

The logo is a circular emblem with a blue-to-purple gradient. It features the text 'Home Stretch' in a large, white, sans-serif font, with 'WA' in a smaller font below it. A decorative arc of white dots curves along the bottom edge of the circle.

**Home
Stretch**

WA

Info session

Acknowledgement of Country



We wish to acknowledge the traditional custodians of the land we are meeting on and pay respect to elders past and present. We wish to acknowledge and respect their continuing culture and the contribution they make to the life of this city and this region.

In this Home Stretch WA Info session?



What is Home Stretch WA?

I need more information!

Service Providers?

How does Home Stretch
WA work?

Referral process?

Eligibility?

FAQ!



What should being 18 feel like?

Activity: Write on your sticky note how turning 18 made/makes you feel?



You can write down or draw anything! For example, emotions, goals, things you're excited for!



Turning 18 should be a
positive and exciting
experience.



This is what **Home Stretch** is helping
make happen.

What's on the mind of young people when they are leaving care?



The day after my 18th birthday, my case manager dropped me off at the crisis accommodation
Young person in Workshop 1

They gave me a huge file and that was it...
Young person from YAG

I had to leave care the same week as my ATAR
Young person in Workshop 1

I wouldn't have had to sell the house if the subsidy could be continued

Foster Carer from Trial

I was better off in jail than being supported by leaving care services

Young person from YAG

"I thought the only point of the plan was to provide and assist me with furniture. Was not aware they were able to help with other things"
Young person interviewed in Pilbara

I was doing fine until I turned 19 and my share house fell apart. All the other students just went back home. I couldn't do that. Then things really went downhill.

Young person in Workshop 1

I don't think I had a case manager for the last 10 months
Young person from YAG

I didn't leave care, care left me!

Young person in Workshop 1

What young people and carers have said about Home Stretch WA

I'm not worried about leaving care anymore!

My coach listened to me and helped me figure out how to move from my foster family and live with mum. And how to talk to them about it.

The Transition Coach was like an extra pair of hands for our family,

They didn't take over and tell me how to be a parent.

The respected our family and helped with all the things I didn't understand like TAFE and centrelink.

At first it sounded a bit like having to stay in care, but it wasn't.

When I met my coach and she told me it was my choice - and how it worked - I decided to try it.

I'd stopped trusting anyone in the Dept would be able to help after 18.

Home Stretch works because it was designed by young people.

Home Stretch is for me.

My coach helped me understand who I am and what's important to me.

What is Home Stretch?

Home Stretch offers you the choice to access higher levels of support until you reach the age of 21.

It extends the supports from the care system, without meaning you have to stay 'in care'.

The Department of Communities is partnering with community service organisations and Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisations (Home Stretch WA service providers) to deliver the program across the State.



How & Who Designed Home Stretch WA?

Through a combination of "Lived" and "Learned" Experience

- Since 2018 over 137 Young People have been consulted in design.
- 37 Young People in the Home Stretch Trial helped test and refine the model
- A Youth Advisory Group help lead the design and review of the model
- Front Line Practice Experts
- Research and Best Practice from across the world

We use Human Centred Design Methodology to ensure **young people** remain at the centre



Home Stretch WA is Strong in Culture

Nitja Nop Yorga Ngulla Mia – System Design

We sought permission. We co-created our approach. We listened deeply and respectfully. We made sense of it together.

We were Aboriginal Young People, Families, Community, Elders and Practice Experts

We co-created a set of principles to guide Home Stretch in WA.

These principles have guided the development of the Home Stretch WA Model.

These principles have guided the plan for the future.



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Home Stretch WA Model



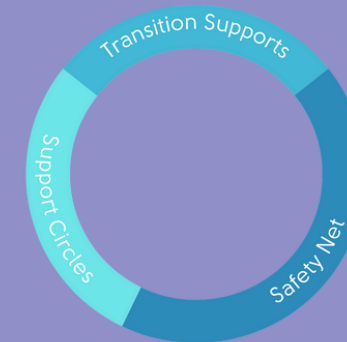
Young people are at centre of support.
Everyone is treated as an individual



Support or connection is offered in
all areas of life



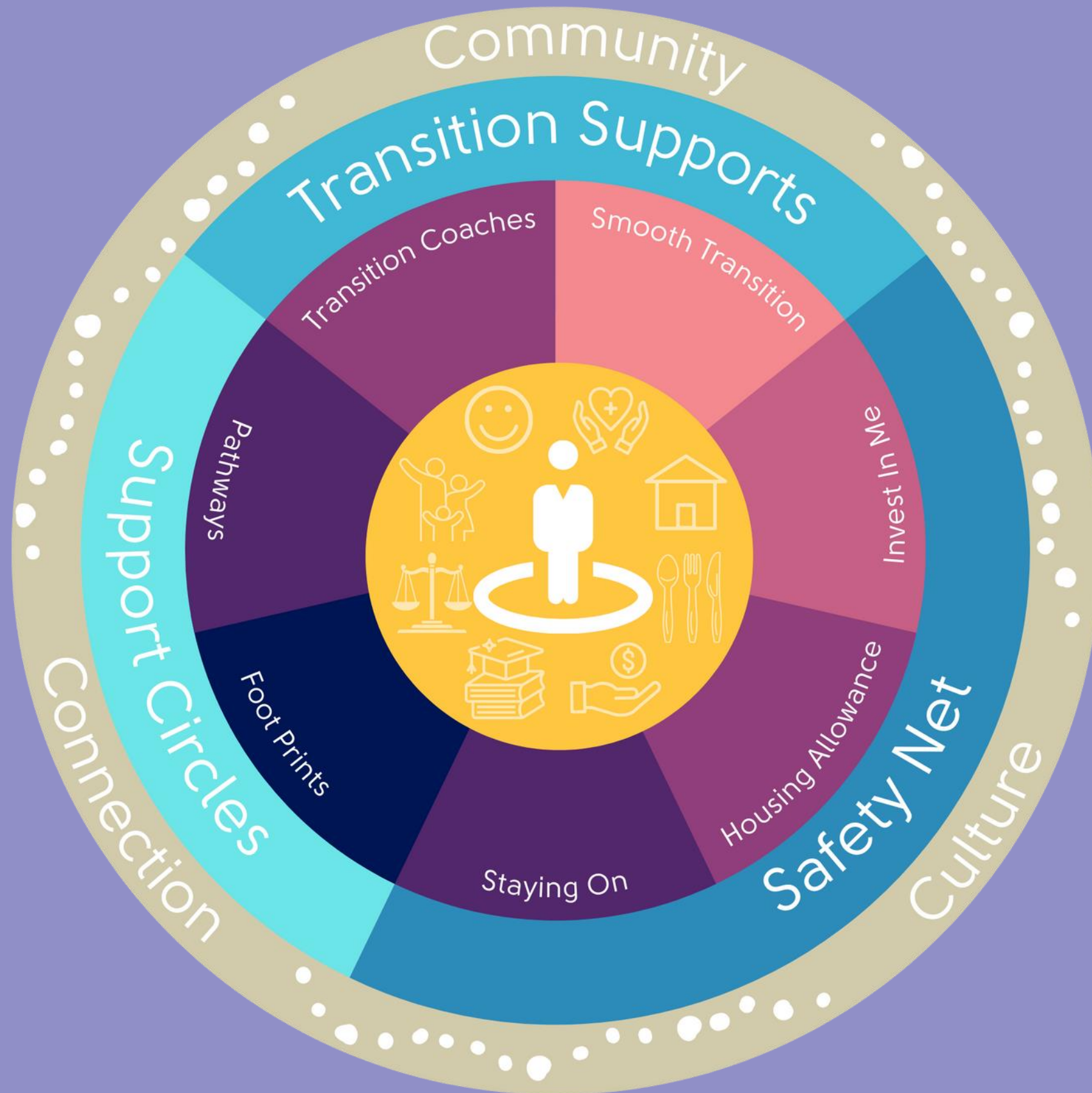
Support is delivered in specific
ways [Practice Approaches] that
work for young people



Home Stretch WA focuses on 3
key elements of support



Home Stretch WA greater purpose is to
connect young people with their
community and culture.



Home Stretch WA - Transition Support

Transition Support is a key element of the Home Stretch program. Flexible, one-to-one support focused on encouraging towards interdependence

This support is offered in two main ways:

Smooth Transition

Transition Coaches

Smooth Transition - (Engagement with program/Referral & Exit)

Working together with a young person and their support circle from age of 17.5 years to ensure a smooth transition into the Home Stretch WA program and a seamless continuation of support until the age of 21 years.

It's also about young people being aware of their rights and being able to independently access support they are entitled to after 21.



Why is Smooth Transition needed?

The current system was failing young people, and did not provide them the supports and resources at the times they needed them most.

Young people involved in the design Home Stretch WA said they wanted to make a choice when they were ready. Referrals at 15 did not give them much choice.

Allowing young people to build trust over time with their Transition Coach was an important learning from the Home Stretch WA Trial.



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

Young Person

Transition Coaches

A consistent, persistent and skilled youth worker who works with young people to provide flexible, one to one support focused on coaching towards independence.

The Transition Coach works from a set of practice principles ensuring support provided is consistent and focused on building a young person's self reliance, skills, capacity and connection to community, culture and country.



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 beyond the child protection system and being seen as a 'care leaver'.

"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



Home Stretch WA - Safety Net

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

This is provided through three different Home Stretch WA service offers...

Housing Allowance

Invest In Me

Staying On Agreement

Housing Allowance

Young people can be supported to access a Home Stretch WA Housing Allowance that can assist them to afford a broader range of living arrangements and includes an emphasis on providing them the skills and supports they need to secure and maintain safe and stable housing.

Transition Coaches work with young people to make a plan for housing and access financial support to make it affordable.



Housing Allowance

How much is the Housing Allowance payment?

As much or as little as you need to make your housing affordable.

The maximum amount is up to the same amount as the Staying on Subsidy.

Age	Current Maximum Rate
18	\$450
19	\$337.50
20	\$225

Staying On Agreement

Young people can be supported to continue ‘staying on’ with a carer to ensure they have a stable living arrangement until age of 21 years.

This includes a continuation of payments and support to foster and family carers with an expectation that a young person will contribute to their living expenses from their independent income.

The focus of Staying On agreements is to support the young person’s emerging independence. A Home Stretch Staying On Facilitator works with each family to setup an agreement about how things work after 18.

These payments are administered by Communities.



Staying On Allowance

How much is the Staying On Subsidy ?

The subsidy is staged down every year and the young person 'chips in' to costs.

Age	Current Maximum Rate
18	\$450
19	\$337.50
20	\$225

Invest In Me

Gives young people the 'right' to a visible and secure financial safety net for resources to support them towards their aspirations and goals, or for crisis relief.

Invest in Me funding is provided through the coaching relationship and administered by Home Stretch WA service providers.

It provides young people with fast access to financial assistance without having to return to a District Office.



How does Invest In Me work?

- Young people can request financial support from their Transition coach towards their goals, or to deal with emergencies. This replaces going to a District Office and requesting money from the leaving care fund.
- Invest In Me is focused on supporting young people to build their capacity and skills around their finances. Young people are asked to 'Chip In' to their costs. This doesn't always have to be \$\$\$
- For purchases under \$100, the Transition Coach can make the decision. For purchases over \$100, the Coordinator or Manager will review the application and approve it.



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.

Home Stretch WA - Support Circles

Support Circles are at the centre of all of the support provided by Home Stretch WA. Transition Coaches are focused on supporting young people to grow and maintain lasting connections to the people, places and things that are important to them. This support also include the offer of assistance to map out the past and to help reconnect with family and historic relationships.

The importance of support circles can be seen in every service offer of the Home Stretch WA program. Though it is the specific focus of two areas of support...

Footprints

Pathways

Footprints

Walking alongside young people to help them understand and explore the people, places and connections that are important to them.

Mapping out the footprints and parts of their life story, we hope to find opportunities for them to build new connections or revisit old ones.



Pathways

Walking alongside young people as they navigate their connections to family, community, culture and country. Providing the resources and supports they need to heal and connect when they are ready

Coaching young people in the skills and knowledge they need to build their support circles, encouraging them to explore pathways to reconnect and providing a safety net for them if things don't work out how they had first intended.



Home Stretch Practice Principles

The Home Stretch WA Practice Principles were developed by young people and every Home Stretch WA provider will work from these principles.

Young People
are at the Centre



A reliable source of support is your right!
It's your choice to join and you can choose
to come and go.



Young People
are at the Centre



You are the expert in your life, you
deserve the freedom and respect to make
your own choices.

Our support is unconditional.



Young People
are at the Centre

"Chipping In" is about young people taking charge. This means that young people are asked to invest in themselves - building their skills, knowledge and capacity.



Young People
are at the Centre

You can make an informed choice about the support you receive from Home Stretch WA. There are no shocks for you or the important people in your life.



Young People
are at the Centre

Your coach will be consistent & persistent but
not intrusive.

“Like a text message, not a knock on the door”.



Young People
are at the Centre

Important moments & transition
points in your life are
acknowledged & celebrated.



Young People
are at the Centre

Your Relationships are important.

The important people in your life can be part of your Home Stretch WA experience and we can support you to build new connections



Young People
are at the Centre

Culturally Safe.

Your supports recognize Aboriginal, and CALD young people must navigate between two worlds.



Young People
are at the Centre

Know your mob to know your place.
When you're ready we will help you find ways to
build your connection to family and culture.



Young People
are at the Centre

Home Stretch will help you heal
and connect.

When you are ready.



Young People
are at the Centre

A series of light grey dots of varying sizes, arranged in a curved path from the top left towards the center of the image.

Break Time

(10 minutes)



Who will provide Home Stretch WA services?

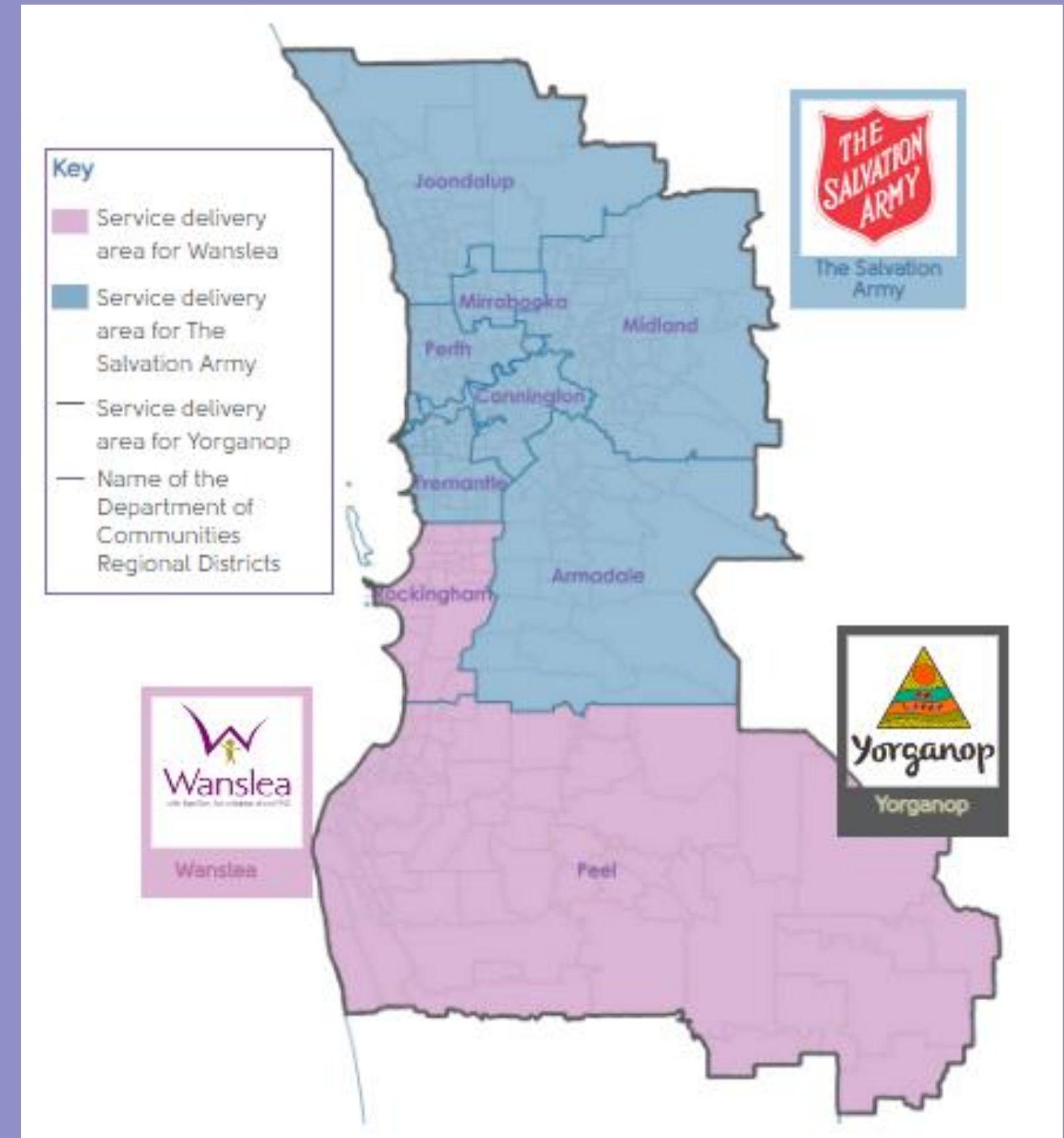
Communities is delivering an interim service provision model to deliver Home Stretch WA service across the state through to 2025.

Metro- Yorganop, Karla Kuliny, Salvation Army & Wanslea cover the Perth Metro Area

Regional- Mission Australia, South West Aboriginal Medical Services, Albany Youth Support Accommodation, Broome Youth & Families Hub, Marra Worra Worra, Jungarni-Jutiya, MG Corporation, Robe River Kuruma, Bloodwood Tree Association, Streeties, and Goldfield Indigenous Housing Organisation (GIHO) cover regional areas.



Home Stretch WA for 2024



Do Home Stretch WA service providers offer after hours support?

- The service provider typically provides support to young people during office hours.
- One of the key elements of Home Stretch WA is to build a young person's interdependence on mainstream services and supports.
- If a young person is struggling with any issues that requires access to supports after hours, their Transition Coach will support them to understand and connect them with appropriate specialist or mainstream supports in the community.
- For vulnerable young people this will be developed and agreed through a safety and wellbeing plan.

Do Home Stretch WA service providers offer after hours support?



- Young people are also supported to understand their rights and to access assistance in an emergency.
- During office hours this would be provided through the Home Stretch WA service provider. After hours young people can contact Crisis Care and identify themselves as a care leaver and part of a Home Stretch WA service program.
- Young people's engagement in Home Stretch WA will be flagged and recorded on ASSIST database so that any after-hours support that is provided can be communicated to the relevant Home Stretch WA service provider.

Who is eligible for Home Stretch WA?



- Turning the age of 18 years on or after 1 July 2022
- Young people connected to a Department of Communities district office that has a commissioned Home Stretch WA service provider.
- The young person is eligible for leaving care assistance as set out Eligibility set out in the legislation *Children and Community Services Act 2004* (section 96)

Who is eligible for Home Stretch WA?



- The young person is eligible for leaving care assistance as set out Eligibility set out in the legislation *Children and Community Services Act 2004* (section 96) -
 - a) the person has left the CEO's care; and
 - b) the person is under 25 years of age; and
 - c) at any time after the person reached 15 years of age they were:
 - I. the subject of a protection order (time limited) or protection order (until 18); or
 - II. the subject of a negotiated placement agreement in force for a continuous period of at least six months; or
 - III. provided with placement services under section 32(1)(a) of the Act for a continuous period of at least six months.

Are young people who were on Special Guardianship Order eligible for Home Stretch WA?

Young people who were placed on a Special Guardianship Order after turning the age of **15 years** are eligible for Home Stretch WA and leaving care support.

Young people who are placed on a Special Guardianship Order before they turn age of 15 years will **not** be eligible for leaving care or Home Stretch WA services due to not meeting legislation requirements under section 96.

Are young people with disabilities eligible for Home Stretch WA, including those under the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS)?

Yes, if they meet the eligibility criteria. For young people living with a disability that limits their capacity to live independently, or for young people who have complex care needs (NATS 5), the following criteria must be met:

- The young person must have the capacity to make an informed choice about engaging with Home Stretch WA service provider.
- NDIS support packages must be in place and appropriately resourced to meet the daily living needs of the young person.
- A funded coordination function must be included in the NDIS package.

*Referrals must not be a substitute for a temporary solution in the absence of NDIS support package.

* A staying on subsidy is not available where the carer is in receipt of or eligible for the Centrelink Carer Payment

Can young people be supported by a Leaving Care Service Provider and Home Stretch WA service at the same time?

No, young people cannot access one-on-one support from both Leaving Care Services and Home Stretch WA at the same time.

A young person will be provided with information about their options and the difference in the level of support and resourcing available to them as part of the initial discussions with the Home Stretch WA Transition Coach.

If a young person has already commenced support through a Leaving Care Service, then they will be offered the choice of transitioning to a Home Stretch WA service provider or to remain with the Leaving Care Service.

How much information about a young person's progress is shared with the District office while they are supported by Home Stretch WA?

Young people involved in the co-design identified that they would like to have control over what information is shared between the district office and the Home Stretch WA service provider after they turn the age of 18 years.

Transition Coaches will negotiate with young people what information they would like shared with staff in a district office.

When a young person opts out of Home Stretch WA, or if they age out at 21 years, the Home Stretch WA Transition Coach will work with the young person to complete a Handover Summary document.

The document will provide information about the young person's current support circle, the supports being provided to the young person, and a summary of the financial assistance they received. The document will also outline any potential areas of financial support the young person might request from a district office after the age of 21 years.

Referral is a choice!

The referral process to Home Stretch WA has been co-designed with young people, their carers and other support people. It is centred around the idea of providing the young person with an informed choice about whether to engage in extended supports through Home Stretch WA.

A young person should be advised of their choices around leaving care supports early in planning, and in developmentally appropriate ways.

This includes providing them with information about their choice to engage in Home Stretch WA from when they turn 15 years of age.

Referrals cannot be made to Home Stretch WA service providers until the young person reaches 17 years old.

How do young people get referred?

All referrals are to be made by a **district office**, either by a young person's case manager or the relevant leaving care team member.

The referral form is a simple process that provides basic information about a young person's circumstances and their potential level of support. While the referral doesn't require a young person to sign the referral form, they must provide consent to the referral.

This referral is sent to the relevant Home Stretch WA service provider who will allocate a Transition Coach to follow up the referral and invite a young person to meet for an initial information session.

Any eligible young person, with assistance from their carer or other support people, can request to be referred to a Home Stretch WA service provider at any district office.



A Transition Coach will follow up for a maximum of six weeks to engage the young person. As part of this engagement, the Transition Coach will seek input and guidance from a young person's carer or other support people to inform how best to offer the service to them.

How to Refer a Young Person

Supported by
Home
Stretch 18

Awareness
from 15

Referral
from 17

Choice

Onboarding
from 17.5

District Office

Share Home Stretch WA information to carers and young people.

Identify eligible young people a Obtain consent to refer.

Complete Referral Form - Stage 1 Email it to Home Stretch WA provider

Complete Referral Form - Stage 2 Support Transition Coach & young person to meet

Young person makes informed choice to engage in Home Stretch WA

Young person makes Informed choice to decline Home Stretch WA

CPFS & Transition Coach share care of young person Encourage young person & Coach to build a relationship

Gradual transition of support & planning to Home Stretch WA Provide information as needed

Young person has transitioned to Home Stretch WA All required information has now been provided to Home Stretch WA

Young person can request re-referral

Documents & Touchpoints

- Home Stretch WA Fact Sheet (Young People)
- HSWA Explainer video
- Staying On Guide for Carers and Young People

- Home Stretch WA Fact Sheet (Young People)
- Smooth Transition - Information Session - Practice Guide

- Home Stretch WA Fact Sheet (Young People)
- Referral Stage I Form
- Referral & Onboarding Flow Chart - Providers

- Referral Stage II Form
- Home Stretch WA Engagement Plan with Locator Contacts

- Home Stretch WA Fact Sheet (Young People)
- Provider Release of Information Form
- Consent to Participate & Collect Information Form
- Home Stretch WA - Explainer Video
- Consent to Obtain & Store Records Form

- Practice Principles - Flash Cards
- Protocols for Transition Coach & Case Worker - Working Together
- Transition Coach - Stages - Practice Guide

- Leaving Care Plan
- Cultural Plan
- Cultural Map
- Protocols for Transition Coach & Case Worker - Working Together
- Onboarding Checklist

- Next Step - Goal Plan
- Outcome Measure Tool
- Footprints Ecomap
- Invest In Me Application Form - Over 100
- Child History File

When can young people be referred?

A young person can be referred from any time after they reach the age of 17 years, and up to the time they reach the age of 20 years and 9 months.

If a young person is older than 20 years of age, they should be encouraged to explore alternative support services, either through the current Leaving Care Service providers or services that are specialist to their current needs (e.g. homelessness service, mental health service).

Home Stretch WA is a service offering from ages 18 until a young person turns 21 years old.

Why aren't Home Stretch WA referrals made at the same time as referrals to Leaving Care Service providers?

The Home Stretch WA model was co-designed with young people who strongly advocated for the referral and onboarding process to occur at a developmentally appropriate stage, when they are better prepared to make decisions about their future.

Ensuring the referral includes contemporary information and is aligned with a young person's current support needs and goals allows for a smooth transition of support into a Home Stretch WA service

While young people are often referred by the district office at 15 years of age to a Leaving Care Service provider, very few engage with the service until they are 17 or 18 when the prospect of leaving the care system is a reality for them.

What if a young person would benefit from Home Stretch WA but is unwilling to agree to the referral?

It can be frustrating to know that a young person may benefit from supports provided by Home Stretch WA but is unwilling to even consider it as an option.

Giving the young person the opportunity to review the Home Stretch WA service offer video and encouraging them to talk through the option with people in their support circle are helpful ways to support them to make the right choice for them.

It is also important to be clear about the alternative leaving care supports available to the young person after they reach the age of 18 years and encourage them to make an informed choice from all their options.

Validating and supporting a young person's choice and agency is an important part of building positive help-seeking and self-reliance. Home Stretch WA service providers will aim to embed Transition Coaches in each district office (for a few hours every fortnight).

This provides an opportunity for a young person who is ambivalent or unsure of whether Home Stretch WA is for them to meet in a more informal space and find out more about the program.

What if a young person declines Home Stretch WA but later changes their mind?

The young person will have the option to request a referral into Home Stretch WA through any district office up to the time they reach the age of **20 years and 9 months**.

It is the responsibility of the Home Stretch WA provider to let them know how to reconnect, and also to let the referrer in the district office know of the same information.

If a young person returns to a district office after the **age of 18 years** to seek assistance, the district duty officer or leaving care team should offer the young person the opportunity to be referred to Home Stretch WA.



Questions

Contact Us:

Website: www.communities.wa.gov.au/homestretchwa

Email: homestretchwa@communities.wa.gov.au

Home Stretch WA FAQ Sheet:

<https://www.wa.gov.au/organisation/departments-of-communities/home-stretch-wa-roll-out>




@homestretchwa




Home Stretch WA

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Stretch WA
information!



Additional- Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)





Carers & Staying On

How are foster or family carers supported by Home Stretch WA?

A young person who chooses to take up the Home Stretch WA offer and wishes to continue in a stable living arrangement with their foster or family carer (where the carer agrees) will be supported through a Staying On Agreement (the Agreement).

The Agreement is an opportunity to identify and map out the supports and resources needed by the carer and young person to make the living arrangement successful.

While the focus of Home Stretch WA support is around the young person and their needs, under the Agreement a carer has access to one-to-one support and links to services through the Staying On Facilitator as part of the Home Stretch WA offering. However, this support is less intensive than the supports typically provided to a foster carer of a young person in care (i.e. under the age of 18 years).

What if there are other children living with the same foster or family carer ?

A young person who is supported through a Staying On Agreement in a home that houses other children in care will be assisted to gain a Working with Children Check, as a requirement of all adults staying in a foster home.

Where the carer is supported by other foster care supports through the Department of Communities or a Community Service Organisation, the Staying On Agreement will include consideration of how those issues and existing supports provided might align with that provided through Home Stretch WA.

Can Home Stretch WA fund an extension of a specialised foster care placement or provide an interim payment for carers transitioning to become a carer under the NDIS?

The Home Stretch WA Staying On Subsidy is not sufficient to cover the costs of a specialised foster care arrangement, nor has it been designed to provide a temporary subsidy payment to accommodate any delays in a young person's transition to being supported by the NDIS.

It also cannot be used as an additional or supplementary payment to another carer payment. In these situations, the district office may choose to work in partnership with the carer, support agencies and NDIS provider to resolve the gap through an individualised agreement outside of the Home Stretch WA supports.

Can a young person return to a past foster or family care arrangement under Home Stretch WA Staying On?

A young person and their previous foster carers can be supported to establish a Staying On Agreement or Housing Allowance, the choice of payment will be dependent on whether the carers are still approved foster carers.

The Staying On Facilitator can also support these arrangements through the Housing Allowance payment, but drawing on the Staying On practice framework.

If a young person stays on with a foster or family carer, does this carer need to have insurance?

Staying On isn't a foster placement, it's a choice made by adults to continue a living arrangement. Home Stretch WA provides a subsidy to support the young person's contribution to living costs.

The Home Stretch WA Transition Coach will discuss health insurance (particularly ambulance cover) with the young person as part of holistic planning across the eight domains.

This can also be discussed in the negotiation of a Staying On Agreement. If there is an identified need for health, home or care insurance, the Transition Coach will work with the young person around planning for that expense and their contribution.

This might include using the Invest In Me Fund and may include the young person chipping in to the family health insurance policy, or supporting the young person to learn how to take out their own ambulance (or health) insurance.



Housing Allowance



How is the Housing Allowance different to a Staying On Subsidy?

A living arrangement funded under a Housing Allowance may offer a young person the same level of support as under a Staying On Agreement, for example, where a young person is living with a relative or extended family member. Therefore, the maximum rate of payment is the same as a Staying On subsidy.

Other living arrangements supported under the Housing Allowance may not provide any level of support and the allowance will only provide a rental subsidy. Staying On Subsidy payments are not treated as taxable income, and do not typically impact income support payments paid to the carer by Centrelink or to a young person.

Housing Allowance payments are treated as taxable income and must be reported by the individual or organisation receiving the payments as part of their income. Housing Allowance payments do not impact a young person's income support payments through Centrelink but are deemed reportable income for the recipient

Can a biological parent be paid a Housing Allowance?

Many young people leaving care will choose to return to their biological families to explore those relationships and reconnect.

Some will even choose to live with families they were removed from.

The Home Stretch WA program provides structured support to young people to explore and make safe connections with their biological family but cannot provide any direct financial payment or support to living arrangements with the family members from whom they were removed.

What kind of living arrangements are ineligible for the Housing Allowance?

There are a few living arrangements that have been deemed ineligible for a Housing Allowance because of existing policy or the perceived risks posed to a young person.

Living arrangements that are ineligible include:

- Housing options identified as unsafe during the application process based on the discretion of the Home Stretch WA provider. Where possible attempts should be made to support a young person to make the living arrangement safe and stable through providing support and structure.
- Emergency or short-term options that are less than three months in duration.
- Housing that is already subsidised, including funded National Housing and Homelessness Agreement housing and homelessness services, Public Housing and Community Housing, or other specialist youth housing and homelessness programs.
- Arrangements that require payment to a family member who has been an open case with the Department of Communities.



Funding

How much funding do young people have direct access to under Home Stretch WA?

Each young person has access to funding - called an Invest In Me Fund - that is delegated to their Home Stretch WA service provider. This funding can be used for a variety of purposes and is designed to be accessible and flexible.

Transition Coaches and Home Stretch WA service providers must adhere to the Invest In Me practice guidelines and ensure a young person is accessing mainstream resources and financial supports before applying for Invest In Me funding. Young people are also asked to make contributions towards their own costs. Ideally a young person's needs around Invest In Me would reduce each year as their financial self-reliance increases.

Each Home Stretch WA service provider must independently manage their Invest In Me funding pool to accommodate the range of financial supports that may be needed by young people they are supporting.

Do young people taking part in Home Stretch WA still have access to the Leaving Care Fund?

Yes, if the young person meets leaving care assistance eligibility criteria (section 96 of the Children and Community Services Act 2004).

The Home Stretch WA program provides a young person with access to the Invest in Me Fund directly through their Transition Coach. The Invest In Me Fund has been designed to improve a young person's access to resources, but also focuses support on developing their capacity to be financially self-reliant.

While Invest in Me funding is the primary source of financial support for a young person engaged in the Home Stretch program, there may be some high-cost items or services, such as dental work or lawyer fees for a Criminal Injuries Compensation Claim (which may or may not have been identified prior to them leaving care), that cannot be paid due to the limited funding available.

In these instances, the Transition Coach will support the young person to make a request for financial assistance for the required goods/services through a district office from the Leaving Care Fund. Should a young person engaged in the Home Stretch WA program receive financial support through the Leaving Care Fund, then a district office should advise the Home Stretch WA Transition Coach.

This will enable the Transition Coach to work with the young person to ensure their needs are met while also supporting the move to independence and self-management of finances

If a young person's Leaving Care Plan includes a commitment to pay significant expenses, how will these costs be covered?

If a Leaving Care Plan stipulates the Department of Communities will pay for significant costs (for example, flights back to county or dental surgery), then payment towards these costs must be covered through the Leaving Care Fund.

When a young person is onboarded into Home Stretch WA program, their Transition Coach will support the development of the Leaving Care Plan and assist the district office and young person to understand the financial supports available through the program.

Where a young person has already left care, the Transition Coach will obtain a copy of the Leaving Care Plan and support the young person to liaise with the district office where applicable to identify and resolve any issues related to outstanding financial assistance on a case-by-case basis.