



Supported Independent Living & Therapeutic Supported Independent Living

This factsheet has been developed for use by Department of Communities and Justice (DCJ) and Service Providers requesting *Supported Independent Living (SIL)* and/or *Therapeutic Supported Independent Living (TSIL)* placements under the Permanency Support Program. They are intended as a guide only to assist referring caseworkers to understand the parameters of SIL and TSIL whilst also determining which service will best fit the needs of the young person being referred.

What is SIL and TSIL?

SIL and TSIL are accommodation and support programs for young people in the Permanency Support Program (PSP) that are over 16 years of age. SIL and TSIL prepare and support young people to make a smooth transition from PSP to independent living, self-reliance and adulthood.

TSIL provides a step down placement option for young people following the application of therapeutic interventions. While SIL and TSIL provide step down placement options for young people, they do not replace essential futures planning.

A joint determination between the young person, service provider and DCJ is made on a case by case basis on whether SIL or TSIL is a good fit or necessary, with each young person needing to possess the capacity to live independently after a period of tailored support.

SIL and TSIL are one of many pathways considered when transitioning to adulthood, but it is not an exit point to leaving care.

What are the aims of SIL and TSIL and how do they differ?

The key objective of SIL and TSIL is to prepare young people to successfully transition to independent living by acquiring independent living skills through the provision of accommodation, case management and structured and individualised life skills programs.

The **distinguishing factor** is that TSIL must integrate these with therapeutic care and interventions offered within ITC, which includes utilising the Ten Essential Elements of Therapeutic Care and providing support from a therapeutic specialist to achieve case plan goals.

Both programs will:

- prevent young people transitioning from the Permanency Support Program to homelessness services
- maximise young people's capacity to live independently in the community
- improve social, economic and health outcomes for young people leaving care
- facilitate relationships with family, community, culture, significant others and friends, and
- Coordinate access to Aftercare support and services.

What is the target group for SIL and TSIL?

SIL placements are for children and young people that are:

- 16-17 years of age at entry
- assessed as having Low or Medium needs (CAT)
- in the statutory PSP, or
- exiting PSP to live independently, or have left a PSP placement but require further support to successfully transition to independence, and
- assessed by Child and Family District Unit (CFDU) as having the capacity to be placed in SIL and will have the capacity to live independently after a period of tailored support.

NB: Children and young people referred must not require therapeutic care

TSIL are for young people that are:

- 16 -17 years of age at entry, and
- assessed as having High needs (CAT)
- in the statutory PSP, or
- exiting PSP to live independently, or have left a PSP placement but require further support to successfully transition to independence, and
- assessed by Central Access Unit (CAU) as having the capacity to be placed in a therapeutic supported independent living program and will have the capacity to live independently after a period of tailored support

How long can a young person remain in SIL and TSIL?

Young people can enter a SIL or TSIL placement any time from the age of 16 up until 18 years of age. The goal of SIL and TSIL is to prepare young people for independent living so caseworkers need to actively work to develop these skills and assist young people transition to long term accommodation. Remaining in SIL or TSIL after this time will be dependent on their circumstances and needs.

While the maximum amount of time a young person can remain in either program is 24 months, placement duration post-18 will be considered closely based on the needs of the young person (see below – Young People in Placement over the Age of 18).

What are the minimum service requirements for TSIL and SIL?

The Service Provider must:

- provide a caseworker for each young person
- provide furnished accommodation that is stable, appropriate and affordable
- pay the difference between young people's contribution towards the rent and the actual rent charged for the property. The young person contributes a proportion of their income towards the rent and utilities for their share of costs (aligned with DCJ Charging Rent Policy)
- be responsible for any repairs and maintenance of properties but, where appropriate, negotiate the repayment of property damage debts with the young person responsible for the damage
- provide:
 - living skills training and support which include self-care, home management and budgeting;
 - assistance with access to education, training and vocational and employment
 - assistance, to support financial self-sufficiency;
 - a 'stay put' option for young people exiting the program who have demonstrated
 - the capacity to maintain a tenancy;
 - education and support to develop parenting skills, where appropriate; and
 - ongoing support after completing the program as required up until age 25.

TSIL services must also be designed to provide the following:

- access to health and counselling services, therapeutic intervention, welfare and community resources, specialist medical, allied health and dental services.

The Therapeutic Specialist must provide support to the young person’s caseworkers and Care Team to formulate and implement the therapeutic aspects of young people’s case plans, facilitate access to specialist services and transition to long term sustainable accommodation.

The TSIL program must be guided by an overarching philosophy of Therapeutic Care and reflect current best practice standards and research around trauma, attachment, and resilience. TSIL services must also meet the Child Safe Organisational Framework requirements.

Additionally, TSIL services must identify and develop the skills, competencies and community connections the young person needs to acquire to be able to live independently. TSIL includes the provision of casework support and facilitates access to specialist services that assist young people to understand their behavioural, emotional, psychological, educational and physical health needs.

In both programs casework support must contribute to developing Futures Planning.

How flexible is the model?

Casework support is provided flexibly depending on how much support a young person requires at any particular time, with levels of support gradually decreasing as a young person’s competencies increase and they move towards independence.

Whilst SIL has no specific requirements for providing support, at a minimum TSIL requires the caseworker to have face to face contact with the young person every week.

Neither SIL nor TSIL has a prescriptive delivery structure with accommodation able to be provided based on the young person’s needs (shared or individual). This is to encourage innovative sector responses to the specific needs of young people.

Three suggested options for providing TSIL placements are:

- Supported shared housing
- Lead tenant households
- Supported tenancies

The differences between the three (3) options for TSIL are outlined in the following table:

| Supported shared housing | Lead tenant households | Supported tenancies |
|--|--|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Suitable for up to 3-4 young people able to live in a share house who do not require daily supervision or intensive casework support. • Casework support provided to young person in an environment of their choice • A young person may stay in the accommodation after exiting the program. • Young person cannot assume the tenancy as vacancies in share housing are to be filled by eligible young people when vacancies become available. • A property owned by the Service Provider can be used for this type of arrangement because it remains open to new participants. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Suitable for up to 2-4 young people requiring daily supervision. • Live-in Authorised Carer or volunteer Authorised Carer is the lead tenant and receives free rent and utilities to oversee the day-to-day running of the home and provides positive role modelling and informal personal support. • The lead tenant has access to 24 hour support. • Casework support provided to young person. • Young person(s) may have option of assuming the lease in cases where they have demonstrated the capacity to meet the obligations of the tenancy agreement. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Suitable for 1-2 young people who are not yet ready to live in a share living situation, are not suitable for lead tenant arrangement and require daily casework support. • Intensive daily casework support provided to young people • Support is gradually reduced as young person’s competencies increase. • Young person(s) may have option of assuming the lease in cases where they have demonstrated the capacity to meet the obligations of the tenancy agreement. |

How do I make a referral for SIL or TSIL?

SIL referrals can only be made through Child & Family District Unit (CFDU), whilst TSIL referrals are made through the Central Access Unit (CAU).

As part of the referral process and prior to a young person entering SIL or TSIL, the agency with primary case management responsibility must provide a copy of the futures plan. If a futures plan is not in place the Service Provider making the referral will need to complete one before the referral will be considered.

Only in exceptional circumstances will a referral be accepted without a futures plan.

The SIL or TSIL provider will then progress and develop the plan as the young person prepares for leaving care.

Each young person should also have an independent living skills assessment completed by the referring agency to ensure they have the capacity to live independently after a period of tailored support. This should be completed prior to a referral being made to assist CFDU and CAU assess the young person's suitability for either program. This can be completed by utilising the DCJ *Independent Living Skills Checklist-A checklist for young people in care*.

CAU (TSIL) and CFDU (SIL) will speak to the referring caseworker at the time of referral to ascertain whether the young person can live with others or needs to be placed individually. Further to this the CAU or CFDU will determine which Service Provider is most appropriate to assist a young person's transition to adulthood based on the individual supports required.

Once a referral is accepted a transition plan will need to be developed with the young person and negotiated with the agencies effected by the change of placement.

What happens on entry to SIL or TSIL?

A review of the young person's independent living skills will be undertaken by the Service Provider as soon as practicable and as close to the date of placement as possible. The young person can complete the DCJ *Independent Living Skills Checklist-A checklist for young people in care* to ascertain their current skill level as well as areas that require further development. The Service Provider assuming case management will be able to observe the young person's independent living skills in the initial period of placement.

A case review should be arranged within one month of placement with any recommendations from the living skills assessment incorporated into the futures plan.

Monitoring of independent living skills is part of ongoing case management with a review of the future plan required on a minimum annual basis.

Young people should have all their belongings with them at the time of placement, with any additional items required to be purchased as soon as practicable.

Who holds primary case management responsibility for a young person in a SIL or TSIL placement?

Primary case management remains the responsibility of the agency providing the SIL or TSIL placement. If an agency makes a referral for SIL or TSIL the intention is that case management will transfer to the agency providing the SIL or TSIL placement.

Which service providers deliver SIL and TSIL and in which locations?

Service providers with a Program Level Agreement (PLA) signed for SIL and TSIL include:

| Therapeutic Supported Independent Living (TSIL) | |
|---|---|
| Provider | ITC Location |
| Allambi Care | Newcastle |
| Anglicare NSW, NSW West & ACT* • Mackillop Family Services | Queanbeyan, Wagga (Anglicare only) |
| CatholicCare, Diocese of Broken Bay | Gosford |
| Lifestyle Solutions (Aust) Ltd | Newcastle |
| Life Without Barriers | Lismore, Orange, and Wollongong |
| Mackillop Family Services Ltd* • Anglicare NSW, NSW West & ACT (St Saviours) | Blacktown, Liverpool, Lismore (Mackillop) |
| Marist Youth Care Limited | Blacktown, Liverpool, Orange, Newcastle |
| Southern Youth and Family Services Limited | Wollongong, Queanbeyan |

*There is a subcontracting arrangement between Mackillop Family Services and Anglicare NSW, NSW West, and ACT (St. Saviours)

NB: All ITC providers have provision within their PLA to provide SIL and TSIL, however will only provide these service types once requested by CFDU or CAU as per referral processes.

Service providers with a PLA signed for SIL include:

| Supported Independent Living (SIL) | |
|---|---|
| Provider | District |
| Allambi Care | Hunter |
| Anglicare NSW, NSW West & ACT* • Mackillop Family Services | Murrumbidgee (Anglicare only), Southern NSW |
| CareSouth | Illawarra Shoalhaven, Southern NSW, Murrumbidgee |
| Caretakers Cottage | Sydney, South Eastern Sydney |
| CASPA Services Ltd | Northern NSW and Mid North Coast |
| CatholicCare, Diocese of Broken Bay | Hunter Central Coast |
| CatholicCare Social Services - Hunter Manning | Hunter Central Coast |
| Lifestyle Solutions (Aust) Ltd | Western Sydney, Nepean Blue Mountains, South West Sydney, Hunter |
| Life Without Barriers | Northern NSW, Western NSW, Illawarra Shoalhaven |
| Mackillop Family Services Ltd* • Anglicare NSW, NSW West & ACT (St Saviours) | Northern NSW (Mackillop only), Western Sydney, South Western Sydney |
| Marist Youth Care Limited | Western Sydney, South West Sydney |
| Pathfinders | New England |
| Samaritans Foundation Diocese of Newcastle | Hunter Central Coast |
| Southern Youth and Family Services Limited | Illawarra, Shoalhaven and Southern NSW |
| The Burdekin Association Inc. | Sydney, South Eastern Sydney, Northern Sydney |
| Veritas House Inc. | Western NSW |

*There is a subcontracting arrangement between Mackillop Family Services and Anglicare NSW, NSW West, and ACT (St. Saviours)

SIL providers will only set up accommodation when requested to do so by the CFDU.

What are the leaving care / futures planning requirements for young people placed in SIL and TSIL?

The leaving care requirements are the same for any child or young person placed in statutory care. The SIL and TSIL service provider will:

- a) develop Person-centred comprehensive Futures Plans (previously known as Leaving Care Plan) for each Young Person aged 15 years or over to support their transition to independent living, consistent with *Transitioning from out-of-home care to independence: A nationally consistent approach to planning*
- b) address key life domains such as housing, independent connections with birth family and education consistent with *Transitioning from OOHC to independence: A nationally consistent approach to planning*
- c) annually review and if required update the Futures Plan to ensure it addresses the needs of the Young Person
- d) provide after care support at regular intervals for Young People who were placed with the provider for 12 months or more, until the Young Person turns 25, including advocacy, assistance, advice and referral to appropriate services
- e) ensure that Post Care Education Financial Support is part of the Future Plan for a Young Person who turns 18 while completing the HSC
- f) support eligible carers to access the Teenage Education Payment (not applicable to SIL/TSIL)
- g) ensure the Transition to Independent Living Allowance (TILA) is discussed with the young person and included in the preparation of the future plan for access at 18 years or beyond, depending on the wishes of the young person and their current and future needs – TILA is available up to age 25
- h) promote lifelong connection (to carers, caseworkers and community) for young people who have left care as a result of turning 18 as required up until the age of 25
- i) comply with requirements relating to futures planning and after care as outlined and detailed in the relevant FACS policies and procedures in Schedule 4

Futures planning will also need to include therapeutic supports as part of case planning for young people placed in TSIL. The futures plan will need to outline how the therapeutic specialist is being utilised and supports they are providing to the young person.

As SIL and TSIL are one of many pathways considered when transitioning young people to adulthood preparing the young person to exit this service to long term accommodation should be an ongoing part of case planning.

The final leaving care plan needs to be approved by DCJ prior to the young person turning 18 with the Leaving Care Letter and information from the Minister completed at least 4 weeks prior to the young person's 18th birthday.

For further information regarding leaving care and after care refer to the [DCJ website under leaving care and after care](#).

Young people in placement over the age of 18 years

SIL and TSIL are not long term accommodation options for young people transitioning to independence so remaining in SIL and TSIL post 18 will only be considered on an individual needs basis. As part of case planning caseworkers should continually review the young person's needs and support them to make the transition to adulthood as soon as practicable.

If there are young people aged 18 years and over in placement it's important to speak to CAU or CFDU to determine whether this placement is actually the most appropriate for their needs.

Transitioning from SIL and TSIL placements

Transition planning is part of case management and should occur for all young people prior to the cessation of their placement with SIL and TSIL providers.

Young people should also be provided with a guaranteed exit point from the placement, with stable, long term, and sustainable accommodation secured prior to transition from the program. This may be provided by the SIL or TSIL provider themselves or secured with other accommodation providers, including a private rental.

A case review should be conducted prior to the young person exiting the program with a review of the futures plan included to ensure all the necessary supports are in place to assist the young person make a successful transition to independence.

The young person should be informed that they can access support up until the age of 25 years and can access their care records at any time (from all agencies that provided their care).

More information

For more information, contact the Department of Communities and Justice, ITC Commissioning team at OOHCRcontracting@facs.nsw.gov.au