



## Your new agency – what it means for you

### for children & young people in care

#### Why am I moving to a different agency?

The NSW Government is moving kids in “statutory care” and their carers from Community Services (‘DoCS’) to other agencies (called “non government agencies”).

This is because research shows these agencies do a great job of supporting children and young people in care and their carers. As part of the move, you will get to meet the new agency caseworker who will support you and your carer.

#### How does the move happen?

Your carer will speak to Community Services about what agencies are near you and what agency is best for you. When you ‘transfer’ to a new agency, so does your carer – it all happens together. This means you and your carer get to stay together.

#### Will I get a new caseworker?

Yes. When you move to a new agency, you will get a new caseworker. This may mean getting to know someone new and having regular contact, phone calls or visits from them. Most agency caseworkers will visit you every four to six weeks.

This is so the caseworker can support you and make sure you get what you need. They’ll check how you’re feeling and what’s going well for you or not so well.

Your Community Services caseworker will talk to your new caseworker about your case plan and history – so you won’t need to tell your story all over again (unless you want to)

#### Will I have to move to a new foster care family?

No. If your carer is meeting your needs, there should be no change to your placement. You and your carer will move across to the new agency together!

#### Will I have to change schools?

The move isn’t about turning your life upside down but supporting you to be the best you can be.

In most cases, you won’t need to change schools. If for some reason you do need to change schools, the new caseworker will make sure you feel comfortable and you get a say in what happens.

#### What are the agencies like?

All the agencies are passionate about kids in care and have plenty of experience. They’ll make sure you have a caseworker that you see regularly.

Agency caseworkers have lots of experience and big hearts – they look forward to meeting the kids and the carers moving from Community Services. They’ll support you with education, health and any special needs you have, and work with you to develop a leaving care plan.

Some of the agencies also offer kids the chance to take part in programs like camps, school holiday activities, mentoring, homework centres and other activities.

#### Will I still have the same support people in my life?

When you move to a new agency, Community Services will make sure the new agency knows about the support people you already have (like an Aunty, mentor or counsellor).

In most cases you’ll still be able to have the same people to support you - including people who help you like a speech therapist or learning support person. If there are any changes, your caseworker will talk this through with you and make sure you get a say in what happens.

#### Will I still have contact with my brothers and sisters, family or other people who are important to me?

All agencies want to make sure you have support and contact with safe people who are important to you. They also want to keep you connected to the people who are important to you.

Contact with your brothers, sisters and family should stay the same, as long as this is right for you.

*Did you know that more than 200 kids have already moved to a non-government agency with their carers!*



*For most kids, day-to-day things will stay the same, it is just that a new agency will be supporting your placement.*

### My brothers and sisters are with a different carer – will we move to the same agency?

If you and your brothers and sisters are with different carers, then it is likely you will all (with your carers) move to the same agency. But even if you do move to different agencies, contact with your brothers and sisters will stay the same (as long as this is right for you).

### I'm over 16 – do I have to move to a new agency?

If you are over 16 you probably won't need to move to a new agency as you will be getting ready to leave care soon. If you have younger brothers and sisters in care then you may all move to the same agency together. Talk to the caseworker and your carer about what's best for you.

In most cases, brothers and sisters who live in different foster families will transfer to the one agency.

### My carer wants to adopt me, do I have to transfer?

If your carer has started the adoption process, you won't need to transfer. If they haven't, then you and your carer can transfer. This does not mean your carer can't begin the adoption process later.

### When will my transfer happen?

This will depend on where you live, what agencies are operating in your area and if your carer has started the transfer process. In NSW, many kids and carers have already moved to new agencies.

Most Aboriginal children and young people will transfer only when there is an Aboriginal agency set up in their area. Aboriginal agencies support Aboriginal kids and their carers – helping kids keep connected to family, culture and community.

### Do I get a say in what agency to move to?

Talk to your carer and caseworker about how the transfer happens and what agencies are available locally. You can talk about what support and services you need.

You and your carer can also speak to the agency and ask what kind of things they do to support kids in care. You can also go online to find out about agencies at [www.fosteringnsw.com.au](http://www.fosteringnsw.com.au) (click "Find the right agency for you") or there may be the opportunity to visit the agency with your carer.

### What do I need to do?

Talk to your carer and/or the Community Services caseworker and ask them any questions you may have and talk about any worries or concerns.

Your new caseworker will meet with you, so that's a great time to ask any questions and talk about what you need, about school and what you like and don't like.

### Who else can I talk to?

If you want more information talk to your carer or caseworker. If you don't have a caseworker, call your nearest (local) Community Services Centre and ask to speak to a caseworker. If you still don't know who to talk to, call the CREATE Foundation on 9267 0977. CREATE can help you find the right person to talk to.

You can also find out more information about the transition at [www.tponsw.com.au](http://www.tponsw.com.au)

*I've moved to an agency and my new caseworker is cool. She sometimes drives me home from school and we have afternoon tea. She gave me her work phone number to call when I need. I like that I get to have a say in what happens because I'm included in review meetings.*

*Chantelle, 16 years*

[www.create.org.au](http://www.create.org.au) • [www.fosteringnsw.com.au](http://www.fosteringnsw.com.au)

