aboriginal community.

I also want to pay special thanks to Minister Simone McGurk, one of Western Australia’s first Home Stretch champions. Without her support, which began from the opposition bench, none of this work would have been done.

Most importantly, this work has been for the young people in care who will reach age 18 in future and receive the type of support that many of their contemporaries would always have taken for granted. May their lives be full and rich.

Mark Glasson

Home Stretch Campaign Chair, WA.  
CEO Anglicare WA.



## HOME STRETCH WA TRIAL

The Home Stretch WA Trial has co-designed and tested an enhanced support system for young people as an extension of care, providing them with a continuation of support and access to resources from 18 years to when they turn 21 years of age.

The Trial has been a highly collaborative project driven by the voices and expressed needs of young people, and in particular their experiences of 'ageing out' of the state care system at 18 and being forced into independence with significantly less support and resources than their peers.

Commissioned as a developmental platform rather than a 'pilot before roll-out', the Home Stretch WA Trial has brought together stakeholders from within and outside the child protection system to co-create the practice, policy and system adaptations that are needed to effectively extend supports from 18 to the age of 21 in the WA context.

A key principal that has underpinned the project is ensuring that the wisdom, experiences and agency of Aboriginal young people, families and community are embedded into the co-design approach and the development of the model.

The Home Stretch WA Trial is now ready to support the scaling and expansion of an extension of care to young people across Western Australia. This report provides a summary of some of the key learnings and insights that have been captured through a range of different co-design tools and activities used in the Trial.

This report also provides a number of key recommendations that have been developed through collaboration with key stakeholders involved in the Trial.

## WHY IS THIS IMPORTANT ?

Young people who have experienced out-of-home care face significant and complex issues during their lives and are considered among the most vulnerable and disadvantaged groups in society.

At the age of 18, children in out-of-home-care in Western Australia are deemed legally "independent" and many are required to exit from their care and accommodation arrangements. At this age many young people are still completing their final year of high school, or are facing other critical transition points in their lives.

Research across Australia has found a high proportion of these young people end up homeless, in the criminal justice system, unemployed or a new parent within the first year of leaving care. <sup>2019</sup>

The lack of an ongoing, stable and supportive placement, emotional support, and a flexible and gradual process toward independent living makes it much more difficult to integrate with society, find employment or develop supportive networks.

In contrast, 85% of young people in the general population continue to live with their parents well into their mid-20s, entering and exiting the family home several times as they pursue various development opportunities. <sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> The Household, Income & Labour Dynamics (HILDA) in Australia survey data, 2019,

[https://melbourneinstitute.unimelb.edu.au/\\_data/assets/pdf\\_file/0010/3398464/HILDA-Statistical-Report2019.pdf](https://melbourneinstitute.unimelb.edu.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0010/3398464/HILDA-Statistical-Report2019.pdf)

**August 2016** The Home Stretch National Campaign was launched in August 2016, formed to seek an extension of leaving care arrangements for young people in state care across Australia to age 21.

The campaign created a compelling case for change across Australia, and compiled an overwhelming body of research and evaluations from international jurisdictions that highlighted the significant positive outcomes that resulted from extending supports from the care system from 18 until 21 years.

**24th February 2017** Anglicare WA launched the Home Stretch campaign in Western Australia, bringing together a campaign committee comprising representatives from youth services, researchers, leaving care services, peak bodies and Out of Home Care Service providers. A number of Aboriginal community leaders, along with representatives from Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisations were critical partners that have been involved from the launch of the campaign.

The Home Stretch campaign committee presented a compelling case for change in Western Australia, and provided support and opportunities for the voices of young people with lived experience to be heard by the public and key decision makers.

**November 2018** A decision to Trial an extension of care to 21 was made by Minister for Child Protection Simone McGurk. Minister McGurk became a key sponsor and advocate for building a case and an evidence base for a broader policy reform in Western Australia.

A policy co-design sprint was held over 3 workshops in late 2018 and was instrumental in creating a shared high-level vision for what extensions of support might be needed in Western Australia.

The sprint proposed key elements of a high-level service model, but also identified a series of challenges that would need to be solved for the model to succeed.

**July 2019** Anglicare WA was commissioned by the WA Department of Communities to lead the Trial and continue a design led methodology to further develop and test an effective and contextualised model. The Trial commenced in July 2019 as a 12 month project with a limited scale of 15 young people within the Fremantle District Office of the Department of Child Protection and Family Support.



**November 2019** Additional funding was granted by Lotterywest that allowed for an expansion of the scale of the Trial by an additional 25 places, financial resourcing for an Independent Evaluation, resources to engage Create Foundation to support a Youth Advisory Group and additional funding to undertake a parallel co-design project with an Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisation.

The additional funding through Lotterywest, and an emerging evidence base from the early successes of the Trial provided sufficient evidence for the Department of Communities to extend funding of the Home Stretch WA Trial for a full 3-year period.

**April 2020** Anglicare WA formally partnered with Yorganop to undertake a co-design project to adapt the Home Stretch model to meet the needs of the Aboriginal Community connected to Yorganop. Named 'Nitja Nop Yorga Ngulla Mia', the project includes the provision of the adapted model of support to young people connected to Yorganop over a three-year period. This approach to capacity building and the longer-term goal of supporting Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisations to deliver an extended care offer to Aboriginal young people is consistent with the recommendations published in a recent scoping study of Indigenous Young people in Australia.

**January 2021** State Premier, Mark McGowan made an election commitment to permanently expand the Home Stretch WA Trial to provide the service offer to all young people aging-out of care from 2021.

2019

- Nov '18 - Jan '19 **Policy co-design**
- March **Home Stretch WA Trial announced**
- June **Co-initiation with Fremantle District**
- July **12 month Grant Agreement**
- August **Participants identified service infrastructure in place**
- September **First young person on boarded**
- October **Co-initiation with Yorganop Design Lab 1 "Staying On Agreements"**
- November **Lotterywest Grant awarded Create WA 'Youth Advisory Group'**
- December **15 Participants Engaged 1st 'Staying On' Agreement**

2020

- January **Planning for Lotterywest expansion**
- February **Design Lab 2 "Housing Subsidy"**
- March **Begin Yorganop partnership planning**
- April **Design Sprint "Staying On as Covid Response"**
- June **Design Lab 3 "Smooth Transition" Independent Evaluation Starts**
- July **Expansion of Trial 5 Aboriginal young people in Aboriginal Family Care with Yorganop**
- August **Design Lab 4 "Invest In Me"**
- October **Yorganop – Nitja Nop Yorgan Ngulla Mia co-design begins**
- December **Trial reaches 25 places Expansion to Rockingham Scaling up recommendations**



2021

- January **Nitja Nop Yorgan Ngulla Mia co-design interviews completed WA Labor election commitment to Scale Home Stretch across the system**
- February **35 places allocated**
- March **Design Lab 5 "Transition Coach" Principles and Practice**
- April **Nitja Nop Yorgan Ngulla Mia theming and insights completed**
- May **Design Lab 6 Design Principles Nitja Nop Yorgan Ngulla Mia Independent Evaluation - Early Insights Report Released to Steering Group**
- July **Gallery walk Design led review of prototypes**



## OUR APPROACH TO CO-DESIGN

## Co-Design Process

Co-design refers to the approach and set of methodologies that provide ways to involve people in the design of the services, strategies, environments, policies and processes that impact them.

By commissioning the Home Stretch WA Trial as a co-design project, the Department of Communities has demonstrated a commitment to moving beyond consultation to policy and service co-design.

In the context of the Home Stretch WA Trial, the perspective and agency of young people has been prioritised. Young people are the collaborators with whom the practice, policy and system responses have been developed, tested and evaluated. Their opinions, ideas and experiences have been the unifying force that has brought together the broader perspectives of other stakeholders and allowed for open collaboration and innovation to occur.

The Trial has also prioritised engagement with people who directly support young people such as foster carers, front line child protection and community service organisation workers, practice experts in working with young people and families, Aboriginal community leaders and cultural practice leads.

The Home Stretch WA Trial has drawn heavily on the practice and principles of Human Centred Design, a robust practice framework that has provided a counterbalance to the ambiguity and dynamic nature of co-design projects in human services.

The project has provided an exemplar of the benefits of a commitment to power sharing with the community services sector, youth participation in governance and decision making, and an ongoing dialogue between young people as service users and the future systems that will support them.

All stakeholders, including Departmental representatives have had an opportunity to contribute their perspective, and at the same time learn and adapt their practices and services in order to achieve the best design outcomes.

This flexibility has allowed policy makers and key stakeholders to understand the potential broader impact of changes to the existing service system, the adaptations to the broader service system for young people, and any potential unintended negative consequences that might arise from introducing an extended care offer into the Out-of-Home-Care service system in WA.

**“From the very beginnings of the Home Stretch WA Trial in WA, young people have been shaping and guiding how it should work.**

Darcy Garrett  
YAG Member



A number of core principles have supported an ethical approach to the design of the Home Stretch WA Trial. Participation and involvement in all aspects of the Home Stretch WA Trial was a choice given to young people identified for the Trial. Young people were not disadvantaged by their involvement in terms of access to other services. Decisions to offer opportunities to young people to participate, were made after consultation and guidance by senior staff from the relevant district office of the Department of Child Protection.

Young people were supported to understand information about the Trial, and their rights as a participant before agreeing to participate.

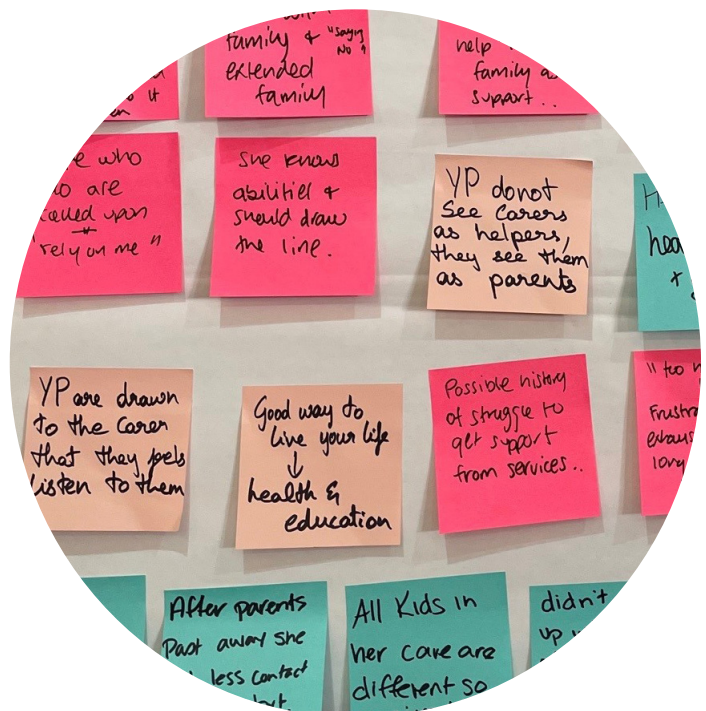
Information sharing and privacy were key considerations, and the sharing of any identifying information between the Home Stretch WA team and the Department of Communities was not assumed and authorised on a case by case basis.

Anglicare WA has a strong commitment to good practice governance, and all of the prototypes used in the Trial were developed after consultation with relevant practice experts employed by Anglicare WA.

Ethical practice is integral to good co-design. A Trauma Informed Approach was used to design and facilitate of co-design activities. In particular the wellbeing of young people participating was considered in the planning of co-design sessions and the support staff present.

Young people who volunteered to be part of media opportunities were provided media training, and support to process and plan their own personal disclosures in a public context.

Create's 'Speak Up' training was offered to all participants in the Youth Advisory Group.



A key feature of the co-design has been the use of a prototyping methodology in the development of the core service elements. The term 'prototyping' refers to the act of turning a conceptual idea into something tangible enough to experience, or at least, respond to meaningfully.

In Industrial Design, or Architecture, this might involve the development of models, of increasing fidelity, using each iteration to gather data and feedback on performance. This same approach can be utilised from stakeholders for human services using comic style storyboards, role plays, and mock ups of intake forms or computer systems.

These early prototypes provide learning to inform and de-risk 'live prototypes' where new methods are used directly with service users in a controlled and support context.

Incorporating a prototyping methodology in the Home Stretch WA Trial provided the necessary structure and flexibility to adapt and incorporate changes to the model that are derived from insights and feedback captured over time from the perspective of young people participating in the Trial.

It also allowed for the development of a degree of modularity in the service model, an important consideration in developing a model that can be later adapted and modified to meet the needs of other regions and cohorts.

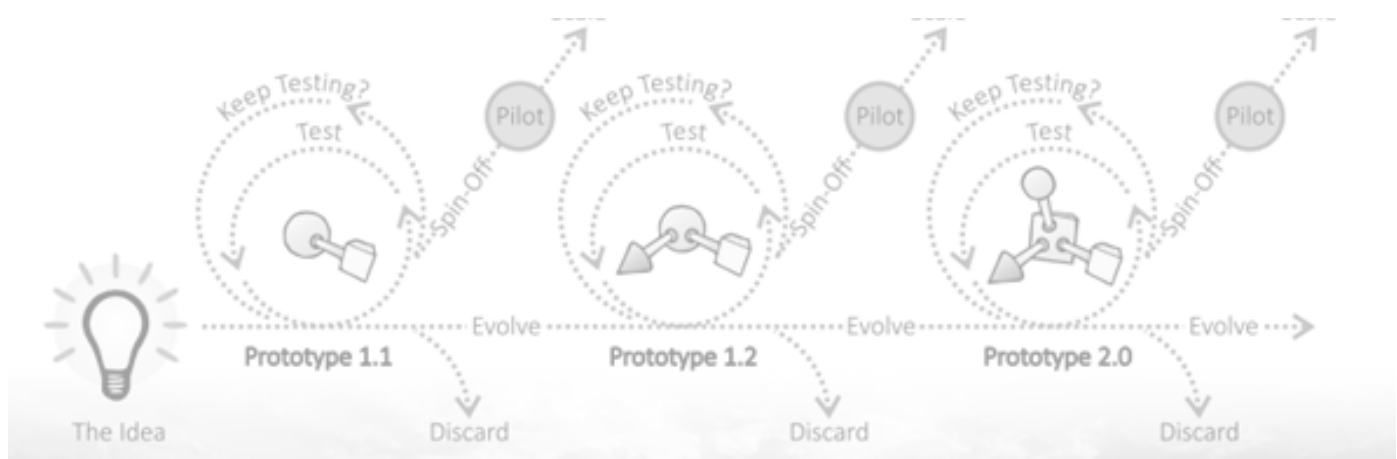
Over the course of the Trial, key elements of the model were scheduled for co-design sprints, comprising of a series of design lab workshops and sessions with the Youth Advisory Group and other key stakeholders.

These design sprints followed a co-design process that incorporated working with young people in the Youth Advisory Group desktop research and interviews with experts to deeply understand the different perspectives, issues and contexts. This feedback and experiences that were then themed into insights and used to generate possible service and policy responses.

These service or policy service response prototypes were then tested with members of the Youth Advisory Group or by participants in the Trial for feedback and input. Final versions endorsed by the Youth Advisory Group were then developed into the prototypes that are being used in the Trial.

In this way, the Trial has undertaken deep co-design work in developing the detailed solutions that constitute the Home Stretch service offer. The prototypes are now being tested in the Trial and their impact measured, with learnings and insights recorded and used to create adaptations and refinements to services.

Young people, foster carers, child protection workers, and other stake holders are then able to continue to guide the ongoing development of practice and policy in an iterative and collaborative way.



### Prototyping Case Study – Youth Advisory Group – Negotiating an Agreement to Stay On in a Stable Foster Placement.

The ability to support young people to stay on with foster carers up to the age 21, and to have this living arrangement both supported and funded was one of the challenges of the Home Stretch WA Trial.

The Youth Advisory Group (YAG) played a critical role in helping to create the structure, content and practice framework for negotiating these Agreements. Using a range of interactive activities, advisory group members were able to identify the key issues and potential problems that might arise for young people who choose to Stay On in a living arrangement.

These ideas were collated and developed into a set of visual cards, to assist young people and carers identify and articulate potential issues of concern. Young people highlighted the importance of maintaining relationships, creating space to explore relationships with biological family members, and also the necessity of having a transition coach to help them to talk about what is important to them.

Foster carers and young people also identified it was an important opportunity to create a safe space to talk about things that were often stigmatising, particularly around the payment of foster carer subsidies and how this was used to support the young person.

A method for facilitating and negotiating Staying On Agreements was also designed in collaboration with the YAG, and foster carers participating in the Trial. The workers involved in the Trial presented a role play demonstration of how Staying On Agreements might be facilitated to young people.

These young people were able to engage with the practice, and provided individual feedback on the proposed process. Through the broader discussion that followed, the Home Stretch team was able to harvest actionable insights, and used the data for the development of a pilot practice framework for Staying On Agreements.

This went beyond mere consultation, and resulted in a number of significant adaptations that arose from the guidance of young people including; refining the roles of staff in the discussion, reordering and restructuring the different stages of negotiating the Staying On Agreement, offering young people an opportunity to complete the Agreement in stages, and revising the Staying On Agreement template that records the final social contract.

The ability to co-design and test the key practice elements of the Home Stretch service offer with YAG prior to implementing them into the Trial, provides an important layer of safety, quality control and protection for young people participating in the Trial.



The Home Stretch WA Trial has focussed on the development of policy that is fit for purpose for an offer of extended care in WA. Our Approach started by asking how might the young person's and the systems objectives align. Policy co-design is an approach that is person-centred and develops design principles that inform and guide the development of practice, policy and systems innovation. This is a prototyping approach which is about 'learning by doing' in structured cycles of discovering, defining, developing and delivering.

### 1. Young Person

The model is built from the experiences and expressed needs of young people. It focuses on their voice, ideas and feedback as a foundation. These insights and learnings are translated into design principles which guide the development of the model.

### 2. Design Principles

Design principles represent the voice and wisdom of young people into the design of system, policy and practice. They incorporate an understanding of context and place. The design principles guide the development and decision making at all levels and help shape the culture, practice and policy so that is built around the needs of young people.

### 3. Practice

Young people and the support system work together to develop practice that will achieve positive outcomes for young people. This encompasses the touch points, processes, pathways and behaviours of people that work alongside young people. These form the core prototypes of the Home Stretch WA Trial (See "Prototyping" Page 9).

Services are modelled using comic style storyboards, role plays, and mock-ups of intake forms or practice interventions. The early prototypes provide learning to inform and develop the 'live prototypes' where new methods are used with service users.

### 4. Policy

The Home Stretch WA Trial provides a platform to build, test and refine policy responses that support good practice that achieves outcomes for young people. The process of policy co-design identifies the impact new policies might have on the underpinning system, and evaluates and informs how to approach future systems reform. The policy co-design process brings young people and government policy makers together.

### 5. System

Young people often perceive systems as faceless or nameless entities in their lives, that can dictate the resources and supports they can access. Young people feel like they have little direct input, decision making or influence in how systems are developed, and the voice of young people can often be minimised or under represented.

Systems are defined and shaped by the agreed purpose or objective that binds them together. Legislation and policy articulate and scaffold the agreed purpose and object.

By following the policy co-design process, young people's needs are intrinsically embedded into the purpose and objective of the system.

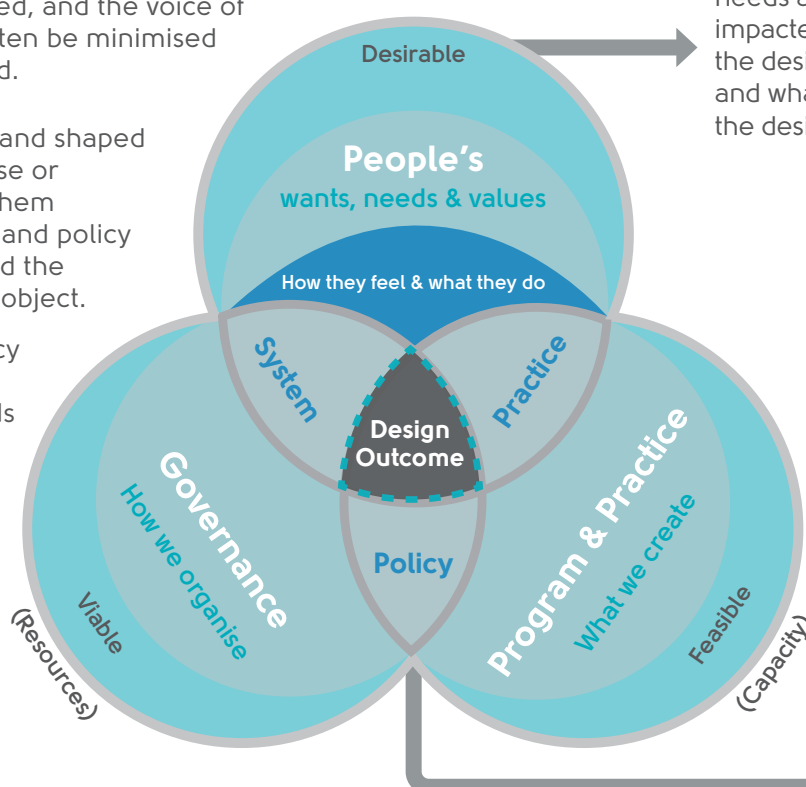
### 6. Desirable

The process preferences the wants, needs and values of the people impacted by the service. It brings to the design process how people feel and what they do currently and how the design outcome supports them.

### 7. Design outcome

There is always a designed outcome, when we do nothing it will create an outcome.

Knowing they occur accidentally or deliberately raises awareness to be mindful of what we do (practice) and how we govern (policy and system).





The Home Stretch WA Trial has emphasised a collaborative approach to co-design.

### Youth Advisory Group (YAG)

Young people membership	10
Youth Advisory Group Meetings	16
Home Stretch staff recruitment interviews with YAG young people	20
Presentations given by YAG members	10

**TOTAL**  
56

### Co-design Activities

Home Stretch WA Trial Team design lab sessions (3-5 hrs)	90+
Implementation Working Group meetings (1hr)	40+
Policy Working Group meetings (1hr)	30+
Operations Working Group (1hr) Front Line Staff	30+
Nitja Nop Yorga Ngulla Mia co-design and planning sessions with Yorganop (1 -2 hours)	20+
Co-design sprints (4-6 wk cycles of rapid prototyping and development)	5
Journal articles and research papers reviewed	100+

**TOTAL**  
315+

### Young People Individually Consulted or Contributed to Co-design

Youth Advisory Group Members	10
Young People Completed Life Journey Mapping	16
Young Aboriginal people through Danjoo Darbalung	35
Young Aboriginal people through Yorganop	6
Young People Participating in the Trial	37

**TOTAL**  
104

### Carers interviewed & consulted for co-design

General foster carers through Department of Communities - Fremantle District Office	6
Aboriginal family carers through Nitja Yorga Ngulla Mia	5
Foster carers in the Home Stretch WA Trial (including 7 Aboriginal carers)	13
Foster Carer Association Conference 2020 survey responses	10

**Occasions Home Stretch Team co-located in Fremantle District Office (fortnightly for 3-4 hours)** 30+

**TOTAL**  
64+

### Individual Expert Interviews with Leading Practitioners and Academics in the Following Areas

- |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Family Finding</li> <li>• Crisis Care - After Hours Support for Young people</li> <li>• Evaluation and Review of Services for Young people (Monash, Curtin, UWA, Department of Communities)</li> <li>• Housing Subsidy Models</li> <li>• Aboriginal Family Finding - Who's My Mob</li> <li>- Kinship Connections</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Follow the Dream Programs for Young Aboriginal People</li> <li>- Department of Education</li> <li>• Natural Networks and Social Capital for Young people (Monash, Change Collective - Canada)</li> <li>• Staying Put (United Kingdom )</li> <li>• Oranga Tamariki - Transition Support Service (New Zealand)</li> </ul> |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|

## NITJA NOP YORGA NGULLA MIA

**The name given to the partnership between Anglicare WA and Yorganop is Nitja Nop Yorga Ngulla Mia (Our Boys and Girls are Staying Home).**

The Nitja Nop Yorga Ngulla Mia project developed to undertake a culturally safe co-design process and discover the needs of Aboriginal young people, their families and community. The process has been led by Yorganop and supported by Anglicare WA.

The original design process prioritised young people's voices in the development of a prototype model of enhanced support, the model has been further developed and tested within the Trial.

In acknowledgement of the gap in representing the needs and aspirations of Aboriginal young people transitioning from out-of-home care, additional

funding was sought from Lottery West to fund an Aboriginal co-design process to inform the Home Stretch WA Trial.

The partnership and co-design insights have significantly informed and adapted the development of the prototypes and practices implemented in the Trial.

The partnership focused on building an understanding of how the Home Stretch offer of extended care should be adapted to meet the needs of Aboriginal young people, their families and community.

This was achieved through a broad range of co-design activities with Aboriginal young people, families, practice experts and carers, as well as the inclusion of 6 young people and their family carers as participants in the Home Stretch WA Trial.

**"We recognise between 18-21 years old is an exceptionally vulnerable age. It's essential that they have the support and connections they need to successfully transition to independence, when they've been living in the care system."**

Yorganop CEO Dawn Wallam

### KEY POINTS

- The partnership was endorsed by the leaders of both organisations and was grounded in a firm commitment to collaboration, and was appropriately resourced.
- We allowed time, space and silence to hold the same level of importance as progressing and meeting outcomes.
- There was a risk to the reputation for both organisations; this was Yorganop's first partnership in its 30-year history.
- We acknowledged and accepted the reality that the partnership may not work if we did not have the right people working together.
- The partnership was genuine and not a token activity for cultural endorsement.
- It was built from a mutual understanding of the importance of lifting the voice of Aboriginal young people and their community.
- The organisations came to the table as equals and acknowledged their gaps in knowledge.
- We walked alongside each other; finding our way and discovering how to work together.
- The partnership created value, skills development and knowledge sharing for both organisations; it was a two-way exchange.
- Through the partnership we created design principles that informed the ongoing development of the Trial.
- Genuine collaboration around service delivery has resulted in the development of practice approaches that are culturally competent and informed by the evidence underpinning the Home Stretch model.
- We acknowledge together that there is not a single view of Aboriginal culture and community, and our work together provides an example of an approach to contextualising services to local Aboriginal communities. The expansion of Home Stretch must incorporate a similar approach to ensure integrity to the principles developed through our partnership.
- It was recognised that the co-design was informed by perspectives of primarily Noongar young people, community members, and that wider application of the co-design outcomes will need to be contextualised to other culturally and linguistically diverse people.

## NITJA NOP YORGA NGULLA MIA – SYSTEM DESIGN PRINCIPLES

These are the principles that have been developed through our co-design journey with Aboriginal Young People, their families and community.

Insights from interviews and co-design activities we undertook themed by Aboriginal practice experts from Yorganop and the Home Stretch Team, and created into Design Principle that provide guidance for the system scaling of Home Stretch to ensure it meets the needs of Aboriginal families and young people.

The young person is the focus of the coaching relationship.

Home Stretch must have the capacity to support young people to heal and connect when they are ready. (repair loss and reduce inter-generational trauma)

Young Aboriginal people and families must have the choice to receive Home Stretch support through an Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisation.

Aboriginal organisations need to lead and deliver the Home Stretch service. They are the experts, and we must work alongside them to deliver a culturally safe service.

Home Stretch should support young people to know and/or connect with their family when they are ready and want to. (This is an important connection to culture - know your mob to know your place/culture)

Organisations who deliver Home Stretch must use a trauma-informed approach, that addresses the impact of racism and unconscious bias in practice.

Home Stretch recognises that Aboriginal and Culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) young people need to navigate between two worlds.

Home Stretch must have the capacity to support young people to continue to build cultural knowledge and learning.

The Home Stretch offer must be a choice, flexible and individualised to meet young people where they are at.

The Home Stretch offer should respect and strengthen existing relationships between young people and their carer and community.

Home Stretch must respect and support young people's roles within family and community. They are equally helpers as requiring help.

**“Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children make up almost 57% of the children in out-of-home care in WA, the over representation can only be addressed through a combined effort by all. Aboriginal organisations need to lead this work. They are the experts and we must work alongside them to deliver culturally appropriate solutions to help keep children and young people safe at home.”**

Child Protection Minister Simone McGurk 2021  
*At the Launch of Aboriginal Family Led Decision Making Pilot*

Investing, supporting and allowing self-determination and management of services by Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisation's (ACCO's) is critical for Aboriginal young people in care, their families and their communities.

The Out of Home Care (OOHC) service landscape in WA is a reflection of the complexity of the geography and challenges of compliance/contracting inherent to OOHC service provision. Yorganop is the only ACCO contracted to work in OOHC in WA. In contrast, there are 9 ACCO OOHC services providers in Victoria.

Across WA, there are no ACCOs currently contracted to deliver post-care or leaving care services. There are sub-contracting arrangements, but they are not and will never be equivalent to investing, supporting, allowing self-determination and the management of services by ACCOs.

Leading academics in OOHC asked First Nations service providers what currently exists and works for Aboriginal young people.

The study recommended the following:

- Policy Recommendation Three - ACCOs across Australia receive adequate funding to provide leaving care services to all Indigenous young people, proportionate to the number in their State/Territory.
- Policy Recommendation Nine - Each State and Territory allocate proportionate funding to ACCOs to support Indigenous children's connection to family and community whilst in OOHC and provide a foundation for reunification when they leave care, with the aim of preventing Indigenous young people leaving care without family and community support.

**Work together without agenda, declare our biases, be open, learn together and practice reciprocity.**

**Go slow, take the time to understand each other and build a relationship of respect and trust.**



Across Australia, the Home Stretch campaign is driven by the voices of young people. In particular, their experience of 'aging out' of the state care system at 18 and being forced, with significantly less resources, into independence much younger than their contemporaries.

The Home Stretch WA Trial continues this ethos, placing young people at the centre with the intent of co-creating services and system adaptations needed to extend and enhance supports from 18 to the age of 21 in the WA context.

The Youth Advisory Group (YAG) has been a critical part of the Trial and provides an ongoing connection with young people with lived experience of leaving care.

This connection ensured the voice and experiences of young people continue to remain at the centre of the design and development of the service model.

The YAG is one way young people collectively held the Home Stretch WA Trial team and other decision makers accountable, empowering young people as a group by equipping them with the tools of advocacy and collaboration.

**"The VOICE of Young People with a lived experience of leaving care has had a powerful impact on the design of Home Stretch in WA"**

Mark Glasson 2021 CEO  
Anglicare WA

The Youth Advisory Group:

- Commenced in November 2019 through the support of Lotterywest
- Led by a CREATE Foundation staff member and co-facilitated by the Home Stretch team
- A central reference point and consultative body for the development and design of the Trial's key elements
- Holds a membership and has representation at the Trial Steering Group to provide input at all levels of governance and decision making.
- In a reciprocal arrangement, the YAG invites a member of the Steering Group to attend part of its meeting, allowing young people to understand and engage with high-level decision makers in a different context.

The YAG has a core membership of six young people with lived experience of leaving care, and is regularly attended by Trial participants.

This allows for feedback from participants to be discussed and explored amongst their peers.

Young people living with disabilities, experiences of residential group homes and foster care, young Aboriginal people and young parents are all represented, providing a broad representation of diverse needs and perspectives.

All Trial participants are welcomed to attend the YAG, and are regularly supported by their Transition Coach to do so.

CREATE WA's involvement supporting the YAG has allowed members to maintain a degree of independence from the Home Stretch team.



We used the 'Most Significant Change' to understand people's personal experiences of change throughout the Trial.

This approach supports personal story telling to understand the changes that have occurred for

young people and carers and deciding which of these is the most significant – and why.

As part of the evaluation of the Home Stretch WA Trial, and to ensure the voice of participants shape the broader program, we ask young people and carers every 3 months 'What's the biggest change you've noticed as a result of Home Stretch?'.

These comments shed light on core components of the Trial and helped shape the way forward.



### What young people say about the Youth Advisory Group

For me having a voice and seeing the change has been a gift, I feel like I am helping the next generation to have a way better life than me.

Home Stretch WA Trial, young people have been shaping and guiding how it should work. Many young people leaving state care often have a feeling of not being heard, or not having had much say in the kinds of supports they were offered or the systems they had to navigate.

I now have a platform to steer things towards improvement. That's really cool.

Very profound, being able to turn my experiences into something. Yes there are things wrong, but there are so many ways we can improve on them by sharing and communicating.

## Home Stretch Core Elements



## Home Stretch WA Trial

### A Road Map for Reform

The Home Stretch WA Trial has aimed to work with young people, carers, families and communities to develop an enhanced support system for young people who have been in out-of-home care.

Home Stretch provides young people and foster carers with extended support and resources from 18-21 years of age.

## HOME STRETCH CORE ELEMENTS

### Safety Net

The right to a visible and viable, secure safety net that ensures access to housing, foster care, health education and life skills

### Transition Support

Flexible, one-to-one support focused on coaching towards interdependence

### Support Circles

Supporting a young person to establish an enduring network of personal, family and community connections

### Prototypes

Staying On Agreements  
Housing Subsidy  
Invest In Me Funding

Smooth Transition  
Transition Coach

Support Circle  
Nitja Nop Yorga Ngulla Mia

## A Diverse Range of Experiences

Young people leaving state care have a diverse range of experiences and support needs. The initial co-design identified a number of key cohorts who had significantly different support needs. Their inclusion in the trial has allowed for detailed co-design work that is inclusive and adapted to meet their specific needs.

Participants in the trial were identified by the Home Stretch Implementation Working group, and given an informed choice to participate in the trial or receive post-care services from the existing system.

The time, scale and geographic limitations presented a significant challenge to recruitment for the initial group of 15 young people in 2019. This resulted in shared care of 5 young people already connected with a Leaving Care Service but who chose to participate in the Trial.

## Cohort Representation of Young People Participated in Trial

\*A young person may represent more than 1 cohort

Cohort 1 - Young People Living in General Foster care or a family care arrangement	13
Cohort 2 - Young people with significant experiences of group homes, residential care, and/or homelessness services.	17
Cohort 3 - Aboriginal people	14
Cohort 4 - Young parents	5
Cohort 5 - Young People Transitioning to NDIS Care (Initially excluded, but identified as an important cohort who will significantly benefit from Home Stretch supports)	3 (limited)
Cohort 6 - Young People with particularly complex support needs (Transitional High Needs/Specialised Foster Care were not included in the trial due to the complexity of funding arrangements for these young people)	0 (excluded)

## Resilience and Complexity

Research into experiences of care leavers suggests that three main groups of young people can be identified across studies; young people who are “moving on”, young people who are “survivors”, and young people who are “strugglers”. Mike Stein et al. (2004, 2005, 2006, 2008)

The Home Stretch WA Trial team has applied this framework to balance the support needs of young people with the capacity of each Transition Coach.

Lower Support Needs (Moving On)	10
Moderate Support Needs (Survivors)	19
Higher Support Needs (Strugglers)	8



## Engagement Data Summary [June 2021]

Total # Funded Trial Places	35
Total # Young People Selected to Participate	47
# Young People who Never Engaged (beyond initial referral)	8
Young People who 'Opted Out' or disengaged from support	2
Young People who have 'Aged Out' at 21	3
Current Active Participants [June 2021]	32
New Participants Currently Onboarding [July 2021]	2
<b>Total # Participants in Trial [July 2021]</b>	<b>37</b>

### Housing Status At Time Of Onboarding

#### Trial Participants

Primary Homelessness [Rough Sleeping]	2
Secondary Homelessness [Couch Surfing]	4
Supported or Transitional Housing	1
Detention [Juvenile or Adult]	3
Shared Housing	4
Biological Family [Self selected]	2
Residential Care	0
Foster Care	16
Independent Housing [Nominated on lease]	5
<b>Total</b>	<b>37</b>

### Breakdown By District

#### Active Participants

Fremantle	20
Rockingham	6
Kwinana	3
Midland	1
Cannington	1
Mirrabooka	1
<b>Total</b>	<b>32</b>

### Breakdown By Age

#### Trial Participant at time of Onboarding

17 and 6 months	14
18	13
19	9
20	2
<b>Total</b>	<b>37</b>

### Two Housing Allowances Were Established Over The Trial

Payment to Support a Student Housing Placement	1
Payment to Support a Living Arrangement with Sibling [non foster care]	1
Housing Allowance Applications in progress	4

The impact of Covid [payments and rental freeze] prevented the Trial from testing the Housing Allowance model until March 2021

### Current Active Participants [June 2021]

Fremantle Trial [Communities funded]	13
Yorganop Trial [Lotteries funded]	6
Expansion Trial [Lotteries funded]	13
<b>Total active participants</b>	<b>32</b>

### Staying On Agreements

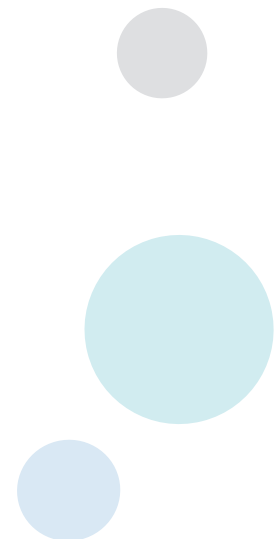
Current Staying On Agreement and Subsidy payment in place	10
Staying On Agreement concluded	3
Staying On Agreements in progress	3

### 16 Carers Participated In The Trial

General Foster Carers - Relative	6
General Foster Carers - Non Relative	10
Foster Carers Supported by a CSO	6
Aboriginal Carers - 4 Yorganop , 2 Dept.	6

# HOME STRETCH WA TRIAL PROTOTYPES

<b>Housing Allowance</b>	Pg 23
<b>Invest In Me Funding</b>	Pg 27
<b>Staying On</b>	Pg 33
<b>Smooth Transition</b>	Pg 38
<b>Tansition Coach</b>	Pg 43
<b>Support Circles</b>	Pg 48



The Housing Allowance supports young people to find and maintain a broader range of housing options.

Young people are supported by their Coach to develop a housing pathway plan and apply for funding to support a safe, stable and affordable housing option.

The allowance supports shared housing, student housing, or can be used to negotiate tenure to live with people in their Support Circle who were not foster carers but can provide an appropriate housing option. It does not duplicate or replace existing financial supports around housing, nor can it be used to further subsidise homelessness services or public housing.

The allowance is negotiated individually, and the Coach works to develop the young person's skills and knowledge about housing through the application and review process, as well as helping them make informed choices about the safety and stability of their housing options.



## WHY IS IT IMPORTANT?

### Young People Need Support To Access And Maintain Housing

Access to stable and safe housing is a fundamental human right; a critical foundation for young people to build a positive future. Young people who have self selected living arrangements, leaving residential care, or moving on from foster care must have access to additional support and resources to find safe and stable housing.

### Housing For Young People In Private Rental Is Unaffordable And Often Unobtainable

The Rental Affordability Snapshot 2021 found that there were 0 properties in WA affordable for young people living on Youth Allowance. While shared housing and living with extended family are common pathways for young people living independently for the first time, these are often supported and/or subsidised by family.

The current federal subsidies are not able to support young people in shared housing, or sufficiently assist them to afford student housing.

### It Maintains And Grows Connection To Community

Young people should be supported to find and secure housing options that maintain or strengthen their support circles, connection to community and allow them to continue education and employment.

The current youth homelessness system requires young people to relocate away from their networks as they cycle through a stepped system of care.

### Creates A New Mechanism To Expand Choice And Housing Options

There is no current equivalent to the Housing Allowance in WA, even for young people under 18. The Supported Rental Pathway Pilot is focused on establishing longer term tenancies in private rentals, and does not provide support to more flexible options. The NSW Youth Rent Choice Program, and the Victorian Accommodation Allowance have both informed the development of the prototype.

## WHAT HAS BEEN DEVELOPED & TESTED?

### Housing Allowance

#### Housing Allowance

A flexible support package for young people to develop the skills, knowledge and experience of finding and securing a variety of housing options. Housing options are linked to longer term goals in different life domains, and a housing pathway plan and budget must be developed through the process.

The Housing Allowance application pack has been created to be accessible, but also includes sufficient checks and balances to prevent misuse.

It includes tools for young people to make decisions about the safety, affordability and stability of housing options.

#### Practice Tools and Resources

- ♥ Housing Allowance Model Framework
- ♥ Housing Allowance Fact Sheet
- ♥ Housing Allowance Application Form
- ♥ Safe & Stable Housing Discussion Guide
- ♥ Housing Pathway Planner
- ♥ Housing Budget Planner
- ♥ Housing Allowance Payment Contract
- ♥ Housing Allowance Practice Principles



**"I'd been kicked out of every crisis accommodation and housing program. The biggest thing that Home Stretch has helped me with is finding a home for me and my son."**

Young Person

## WHAT HAVE WE LEARNED?

#### Safe and Stable Housing Must Be Prioritised

The provision of financial and practical supports around housing are a critical priority for Home Stretch services. The lack of affordable housing options for young people in WA, and a Homelessness system that fails to provide sufficient options for young people with more complex support needs requires further action at a system level. Programs like LIFT [Indigo Junction] and the Housing First models provide a clear example of what is required, and would need to be integrated into Home Stretch services to effectively support young people.

#### The Allowance Must Be Conditional On Engaging In Support, But Access To Support Must Be Unconditional

Young people need to be positively engaged in support for the Coach to reliably support and complete a Housing Allowance application. The Transition Coach provides ongoing support and assistance should issues emerge in the living arrangement, and the young person needs or chooses to move on. The allowance is accessible to the young person, not fixed to the property. This is consistent with the Housing First approach, and an important opportunity to test an adaptation of the housing and homelessness system towards a more effective response.



## WHAT HAVE WE LEARNED?

## Housing Allowance

### A Focus On Developing Support Circles Open Up Opportunities For Brokering Supported Housing Options

The lack of housing options means Transition Coaches need to be creative in supporting young people to explore a broader range of options. While yet to be fully tested, there are some early indications that young people might be able to explore reconnecting with historic care arrangements or to undertake family finding to build their support circles. A possible outcome of reconnecting with supports is opportunities for brokering stable and supported living arrangements.

Many young people return to live with their biological family, even before they reach 18.

Further co-design with biological families is needed to understand how to support these arrangements.

### Staying On And Housing Allowance Share Similar Principles And Practice Approaches

The Staying On Agreement tools support living arrangements to work in a shared housing option with supportive friends, family or other members of their support circle.

The tools are useful where the young person needs to abide by set expectations or conditions of living in the arrangement, or the young person needs assistance to advocate their needs or rights.

### Empowering Young People With The Right To Make Choices Allows For Failure And Learning But Creates A Difficult Tension

While young people are able to make informed choices about their living arrangements, those who have experienced trauma and domestic violence can find it difficult to make accurate risk assessments posed by certain situations and living arrangements.

Transition Coaches work in a transparent way to ensure young people make informed choices, and have the dignity of managing their own risk, but there are ethical issues with financially supporting young people to live in housing options that place them at risk.

## WHAT DOES THE DATA SAY?

### TWO HOUSING ALLOWANCES HAVE BEEN ESTABLISHED OVER THE TRIAL

Payment to Support a Student Housing Placement	1
Payment to Support a Living Arrangement with Sibling [non foster care]	1
Housing Allowance Applications in progress	4

The impact of Covid [payments and rental freeze] prevented the Trial from testing the Housing Allowance model until March 2021

### PRACTICE

**Further testing of the model in the Trial** - COVID delays meant the model is yet to be fully tested and operationalised in the Home Stretch WA Trial. We recommended continued testing to collect evidence with a focus on young people transitioning out of residential care from 15.

### **Collaboration and sharing practice and learnings with Victorian Accommodation Allowance model**

- The Victorian implementation of Home Stretch has occurred on a larger scale, and there are opportunities to learn from their implementation and scaling of the Accommodation Allowance.

### POLICY

**Establish a mechanism for the payment of Housing Allowances** as a Department of Communities Subsidy Payment - Currently, the only mechanism is through brokerage payment protocols administered by Anglicare WA. The development and testing of a process for a Housing Allowance payment through the Dept of Communities should be explored and tested. Some Child Protection workers have found ways to provide ongoing funding for housing by subsidising other living costs on an ongoing basis. The process must be flexible and not stigmatising for young people.

**Housing a Priority Focus Area in the Rapid Response Agreement Framework** - The framework needs to contain clear policy direction around priority access to social and public housing options for young people, and this information provided to young people in a simple to read guide.

### **Agreement between State and Federal governments around impact on Centrelink Payments** -

There are individually negotiated exemptions for subsidised housing.  
At a larger scale, an agreement must be reached to ensure young people do not have their income support payments affected by a Housing Allowance.

### SYSTEM

#### **Alignment with Housing Choices, Supported Rental Pathways and other housing programs**

- While the two models are distinct, there is an opportunity to understand the intersection, and whether priority access may be brokered for young people aged 16-21. The additional supports and resources available through Transition Coaches provide the critical supports needed to ensure young people can sustain these options.

#### **Exploring feasibility and viability of Housing Allowance to support residential care extensions**

- In other jurisdictions, Staying Near or Staying Close are options for young people to move into independent housing close to residential care facilities. This allows them to continue to access supports and maintain relationships with residential care staff. Indigo Junction, St John of God and Anglicare WA have developed similar models in their homelessness services.

The 'right' to access a visible and secure financial safety net to attain resources that support a young person towards their aspirations and goals, as well as relief in times of crisis.

Invest In Me Funding provides young people with enhanced access to financial resources as part of supporting their transition from 18–21. The financial resource is administrated by the Home Stretch Team who have direct access and delegated authority to approve spending to support young people.

Young people who are supported by the Home Stretch WA Trial are currently allocated \$7,000 per annum towards their individual Invest In Me budget.

Young people are redirected to access financial support through the Home Stretch WA Trial, rather than returning to a District Office for financial support.

"Being supported to get into TAFE and get a smartrider was good, I couldn't afford it so it would've stopped me going. My Coach is easy to get in touch with too. I get frustrated when other workers don't pick up or wait days to get back to me"

Young Person

## WHY IS IT IMPORTANT?

### The Current Discretionary System Fails To Provide A Consistent Safety Net For Young People

One of the main challenges raised by young people in the co-design activities was consistent and reliable access to financial support and resources from the Department. District Offices are not resourced to provide the necessary after care support to assist with financial requests.

Decisions are often made in a reactive and subjective way, and can largely depend on how well known the young person is in the office they visit. There is no current resourcing in most District Offices to provide the necessary support to respond to young people's requests.

### Legislation And The Case Practice Manual Provide Flexibility But Lack Clarity

There is a need for a more intentional approach in supporting young people, one that provides scaffolding for workers to make more informed decisions about the nature and level of support they provide each young person.

Across districts there are a variety of approaches to making decisions about funding requests, and there are consistent practices and approaches upheld by some teams, but these are largely tacit knowledge. Assistant District Directors hold significant influence in deciding how leaving care funding is allocated.

### The system can sometimes reinforce dependence over interdependence

The inconsistent approach to provision of leaving care funds has resulted in a range of different strategies and behaviours employed by young people and support workers. Many young people and support workers go 'district shopping', support workers take over advocacy based on the assumption that young people won't be successful.

There are a range of values and attitudes regarding access to leaving care funds which further reinforces dependence and learned helplessness. This includes teaching young people to 'get everything they can out of the Department', or the inclusion of a broad range of costs in a 'Leaving Care Plan' to ensure that young people have the option for financial support.

These approaches are in conflict with a broader aim of building young people's interdependence beyond the specialist Child Protection system resources.

The current system can be a barrier for young people building self-reliance and engagement with mainstream services.

## WHAT HAS BEEN DEVELOPED & TESTED?

- Invest In Me Practice Guidelines and reference tools to govern the use of funding, and support Coaches to make consistent decisions.
- Practice principles that were defined in the co-design and have been further developed and refined over the Trial.
- Bulk application processes to assist the digital and physical forms and processes to enable applications.

### Practice Tools and Resources

- Practice Guidelines
- Young Person Decision Making Tool
- Coach Decision Making Tool

## Invest In Me Funding



Some things should “just be paid for” Education, Health and Mental Health”.  
Young Person Feedback Home Stretch WA Trial Program Data

## WHAT HAVE WE LEARNED?

### ‘Chipping In’ And Contributing To Costs – An Important But Challenging Principle To Implement

In order to access funding and support through the Invest In Me prototype, young people are encouraged to make a personal contribution towards the payment of expenses they seek funding for. These contributions are individually negotiated and are not always financial, young people having the capacity to contribute through other means or actions consistent with achieving their goals. This approach is in contrast to the experiences of many young people from the Youth Advisory Group who reported they are usually supported with the full payment of costs towards expenses, or the rejection of their request for funding. This all or nothing approach is not consistent with the experiences of young people outside of the care system.

### Scaffolding Towards Financial Independence And Self-Reliance

While there is a need for better access to financial support for young people as they transition to independence, the approach to providing support must also focus on building their capacity, skills and knowledge when they seek financial assistance. This requires the dedicated time of a skilled worker with a clear, consistent framework for funding and an administrative process that allows for rapid responses to funding requests.

### The Majority Of Expenses Relate To Education Costs

An effective Rapid Response Framework could significantly reduce the financial burden on the Department of Communities for post care discretionary funding and access to support. The largest costs incurred by Invest in Me throughout the Trial were for education and training to provide pathways to employment. This was common across most young people in the Trial.

Financial Support needs to include pathways to support young people to understand, consolidate and manage their debt.

For a number of young people in the Home Stretch WA Trial, the burden of financial debt incurred through impulsive decisions made when they were younger.

The debt was a significant source of ongoing stress and a barrier to moving forward in their lives. This is evident in the cohort of young people who engaged with Home Stretch at the age of 19 or older, where there had been limited access to support to deal with financial problems after they left care.

**COVID had a significant impact on young people's need for financial support. The increase in the rate of Youth Allowance payments significantly reduced the amount of financial support young people sought from their Transition Coach through the Invest In Me funding.**

Home Stretch WA Trial Program Data  
Sept 2019 – June 2021

### "INVEST IN ME" FUNDING - TOTAL SPENDING



"The coach helping with support around clearing a pay-day loan "got rid a lot of stress when everything else was going to shit" and support and encouragement in following up other loan payments "also helped me get on top of things for the first time in years."

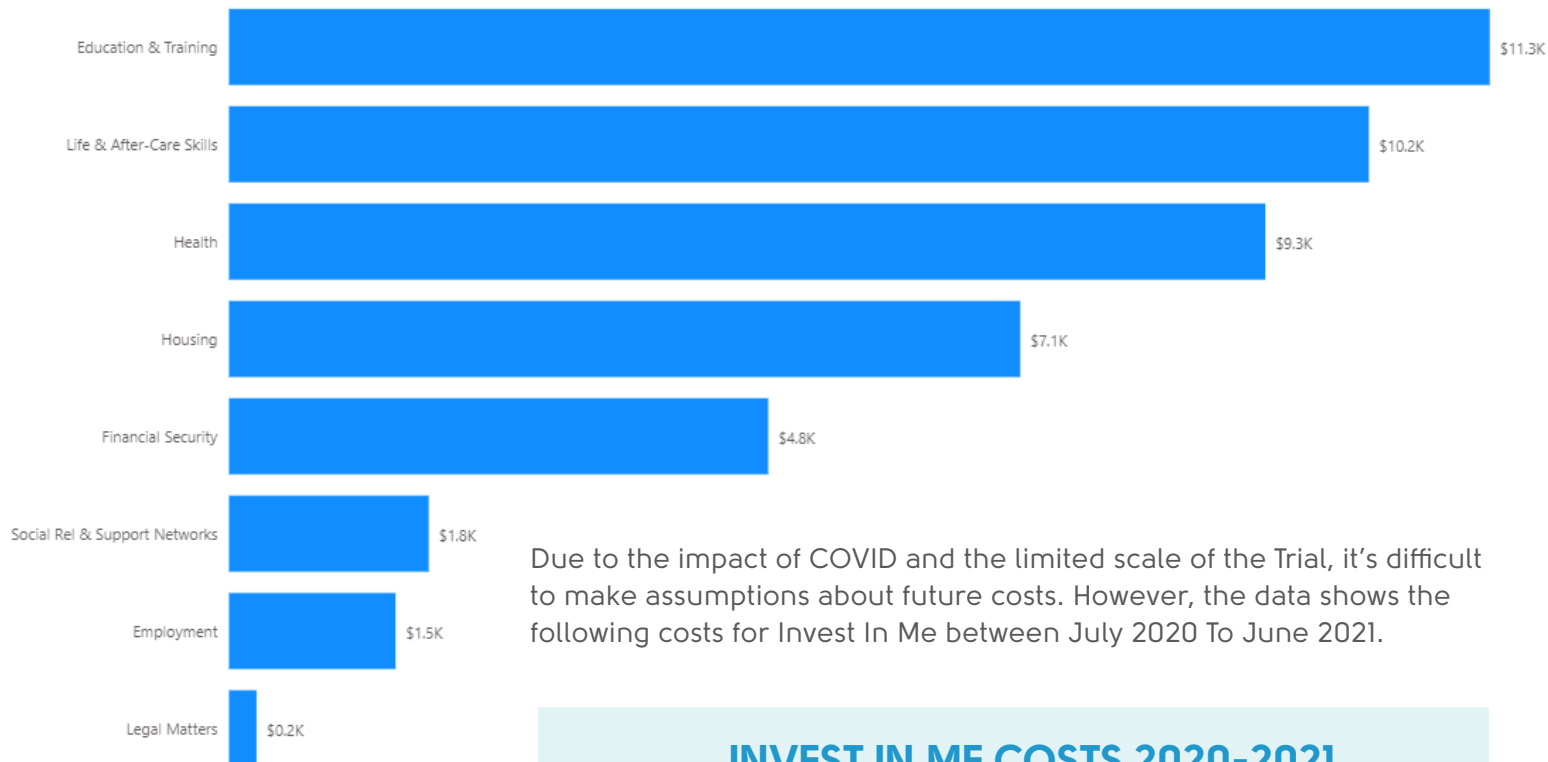
Young Person

**Aspirational Education & Training, and Emergency Housing costs were the most expensive individual items. Education & Training and Life & After Care Skills were the most significant costs incurred across the whole Trial.**

Home Stretch Program Data  
Sept 2019 – June 2021



The Home Stretch Program Data from September 2019 to June 2021 shows Aspirational Education & Training, and Emergency Housing costs were the most expensive individual items. Education & Training and Life & After Care Skills were the most significant costs incurred across the whole Trial.



Due to the impact of COVID and the limited scale of the Trial, it's difficult to make assumptions about future costs. However, the data shows the following costs for Invest In Me between July 2020 To June 2021.

INVEST IN ME COSTS 2020-2021	
AVERAGE cost per person	\$1194 per Year
MEDIAN cost per person	\$994 per Year
HIGHEST cost per person	\$5845 per Year

Home Stretch Program Data

One young person was finding Home Stretch's approach to financial support challenging; they just wanted payments to be made without having to 'chip in' towards costs. The young person's frustration and feelings were validated by the Coach, but they continued to support the young person in a consistent and persistent manner.

After working together for 4 months, they contacted their Coach with a plan for studying and worked out what they could contribute from their own income towards costs, asking for Home Stretch to 'chip in' the rest.

### PRACTICE

Further refinement and development of the Invest In Me Practice Framework as part of scaling Home Stretch - Need for training and practice guidelines for services providing Home Stretch Offer.

Review the Invest in Me principles and practice developed as a reference for practice guidelines for Leaving Care Teams and others making decisions about funding for young people from the age of 15

We need to consider how to incorporate financial planning as part of supports provided throughout the leaving care pathway from 15 years

Development of youth friendly resources that describe and define how decisions are made about funding, and the pathway to escalate or challenge decisions

Online and digital portals for young people to make requests for funding - Incorporating a structure to build skills and capacity through the process.

### POLICY

Improvements to data tracking for Leaving Care Fund usage by Child Protection districts.

Development of policy to support consistent practice around decision making in the use of leaving care funding, particularly in regards to needs identified in the Leaving Care Plan.

This is increasingly important with the current amendments suggested for the Children and Communities Act 2004.

### SYSTEM

Delegated authority for use of brokerage funds to Home Stretch service providers - An explicit framework is required for decision making in contracts and a recognition of the administrative burden.

Resourcing of an appropriate Leaving Care Team function in all Child Protection districts to manage funding requests after 18.

An online portal for young people to update their details with Child Protection & Family Services (CPFS).

Undertake a co-design and reform of how leaving care funding is accessed in the system post 21 - Development of an accessible system and transparent process which builds interdependence and self-reliance.

## INVESTING IN MARTIN

Martin\* has been participating in the Home Stretch WA Trial for the past year engaging regularly with his Transition Coach. He left care at 18 and returned to his biological family. He would like to live independently but knows that living off a benefit and maintaining a private rental would not be possible.

Martin sought work by connecting to a job network provider but felt unsupported and unsure of the kind of work he would like to do.

With his Transition Coach, Martin looked at a range of employment options which played to his strengths and preferences: working as part of a team, being outdoors, and working with vehicles.

A job in traffic management peaked his interest and he asked Home Stretch to support the payment for a training course that his employment provider could not fund.

By completing a budget, Martin found he did not have the available funds to contribute on this occasion. He looked at a range of training providers to work out which would best suit him as far as course content and location, speaking to the trainers directly and feeding back information to his Coach.

Martin has learning difficulties and found long periods of being in a classroom environment challenging. His Coach discussed the challenges he may face completing a course, which had prevented his completion in the past.

Based on Martin's contribution to researching options and making a travel plan, his Invest in Me funding was approved. Home Stretch covered the costs of the course with Martin's Coach maintaining contact to hear how it was going and provide encouragement. He valued the support and coaching, knowing his Coach was working towards his long-term goals with him.

***'It's easier to get support and coaching from Home Stretch, when you call DCP (Department of Communities) you never know who will answer.'***



**"Invest In Me 'works better because I have a relationship with my Coach, I know him and he knows me so when I call I know he'll answer."**

**Martin successfully completed the course and celebrated the achievement with his Coach. They began the next step looking for work: updating his resume, writing cover letters and contacting a range of employers and labour hire agencies.**

The job network provider was advised of the traffic management course completion and therefore had a clearer picture of how to support him.

**After several weeks, Martin was able to get a week of casual labour work from an agency he had independently contacted, and obtained ongoing traffic management work through the job network provider.**

Martin recently made another Invest in Me funding request to his Coach for newly prescribed glasses and made a significant contribution to the cost of them due to his increased income.

\* Names and details have been changed to protect privacy.

Invest In Me gives young people the 'right to a visible and secure financial safety net' to access resources to support them towards their aspirations and goals, as well as relief in times of crisis.

Young people are encouraged to make personal contributions, they are individually negotiated and not always financial, they can contribute by other means consistent with achieving their goals.

Under the Home Stretch WA Trial, young people and carers have the option to continue their stable living arrangements until the young person turns 21.

There is a continuation of payments and support to foster and family carers and an expectation that the young person contribute to their living expenses from their independent income (Centrelink, employment etc.).

As part of their support and advocacy role, Home Stretch WA Transition Coaches assist young people to develop and maintain Agreements with their foster or family carers and the Department of Communities.

The agreement establishes the expectations, payments and conditions of staying on in a stable living arrangement until they are ready to leave or up to the age of 21.



**"The Staying On Agreement has allowed me to feel more like one of the family and like I have a place to be after 18."**

Young Person

**"I'm so glad to know he'll have support when he turns 18 too... It's always on my mind... What's going to happen when he turns 18? How am I going to afford this? I'm so glad it is happening, it's wonderful news.."**

Carer

## WHY IS IT IMPORTANT?

**Many young people aren't ready and cannot afford to move out at 18; and leaving a stable environment can have a serious negative impact**

It forces them to move from their support networks, training and employment, education that removes the safe and stable environment.

**Young people value stability, support and connection, but want to be respected as a young adult**

Many young people and carers felt the Staying On Agreement empowered young adults with rights and responsibilities within their family or living arrangement.

They also valued the direct ongoing support of the Coach promoting interdependence.

**Paying a staying on subsidy provides stability in the living arrangement**

While many young people continued to live with foster or family carers in Western Australia without the payment of a subsidy, early insights suggest the subsidy is a critical foundation for ensuring the stability of living arrangements past 18.

It is particularly important for young people who are studying, and unable to contribute financially to living costs, and those transitioning to support from the NDIS after turning 18.

## WHAT HAS BEEN DEVELOPED & TESTED?

### Staying On Agreements

A practice approach to supporting families and young people to agree how they can be supported and continue the living arrangement. The agreement includes: practice guide; payment process and forms; information resources for foster carers and young people; policy recommendations about eligibility, payment rates and approval; and a toolkit for workers to negotiate Agreements.

#### Prototype Practice Development

- ♥ Staying On Blueprint
- ♥ Home Stretch Staying On booklet
- ♥ Staying On Agreement form
- ♥ Staying On Subsidy application form
- ♥ Staying On Agreement how to and discussion guide Card Sort Tool
- ♥ Home Stretch housing pathways guide and checklist
- ♥ Rights & Responsibilities of Young People and Carers in a Stay

## WHAT HAVE WE LEARNED?

**‘Staying on Agreement support must be highly individualised to respect and strengthen the existing family relationships**

In functioning families, the agreement is about validating and celebrating the strengths of the family. ‘Carer’, ‘subsidy’ and ‘agreement’ language can be stigmatising if not handled sensitively. The intervention must be planned and have sensitivity to each family and their individual dynamics.

**Regular support and structured reviews of the Agreement and subsidy are an important part of the model**

The structure of formal reviews and regular informal contact is helpful to identify issues in the living arrangement and identify potential support needs for the carer, family and the young person. It provides opportunities to celebrate what is going well, significant milestones and supports the Transition Coach to maintain engagement with young people who are struggling.

**“The carer provides support with a safe home, food, support and occasionally clothing. The young person mainly provides for themselves through their own income.”**

Transition Coach

**Staying on Agreements support a young person’s home, not just the room they are sleeping in that night**

Staying On secures a stable home for young people, allowing them to explore and over time test independent living options. When young people spend time away from a Staying On arrangement, perhaps exploring ‘idealised’ relationships with biological family members or testing out living with a partner or friends, it is important the young person feels they can come home, for as long as they see it as their home.



## WHAT HAVE WE LEARNED?

### Communicating the choice to stay on must happen early

Carers make significant financial or personal choices based on their expectations of what happens after 18. Information about the option must be provided early and in small chunks to allow families and carers to plan for the long term.

The application should be made at 17, allowing time between 17 ½ to 18 to explore housing options if things have changed, or negotiate a shorter Staying On agreement after 18 to help a young person finish education or find another positive housing option.

It's no longer a 'Placement' but a supported 'Agreement' made by a young adult & their carer. Clearly articulating the Home Stretch support offer, and the rights and responsibilities of young people and carers is important, both within families and the system. Young people are increasingly the focus of the support after 18, but support to carers must also be signposted.

### The separation of the coordinator and transition coach role is important.

Whilst it is important for the Transition Coach to have knowledge of the family systems, the separation of the Staying On roles allow separation of support as needed, particularly when the support needs of the carer impact the work of the Transition Coach and vice versa. This is very important for young people receiving NDIS support.

## WHAT DOES THE DATA SAY?

Over the course of the Trial, only one family has declined the offer to negotiate a Staying On Agreement.

The Home Stretch team were never able to speak directly to the carer or the young person about Staying On or the Home Stretch Offer.

3 Young People have moved on from the living arrangement before they reached 21. Each time it was a decision made by the young person to move on. The transition coach continued to support the young person into their new living arrangement.

## Staying On

"17 would be a good age to start a Staying On Agreement, then you have 12 months. As there's so much you need to think about and plan for."

Young Person

### Negotiation of the subsidy rate and young person's contribution is a vital but difficult part of the Agreement. Creating equity and meeting the needs of individuals and families is a crucial consideration.

Young people and carers in the Trial were strongly supportive of the young person chipping in to costs as it builds self reliance and capacity. Negotiating the contribution and subsidy rate on a case by case level achieves the most learning for the young person, but also takes time and can impact their relationship.

Clear guidelines and conditions for Staying On subsidies must be in place to ensure young people are not exploited. It may not be possible at a system level to individually negotiate payment rates.

### Aboriginal families require a culturally informed understanding of living arrangements

Flexibility and adaptation to the Staying On model is required to ensure the appropriate support of young Aboriginal people to live within the family, but also clarity to ensure financially supporting the young person's living arrangement is the priority of the subsidy payment.

### 16 CARERS HAVE PARTICIPATED IN THE Trial

General Foster Carers - <i>Relative</i>	6
General Foster Carers - <i>Non Relative</i>	10
Foster Carers Supported by a CSO	6
Aboriginal Carers - <i>4 Yorganop and 2 Department</i>	6

### PRACTICE

**Staying On is not a standalone service** - Many young people choose to explore connections with biological family, or attempt to move out after they reach 18. Transition Coaches play a critical support role to assist with choices and a pathway to stable housing if things don't work.

**Staying On Practice Framework** - We recommend review and refinement by a working group and tested specifically with a larger group of young people transitioning to NDIS to assess whether the needs of carers can be met by the model.

**Training for facilitating Staying On Agreements** - Training provided to individuals involved in expanding the Home Stretch offer. A community of practice assists the development of practice knowledge to support expansion of the model.

### POLICY

**Department of Communities create policy to support practice developed in the Trial** - The right for young people to be supported to Stay On must be clearly defined in policy to ensure it is a right and not a discretion. Policy must now be created to support practice, and not redefine practice based on system need.

**Subsidy rates fixed and set by the system** - Rates reduce over the 3 years to encourage greater financial contribution by young people. There is a process for seeking exemption to the reduction on a case by case basis, and the ability to negotiate amounts when appropriate.

**Staying On becomes available to historic carers who are willing to support a young adult to return**

### SYSTEM

**Carer's support is resourced in the model** - The addition of a full time Staying On Coordinator role to support carers and negotiate Agreements across a region (up to 30 families per Coordinator). Opportunities to extend access to 21 from programs that provide therapeutic support to foster carers like Woon-yah Ngullah Goorlanggass, should be considered.

**Develop a Staying On Carer Recruitment Program** - Recruit new carers specifically interested in supporting 16-21 year olds working or studying.

**Staying On carers have the same access to the supports of 0-18 carers; like counselling Staying On practice applied by different service providers, and adapted to their context**

Mary\* is 18 years old, through the Home Stretch WA Trial she was able to continue her long term care placement. The agreement between Mary and her carer focused on contributing to the household and engaging in further education.

Mary mainly participated in the Trial to continue her carer's subsidy. She felt that without it her carer would be unable to continue the placement.

*'The subsidy payment has been helpful to pay for the strata costs and bills, without it I don't think I could afford to have her stay here.'*

Mary had part-time work with limited time to connect with her Home Stretch Transition Coach, through Invest in Me funding she was able to begin a TAFE course.

Struggling with the extra workload of her studies and commitment to earning money at her job, Mary pulled out of the course within the first term. Her Coach remained in contact to check-in and allow opportunities of support.

Due to COVID, the scheduled six month Staying On agreement review was delayed until Mary, her carer, Home Stretch Coordinator and Transition Coach could meet in person. The carer and Coordinator paired off from Mary and her Coach to discuss how the living arrangement was going. Mary and her carer had differing opinions on how the placement was going.

Her carer felt that she was not contributing enough to the running of the household and felt unsupported; Mary felt she did not have the time or energy to contribute more due to extra work hours that were rostered on in response to her receipt of JobKeeper payments.

It also came to light that Mary was fearful she would not be able to stay much longer in the placement as a younger sibling was moving into the property and the house would be overcrowded.

Home Stretch includes a continuation of payments and support to foster and family carers with an expectation the young person contributes to their living expenses from their independent income.

By having the review, both Mary and her carer were able to acknowledge the strains in the relationship, but felt a weight lifted by being able to talk openly about them.



*'It was good to get things out in the open and talk about it rather than letting it all bottle up.'*

The Coach and Coordinator were able to provide possible ways Mary could contribute to the household and help support her sibling. The Coach arranged to meet later in the day so Mary had time to complete work and rest before meeting to workshop an accommodation plan.

In the time after the review, Mary was supported by her Coach to look into her employment rights and identified she was being underpaid by her employer, this was an opportunity to look for alternative employment options and plan a route to get there.

The Home Stretch Coordinator made subsequent contact with Mary's carer who said there was a positive change to how things were going.

\* Names and details have been changed to protect privacy.

Supporting young people and carers to understand, make an informed choice, and access the Home Stretch WA offer.

Key elements include:

- Continuity of support and care into the post care system, a shared care approach from the age of 17 ½ to 18
- Accessible pathways for young people to exercise their return to extended support and rebuild their Leaving Care Plan and support circles.
- Support to understand their rights to access ongoing support after 21
- Updating leaving care plans between 18-21 to identify contemporary support needs of the young person

**"A big part of the transition is introducing a different style of working. It requires helping young people understand they are responsible for their decisions now. Doing this at the same time as building a new relationship can be challenging."**

Transition Coach  
Home Stretch WA Trial

## WHY IS IT IMPORTANT?

### There Is A Significant Drop Off In The Level Of Support Once They Reach 18

Simplistic chronological triggers and age thresholds which drive the bureaucratic transitioning of young people from state care, are incongruous with research evidence, practitioner wisdom and the voices and experience of young people.

Young people need a developmentally appropriate support system which recognises their need for a gradual transition, and helps build skills, knowledge and connection to community.

### Many Young People Living In Residential Care Disengage From The Child Protection System At 15, But Return To District Offices For Assistance After 18

A necessary feature of extended support to young people is accessible pathways for young people to return to intensive support.

Many young people disengage from the care system during the critical period allocated to leaving care planning, only to return as adults after 18 seeking support and connection.

### Young People Have Usually Experienced Relational Trauma; We Need To Build Epistemic Trust\* And Relationships Over Time

The impacts of childhood trauma are seen in young people's reluctance to engage in help seeking, or to form trusted relationships with helpful adults.

An approach where young people are warmly introduced to additional supports over time, through someone they trust is critical to brokering post care supports and relationships.

For Aboriginal families and young people, trust is also strongly connected to safe organisations known and vouched for by family members and community.

**Epistemic Trust** - An individual's willingness to consider new knowledge as trustworthy and relevant, and therefore worth integrating into their lives. It has important implications on people's capacity to engage and their expectations of helping relationships.

### Emphasis Is Placed On Completing A 'Leaving Care Plan' Before 18

Many young people are not developmentally ready to engage in longer term planning, and the system's current reliance on a Leaving Care Plan before 18 to define their support needs is unrealistic and ineffective in meeting their needs.

While there have been suggested amendments proposed to the Children and Communities Act, they are yet to be legislated and implemented in practice.

"I don't want you to look at my case file or leaving care plan, that's not who I am anymore!"

Young Person

### Leaving Care Service Referrals Completed At 15 Cannot Create An Extension Of Support

The Case Practice Manual currently specifies young people should be referred to leaving care services at 15. Information provided at this age is not useful or relevant, referrals are often rushed and made without the young person's involvement, circumstances and contact details change between 15-18. Young people are not making informed choices about engaging in post care supports.

### Absence Of A Planned Continuum Of Care From 15-25

The current post care system lacks intentionality in design, and relies on a fragmented and inconsistent blend of underfunded and poorly integrated service offers. District Offices do not record post care intervention data, and are unable to track young people engagement in funded leaving care services. There is no consistency in practice across supports, and demand management approaches are confusing and often subjective.

## WHAT HAS BEEN DEVELOPED & TESTED?

- A range of co-designed resources to communicate the Home Stretch WA offer across multiple channels – visual, digital, video
- A staged approach to referral and onboarding of young people
- Agreed protocols and approach for shared care from 17 ½ up to 18
- **Handover Summary Tool with Guidelines** - A tool for young people to articulate their progress with Home Stretch WA and post care financial support needs. Intended as a supplement to the Leaving Care Plan and developed in a useful format for District Office to make informed decisions about future leaving care funding requests
- Prototype Demand Management System to test 'Right To Return'

### Prototype Practice Development

- Onboarding Service Blueprint
- Handover Summary & Guidelines
- Video/Flyers to communicate service offer



### **Trusting Relationships Between Child Protection Staff And Home Stretch WA Team Members Are A Critical Foundation For A Smooth Transition**

Collaboration and coordination of support between the child protection system and community service organisations is strengthened through co-location.

Where there are clear communication channels, established relationships between workers, and agreed expectations around roles, young people are more likely to experience a smooth transition of support. This is a foundation for epistemic trust\*.

### **Dedicated Leaving Care workers in District Offices are critical to a continuum of care, the role needs to be clearly defined and resourced**

The introduction of Leaving Care teams in some districts allowed the support needs of those aged 15-18 to be prioritised, and supported to smoothly engage in post care supports like Home Stretch WA.

In districts without a Leaving Care team, there is greater reliance on assertive follow-up by the Transition Coach to engage.

Leaving Care teams are not currently resourced to provide support past 18, but it may suit some young people to have this option. Nitja Nop Yorga Ngulla Mia identified that some young Aboriginal people, planning and preparation for adulthood might need to commence as early as 12 years of age.

### **Young People And Carers Need To Be Provided Information About Home Stretch WA In Multiple Ways Over Time**

The introduction to Home Stretch WA information needs to be provided early to young people and families, and it is important to clarify the difference between support provided by Home Stretch WA and case management provided by Child Protection.

Young people must receive information about the service offer directly from a Transition Coach rather than a CPFS case worker, to provide young people with an informed choice and de-stigmatise the support offer.

### **Shared Care From 17 ½-18 Builds Engagement With Post Care Supports**

Young people supported from 17 ½ demonstrated a stronger and consistent pattern of engagement in the Trial, and required less assertive follow-up to engage with their Home Stretch WA Transition Coach.

Involvement from 17 ½ enabled the Coach to participate and support leaving care planning, and be part of celebrations and rituals of transition prior to leaving care. It creates space for continuity in support planning and a warm handover of information about support circles.

### **Young people need a 'Leaving Care Planner' not a 'Leaving Care Plan'**

The ongoing system reliant on a Leaving Care Plan, and the time pressure to ensure all financial needs are clearly defined and described in the plan creates an unhelpful reliance on a static and time limited document.

It is largely an attempt to manage a discretionary funding system experienced by young people as inconsistent and subjective.

By extending support to plan and develop an adapted Leaving Care Plan handed back to the system at 21, young people are prepared to seek help and communicate post care support needs to a district office.

**"It helps that the Department knows what I might need if I have to go back there after 21, the Leaving Care Plan was written when I was 17. I didn't know what I know now".**

Young person talking about the Handover Summary, the modified version of the leaving care plan.

**100% of young people who aged out of Home Stretch [or Opted out before] have been supported to create their version of a tweaked 'Leaving Care Plan'.**

**With the consent of the young person, the document is provided to the District Office a young person is most familiar with, and uploaded into ASSIST.**

Home Stretch WA Trial, Program Data

**Significant time and effort [almost 25% of instances of service] is placed into shared care, and coordinating supports with members of young persons support circle.**

Home Stretch WA Trial, Program Data

**100% of young people who have aged out of Home Stretch have been supported to create an updated 'Leaving Care Plan'.**

**Termed a Handover Summary it, articulates their strengths, achievements, current Support circles, as well as their future financial support needs from the leaving care fund after 21..**

Home Stretch WA Trial, Program Data

### PRACTICE

**Use a multi-channel communication strategy to communicate the Home Stretch offer across the system** - Replicate and scale the success of young people scripted videos. Develop Aboriginal specific resources describing post care supports and Home Stretch.

**Embedding or co-locating Home Stretch staff in District Offices at various times** - Builds epistemic trust\* between Transition Coaches and Child Protection Staff.

**Alignment of Leaving Care Plan with Handover Summary** - Undertake practice development to improve the functionality of the Leaving Care Plan and establish a framework to update and revise the plan beyond 18.

### POLICY

**Strengthening of Leaving Care Policy and Practice Guidance to integrate the learnings and adaptations needed to implement Home Stretch. Including:**

- Practice around adapting/modifying Leaving Care Plans after 18
- Leaving Care Planning for young Aboriginal people commence at 12 years of age
- Shared care approaches between NGO and Dept of Communities staff for under 18's, incorporating learnings from the Towards Independent Adulthood Trial
- Outcomes Framework and Minimum Data set shared across the post care system
- Improvements to data systems to record post care interactions with young people on the ASIST data system
- Communication protocols to share information about which young people are engaging in Home Stretch or leaving care services

### SYSTEM

**Broader co-design of the Leaving Care Services Continuum of Services to integrate the Home Stretch offer**

- Undertake comparative analysis of Leaving Care teams in different districts.
- Resource an appropriate Leaving Care team function with cultural supports in each district office.
- Review of the role, resources and function of leaving care services to provide support from 21-25.
- Further co-design of the Home Stretch prototypes with young people in  
\*CSO residential care services, NDIS and regional and remote settings.

**A secure online platform for young people to store and access their information, and update contact details for CPFS** Ensure the commissioning of Home Stretch providers is place based partnered with the Aboriginal community, and Aboriginal organisations

Flexible, one-to-one, individualised support focused on Coaching a young person towards interdependence.

The Transition Coach works from a culturally competent, trauma informed, strengths-based approach. Their work is young person driven, and practice is guided by the practice principles co-designed as part of the Home Stretch WA Trial.

The Coach connects young people to resources and supports available through the Home Stretch service model and beyond, helping them navigate their journey to interdependence without reinforcing a dependence on the Child Protection system.

## WHY IS IT IMPORTANT?

### A Smooth Transition - An Intentional System

The Auditor General's Report 2018 into Young People Leaving Care found 65% of young people eligible for leaving care support did not get it early enough or at all.

It highlights a system lacking coordination and collaboration, in which Child Protection workers, leaving care providers and other agencies were not effectively communicating and working together to link young people to services.

The Department did not know if young people leaving care received the support they need, or what happened to them after they transitioned to post care services.

### Young People Want Continuity And Extension Of Supports, Not An Extension Of 'Being In Care'

Often the young people who most need extended supports to 21 were wary of the Child Protection system. Young people consulted throughout the co-design process highlighted any offer of 'extended care to 21' must be made available from outside the Child Protection system.

They identified perceptions and stigma associated with being 'in care' and remaining connected to a District Office would be a significant barrier for many to engage in extended supports to 21.

The findings of 'Nitja Nop Yorga Ngulla Mia' highlighted Aboriginal young people and families would be reluctant to engage in Home Stretch services if they were delivered by the Department.

### We Need A Skilled, Culturally Competent And Capable Workforce That Young People Trust

The nature, quality and strength of the therapeutic relationship between a support worker and a young person is the most critical feature of any successful intervention or approach to support. While there are many motivated and skilled workers in the system, their work tends to occur in isolation or within the context of small teams.

The current post care system struggles to apply consistent and evidence informed approaches or frameworks, and there is little scaffolding and support available to develop the workforce.

Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisations have a critical role in service delivery to ensure cultural knowledge, community and healing is intrinsically woven into practice approaches to supporting young people.

**"My Coach has stuck by me, even when I didn't answer messages. Every young person coming out of care should have someone like that."**

Youth Advisory Group  
Member and Trial  
Participant

## WHAT HAS BEEN DEVELOPED & TESTED?

## Transition Coach

- Transition Coaching - Practice principles co-designed with young people. A range of flexible and creative tools to assist a young person to plan and prepare their future across the 8 domains of leaving care.
  - An emphasis on building Support Circles, recognising the importance of agency, autonomy, skill development and interdependence.
  - Practice frameworks and resources to assist in workforce training.
  - A prototype demand management framework with an option to 'Step Back' from intensive support but remain connected
- ### Prototype Practice Development

  - Transition Coaching Service Blueprint
  - Coaching Tools - Mind mapping Activity/8 Domains Card Sort Activity
  - Practice Principles - Cards
  - Handover Summary - 'Revised Leaving Care Plan'

## WHAT HAVE WE LEARNED?

### Persistence And Digital Channels To Stay Connected With Young People

'Persistent like a text message, not a knock on the door' is a principle young people acknowledged as key to their ongoing engagement and connection with Transition Coaches. The offer of extended support to 21 includes the Coaches' responsibility to stay connected and assertively follow up young people over the Trial period.

The use of SMS messaging and other digital services (e.g. Facebook messenger) are critical for regular and consistent communication.

A number of young people in the Trial commented that knowing the Coach was thinking of them, even though they weren't in a mindset to engage, was highly valued and gave them confidence to return to support.

### Experienced, skilled Youth and Social Workers, oriented to Child Protection

The role of a Transition Coach requires a range of skills equivalent in many ways to Child Protection workers; many young people experienced significant and complex trauma requiring a skilful approach to engagement and ongoing support.

Young people often present with a range of time critical support needs and require periods of intensive support to manage high levels of risk and safety concerns in their lives.

The commissioning of Home Stretch providers, must ensure sufficient resources are available to providers to attract, retain and support qualified and skilled staff.

### A Commitment To Collaboration And Shared Care

Mirroring key elements of the Care Team approach, Transition Coaches work closely and collaboratively with the young person's primary supports. This includes the Smooth Transition phase from 17½ to 18 and throughout their engagement to connect with services and networks beyond the Child Protection system. As young people reach the age of 20 or choose to opt-out, their rights to access supports until 25 must be clearly communicated.

This includes collaborating to create a Handover Summary detailing financial support from the Leaving Care Fund, communicated back to their District Office through a handover. Young people are introduced to other Transition Coaches and Home Stretch team members to build their connection with the program, and to manage staff absences.

This is important when a young person has higher support needs, and in the case of young parents where there is a need to provide more specialised supports around parenting and to prioritise the needs of the child as part of the support offer.



## WHAT HAVE WE LEARNED?

### Young people who are transient need a consistent Transition Coach

While there are increased demands on travel time and workload management for Transition Coaches, young people who are moving between different locations need the consistency and stability of the same support worker until they stabilise their living arrangement.

This is critical for young people with experiences of homelessness, where supports must not be conditional on accommodation or geographic area. This approach is consistent with the principles of Housing First.

For young people who move between cities or regions across the State, support can be offered remotely and through digital channels but it is not as effective, the Transition Coach must provide opportunities to link with local place based services.

### Relationships And Trust Take Time

In many cases, the relationship with young people is built over time. Transition Coaches create an engagement plan for young people and describe the need for a unobtrusive 'persistent and reliable approach' and 'the importance of assertive follow up' in order to better engage young people with significant support needs and poor experiences of formal support.

### Transition Coaches Need To Work Within A Young Person's Natural Networks (Support Circles)

The original co-design highlighted the critical importance of applying a 'Youth Work' approach placing the young person as the primary client.

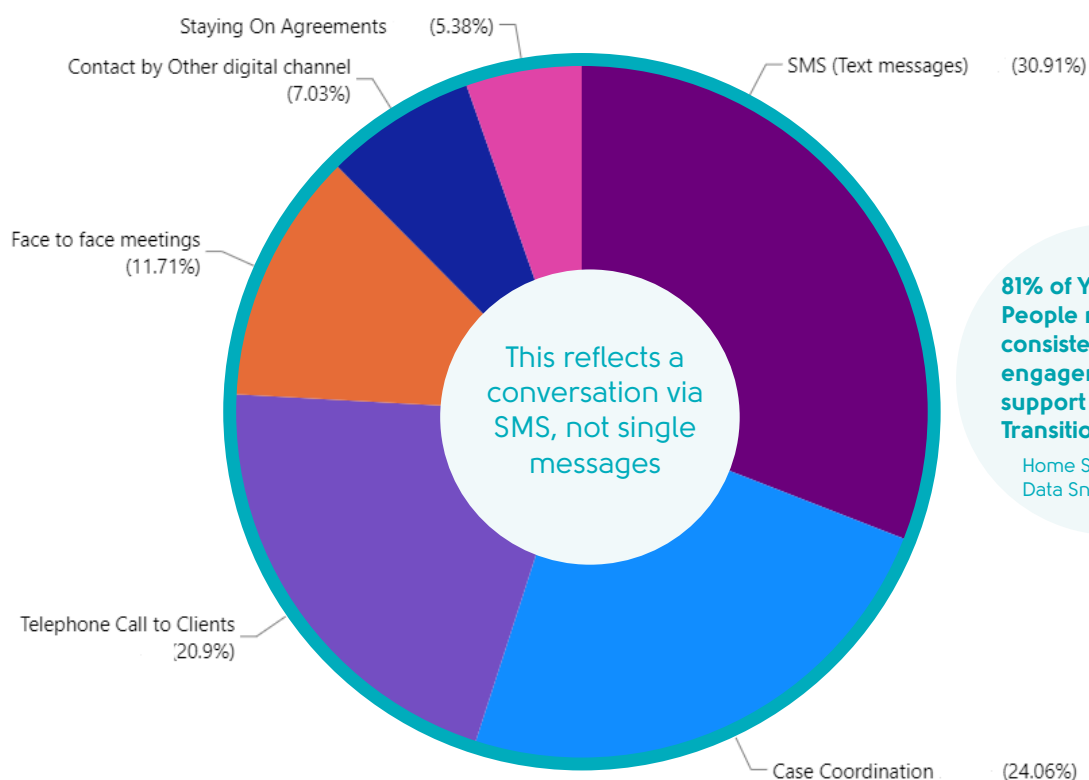
While this remains a key foundation of the Home Stretch approach, there is a need for Transition Coaches to intentionally work from an approach that includes and supports young people to strengthen their relationships with others, and at times support Staying On carers and others to better understand and support the young person.

This was evident in a number of Staying On Agreements, when supporting young people to reconnect with biological families, and in cases where the young person transitions to NDIS supports.

## WHAT DOES THE DATA SAY?

### DISTRIBUTION OF MEETING TYPE

July 2020 – June 2021



**Transition Coaches frequently used digital channels [SMS & Facebook Messenger] to maintain and connect with young people. For many young people this was there preference..**

Home Stretch WA Trial Program Data

**81% of Young People maintained consistent engagement in support with their Transition Coach.**

Home Stretch July 2021 Data Snapshot.

**While digital communication was important to maintain connection, face to face meetings were typically much longer in duration, typically ranging from 2- 4 hours.**

Home Stretch WA Trial Program Data

### PRACTICE

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**Broader co-design of the Leaving Care Services Continuum of Services to integrate the Home Stretch offer**

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\*CSO residential care services, NDIS and regional and remote settings.

**A secure online platform for young people to store and access their information, and update contact details for CPFS** Ensure the commissioning of Home Stretch providers is place based partnered with the Aboriginal community, and Aboriginal organisations

## BRIAN'S TRANSITION COACHING

Brian and his young siblings entered the care system due to risks to their welfare associated with their biological parent's heavy substance misuse, and ongoing experiences of homelessness. Brian experienced significant periods of rough sleeping and homelessness from age 16 until 18 despite being in the care system. After transitioning from state care at 18, he was living on the streets with his young brother.

### **BRIAN WASN'T READY TO 'LEAVE CARE' AND NEEDED THE EXTENSION OF SUPPORT FROM THE HOME STRETCH WA TRIAL.**

The newly established Leaving Care team were able to support both brothers into a public housing property, prior to being on boarded onto the Trial. Brian has been his younger brother's primary carer for some years, a situation he finds extremely challenging.


***'It's been really hard because there is heaps of fights, sometimes physical fights, between me and my brother because I have to take on a lot of the responsibility and he just doesn't get that none of 'this' would be possible if it wasn't for me'.***

***'I never asked to be the parent, but he has nowhere else to go and I'm scared he will end up back on the street. I'm really struggling to focus on anything else, or do anything for myself, because I'm always focused on him and the tension between us. I don't want to lose my brother but I need help with this situation'.***

As well as Brian's daily social and wellbeing challenges, he was diagnosed with epilepsy. When he met with our Home Stretch Transition Coach, he was not taking medication due to a lack of money and became a very high risk.

***'I just run out of meds sometimes and think I will be okay, but then I have a seizure. I needed extra money around the Christmas period, so I didn't pay my bills or get my script filled'.***

Brian has aspirations to complete a Sound Production course but was unsure of where to start the process. He also wanted to get his resume completed but struggled to find support. Brian identified areas to improve and required support with his living situation, education, health and money management.



**"I'm happy to finally be enrolled into TAFE and have my resume completed. It feels good to have something to focus on that's for me and my goals... It's been really good to have someone support me with my living situation and stress. If I didn't have the support, I know things with my brother would get worse and worse, which really affects me."**

The Home Stretch WA Transition coach collaborated with agencies to support Brian and his brother. Home Stretch WA walks alongside the young person with a flexible approach; building their self-reliance and agency and challenging them to be responsible for their decisions. Our proactive approach places strong emphasis on developing the skills needed for independence.

Home Stretch supported Brian to enrol into a 6-month certificate with ongoing plans to start another year-long certificate. Transition Coaches assisted Brian with research into voluntary work opportunities in the sound production industry; helped complete his resume, where he reached out to members of the community to request recommendation letters; and supported Brian with budget and money management skills, seeing him pay off outstanding debts.

Brian has been encouraged to re-engage with his GP to work out a safety plan to manage his epilepsy, and assisted with mapping out his social networks to identify where to access support in the community.

\* Names and details have been changed to protect privacy.

Support Circles is a practice lens applied to all aspects of Home Stretch WA. Almost every intervention has incorporated an intentional focus on understanding how extended support can enhance a young person's connection to people, places, culture and community.

Transition Coaches approach their work with young people from a Support Circle lens, integrating a trauma informed approach that focuses on the Coaching relationship as a positive and reliable relationship that can be used to help a young person heal, and with support to grow confidence and skills in connecting with new relationships or revisiting old connections.

Support Circles is also about helping a young person to map out and understand their biological family, and to explore reconnecting if and when they are ready.

\*The original co-design sprint identified the potential for testing a model of practice that supported young people to bring together and meet regularly with a group of mentors chosen from their networks.

There was little interest from young people in the Trial to test this approach, and the Youth Advisory Group largely rejected it as a desirable option.

## WHY IS IT IMPORTANT?

### Interdependence Over Independence

Research literature on young people highlights supporting young people to develop an enduring connection to people, community and culture is a critical factor in their successful transition to adulthood. Systems of care can provide the scaffolding for connection, commitment to building an enduring network beyond the leaving care continuum is needed.

### Relational Trauma And The Impact Of The Care Experience

Many young people experienced significant relational trauma creating barriers to help seeking, forming and maintaining trusting relationships. These challenges when viewed developmentally, require an approach to support that is delivered through a consistent, persistent, reliable and hope inducing relationship.

The Transition Coach relationship may be an important point of healing and cultural support resulting in young people developing healthier views of relationships and good boundaries.

### Culture And Knowledge Of Self Is Built Through Relationships

Many young people are disconnected and removed from their family, and deprived of an understanding and connection to their heritage and culture. Efforts to achieve this through generic 'Cultural Plans' overlook the importance of relationships and understanding identity and place in family to knowing culture and community.

**"My Coach helped me reconnect with my old foster carers who I hadn't seen since I was 16. They even helped set it up so I can live with them again and they get a payment."**  
Young Person (age 19)

### Support Circles

A focus on support circles is integrated into all of the work of the Transition Coach. It provides a lens in which all interventions are considered.

Early and consistent use of **Eco-mapping, genograms** and other practice tools support young people to visually map out their connections.

Family finding and mapping of relationships has been supported through Yorganop.

Appropriate usage of **Invest In Me** funding to support young people to develop interpersonal and social skills, and access opportunities and activities which build their networks.

**Transition Coaches identified that almost 94% of the young people in the Trial had established Support Circles [Natural Networks] that were of assistance to them.**

Home Stretch July 2021  
Data Snapshot

## WHAT HAVE WE LEARNED?

### An Empowerment Approach Supports Young People To Become Interdependent, Not Dependent

'Interdependence' is used over 'Independence', it accurately reflects one of the key outcomes Home Stretch WA aims to achieve, connection to strong and stable natural networks to support them beyond their contact with systems of care.

The intentionality of extending the leaving care planning and support phase to 21 provides an important opportunity to encourage and support young people's emerging independence.

### Reciprocity And An Option To Giving Back Is Important

The Youth Advisory Group has provided a critical foundation for the development of the Home Stretch WA model.

One of the unintended but important outcomes from the group is the opportunity for young people to make meaning of their care experiences with other young people, and have their experiences and ideas validated by their peers.

**"There is a lot more need for family and systems work and knowledge than you would expect in a youth work role."**

Transition Coach

### Balancing A Youth Work Approach With A Family And System Lens Is Important

The primary focus of the Transition Coach is to work directly with the young person, rather than work systemically with family networks. This is important to ensure young people are being empowered and the work is appropriately focused on the relationship with the young person.

There has emerged a need for capacity within Home Stretch WA Teams to think systemically, and to understand practices and principles specific to family finding and reunification.

This is coupled with a strongly trauma informed practice approach by Transition Coaches to ensure young people are provided scaffolding, safety and choice around decisions to build their natural networks.



## WHAT HAVE WE LEARNED?

### Family Finding And Reunification With Biological Family

Many young people return to explore their connection to biological family once they age out of the care system, including young people who were previously in stable and secure placements.

Despite a desktop literature review and exploration of current practices in WA and other jurisdictions, limited practice support is available to guide the support of young adults leaving care who wish to find and reconnect with biological family.

‘Who’s My Mob’ and youth homelessness reconnect services provide some evidence and indication of useful practices approaches, which should be investigated further.

### An Understanding Of Support Circles Needs To Be Carried Out And Recorded Throughout An Individuals Care Experience

Young people often leave care with a limited understanding of their own journey, and the people and places important to it. This is particularly apparent for young people with experiences of multiple placements.

Where it has been possible, a handover of historical and current supports resulted in better connection and understanding.

## WHAT DOES THE DATA SAY?

**“You really have to let them go if you want them to come back!”**

Foster carer talking about the importance of supporting young people to test relationships with biological family after 18.

**Transition Coaches identified that almost 94% of the young people in the Trial had established Support Circles [Natural Networks] that were of assistance to them.**

Home Stretch July 2021  
Data Snapshot

### PRACTICE

**Establishment of Youth Advisory Groups for each Home Stretch region with strategies for including diverse voices**

**Development of a Support Circles Practice Framework**

**Support Circles – Long term understanding** - Collaboration with concurrent co-design work by Parkerville.

**Family Finding and Reunification for Young Adults** Co-design an approach to supporting young adults to reconnect with biological family members including co-design with parents and families who have had children taken into care.

### POLICY

**Alignment of case practice approaches around Leaving Care Planning to strengthen focus on Support Circles**

**Recruitment of staff** - Home Stretch WA Teams recruit to balance skills in youth work and more systemic approaches such as family and community workers.

**Strengthening of Department of Communities policies and practices around natural supports** - Included are resources for maintaining contact with siblings, extended families and friends, recording information about natural networks and supports, and sharing information as part of transitioning between care arrangements.

### SYSTEM

**Workforce Development Strategy** - Reinvigorate systems and natural network thinking with education and training, while emphasising approaches to respond to relational trauma. This should be undertaken at all ages and stages.

**Access to camps and recreational activities for young people a system resource, not an agency or program specific resource** - Camps run for young people expanded to invite all young people to participate.

**Peer Worker roles in Leaving Care** - Young people in the Youth Advisory Group strongly advocated for peer support/navigator roles to be established.

**Add a Staying On Coordinator role to a Home Stretch WA Team** - With a focus on working with families to develop and support Staying On Agreements. The scope for this role would also provide family reunification and family mapping supports.

# FOUNDATION FOR SCALE

## MOVING FORWARD

The Home Stretch WA Trial was commissioned by the Department of Communities as a developmental platform rather than a typical 'pilot before roll-out'.

The use of a design-led approach has ensured learning and improving have been prioritised, and the voice and experiences of young people, carers and community can be effectively included in the development of policy and practice.

The prototypes and practice that have been developed through the co-design now present a foundation for the scaling of Home Stretch across WA.

In order to achieve this, additional resourcing and supports must be made available to the system through a community of practice.

### Change is difficult

Achieving change in an system requires a relentless commitment to include people and their thoughts in the process. Often organisations and people within a system will behave like a biological system attempting to achieve balance by resisting agents of intervention or reform.

Scaling the key elements of Home Stretch across the system will require an approach that unites people around a shared vision, and provides them with the support and resources to integrate Home Stretch into their local context.

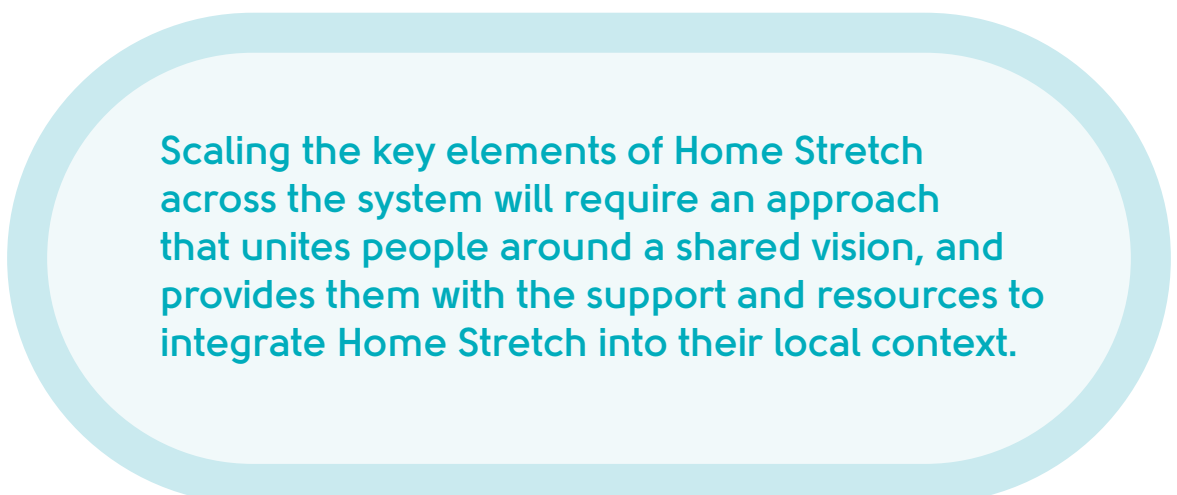
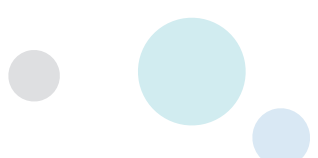
### Limited resources and supports available to support good practice

Currently in WA, there is a deficit in available supports and resources for child protection workers and others in supporting young people to transition beyond 18.


The complexity of the support needs of some young people means that the baseline of requisite skill and knowledge of child protection systems is high.

### Moving from a Trial to a Program

Many of the prototypes developed as part of the co-design work have demonstrated their efficacy, but require additional development and refinement to be contextualised to local communities across WA.



**Scaling the key elements of Home Stretch across the system will require an approach that unites people around a shared vision, and provides them with the support and resources to integrate Home Stretch into their local context.**



## KEY CONSIDERATIONS

### Research from the UK and Scotland on the scaling of extended support suggest some key considerations:

#### Workforce Development

Effective scaling of a system change requires extensive and sustained development of workforce and integrated systems and organisations that support practice and the staff involved.<sup>2</sup>

#### Monitoring and accountability

Without effective planning and monitoring, there are many opportunities for various providers to reinterpret, deviate from, or subvert the original intentions of the model.<sup>3</sup> Creating clear and agreed outcome measures, and working transparently with Home Stretch providers and child protection workers.

#### Long term financial commitment

Embedding new ways of working, changing culture and practice generally requires long-term commitment and financial investment in both the delivery of the program, but also the support and resourcing to sustain the quality of practice that underpins it.<sup>4</sup>

## WHAT WOULD IT LOOK LIKE?

A time limited and resourced Community of Practice that is expands upon on the Home Stretch WA Trial and builds capacity in the Department of Communities.

#### The community of Practice will:

- ♥ Develop packages and provide training to Home Stretch providers
- ♥ Further refine, develop and publish practice frameworks
- ♥ Provide leadership and support to the co-design establishment phase
- ♥ Support the development of specialist adaptations of the model for young people transitioning to NDIS services

<sup>2</sup> O'Connor et al, 2012

<sup>3</sup> Tronto, 2010; Pronovost, 2011; Radboud University, 2015

<sup>4</sup> Fixsen, Blase, Naoom and Wallace 2009; Weisz et al, 2013, in Wiggins, Austerberry and Ward, 2012

### PRACTICE

- Work alongside the Home Stretch WA Trial Team to refine and publish relevant practice resources, practice frameworks and tools for Home Stretch Providers to use in their work.
- Provide training to Home Stretch Staff to induct them into the model, and establish fidelity to the key principles and practice inherent to the model.
- Facilitate group reflective practice supervision, to encourage the development of skills and capacity of teams to deliver a high quality service.
- Encourage and facilitate service innovation and adaptation to meet the needs of specific cohorts and contexts not directly tested in the Trial

### POLICY

Assist in the integration of Home Stretch into a continuum of services for young people transitioning from Out of Home Care.

Support the Department of Communities to develop strong policy and case practice manual entries that ensure that Child Protection Workers understand how to prepare young people to access an offer of extended support, and smoothly transition into the Home Stretch model.

Provide leadership, support and co-design facilitation to each region or district to establish a strong and collaborative approach to embedding Home Stretch providers.

### SYSTEM

Support region/district/cohort based adaptations of the key elements of the model.

Support Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisations to deliver Home Stretch supports - A commissioning requirement for Home Stretch Providers in line with National Recommendations

Post care continuum of services reform - Integrate the Home Stretch offer and renegotiate Leaving Care Service Contracts to align with the new continuum.



## WHAT DO WE RECOMMEND HAPPENS NEXT?

### PRACTICE

#### **Establish a Community of Practice to Support Scaling**

A time limited and resourced Community of Practice that is shared between non-government organisations, academic institutions and the Department of Communities.

The Community of Practice will:

- Develop packages and provide training to Home Stretch providers
- Further refine, develop and publish practice frameworks.
- Provide leadership and support to co-design establishment phase.
- Support the development of specialist adaptations of the model for young people transitioning to NDIS services.

### POLICY

**Clear policy frameworks** - Frameworks developed to underpin the scaling of key practice elements.

**Co-design establishment phase** - Phase is funded as part of the Home Stretch Providers contracts.

**Development of a simple and clear outcomes measurement framework for the Leaving Care Continuum to monitor system, program and individual progress**

**Review of existing legislation** - Undertake a targeted review to identify gaps in the Children and Communities Act 2004, which could be a possible barrier to effectively scale Home Stretch service offers.

### SYSTEM

**A resourced, time limited Community of Practice** - Support scaling and region/district based adaptations of the core elements.

**Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisations proportionally funded to deliver Home Stretch supports** - A commissioning requirement for Home Stretch Providers in line with National Recommendations.

**Curtin University Independent Evaluation recommendations** - Follow expansion and scaling recommendations of the model.

**Post care continuum of services reform** - Integrate the Home Stretch offer and renegotiate Leaving Care Service Contracts to align with the new continuum.

**Home Stretch services commissioned to align with Department of Communities Metropolitan Regions for contextualising of model.**

**Undertake a Regional Trial to support a phased expansion of the model.**

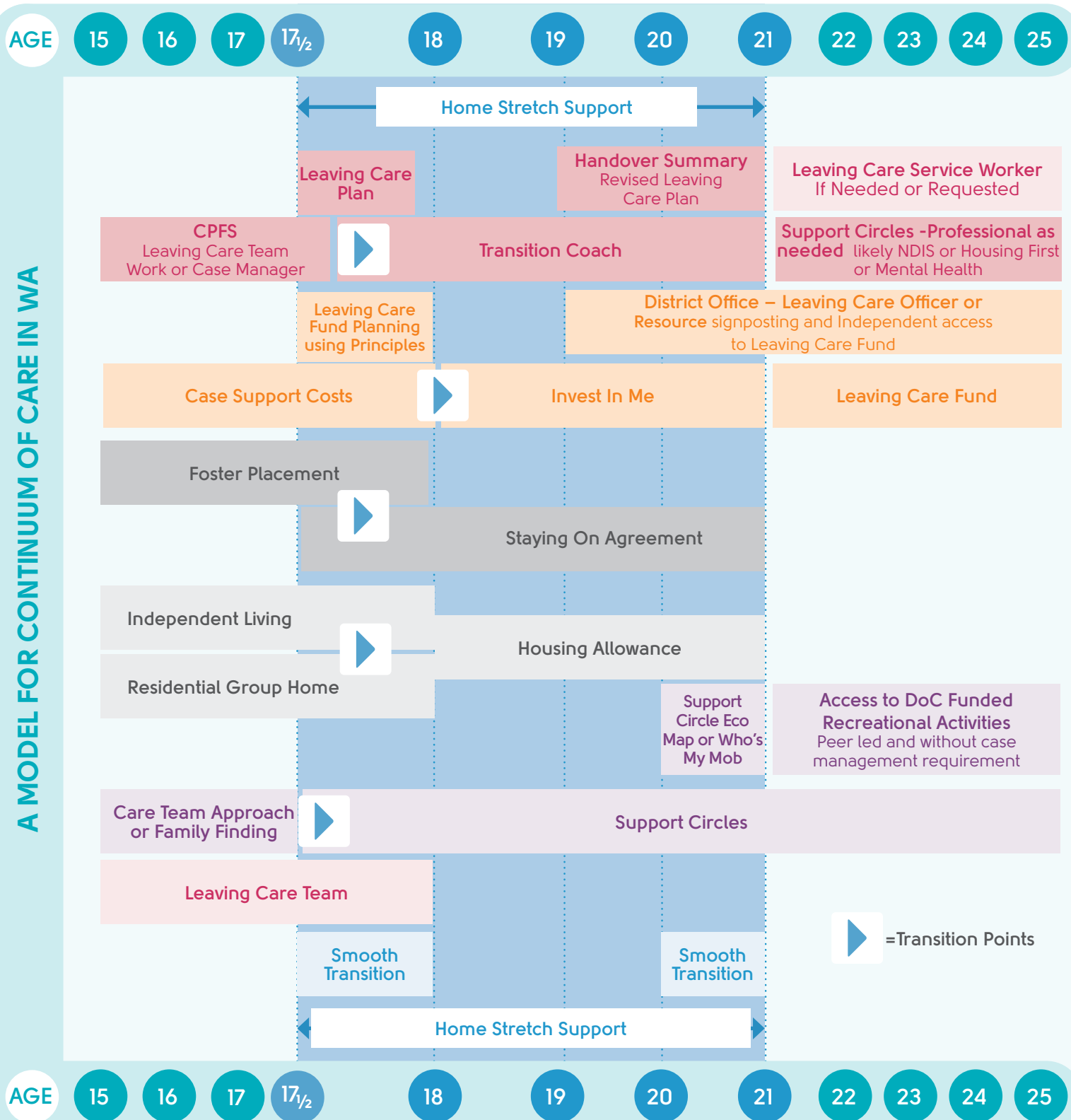
## A MODEL FOR CONTINUUM OF CARE IN WA

The addition of the Home Stretch extension of care supports for young people 18-21 years represents an opportunity to explore the experience of transitioning to adulthood from a whole-of-system perspective.

The Home Stretch WA Trial recommends that, as Home Stretch is rolled out to young people across WA, an investment is made in ensuring that this continuum of care is made as seamless as possible for young people.

The Trial has documented elements of this continuum below – the addition of Home Stretch to the existing system will involve some adjustments to ensure that the offer of an extension of care smoothly integrates with the existing system.

### FROM CARE TO HOME STRETCH





## Home Stretch Regional Team Leader

### Manage Home Stretch Team

- Supervision of Transition Coaches
- Supervision of Staying On Coordinator

### Practice/Program

- Manages referral/applications directly with District Office Leaving Care Team
- Approval/Oversight/Governance of Invest In Me
- Review and Monitoring of Quarterly Reporting
- 6 Monthly Progress Reporting

### Collaboration

- Establishes Implementation Working Group for first 6 months of roll-out
- Supported by Community of Practice to Lead a series of co-design workshops as part of Contextualising Service to Region [First 3 months]
- Ongoing attendance relevant meetings in each District Offices in Region on a monthly basis
- Attends Home Stretch Community of Practice Leaders Group

## Transition Coaches

### Provide 1:1 Support to Young People

- Directly Support Up to 10 Young People
- Skilled and experienced Social Work or Youth Worker (mixture in team)

### Practice/Program

- Young People are Primary Focus
- Smooth Transition or Coaching or Housing Allowance or Support Circles
- Administers and provides access to Invest In Me
- Quarterly Reporting on Progress
- Develops Handover Summary with Young People [Tweaked Leaving Care Plan at 21]

### Collaboration

- Allocated to a specific District Office in Region – Regular [Fortnightly] co-location
- Allocated to a CSO Foster Care Agency
- Supported by Community of Practice to under-go training in first 3 months.
- Works in collaboration with Leaving Care Team Staff or Case Managers from Dept.
- Attends Group Supervision within Community of Practice

Home Stretch must be delivered by OR in partnership with an Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisation with goal of proportionate funding.

## Staying On Coordinator

### Staying On Agreements

- Directly Support Up to 30 Staying On Living Arrangements
- Social Worker/Family Worker experience and skills in working with families

### Practice/Program

- Primary Contact for Carers/Families
- Sets Up/Coordinates/Reviews Staying On Agreements
- Brief Family Intervention to manage conflict/issues
- Signposting and warm referrals for ongoing therapeutic work [Including NDIS]
- Provides Family Mapping/Finding Support to Transition Coach and Young People
- Supports Coach to support young person with planning reunification/contact with biological family

### Collaboration

- Allocated to Region/CSO Foster Care Agency
- Supported by Community of Practice to under-go training in first 3 months.
- Works in collaboration with District Placement Officers/CSO Support Workers
- Liaises with Subsidy Payment Unit oversight of Subsidy Payments to Carers

**Integrating with Aligned Systems or Services in Education, Child Protection, an Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisation or Local Government.**

## Community Connector

### Creates Networks/Resources/Opportunities for Young People Across Region

- System Level Role
- Works within Community of Practice or Create Foundation to provide service to Transition Coaches

### Practice/Program

- Creates Opportunities for young people to expand support circle and networks
- Maintains a register and network of opportunities through digital platform [Facebook etc]

- Promotes access to Volunteering, Employment, Recreation, Cultural Camps, Traineeship, Mentoring, Community Groups, and other events
- Runs Region Specific YAGS Bi-Monthly

### Collaboration

- Works with Community of Practice to Establish YAGS
- Shares information across Home Stretch Teams in allocated region

## Administrative Support

### Support Home Stretch Team

- Assistance with Communications and Secretarial Support for Meetings during Establishment Phase
- Process and tracks Spending/Receipts/Payments made through Invest In Me



## CSO Foster Carer Support

### Placement Supports

- Directly Support Up to 30 Staying On Living Arrangements
- Social Worker/Family Worker experience and skills in working with families

### Practice/Program

- Primary Contact for Carers/Families
- Sets Up/Coordinates/Reviews Staying On Agreements
- Brief Family Intervention to manage conflict/issues
- Signposting and warm referrals for ongoing therapeutic work [Including NDIS]
- Provides Family Mapping/Finding Support to Transition Coach and Young People
- Supports Coach to support young person with planning reunification/contact with biological family

### Collaboration

- Allocated to Region/CSO Foster Care Agency
- Supported by Community of Practice to under-go training in first 3 months.
- Works in collaboration with District Placement Officers/CSO Support Workers
- Liaises with Subsidy Payment Unit oversight of Subsidy Payments to Carers





## District ADD or Leaving Care Team Leader

Governance and Oversight of Service Integration from Dept. Perspective

### Collaboration

- Works closely with Home Stretch Team Leader to facilitate and establish Home Stretch Offer in district office

- Assists with ensuring collaboration is prioritised and problem solve issues as they arise.
- Ongoing Attendance at Implementation Working Group

## District Office - Leaving Care Team Worker

### Case Management for 14 – 18

- Supports Young People Aged 14-18 in each District Office

### Practice/Program

- Support Young People, Carers & Families to understand and apply for Home Stretch Offer at 17.
- Facilitates other post-care support options if not Home Stretch
- Works with Transition Coach to plan Smooth Transition

- Works in collaboration with Transition Coach from 17 1/2 - 18, warm handover of support and continuity in care.
- Supports young people who return after 18 – 21 to apply for Right To Return Support or Home Stretch

### Collaboration

- Attends Implementation Group in District Office
- Attends co-design workshops as part of Contextualising Service to Region [First 3 months]
- Supports Co-location of Coach [Buddy System]

## Project Officer – Child Protection - Policy & Practice Framework

### Support Establishment

- Finalisation and publication of practice frameworks that were prototyped in the Trial.
- Works with Specialist Child Protection unit to update and refine Case Practice Manual

### Practice/Program

- Works in collaboration with Specialist Child Protection Unit to refine and publish practice frameworks
- Coordinates with each service provider to identify gaps and needs in practice frameworks.
- Supports training & support needs during establishment phase

## Department of Housing

Builds more housing because there isn't enough.  
Provides priority access to Supported Rental Pathways for Young People.

## Project Lead/Co-design Support

### Support Establishment

- Directly Supports Home Stretch Team Leaders with establishment Phase in each region

### Practice/Program

- Assistance to facilitate and run co-design workshops in each region
- Coordinates with each service provider to assist in developing establishment project plans
- Supports training & support needs during establishment phase

### Collaboration

- Leads Community of Practice Meetings with Regional Team Leaders
- Leads co-design workshops as part of Contextualising Service to Region [First 3 months]



## Trainer/Educator UWA or Department

### Build Capacity

- Directly Supports Home Stretch Team Leaders with establishment Phase in each region

### Practice/Program

- Works in collaboration with Specialist Child Protection Unit and project officer to refine and publish frameworks
- Facilitates training with Home Stretch Teams on prototypes.

- Coordinates with each service provider to assist in developing establishment project plans
- Supports training & support needs during establishment phase

### Collaboration

- Attends Community of Practice Meetings



## Youth Consultant

### Support Establishment

- Directly supports Home Stretch Team Leaders with establishment phase in each region

### Practice/Program

- Provides peer support to Home Stretch teams

### Collaboration

- Supports establishment of Youth Advisory Groups for each Home Stretch region with strategies for including diverse voices
- Supports Community of Practice Youth Advisory Group

## Impact Project Officer

### Support Establishment

- Directly supports Home Stretch Team Leaders with establishment phase in each region

### Practice/Program

- Facilitates training with Home Stretch Teams on outcomes
- Collects, aggregates and circulates data for the purpose of systems improvement and evaluation of success

## Cultural Practice Lead

### Provide 1:1 Support to Young People

- Provides roll-out support to ACCOs during establishment phase
- System Level Role 50D
- Works with Community of Practice and Local Communities

### Practice/Program

- 1:1 Support and Assistance to Transition Coaches to work with families and young people
- Assistance with individual cases to ensure Family Finding/Mapping in a Culturally Appropriate Way
- Promote access to cultural healing services
- Cultural Supervision to Aboriginal Staff in teams

### Collaboration

- Works with Community of Practice to embed practice principles
- Provides training and support by region with Community of Practice
- Connects with Local Elders and Community to ensure service prioritises voice of community during establishment phase

## Facilitators of Co-Design Work

Kimberley French – Department of Communities  
 Andy Kazim – Home Stretch WA Trial Project Lead  
 Russell Thom - Human Centred Design Lead, Anglicare WA  
 Alexis Nicholson – Co-design Lead, Yorganop  
 Virginia Dingo – Aboriginal Practice Lead, Yorganop  
 Katie Stubley – Strategic Design Manager, Centre for Social Impact  
 Jethro Sercombe – Human Centred Design Lead, Anglicare WA

## Trial Steering Group

### Co-chairs

Philippa Boldy (Anglicare WA) and Helen Nys (Department of Communities)  
 Department of Communities - Policy and Service Design  
 Department of Communities - Fremantle District Office  
 Department of Communities - South West Regional Leadership & Foster Care  
 Anglicare WA  
 Indigo Junction  
 Yorganop  
 Wanslea  
 Children and Family Alliance of WA  
 Telethon Kids Institute/Australian Centre for Child Protection  
 Foster Care Association of WA  
 University of South Australia  
 Create Foundation  
 Youth Advisory Group Representative  
 Youth Advisory Group Members  
 Parkerville Children and Youth Care

## Core Design Team

### Key Collaborators in Design and Development of Prototypes

**Department of Communities – Policy and Service Design**  
 Helen Nys, Kimberley French, Audrey Lee, Karen Lacey & Amanda Bateman

**Department of Communities – Fremantle District Office**  
 Vania De Paz, Paul Burge & Michelle Charlton Fremantle Leaving Care Team Members

**Yorganop**  
 Virginia Dingo, Alexis Nicholson, Libby Cramer, Jo Morrison, Chipso Nchimunya, Kirana Larasati, Angela Thornhill, Gemma Westrup & Dawn Wallam

**Create Foundation**  
 Kym Fenton & Sarah Lewis

**Anglicare WA**  
 Laura Florisson, Vanessa Msapenda, Ben Dancey, Jess Sharp, Jess Powers, Hayley Mackenzie, Natasha Waller, Andy Kazim and Philippa Boldy.  
 Youth Advisory Group Members - Names redacted for Privacy


The group has a core membership of 6 young people with lived experience of leaving care, with an ongoing invitation for young people who are participants in the Trial to attend the advisory group meeting. Young people living with disabilities, young Aboriginal people and young parents are represented within the Youth Advisory Group, providing a broad range of different experiences and perspectives.

**The design of Home Stretch in WA has greatly benefited from government and non-government leaders, frontline workers and agencies.**

**The time, knowledge and skills invested by all stakeholders was an incredibly significant contribution in developing the model. Workshop or co-design session attendance, provided expert input, written or verbal feedback & consultation on prototype development.**

Agency Network Youth (YACWA)	Monash University - Jacinta Waugh
Australian Childhood Foundation	National Coalition for Youth Housing - Youth Homelessness Matters Day
Career Employment Australia - (Indigenous Youth Mobility Pathways)	New Zealand Government - Oranga Tamariki -
Centrecare	Noongar Family Safety and Wellbeing Council - Barbara Henry
Children & Families Alliance of Western Australia	NSW- Y-Foundations
Commissioner for Children & Young People	NSW State Government - Department of Family & Community Services - Rent Choice Youth
Communicare	Parkerville Children and Youth Care
COMPASS - Anglicare Victoria	Perth Inner City Youth Service (PICYS)
Create Foundation	Salvation Army - Crossroads West
Curtin University - Navigating Through Life Research Team	Shelter WA
CYPRESS - Anglicare WA	St John Of God - Horizon House
Danjoo Darbalung - St Catherine's College - Staff & Students	Street Connect - Anglicare WA
Department of Communities	Telethon Kids Institute - Melissa O'Donnell YACWA
Department of Communities Fremantle District Office	Transition Support Services
Department of Communities Homelessness Strategy Team	United Kingdom - Fosterline
Department of Communities Policy Practice Unit	United Kingdom - National Children's Bureau - Staying Put
Department of Communities Policy Staff in the Housing,	United Kingdom - University of Bedfordshire -
Department of Communities Rockingham District Office	UnitingCare West
Department of Communities Supported Rental Pathways Pilot	University of Western Australia - Centre for Social Impact
Dumbartung Aboriginal Corporation	University of Western Australia - Dr Stephan Lund
Family and Relationship Services - Anglicare WA	University of Western Australia - Professor Marie Harries
Foster Care Association of WA	Victoria - Anglicare Victoria -
Foyer Foundation - Brotherhood of St Laurence	Victoria State Government - Department of Health & Human Services - Better Futures
Foyer Oxford - Anglicare WA	WACOSS
Home Stretch National Campaign	Wanslea - Leaving Care Services
Homelessness, Disability Kinship Connections areas	Wanslea - Transition to Independent Adulthood Trial
Indigo Junction - Housing & Homelessness Services	Yes Housing - Anglicare WA
Indigo Junction - LIFT Program	Yorganop
Innovation Unit - Anglicare WA	Young Parents Support Service - Anglicare WA
McCusker Center for Citizenship - Wicked Problems Unit	Youth Futures - Youth Place
Mental Health Commission - Youthlink Aboriginal	Youth Homelessness Advisory Council Members - YACWA
Mental Health Commission - Youthreach South	Youth Legal Service Inc
MercyCare	Y-Shac - Anglicare WA
Mission Australia	
Monash University - Assoc Professor Philip Mendes	





Anglicare WA acknowledged the significant time, knowledge, skills and resources that have been invested by numerous stakeholders in the Home Stretch WA trial.

We are now presented with a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to be part of social policy change that will result in transformative outcomes for young people who would have otherwise aged.