

# **National Standards for Out-Of-Home Child Care**

Department for Social Welfare Standards

October, 2009

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ISBN: 978-99957-803-0-2

Author: Working Group on Standards for Out-Of-Home Care

Publication: Department for Social Welfare Standards  
Ministry for Social Policy

Illustrations: Children from St Rita Home, Tarxien and from St Joseph Home, Sta Venera

Design and Printing: Print Right Ltd., St Venera, Malta

# Acknowledgements

## Acknowledgements

The Department for Social Welfare Standards (DSWS) is responsible for setting Maltese national standards of social care. The DSWS formed a working group that consisted of service users, ex service-users, parents and persons who work in the field in order to draw up National Standards for Residential Child Care. The working group was chaired by Marian Muscat Azzopardi and the members were Fr Silvio Bezzina, Pat Bonello, Sarah Borda Bondin, Vicky Bugeja, Roslyn Calleja, Sr Rosette Camilleri, Sr Magdalene Cauchi, Jesmond Debono, Mahmoud El Bakry, Alexia Ellul, Frances Mallia, Francesca Mangion, Elaine Micallef, Annalise Montesin, Carmen Rapinett, Rolando Skodatis, Marie Testa, Sr Denise Vassallo and Charmaine Vella.

This working group produced Draft National Standards for Residential Child Care that were issued for public consultation on the 15<sup>th</sup> February 2008. These standards were an adaptation of Q4C European Standards to the local context.

The Quality4Children Standards for Out-of-Home Child Care in Europe Project is the work of three organisations, FICE (International Federation of Educative Communities), IFCO (International Foster Care Organisation) and SOS Children's Villages. 32 countries participated in the project. John Role was the Maltese National Coordinator who carried out the research locally with the help of a national team that consisted of Sr Magdalene Cauchi, Olivia Galea Seychell, Fr Frankie Cini and Edwina Gouder. Young persons, children, care givers, biological parents and professionals participated in the formulation of the Q4C Standards.

A revised version of the National Standards for Residential Child Care was produced by the DSWS working group in July 2008. This version took into consideration the generous response from the vast consultation process.

This version was adapted to include all out-of-home care by a working group that consisted of DSWS staff and stakeholders within the field of foster care. The members of the working group were Marian Muscat Azzopardi, John Role, Jason Zerafa and Anna Azzopardi.

Without the hard work, dedication and good will of all the above, these standards would not have been developed.

We would like to thank the numerous stakeholders who responded to the consultation process. Without their views and suggestions, this work would not fully reflect the local needs and concerns.

We would also like to thank the Scottish National Care Standards Committee who kindly waived copyright on their standards.

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# Introduction

## Introduction

### Living in care

There are times when, for some reason, your family is not able to look after you. When you cannot stay with your family, then you may need to go into care and the state will provide people to look after you. You will be looked after by a foster care family or in a children's residential home.

### Standards of care

You and your family need to know that while you are living in care you are well looked after, you are safe and you are getting all that you need to help you to grow up in the best possible way. To make sure that you are well looked after, the Department for Social Welfare Standards (DSWS) asked a group of people to write a set of National Standards for Out-Of-Home Care.

The working group that wrote the standards was composed of persons who use or have used the services, their relatives and staff who work in providing the service. When the standards were written, they were issued for public consultation; the views of stakeholders were taken into consideration when the final draft of the standards was drawn up. These standards describe what each and every child or young person can expect from the service provider, such as for example, Aġenzija Appoġġ, residential homes and others. They have been written in a way that you can understand them. Other persons with experience in the field were also asked for their opinion regarding the standards.

The standards are grouped under headings that follow your journey through the service. These are as follows:

### Standard Area 1:

#### Decision-making and admission process

*This area includes the following standards:*

- Standard 1:** You and your family receive support as necessary during the decision-making process
- Standard 2:** You will be given all the help you need to be able to participate in the decision-making process
- Standard 3:** A professional decision-making process ensures the best possible care for you
- Standard 4:** Siblings are cared for together
- Standard 5:** The move to a new home is well prepared and sensitively carried out
- Standard 6:** While you are not living with your family your care is guided by an individual care plan

# Introduction

## Standard Area 2:

### Care-taking process

*This area includes the following standards:*

**Standard 7:** Your placement matches your needs, life situation and original social environment

**Standard 8:** You maintain contact with your family

**Standard 9:** Care givers are qualified and have adequate working conditions

**Standard 10:** Your relationship with your caregiver is based on understanding, respect and individual attention

**Standard 11:** You are empowered to actively participate in a responsible manner in making decisions that directly affect your life

**Standard 12:** You are cared for in appropriate living conditions

**Standard 13:** You are well prepared for independent living

## Standard Area 3:

### Leaving-care process

*This area includes the following standards:*

**Standard 14:** The leaving-care process is thoroughly planned and implemented

**Standard 15:** Communication in the leaving care process is carried out in a useful and appropriate manner

**Standard 16:** You are empowered to participate in the leaving-care process

**Standard 17:** Follow-up, continuous support and opportunity for contact are ensured

# Introduction

## Explanation of Format

The standards are set out in a way that helps all those involved to know what is expected of them. After the main principle of each standard is set out, the responsibilities of each of the people/entities involved including those responsible for child social care services and those who are responsible for the provision of care are outlined. There are general guidelines on how each standard is to be observed. This is followed by a list of indicators that suggest that a process might be going wrong.

### Using the national care standards

As a child or young person living in, or receiving care in, a care home or with a foster care family, you will use the standards at different times. You and those responsible for your care may want to use them so that you and they know the sort of questions to ask under different circumstances. If you already live in a care home or with a foster care family you may use the standards when discussing the service you receive with your caregivers or with other people, such as your social worker.

If things are not going well you can refer to the standards when you speak about matters that are worrying you or when you make a complaint.

Those who are responsible for your care may use the standards to find out what is expected of them in offering support and care. Standards make it clear that everything about the service is focused on the quality of life that you, as the person receiving care, experience.

The standards must also guide the work of those responsible for ensuring that there are enough suitable placements within residential homes and foster care families to meet the needs of those children who require care.

When applying for registration, every agency responsible for the provision of care and every service provider will provide the DSWS with a statement of how they plan to work and achieve their goals. The DSWS uses this statement when carrying out an assessment within the care home.

### The principles behind the standards

The working group is aware that caring for you involves giving the kind of care, warmth and devotion that cannot be spelt out in a set of standards. Attention needs to be given to your emotional and developmental needs of children and young persons. The standards reflect a minimum level of what is needed to be done in your best interest.

The standards are based on a set of standards that were presented to the European Parliament, in June 2007 by the Quality4Children international organisation. The standards are also based on a set of principles that are found in foreign national standards and have been adapted to local requirements.



# Introduction

These standards recognise that services must be accessible and suitable for all who need them, according to their needs. They reflect the fact that you have rights, and that your experience in out-of-home care is important and should be a positive one.

## The main principles

The principles are: dignity, privacy, choice, safety, realising your potential in a suitable way, individuality and diversity.

### Dignity

Your right to:

- be treated with dignity and respect at all times; and
- enjoy a wide range of appropriate social relationships.

### Privacy

Your right to:

- have your privacy and property respected; and
- be free from unnecessary intrusion.

### Choice

Your right to:

- make informed choices, while recognising the rights of other people to do the same;
- know about your range of choices; and
- get help to fully understand all the options available to you and to choose the one that is best for you.

### Safety

Your right to:

- feel safe in all aspects of your life, and to be secure in the knowledge that adults are responsible for children's safety;
- enjoy safety without being over protected; and
- be free from exploitation and abuse.

### Realising potential

Your right to have an opportunity to:

- achieve what is possible and what you desire;
- make full use of the resources that are available to you to fulfil your potential; and
- make the most of your life in the way that is suitable for you.

# Introduction

## **Equality, individuality and diversity**

Your right to:

- develop your skills to live an independent life with a sense of direction and opportunity to fulfil your personal aspirations;
- be valued for your ethnic background, language, culture, sexual orientation and faith;
- be valued and treated as an individual;
- be treated equally and be cared for in an environment free from bullying, harassment and discrimination; and
- be able to complain effectively and responsibly without fear of victimization.

## **Responsibilities**

You will actively participate in decisions taken about your care according to your level of understanding. It is in your best interest for you to act responsibly and you should do your best to follow the care plan that is agreed upon. While you are living in care you need to cooperate with your caregivers when they are acting in your best interest. You should also treat other children you are living with and other children in care with respect and dignity.

## **Emergency situations**

There are circumstances where due to the urgent nature of your situation it will be impossible to follow each step set out in these standards. In such cases these standards should be given an intelligent interpretation.

## **Interpretation of Standards**

- These standards are based on the fundamental principle that the best interest of the child should always be the primary consideration.
- Your family is very important to you. For this reason, the participation of your family and communication with you are an integral part of these standards. However, there are circumstances where communication with your family and/or your family's participation is either not in your best interest or is not as feasible as is desired. Each case is to be examined according to its particular circumstances.
- These standards recognise throughout the importance of siblings not being separated. Currently there are no residential care facilities in Malta that allow for siblings to be cared for together under various circumstances. This is an issue of great concern and until the state provides the necessary resources to permit that siblings do not need to be separated, the standards emphasise the importance of maintaining a close contact that is sufficient for siblings to build and maintain a strong relationship.

# Introduction

- Where the Standards refer to care that reflects the care experienced within a family environment, this reference is made to ensure that your emotional needs are met in a suitable environment.
- The third section of the standards is dedicated to the importance of the leaving-care process and after-care support that you may need during the period when you are not yet fully prepared for independent living. This sector introduces an element of care which so far has only been carried out on an informal basis. These standards indicate that this service should be recognized as an essential part of your care and that resources should be allocated in supporting you during this phase of your life which is vital to your social inclusion and to your development as an independent citizen capable of giving your contribution to society.

## **The Qualifications of those who look after you, and the Codes of Conduct and Practice**

In order for the standards to be implemented, the competent authorities need to establish the required qualifications of those persons who are responsible for your care and ensure that resources are available for such qualifications to be attained. This will enable the DSWS to ensure that the persons in whose care you are entrusted have the minimum qualifications required.

The DSWS has issued Codes of Conduct and Practice for Social Service Workers and their Employers. The codes describe the standards of conduct and practice that one should abide by. It is important that you know about these Codes, since these show you what services you can expect.

The codes are available on the DSWS website ([www.welfarestandards.gov.mt](http://www.welfarestandards.gov.mt)).

## **Using the National Standards of Care**

The DSWS is responsible for regulating social care. The DSWS will promote the standards of social care, and will also encourage those responsible for the service to respect them in the best way possible.

The DSWS will also monitor the provision of these services once the legislation and regulatory system is in force.

## **Comments**

Valid comments regarding the standards are always appreciated. You can send your comments either by post or by email to the Ministry for Social Policy. Comments will be taken into consideration when the standards are being reviewed.

# Standard Area 1

**Decision-making and  
admission process**





# Standard Area 1

The decision-making process is divided into two phases:

The first phase of this process primarily includes an evaluation of your needs, your family situation and a decision regarding the best possible solution for you. If circumstances indicate that it is in your best interest to go into care, then the next step in this process begins with the choice of the best alternative place for you to live in. This process ends when the decision regarding the most suitable placement for you is taken and is agreed upon by all those persons involved in your life so long as this is in your best interest.

The admission process includes all activities that are necessary to help you feel as comfortable as possible with the place where you will be living. All those directly involved in your upbringing should receive and share the relevant information about the decision-making process.

During this process, if you have special needs, these needs should be taken into consideration.

This standard area includes:

- Standard 1:** You and your family receive support as necessary during the decision-making process
- Standard 2:** You will be given all the help you need to be able to fully participate in the decision-making process
- Standard 3:** A professional decision-making process ensures the best possible care for you
- Standard 4:** Siblings are cared for together
- Standard 5:** The move to a new home is well prepared and sensitively carried out
- Standard 6:** While you are not living with your family your care is guided by an individual care plan



## Standard 1

### You and your family receive support as necessary during the decision-making process

When you or your family wish for a change in your living situation or when the situation demands it you have the right to express your wishes and you will receive professional help. Your safety and best interest are the highest priority. You and your family are always listened to and respected.

#### A. Responsibilities

##### The agency which is responsible for the welfare of the child

- Immediately appoints a person (usually a social worker) to be responsible for the decision making-process, and if possible, the entire process of out-of-home care.

#### B. Guidelines

##### 1. The person responsible for you is always available and immediately contacts you

The person responsible is easily contactable throughout the decision-making process whenever you need to clarify your situation and to give the necessary support to you and to your family. The person responsible monitors and supports the entire out-of-home care process.

##### 2. All relevant parties are involved in a sensitive manner

The person responsible coordinates the involvement of all parties concerned. The person responsible takes an interest in all the aspects of your situation and informs everyone involved about their rights and duties. This person involves all those who can help to clarify your situation and to find a solution for you. The person responsible listens to every person involved, treats them with equal respect, and presents your options honestly.

#### C. Warning Indicators

- You are worried about whether you and your family are going to receive all the support that you may need or request for.
- You are afraid that no importance will be given to what you have to say or that you are not going to be believed.
- Only one side of the story is heard.
- The parties involved are not treated or respected equally.
- Information about children's rights and responsibilities are not provided in an appropriate way.

## Standard 2

### You will be given all the help you need to be able to participate in the decision-making process

You are respected, listened to and trusted by all parties involved. You are properly informed about your situation, encouraged to express your views and to participate in this process according to your age and level of understanding.

#### A. Responsibilities

##### The agency responsible for the welfare of the child

- Ensures a decision making process that is respectful to all concerned.
- Empowers you to participate in the entire decision-making process.
- Provides you with all relevant information and ensures your participation.

#### B. Guidelines

##### 1. You are given all the relevant information in a way that you can understand

The person responsible ensures that you receive all important information concerning the current situation and future options. He/she ensures that you understand this information.

##### 2. Your opinion is sought in a sensitive manner

The person responsible asks you for your views in a professional manner, in a safe environment and in a way that helps you to feel at ease.

##### 3. Your opinion is respected and taken seriously

The person responsible carefully evaluates your situation and considers ways in which your suggestions could be realised.

#### C. Warning Indicators

- You do not have sufficient information about your situation or do not understand the information given.
- Your opinion is ignored.
- You do not agree with the decision.

**Standard 3****A professional decision-making process ensures the best possible care for you**

The decision-making process involves two questions: Which solution meets your best interest? If you need out-of-home care, where is the best place for you to be brought up in?

All parties directly involved in your development cooperate using their respective expertise and knowledge. They receive and share the relevant information about the decision-making process.

During the decision making process, if you have special needs, your specific requirements are taken into consideration.

**A. Responsibilities****The agency responsible for the welfare of the child**

- Ensures a professional decision-making process.
- Ensures a participatory and transparent process.

**Care organization**

- Provides the agency responsible for the welfare of the child with all relevant information about the form of care it offers as is specified in the request for relevant documentation in the introduction to these standards.

**B. Guidelines****1. The process is participatory and transparent, open to all those who are involved in your development**

The person responsible ensures that all parties involved participate in the process. He/she gathers all information and documents in a clear way. If it is in your best interest the responsible person informs the involved parties in a sensitive way, ensuring that everyone involved understands and has access to the relevant information.

**2. Cooperation with external bodies is ensured**

The person responsible ensures that professionals from different organizations that are currently or have been involved in your case assess your situation and give advice.

**3. You are given information about the potential consequences of the placement**

The person responsible thoroughly evaluates the possible choices and ensures that all parties involved are aware of the possible consequences of the placement.



#### **4. Alternative placement is considered should the original placement be inadequate for you**

The person responsible ensures that during the decision-making process an alternative placement is considered in case it becomes apparent that the first option is not adequate.

#### **5. The decision is based on all relevant facts**

The person responsible ensures that research relevant to your situation is conducted thoroughly and that the documentation obtained is analysed. An appropriate decision to ensure your best interest is made on the basis of this data and clearly recorded.

#### **6. The best possible placement is selected for you**

The agency responsible for the welfare of the child selects the best possible placement giving serious consideration to your ethnic, social, religious and medical background. Together with the care organisation, it ensures that the placement provides an inclusive, supporting, protecting and caring environment.

Your potential care giver must be qualified and receive sufficient resources as well as continuous training to enable him/her to take care of you, and of your siblings, as necessary.

#### **7. Care organizations cooperate if you move from one form of care to another**

If you are to move from one form of care to another all those responsible for your care and the agency responsible for the welfare of the child support the process and provide all the necessary information about you.

### **C. Warning Indicators**

- The decision is not made in your best interests.
- The placement does not take account of your needs, life situation, or original social environment.
- There is no alternative placement option, in case it becomes apparent that the original placement is not adequate.
- The decision is not based on facts.
- There is no documentation of the process.
- There is no transparency of information.
- You, your family and other relevant parties are not involved or do not understand the process.
- The decision is sudden and unexpected for you and your family. (This does not apply in cases of emergency).
- Professionals do not cooperate.

**Standard 4****Siblings are cared for together**

During the out-of-home care process, siblings should not be separated unless it is in their best interest. If you are separated from your siblings those responsible for your care should ensure that there is regular contact between you and all your siblings.

**A. Responsibilities****The agency responsible for the welfare of the child**

- Undertakes all necessary activities to ensure the joint placement of siblings.
- Seeks a placement for children where siblings can be placed together.
- Arranges regular and frequent contact between you and your siblings if you are not placed together.

**Care organisation**

- Has a structure that allows the joint placement of siblings of different ages.

**Your caregiver**

- Collaborates to ensure regular and frequent contact between siblings if they are not placed together.

**B. Guidelines****1. Siblings are placed together**

The agency responsible for the welfare of the child should do all that is possible to ensure that you and your siblings are placed together. The wishes of siblings should be taken into consideration by those responsible for your placement. The agency responsible for the welfare of the child gives practical support to care organisations that place siblings together. The care organisation ensures an adequate structure for the care of siblings.

**2. You should have regular contact with your siblings if you are not placed together**

The agency responsible for the welfare of the child and the care organisation provide resources (example: financial support) and support to allow siblings who are not placed together to maintain contact.

If you are not placed with your siblings, your future caregiver is given information about your siblings, for example, their name, age, gender, the place where they will be living and who will take care of them.

**C. Warning Indicators**

- Siblings are separated.
- The reasons for separating siblings are neither justified nor in your best interest.
- The care organisation does not have an adequate structure to care for siblings.
- Siblings have no contact or irregular contact.
- Your caregivers have no information about your siblings.

## Standard 5

### The move to a new home is well prepared and sensitively carried out

After agreeing upon who will be taking care of you and how this will be done, the future care organisation prepares your admission thoroughly.

Your admission must be gradual and cause no unnecessary suffering. Transition to the new home is organised as a process of which the main purpose is to ensure your best interests and the well being of all relevant parties involved.

#### A. Responsibilities

##### **The agency responsible for the welfare of the child**

- Together with the care organisation and your care giver, prepares and implements your admission process.

##### **Care organisation**

- Ensures that your caregiver has adequate resources and support to take you in and care for you.

##### **Your caregiver**

- Prepares an appropriate welcome for you and ensures that the admission process is professionally implemented.

#### B. Guidelines

##### **1. The admission process is professionally prepared and implemented**

The admission process is prepared and implemented in close cooperation with all relevant parties involved. Sufficient time and resources are provided to prepare for your admission.

The agency responsible for the welfare of the child ensures that all those involved are aware of the arrangements and decisions being made, and that these are realistic and clear. All involved parties are bound by these arrangements and agreements.

Before going to live in your new home, the agency responsible for the welfare of the child ensures that the care organisation and your caregiver have sufficient resources so that you receive good quality care.

##### **2. Your family or your previous caregivers are fully involved in this process**

The agency responsible for the welfare of the child and the future care organisation ensure that you, your family and /or previous care givers are involved, consulted and supported during this process.

##### **3. You should be acquainted with your future home**

The person responsible ensures that you have the opportunity to acquaint yourself with your future home and caregiver.

#### **4. The placement causes as little disruption as possible to you and your family**

The person responsible ensures that the placement causes as little disruption as possible to you and your family.

#### **C. Warning Indicators**

- The admission process is not professionally prepared.
- Your caregiver is not prepared to host the placement.
- Your caregiver does not have sufficient resources available.
- Your caregiver does not cooperate with the agency responsible for the welfare of the child.
- You and your family have no information about the new home for no good reason.
- The arrangements for the admission process are not clear.
- The relevant parties are not involved in the process.
- There is no contact between you and your future caregiver prior to the admission.
- You feel that the admission causes a lot of disruption to your family.
- There is no welcoming event.

## Standard 6

### Your out-of-home care process is guided by an individual care plan

Your individual care plan is created during the decision-making process. It is further developed and implemented during the entire out-of-home care process. This plan covers your overall development.

The care plan defines your developmental status, sets objectives and measures and clarifies the resources needed to support you in developing your full potential. Every relevant decision taken during your placement is guided by this plan.

#### A. Responsibilities

##### **The agency responsible for the welfare of the child**

- The agency responsible for the welfare of the child is responsible for an assessment of your potential and for the creation of an individual care plan guiding your overall development.

##### **Care organisation**

- Ensures that the out-of-home care process is based on your individual care plan.
- Supports the caregiver in developing and implementing the care plan.

##### **Your caregiver**

- Is responsible for the implementation and further development of your individual care plan.

#### B. Guidelines

##### **1. Your individual care plan is based on your needs**

In consultation with a multi-disciplinary team, the agency responsible for the welfare of the child creates your individual care plan, taking into account your social and cultural background, and your potential.

##### **2. You participate in the development of your individual care plan**

Participating in the development of your care plan depends on your level of understanding.

##### **3. The individual care plan is periodically reviewed**

The agency responsible for the welfare of the child, the care organization and your caregiver are responsible for the implementation and development of your care plan. In consultation with all professionals involved your care plan is periodically reviewed and updated at least once every six months. This would be done through case reviews and where necessary, case conferences.

#### C. Warning Indicators

- There is a lack of documented assessment and no individual plan for you.
- The plan does not meet your individual needs.
- Not all relevant parties contribute to the development of the care plan.
- The parties involved do not agree on your individual care plan.
- The plan is not periodically reviewed and updated.



# Standard Area 2

## Care-taking process





# Standard Area 2

The care-taking process is defined as the period between the admission process and the leaving-care process.

This standard area includes the following standards:

**Standard 7:** Your placement matches your needs, life situation and original social environment

**Standard 8:** You maintain contact with your family

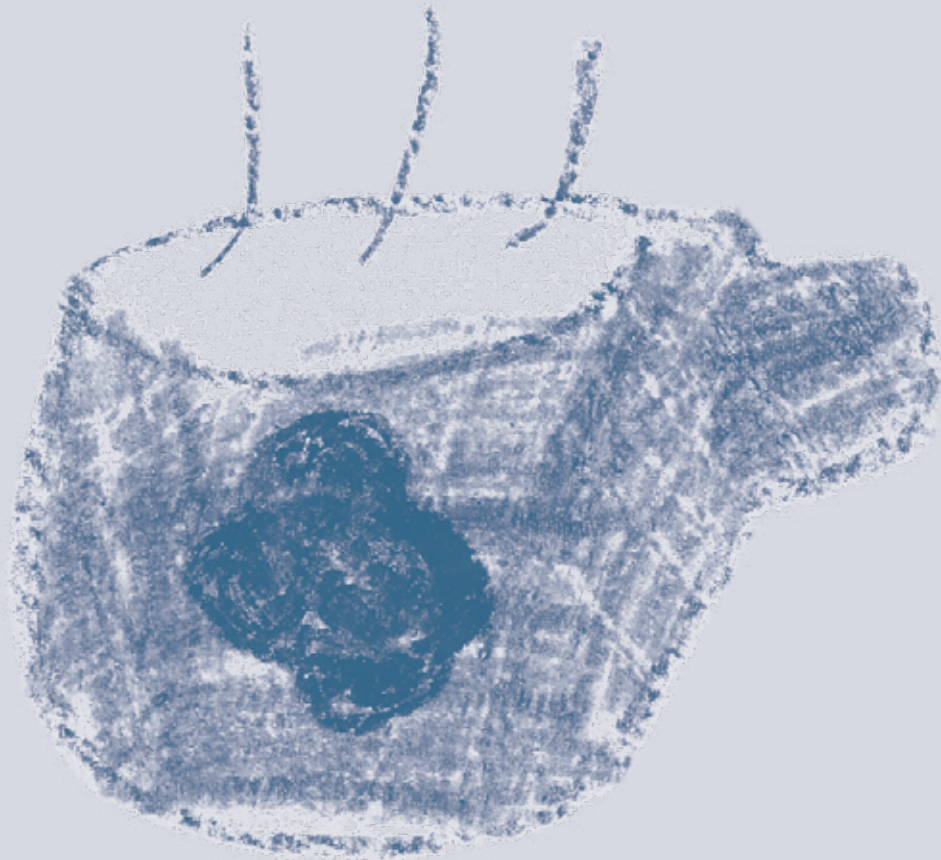
**Standard 9:** Care givers are qualified and have adequate working conditions

**Standard 10:** Your relationship with your caregiver is based on understanding, respect and individual attention

**Standard 11:** You are empowered to actively participate in a responsible manner in making decisions that directly affect your life

**Standard 12:** You are cared for in appropriate living conditions

**Standard 13:** You are well prepared for independent living



## Standard 7

### Your placement matches your needs, life situation and original social environment

You grow up in an inclusive, supportive, protective and caring environment. These criteria are fulfilled if you are brought up in a warm and caring family environment.

In the new placement you have the chance to build a stable relationship with your caregiver and to maintain contact with your original social environment.

#### A. Responsibilities

##### The agency responsible for the welfare of the child

- Initiates, finds and arranges the best possible placement for you in accordance with your needs, life situation and your original social and educational environment.

##### Care organisation

- Provides care models that meet your needs and the requirements of the agency responsible for the welfare of the child
- Assesses, in cooperation with the agency responsible for the welfare of the child, whether or not the offered placement meets your needs, life situation and your original social and educational environment.

##### Your caregiver

- Makes sure that the new home environment matches your needs, your life situation and original social environment.
- Cooperates with you and your family in this process.

#### B. Guidelines

##### 1. You and your family are informed about the family-based care options

You and your family are informed about the availability of suitable family-based care options. The agency responsible for the welfare of the child encourages care organisations to provide family-based care. If you are admitted to a facility for treatment/therapy, the care organisation must find a way to combine this with family-based care.

##### 2. You receive the best possible placement

The agency responsible for the welfare of the child and the care organisation ensure that the future placement provides an inclusive, supportive, protective and caring environment.

##### 3. The placement matches your needs, life situation and original social and educational environment

The agency responsible for the welfare of the child and the care organisation make a conscious effort to ensure that the placement matches your needs, life situation and original social and educational environment. The physical distance between where you used to live and the new placement is taken into account.



#### **4. The placement supports you in developing a sense of attachment and belonging**

Your care giver provides you with personal space and creates an environment in which you can develop a sense of attachment and belonging.

#### **5. The quality of the care is periodically reviewed**

The agency responsible for the welfare of the child and the care organisation periodically evaluate the quality of care provided.

### **C. Warning Indicators**

- You are not given the chance to be given care that reflects that experienced within a family environment.
- There is no contact between you and your family and original social environment.
- You are not allowed to practice your own language, religion and culture.
- Arrangements are not realistic or as agreed and are not binding.
- You feel that your care is not inclusive, supportive, protective and caring.
- You feel that you cannot rely on a stable and dependable relationship with your caregiver.
- You have no privacy.
- Your caregiver changes continuously.
- Your caregiver is not sensitive towards your situation.
- You have been moved from your school for no valid reason

**Standard 8****You maintain contact with your family**

Your contact with your family is encouraged and supported if this is in your best interest and if it is according to your wishes. This ensures that you maintain your relationship with your family.

**A. Responsibilities****The agency responsible for the welfare of the child**

- Ensures that you maintain contact with your family if this is in your best interest.
- If you decide not to maintain contact with the family this decision has to be examined in order to ensure that this is really in your best interest.
- Ensures that your family is given the required support so that where possible you are re-integrated within it.
- Ensures that you have the relevant information about your family

**Care organisation**

- Ensures and encourages your contact with your family.
- Supports your care giver in this respect.
- Periodically provides your family with information about your development.

**Your caregiver**

- Supports contact between you and your family.
- Cooperates with your family.

**Family or persons legally responsible for you**

- Supports contact between you and your family.
- Respects the care organisation.
- Respects the caregiver
- Participates in the development of your care plan.

**B. Guidelines****1. The agency responsible for the welfare of the child promotes contact between you and your family**

The agency responsible for the welfare of the child encourages, supports and monitors contact between you, your caregiver and your family. It also encourages this contact between all persons involved. It provides you with relevant information about your family. The agency responsible for the welfare of the child provides counselling to you, your family and your caregiver.

**2. The care organisation and your caregiver support the contact between you and your family**

The care organisation trains and supports your caregiver in working with your family. Your caregiver helps you to familiarise yourself with your life story and encourages you to maintain contact with your family, and social, religious and cultural roots. Your caregiver periodically informs your family about your development.

### **3. Your family is involved in your life**

The care organisation and the family clearly define rights and responsibilities regarding your development. All persons involved in providing your care support your family in understanding your situation and encourage your family to help you.

### **4. The frequency and quality of contact is periodically evaluated**

This contact must be evaluated at least every six months during a meeting that is held between you, your family, your carers and the professionals involved in your case. Contact takes place in accordance with the individual care plan and/or any formal agreements made on this matter.

## **C. Warning Indicators**

- There is no contact between you and your family although contact would be in your best interest.
- There is contact between you and your family although contact is not in your best interest.
- Your family acts in a manner contrary to your best interest.
- Contact between you and your family is not supported or is not according to your care plan.
- The reasons for not supporting contact between you and your family are not well-founded.
- You are not given the relevant information about your family of origin.
- Your family does not cooperate with your care plan.

## Standard 9

### Care givers are qualified and have adequate working conditions

Your caregivers are thoroughly assessed, selected and professionally trained before taking on the responsibility of caring for you. They receive continuous training and professional support to ensure your overall development.

#### A. Responsibilities

##### The agency responsible for the welfare of the child

- Ensures that all caregivers at least meet the minimum qualifications profile.

##### Care organisation

- Ensures that all caregivers at least meet the minimum qualifications profile.
- Ensures that your caregivers receive ongoing training and professional support.

##### Caregiver

- Participates in ongoing training.

#### B. Guidelines

##### 1. Your caregivers are selected and trained in accordance with established and accredited qualifications

The agency responsible for the welfare of the child ensures that you are placed in a licensed care organisation that professionally trains and supports your caregivers in accordance with established and accredited qualifications.

Your caregivers' qualification profile must include the ability to base their actions on the principles found in the UNCRC and knowledge on child development.

They are trained to use language in a respectful way and that is appropriate to your level of understanding. They establish a close and trusting relationship with you, have good listening skills and are understanding, empathetic and patient.

The care organisation ensures that your caregivers are assessed, selected, continuously trained and professionally supported in order to be able to carry out their duties.

The care organisation ensures that your caregivers and any person who comes into contact with you have a clean police conduct.

##### 2. Your caregiver has access to professional training and support

Your caregiver is provided with professional training and support according to his/her needs and requests.

The care organisation offers your caregiver diverse opportunities for training and professional support including the opportunity to participate in relevant meetings and conferences.

##### 3. Your caregivers have adequate working conditions

Your caregiver is supported through adequate working conditions. He/she can rely on the financial and human resources needed to appropriately fulfil his/her responsibilities.

#### **4. The formation of exchange networks is encouraged**

The agency responsible for the welfare of the child and the care organisation encourage the formation of informal and formal networks to give caregivers the opportunity to share experiences and good practices.

#### **C. Warning Indicators**

- There are no defined minimum requirements with regard to the caregiver's qualification profile.
- Your caregivers do not have access to professional training and support.
- Your caregivers refuse professional training and support.
- Training and support are not encouraged.
- There is no adequate financial and human resources support.

## Standard 10

### Your relationship with your caregiver is based on understanding, respect and individual attention

Your caregiver gives you individual attention. He/she gives you enough time in order to allow a relationship based on trust to be built. Your caregiver always communicates with you in a manner that is open, honest and respectful.

#### A. Responsibilities

##### The agency responsible for the welfare of the child

- Provides your care organisation and your caregiver with all information about your background.
- Ensures cooperation between your family and your caregiver.

##### Care organisation

- Supports your caregiver in establishing and maintaining a stable relationship with you.
- Ensures that your caregiver has the necessary people skills to build up a good relationship with you.

##### Caregiver

- Always treats you as an individual and considers your needs, your abilities and your level of understanding.
- Ensures that your relationship with your caregiver is based on the values of sincerity, confidentiality and support.

#### B. Guidelines

##### 1. Your caregiver receives information, training and professional support

The agency responsible for the welfare of the child informs the care organisation and your caregiver about your background to allow them to help you in a suitable way. The care organisation professionally trains and supports your caregiver to establish and maintain a suitable positive relationship with you.

##### 2. Your caregiver offers you the opportunity to build a stable relationship

Your caregiver creates a supportive framework based on trust and confidentiality that meets your emotional and practical needs.

##### 3. Your caregiver approaches each child individually

Your caregiver gives you individual attention that takes into consideration your needs and level of understanding.

#### C. Warning Indicators

- There is a lack of respect in the relationship between you and your caregiver.
- You feel that your caregiver is not understanding you.
- Information about you is unnecessarily passed on to third parties.
- The relationship between you and your caregiver weakens.
- There is a high turnover of caregivers.
- Your caregiver does not work in a professional manner and/or goes against procedures established by the care organisation.
- Your caregiver is not given all the information about your background.

## Standard 11

**You are empowered to actively participate in a responsible manner in making decisions that directly affect your life**

You are recognised as the expert of your own life. You are informed, listened to and taken seriously. Your individual resources are recognised as a potential. You are encouraged to express your feelings and experiences.

### A. Responsibilities

#### **The agency responsible for the welfare of the child**

- Monitors your participation in all decisions directly affecting your life.

#### **Care Organisation**

- Ensures that your participation is an integral part of the care-taking process.

#### **Caregiver**

- Helps you to make decisions that directly affect your life.
- Actively supports your participation.

### B Guidelines

#### **1. The care organisation supports your participation in decisions affecting your life**

##### **The care organisation**

- Provides resources to promote your participation.
- Develops and applies different tools which ensure your active participation.
- Promotes a participatory attitude that encourages the involvement of your caregivers.
- Ensures that all parties involved in your care are professionally trained in order to support your participation.

#### **2. Your caregiver supports your active participation**

##### **The caregiver**

- Informs you about your rights and all relevant issues concerning your life.
- Listens to you, encourages you and supports you in making decisions concerning your life.

#### **3. Your caregiver supports you and believes in your capability to actively participate in a constructive manner**

- Identifies your potential and encourages you to use and develop it.
- Respects your individuality, takes into consideration your opinion, and supports your aspirations for independent living.
- Demonstrates that you are important by showing interest in your needs.

## C. Warning Indicators

- Participation tools are not developed and/or implemented.
- You do not participate in making decisions concerning your life.
- You feel that your potential is neither understood, nor supported.
- You feel you are not listened to and/or understood.
- You do not feel sufficiently informed about relevant issues and about your rights.
- There is no appropriate form of involving the participation of children whose communication skills are not sufficiently developed.



## Standard 12

### You are cared for in appropriate living conditions

The living standards and infrastructure of the care organisation and/or your caregiver satisfy your needs in respect to comfort, security, healthy living conditions as well as uninhibited access to education and to life within the community.

#### A. Responsibilities

##### The agency responsible for the welfare of the child

- Guarantees a placement that offers you adequate living conditions and that satisfies your material needs.

##### Care organisation

- Ensures a comfortable, secure, healthy and stable environment for you.

##### Caregiver

- Provides you with a comfortable, secure, healthy and stable home.

#### B. Guidelines

##### 1. You are cared for in appropriate living conditions

The agency responsible for the welfare of the child monitors the fulfilment of the minimum requirements regarding your living conditions; these include comfort, security and healthy living conditions. It ensures that you have uninhibited access to education and to a social life within the community. It ensures a placement which meets these minimum requirements.

##### 2. The care organisation meets the minimum requirements

The care organisation guarantees the quality of its care in a written statement. This quality is ensured by providing a placement which meets the mandatory minimum requirements. This written statement is available to everyone.

##### 3. Your wellbeing and appropriate material living conditions are ensured

Your caregiver follows the mandatory minimum requirements in order to guarantee comfort, security and healthy living conditions as well as open access to education and social life within the community.

#### C. Warning Indicators

- There are no mandatory minimum requirements ensuring your living conditions.
- Your placement does not meet the mandatory minimum requirements.
- The care organisation has no written statement and/or does not make it available.

**Standard 13****You are well prepared for independent living**

You receive all the necessary support in developing into a self-reliant, self-sufficient and participating member of society. You have access to education and are given the opportunity to acquire life skills and adopt values.

You are supported in developing self-esteem. This enables you to feel strong and secure and to cope with difficulties in your life.

**A. Responsibilities****The agency responsible for the welfare of the child**

- Monitors your development with regards to preparation for independent living as agreed in the care plan.
- Ensures that you have access to optimal education.

**Care organisation**

- Provides appropriate framework conditions and programmes for supporting you in becoming independent.

**Caregiver**

- Supports you in becoming independent

**The State**

- Ensures that the system of education responds to your needs and to your individual potential

**B. Guidelines****1. Your caregiver provides individualized training and support**

Your caregiver ensures that you are given training and supported in developing self-sufficiency in accordance with the needs identified in your care plan. Your caregiver should primarily focus on the following points:

- You are encouraged to take on daily responsibilities according to your level of understanding; you are supported in looking after yourself as well as in dealing with money, legal matters, insurance and other practical matters.
- You are supported in integrating into a social network and maintaining contact with people in this network.
- Your caregiver explores your interests and plans activities which supports the further developments of your knowledge and life skills.

**2. Preparation for independent living is organised as an ongoing process**

Your caregiver supported by the care organisation prepares you for independent living. This process is based on your individual care plan.

Your individual care plan considers your preparation for independent living as an ongoing process. It takes into account the appropriate framework conditions and opportunities and/or programmes that can support you in becoming independent.

### **3. You are offered opportunities to participate in self-development programmes.**

The care organisation and your caregiver create opportunities for you to receive training to assume responsibilities to adopt values and to develop life skills.

You participate in the development, implementation and evaluation of the self-development programmes in order to live an independent life.

### **4. You have access to the best level of education**

You have access to and are encouraged to benefit from the best possible forms of education in accordance with your potential and your own interest.

You are encouraged to share in both curricular and extra-curricular activities according to your interests.

### **C. Warning Indicators**

- Preparation for independent living is not considered in your care plan.
- There are no self-development opportunities/programmes available that meet your needs.
- You are denied the chance to make use of self-development opportunities or programmes that meet your needs.
- You feel that you are not well prepared and supported regarding independent living.
- You are not integrated into a social network.
- Your education is not supported.
- You do not spend your leisure time productively.
- You are not listened to.



# Standard Area 3

## Leaving-care process



# Standard Area 3

The leaving-care process includes the process in which you become independent, return to your family, go on living with your foster care family after having reached the age of 18 or move to another placement. This process includes the decision, the moving-out process and after-care support.

This standard area includes the following standards:

**Standard 14** The leaving-care process is thoroughly planned and implemented

**Standard 15:** Communication in the leaving-care process is carried out in a useful and appropriate manner

**Standard 16:** You are empowered to participate in the leaving-care process

**Standard 17:** Follow-up, continuous support and opportunity for contact are ensured





**Standard 14****The leaving-care process is thoroughly planned and implemented**

The “leaving-care process” is a crucial stage in your out-of-home care and should be thoroughly planned and implemented. It is based on your individual care plan.

You are recognised as an expert regarding the quality of your care. Your feedback is important for further developing the quality of the care system and the respective care model.

**A. Responsibilities****The agency responsible for the welfare of the child**

- Ensures that you together with all other relevant parties participate in the planning of this process.
- Monitors and supports the planning and the implementation of the leaving-care process.
- Coordinates cooperation among all parties involved.
- Ensures careful consideration of your wishes.

**Care organisation**

- Ensures that the leaving-care-process is planned and implemented in accordance with your care plan.
- Accompanies you with professionalism and sensitivity throughout the process.
- Cooperates with your family.

**Caregiver**

- Plans the practicalities of the leaving-care process, together with the relevant parties involved.
- Implements the leaving-care-process according to the care plan.
- Cooperates with your family.

**B. Guidelines****1. The leaving-care process is thoroughly planned and implemented**

Your care-giver plans and implements the practical aspects of your leaving-care process together with you and according to your care plan. The manner in which the implementation of this process takes place is according to your best interest. You have a voice in determining to what extent your family should participate in the leaving-care process.

There is careful preparation for the leaving-care process. If necessary your caregiver consults the multi-professional team that drew up your care plan by calling for a case-review.

**2. You are recognised as an expert regarding the quality of your care during this process**

The agency responsible for the welfare of the child asks you to evaluate the care quality. Your feedback is passed on to the care organisation in order that the organisation can consider it for further developing the quality of the care system.

## **3. The leaving-care process is based on your individual care plan**

The care plan defines your developmental status, sets objectives and measures and clarifies the resources needed to support you during the leaving-care process. Your care plan and its implementation are regularly evaluated, as has been previously indicated in these standards. Your care plan also considers your future life after leaving care, in terms of defining guidelines for after-care.

## **4. The return to your family or movement to another placement is thoroughly prepared**

The agency responsible for the welfare of the child, the care organisation, your present and future caregivers as well as your family cooperate. You actively participate in the decision making process and in the preparation according to your level of understanding.

## **5. If you are going to live with your foster care family after you reach the age of 18, you receive the resources necessary to support you**

Together with the agency responsible for the welfare of the child, the care organisation and your carers, you plan the after care that you will receive while you live with your foster care family as a young adult. The resources are available for this plan to be implemented.

## **6. A farewell is arranged for you when you are leaving care**

An appropriate farewell-get-together is organized for you to mark the beginning of your next living phase. The manner in which this is done aims to fulfil your wishes.

## **7. You have access to support and counselling**

The agency responsible for the welfare of the child provides after-care support and counselling if you need it or wish for it.

## **C. Warning Indicators**

- The leaving-care-process is not thoroughly planned and implemented.
- The leaving-care-process is not considered in your care plan.
- The parties involved do not agree on your leaving-care plan.
- You do not feel involved in the leaving-care process.
- You and your family do not participate in the planning and implementation of the process.
- There is no interest in your expertise regarding the quality of your care.
- There is no evaluation of your care.
- The leaving-care process does not meet your needs.
- No after-care support is provided or this support is inadequate.
- You do not have the opportunity to say goodbye.

**Standard 15****Communication in the leaving-care process is carried out in a useful and appropriate manner**

All parties involved in the leaving-care process are provided with all relevant information in accordance with their role in the process. At the same time, you and your family feel secure and have the right to privacy.

All information is communicated in a way understandable to and appropriate for you and your family.

**A. Responsibilities****The agency responsible for the welfare of the child**

- Ensures that all parties receive and understand the information needed for the success of the leaving-care process.
- Ensures that all information is treated confidentially.

**Care organisation**

- Ensures that your caregiver communicates with you in an appropriate way.

**Caregiver**

- Ensures that you receive and understand the relevant information regarding this process.
- Communicates with you in a way that makes you feel at ease during this process.
- Cooperates with your family.

**B. Guidelines****1. The relevant information is managed professionally**

The agency responsible for the welfare of the child, the care organisation and the caregiver recognise the importance of providing you and your family with all relevant information. The agency responsible for the welfare of the child professionally manages all relevant information. It ensures legal compliance in matters relating to confidentiality, documentation and access for the involved parties according to law.

**2. You are properly informed about this process**

The agency responsible for the welfare of the child ensures that you are informed and understand all relevant information regarding the leaving-care process. You are informed about the different possibilities and aspects of your future life and you voice your opinion about them.

**3. A set of requirements is considered in ensuring appropriate communication**

All relevant parties involved in supporting you should meet the following requirements:

- they are skilled in using language appropriate to your needs;
- they establish a close relationship with you, have time for you, have good listening skills and are understanding;



- they communicate with you in a manner that you understand and that makes you feel at ease;
- they create a friendly and comfortable communication environment; and
- they do not hold back information that may be important for you.

#### **4. You, your family, your caregiver, the care organisation and the agency responsible for the welfare of the child work together**

Cooperation among the relevant parties involved in supporting you during this process is strengthened by an exchange of relevant information, appropriate communication and mutual trust. They:

- ensure compliance with legislation, human rights and with these standards; and
- include this standard in the instructions and working methods of the agency responsible for the welfare of the child, care organisations and care givers.

#### **C. Warning Indicators**

- You feel misunderstood.
- Your privacy is violated.
- You have no access to or do not understand the necessary information.
- You feel a lack of communication with your caregiver.
- You feel a lack of communication with your family or with your social environment.

**Standard 16****You are empowered to participate in the leaving-care process**

The leaving-care process is based on your individual care plan. You are empowered to express your opinions and preference related to the leaving-care process. You participate in the leaving-care process.

**A. Responsibilities****The agency responsible for the welfare of the child**

- Ensures your participation.
- Cooperates with your family.

**Care organisation**

- Ensures that all requirements regarding your participation in the process are met.
- Involves you in the planning and the implementation of the leaving-care process.
- Cooperates with your family.

**Caregiver**

- Empowers you to participate in the process.

**B. Guidelines****1. The following requirements ensure your participation**

All relevant parties involved in this process meet the following requirements ensuring that:

- you participate in the planning and implementation of your leaving-care process;
- you are listened to and your plans, doubts and expectations are taken into consideration;
- you are supported in taking decisions according to your level of understanding;
- you are recognised as the expert in relation to your wishes and needs;
- your family participates in the process;
- you are given the opportunity to determine to what extent your family may be involved according to your level of understanding;
- you are supported in bureaucratic and juridical procedures.

**2. You receive all relevant information**

The agency responsible for the welfare of the child ensures that you are provided with all relevant information in order to support you in making decisions during the leaving-care process. It ensures that you understand the information provided.

**3. The planning and implementation of the leaving-care process is based on your individual care plan**

You participate in the development of your care plan. The care plan takes into account your views as well as objectives and all the resources needed to plan and implement the leaving-care process.

**C. Warning Indicators**

- There is no set of minimum requirements regarding your participation in the leaving-care process.
- The set of minimal requirements is not implemented.
- You feel that you are not sufficiently participating in the leaving-care process.
- You feel that the process is not what you thought it would be.
- You do not feel well informed.
- The planning and the implementation of the leaving-care process are not based on your care plan.
- You feel that you are not being taken seriously.
- Decisions are made without your participation.
- You are given more responsibility than you are able to cope with.
- You are not supported in bureaucratic and juridical procedures.

## Standard 17

### Follow-up, continuous support and opportunity for contact are ensured

After you have left out-of-home care you can be in one of the following situations:

1. You either go to another residential home or to live with a foster care family.
2. You return to your family of origin.
3. You stay with your present foster care family as a young adult
4. You start independent living.

#### 1. You either go to another residential home or to live with a foster care family

##### Responsibilities

##### The State

- Supports the development of your wellbeing
- **The agency responsible for the welfare of the child**
- Ensures that the whole process complies with all the standards mentioned so far.
- Ensures that you are prepared for this change.
- Ensures that your future caregivers have all the information necessary for you to be provided with the care that you need.
- Gives you the support you need during the transition.
- Provides follow-up in your new situation.

##### Your previous care organisation

- Participates in the development of this process.
- Prepares you for this change.
- Provides all the relevant information to your future residential home or foster care family.
- Participates in the process of your becoming accustomed to your new home.
- Ensures continuous support until you feel comfortable with your new home.

##### Your previous caregiver

- Actively participates in the process that is being implemented by your previous care organisation.

##### Your future care organisation

- Ensures that your new home has made preparations to welcome you.
- Ensures that the persons living in your future home have been prepared to welcome you.
- Ensures that all the information necessary for your care has been provided.
- Cooperates with all parties involved to ensure that you feel at home.
- Ensures that you receive an appropriate welcome.
- Carries on the implementation of your individual care plan.

##### Your future caregiver

- Actively participates in the process that your care organisation is implementing.

## 2. You return to your family of origin

### Responsibilities

#### The State

- Supports your overall wellbeing

#### The agency responsible for the welfare of the child

- Ensures that the environment in the place you are going to is one that meets your needs.
- Ensures that this change does not place you in a dangerous situation.
- Ensures that your care plan identifies what needs to be done so that you can return to your family of origin as soon as possible.
- Ensures that you are prepared for this change and that as far as is possible this change is according to your wishes and in your best interest.
- Cooperates with your family of origin both before and after you go to live with your family of origin.
- Ensures that the change is carried out at a pace that is suitable to your needs.
- Gives you the necessary support during this transition.
- Ensures that you go on receiving all the services that you need and that you used to receive while you were in care, for example you continue with your education.
- Provides follow-up for a while after you have returned to your family of origin.
- Ensures that you go on receiving support, if you or your family needs or wishes it and that you receive a referral for any services that you may require, for example to find and retain employment.
- Ensures that your situation is monitored if your family cannot meet your needs or if you are at risk of danger.

#### Your previous care organisation

- Participates in the development of this process and in the implementation of your care plan.
- Cooperates with your family of origin.
- Prepares you for this change and gives attention to your practical and emotional needs.
- Forwards to your family all the necessary information and documentation relevant to your care, for example documentation about your health and education.
- Participates in the process that helps you become accustomed to living with your family.
- Provides support until you become accustomed to living with your family.
- Should you request support from the care organisation this should be provided or you should be provided with help to contact a source of support.

#### Your previous caregiver

- Actively participates in the process being implemented by the care organisation.

#### Your family of origin

- Is prepared to welcome you and to meet your needs.
- Cooperates with professionals throughout the care-leaving process.
- Takes on the responsibility of ensuring that your needs are met and that you are secure.
- Should seek support if the need arises and the support is desired.
- It cooperates with those who provide the support.

## 3. You stay with your present foster care family as a young adult

### Responsibilities

#### The State

- Provides schemes to support your accommodation while you are living with your foster care family as a young adult.
- Provides schemes of financial benefits to support your upkeep.
- Provides schemes of employment that help you to start independent living.
- Supports your educational development.

#### The agency responsible for the welfare of the child

- Ensures that your caregivers can go on meeting your needs.
- Ensures that the support that your caregivers need is available.
- Provides aftercare such as:
  - Ensuring that you go on receiving all the services that you need and that you used to receive while you were in care, for example, you continue with your education.
  - Ensuring that you go on receiving support, if you or your foster care family needs or wishes it and that you receive a referral for any services that you may require, for example to find and retain employment.

#### Your previous care organisation

- Participates in the implementation of your individual care plan.

#### Your caregiver

- Participates in the implementation of your individual care plan.

## 4. You start independent living

This can come about in two different circumstances:

**4.1** You reach the age of 18.

**4.2** You are not yet 18 but you are prepared to start the leaving-care process.

### 4.1 When you have reached the age of 18

### Responsibilities

#### The State

- Provides schemes that offer suitable accommodation for you until you are in a position to rent or buy a place where to live.
- Provides schemes of financial benefits that help you start independent living.
- Provides schemes of employment that help you to start independent living.
- Supports your educational development.

#### The agency responsible for the welfare of the child

- Ensures that you have accommodation.
- Ensures that you have what you need to start independent living.
- Ensures that the environment of your future accommodation is one that meets your needs and does not endanger your safety.

- Ensures that your care plan identifies what needs to be done in order for you to start independent living.
- Ensures that you are prepared for independent living.
- Ensures that the transition is gradual.
- Supports you during the transition.
- Ensures that you continue receiving all the services that you need and that you wish for.
- Provides follow-up for some time after you have started independent living if you should need it and/or desire it.
- Ensures that you go on receiving support, if you need it or wish for it and that you receive a referral for any services that you may require.

#### **Your previous care organisation**

- Participates in the development of this process and in the implementation of your care plan.
- Prepares you for this change and gives attention to your practical and emotional needs.
- Provides you with all necessary information and documentation regarding your care.
- Participates in the process that helps you become accustomed to independent living.
- Provides support until you become accustomed to living independently.
- The care organisation should provide you with support or with assistance in contacting a source of support should you request it.

#### **Your previous caregiver**

- Actively participates in the process being implemented by the care organisation.

### **4.2 You are not yet 18 but you are prepared to start the leaving-care process.**

#### **Responsibilities**

##### **The State**

- Provides schemes that offer suitable accommodation where you can live as independently as possible but are also given the level of protection that you need at your age.
- Provides schemes of financial benefit that help you to prepare yourself for independent living and which give you access to the services that you need.
- Supports your educational development.

##### **The agency responsible for the welfare of the child**

- Ensures that you have accommodation which also provides the protection that you need at your age and provides you with what you require in preparation for independent living.
- Ensures that the environment of your future accommodation is one that meets your needs and does not endanger your safety.
- Ensures that your care plan identifies what needs to be implemented in preparation for your independent living following this phase.
- Ensures that you are prepared for living under this level of care and that you are preparing yourself for independent living.
- Ensures that the transition is sufficiently gradual.
- Supports you during the transition.
- Ensures that you continue receiving all the services that you need.

- Provides follow-up until you start independent living.

## **Your previous care organisation**

- Participates in the development of this process and in the implementation of your care plan.
- Prepares you for this change and gives attention to your practical and emotional needs.
- Provides you as well as the caregiver with all the necessary information and documentation regarding your care.
- Participates in the process that helps you become accustomed to this system.
- Provides support until you have become accustomed to this system.
- The care organisation should provide you with support or with assistance in contacting a source of support should you request it.

## **Your previous caregiver**

- Actively participates in the process being implemented by the care organisation.

## **C. Warning Indicators**

- There is no after-care plan.
- The necessary support is not provided.
- You are not, or not sufficiently, involved in the development of the after-care plan.
- You do not like your after-care plan.
- Your after-care plan does not meet your needs.
- After reaching 18 years of age you are no longer given the support that you may wish for.
- You do not have the possibility to maintain contact with your emotional network relevant during your time in care.
- You are not given any financial support to maintain your upkeep.
- You are not given enough opportunities to find and/or retain employment.
- You are not given support in your education and/or training.
- You are exploited at your place of work.

## Glossary

### **Agency which is responsible for the welfare of the child**

The state is responsible for providing the care, support and/or protection of a child who cannot be looked after by his/her family. The state appoints an agency to be responsible for ensuring that the child receives this care, support and/or protection that he/she needs for his/her wellbeing and development. (Like, for example, Appogg)

### **Aftercare**

Support provided by agency or by care organisation to ensure that a young adult goes on receiving appropriate care

### **Care organisation**

The care organisation is the organisation that is responsible for the daily out-of-home care of the child. This may be provided through foster care families or other forms of residential facilities.

### **Caregiver**

Family member or professional who provides care for a child/young adult. These can be both caregivers in family-based care or residential care.

### **Individual Care plan**

An agreed plan for looking after a child and meeting his/her needs. It is created during the decision-making process and further developed and implemented during the entire out-of-home care process. Every child's care plan is different. The care plan defines the child's developmental status, sets objectives and measures and clarifies the resources needed to support the child during the care process.

### **Family**

Family members to whom a child is biologically related, such as birth parents, siblings, and other relatives.

### **Person Responsible**

The person responsible for the whole out-of-home care process is normally the field social worker who has casework responsibility. It is his/her responsibility to ensure that time limits for tasks and interventions are kept and that assigned duties are fulfilled. This person is responsible to ensure that all workers involved, together with the child/young person and his/her family are actively working on achieving particular goals and on tackling areas of intervention in the care plan. In settings where residential social workers are present, the tasks normally carried out may be shared with the residential social worker, since the latter would have more possibilities of maintaining contact with all the persons involved. It is of utmost importance that the field and residential social workers maintain a regular and frequent contact.



**Regular contact**

The state must take steps to promote appropriate personal relations and direct contact between the child and family members when this is in the child's best interest. Sibling relationships are important in sustaining children's personal identity and supporting stability in placements. When siblings are not living in the same home and it is in their best interest to keep regular contact then all reasonable efforts should be made for them to develop a meaningful relationship. Contact has a broad meaning which includes face to face meetings, letters, emails, SMS and telephone calls, exchange of photographs, and sending gifts and cards. This also means that they have the opportunity to share activities such as play and meals in private just as siblings would normally do. When drawing up or reviewing a care plan for a child placed away from home, the arrangements for contact with the child's family and others must be recorded. Where contact is not reasonably practicable or would be inconsistent with the child's welfare, the reasons for this should be recorded.

**The Child's Participation**

The standards state that the child should be empowered to actively participate in decision making processes that directly affect the child's life. This means that if it is in the child's best interest the child is given all the information that is needed in a manner that he/she can understand it to be able to participate in the decisions that need to be taken. The child's views and wishes are listened to and are taken into consideration together with all the other factors that affect the outcome during the decision making process.

**Young Adult**

A young person who is already 18 or older but due to his/her particular situation is still entitled to out-of-home care.

**Minimum Qualifications Profile**

State outlined training, non formal or informal qualifications.

**UNCRC**

United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child.



