

Next Steps Plus and Extended Post Care Support Model



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1. Introduction

1.1 Purpose

This document outlines the service delivery model of the Anglicare Southern Queensland’s (Anglicare) Children, Youth and Families (CYF) Next Step Plus and Extended Post Care Support. It supports the provision of high-quality care to young people transitioning from care and young adults who have had a care experience as funded by the Department of Child Safety, Seniors and Disability Services (hereinafter referred to as the Department). It provides information on the service delivery context, key components of the model, reporting requirements and the expected service outcomes. Use of the model may be (but is not limited to) a guide for reference and training to promote consistency and is to be read in conjunction with the Improving Lives Framework, Child Safety Practice Manual, and the Hope and Healing Framework. Throughout this document, the care leaver is referred to as a ‘young person’ if they are under 18 years, ‘young adult’ if they are 18 years or older, or service users collectively.

1.2 Background

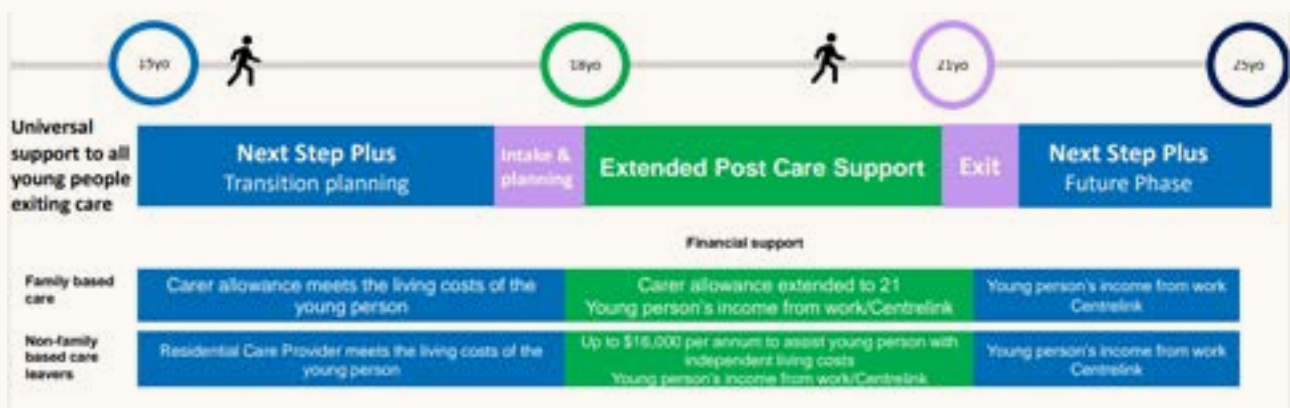
Leaving care is formally defined as the cessation of legal responsibility by the State for young people living in Out of Home Care (OOHC) (Mendes, 2009). Evidence suggests that extending the duration of the government’s responsibilities and the care opportunities available significantly improves the outcomes experienced by care leavers (ACIL Allen Consulting, 2020). Next Step Plus (NSP) and Extended Post Care Support (EPCS) assists the Department in meeting its obligation under the Child Protection Act 1999 to support and assist young people in their

transition from care. Next Step Plus is a service for young people aged 15 to 25 who have had a care experience since their 12th birthday. Next Step Plus commenced on 1 April 2020 to support young people from the age of 15 who are in care to develop the skills and knowledge to live independently (Department of Child Safety, Seniors and Disability Services). The focus is on ensuring young people are resilient and supported and develop the skills, capacity, and capability to be the people they want to be. Figure 1 depicts the phases within Next Step Plus.

Next Step Plus service delivery supports service users to:

- Have a sense of identity and belonging, including an understanding of their family, community, and cultural background;
- Be connected to peers, family, community, and culture;
- Be healthy: physically, emotionally, mentally, and sexually;
- Have a safe and stable place to live and support to sustain those arrangements;
- Have a job or are engaged in continuing education;
- Have practical life skills to look after themselves; and
- Have a stable income and can make basic financial decisions.

Young people under 18 years of age and subject to an order are in the Next Step Transition Planning Phase. In this phase, the Department retains case management responsibility, while Anglicare delivers limited casework in the form of information and advocacy in relation to transition.



Anglicare works with the Department as part of a young person's safety and support network to provide support and share information to meet young people's needs while in care. The views and wishes of the young person are essential considerations for their safety and support network.

Extended Post Care Support (EPCS) is a discrete phase within Next Step Plus and commenced on 1 July 2023 to enhance the service continuum of support available for young people and young adults from 18 years up to 21 years of age. EPCS includes (Department of Child Safety, Seniors and Disability Services):

- Culturally appropriate, proactive, practical support to young adults leaving care from their 18th birthday to their 21st birthday
- Extension of the care allowance for young adults who continue living with their former carer or guardian from their 18th birthday until their 21st birthday
- Financial support of up to \$16,000 per year is available to young adults leaving care to live in their own housing arrangements as independent adults. The financial support is available from their 18th birthday until their 21st birthday and will assist in meeting their everyday living costs.

EPCS services work directly with young adults to assist them with finding a safe and affordable place to live, establishing or maintaining connections with family, culture, country and community, applying for a job or enrolling in a training course or taking young adults to appointments to meet their health and wellbeing needs.

To ensure young adults can receive additional support and services, should they require them, Next Step Plus is available up to the age of 25 years. This is the Next Step Plus Future Phase.

Anglicare services are informed by attachment, trauma and child development theories and research to respond to the physical, social, and emotional needs of each young person. Anglicare recognises that as young people progress through transition their needs are likely to change, and service delivery offers a step-up and step-down approach to adapt to these changing needs.

1.3 Governing Framework

The Child Protection Act

The Child Protection Act 1999 provides the overarching legislative framework for protecting children in Queensland, including reporting concerns. Anglicare's placement services comply with all relevant legislative requirements under the Act, including care service licensing provisions to ensure quality care is consistent with the Charter of Rights of a Child in Care, the Statement of Standards and the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Child Placement Principle. Anglicare placement services comply with relevant Departmental policies, procedures, program descriptions and related guidelines.

The Human Rights Act

The Human Rights Act 2019 protects the rights of everyone in Queensland. The Act requires organisations providing services to the public, on behalf of the Queensland Government - to act and make decisions compatible with the rights it protects. Of the 23 human rights protected in the Act, the following are directly relevant to the delivery of placement services:

- Protection of families and children (s. 26)
- Cultural rights for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples (s.28)
- Cultural rights, generally (s.27)
- Privacy and reputation (s. 25).

The National Framework for Protecting Australia's Children 2009-2020 (COAG, 2009) consists of high-level and supporting outcomes and strategies to be delivered through a series of three-year action plans and indicators of change that can be used to monitor the success of the National Framework. The National Framework also recognises the importance of promoting the wellbeing of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people and families across all outcome areas.

Human Services Quality Framework

The Human Services Quality Framework (HSQF) is the Department's quality framework. The HSQF was developed to safeguard the needs of clients. These six standards cover the core elements of quality service provision and provide a benchmark for measuring service delivery to promote consistency across the sector. Anglicare has a three-tier compliance approach to support services to monitor performance against policy, procedure and the HSQF standards, which support best practice and continuous improvement.

Anglicare’s quality management system ensures the provision of safe, quality care to clients. Anglicare has a three-tier compliance approach to support services to monitor performance against policy, procedure and the HSQF standards, which support best practice and continuous improvement. The ‘Assess to Action’ program supports staff to monitor performance against policy, procedure and relevant external standards, legislation, regulation, and contractual requirements and supports best practice. The first tier is a self-assessment guided by an assessment tool. Findings may contribute to the continuous improvement plan. Advice, education, and support for services is available from the Quality Assurance and Improvement Team. The Quality Assurance and Improvement team conducts internal audits as the second tier and external audits as the third tier.

Acts and regulations:

- Child Protection Act 1999
- Child Protection Regulation 2011
- Child Protection (International Measures) Act 2003
- Childrens Court Act 1992
- Information Privacy Act 2009
- Working with Children (Risk Management and Screening) Act 2000
- Statement of Standards.



2. The Next Steps Plus and Extended Post Care Support Model

2.1 Practice Principles

2.1.1 Improving Lives

All OOHC programs within Anglicare are committed to working within the practice principles of the Improving Lives Practice Framework. The framework has been co-developed between Anglicare and the Australian Childhood Foundation to ensure it meets the needs of the individuals and families that access out of home care programs, care teams, and the organisation.

The Improving Lives Practice Framework integrates the following principles:

- Being Child Focused, Person-Centred and Family-Oriented
- Being Trauma-Informed and Recovery-Oriented
- Strengthening and Empowering Practice
- Valuing Diversity and Cultural Responsiveness.

The framework is underpinned by trauma informed relationships whereby the therapeutic relationship formed between young people and practitioners is one of the most powerful determinants of outcomes (Siegel, 2010). The framework emphasises physical, psychological and emotional safety for both clients and care teams, which builds on the strengths of the individual and community, creating an opportunity to rebuild a sense of control and empowerment.

2.2 Next Steps Plus Service Types

Next Steps Plus Transition Planning

Next Steps Plus is offered to all 15-year-olds under a care order. Early engagement is established through an introduction to the service, information, referral and advocacy for developing the transition plan.

Extended Post Care Support

Extended Post Care Support is a discrete phase within Next Step Plus and offered to young adults 18-21 years with a care experience. It consists of two service levels, universal and enhanced.

Universal service is for young adults with the capacity to develop skills, knowledge, and connections to successfully transition into adulthood but may require intermittent support as they progress to independence.

Enhanced service is for young adults with more complex and interconnected needs, reducing their capacity to develop the skills, knowledge and connections required to live independently.

Next Step Plus Future Phase

Next Step Plus Future Phase is offered to young people subject to a child protection order granting their custody or guardianship to the Chief Executive aged 15-17 years, or who are aged 15-25 years for whom, after turning 12 years, have had their order discharged or their order has otherwise expired, before they turned 18 years. Service delivery can be intermittent or as needed to provide information, advice, advocacy or referral to support the young adult's personal goals.

2.3 Core Model Elements

The provision of support, planning and transitions is conducted in consideration of the young person/adult's unique history of attachment and trauma, connections and relationships with family and community and cultural background. The core elements of the Next Step and Extended Post Care Support Model are entry, assessment and planning, delivery, transition, and exit.

2.3.1 Entry

Anglicare's Next Step and Extended Post Care Support uphold the best interest of young people in care and young adults with care experiences by considering the service users views and wishes, strengths and needs, individual trauma history, culture, disability and developmental needs, the views of the young person's family, community of origin, and continuity of relationships as outlined in the Child Safety Practice Manual. This element covers intake, welcoming service users and engagement.

Anglicare's NSP and EPCS staff are intentional and take time to build relationships with the young person/adult and focus on three foundations of the relationship – unconditional positive regard, emotional literacy, and communication skills. The relationship is a fundamental vehicle for change and is an intervention (Beckett and Horner, 2006). Access to consistent, reliable, warm, and nurturing relationships can offer 'turning points' that alter developmental pathways in a positive direction. This includes relationships

with attachment figures, siblings, peers, and other adults, as well as with professionals who can offer relationships through which the young person/adult can strengthen their capacity to form and maintain relationships with others.

Initial engagement with the service user includes identifying which agencies or supports are already in place, which services are being provided, and the quality of those relationships. When a young person/adult perceives the service is helpful, they're more likely to stay engaged. Workers develop a partnership approach with young people/adults that promotes responsibility and builds skills and capacity.

The Department refers young people to Next Step Plus by providing the service with a quarterly list of young people, including their demographic, contact and placement details. These young people may have a variety of care arrangements and/or access pathways:

- Foster care
- Kinship care
- Residential care services
- Supported Independent Living Services
- Juvenile Detention
- Family of origin
- Living independently
- Self-referral.

Service users are given a welcome pack which includes information on the young people's rights, complaints and feedback processes, privacy and record keeping and essential contacts.

2.3.2 Assessment and Planning

Formal planning occurs once the service user has engaged with the service, and more is known about their needs, interests, and strengths. Anglicare provides collaborative and holistic planning in line with the Improving Lives Practice Framework for trauma informed care. The team utilises various conversations and creative mediums to engage service users in planning conversations.

Transition to Adulthood Plan

Transition to Adulthood/ Independence commences around 15 years, with the Child Safety Officer as the lead case manager responsible for developing a Transition Plan. This is the opportunity for young people to identify their future goals and needs and to work towards these with the support of the Department, key stakeholders, and their family members. This is the commencement of the Next Step Plus Transition Planning phase. From the time the young person turns 15 years old, the Transition Mentor can support the young person by:

- Advocating with the Department for a transition plan to be developed and a meeting held
- Providing information about transition support, including services like Next Step Plus and Extended Post Care Support services
- Providing information about financial resources such as Youth Housing Essentials, Youth Housing and Reintegration Services, Transition to Independent Living Allowance, and independent living skills development tools.

Once the young person reaches 17.5 years, the Transition to Adulthood planning process commences and includes relevant stakeholders. This is the commencement of the Extended Post Care Support Phase. In this phase, the Transition Mentor works with the Young Adult to develop the Goals and Outcome plan if requiring Enhanced service.

- Assessments and Planning consider the following domains:
- Accessing and maintaining safe, secure, and affordable housing
- Connection to Culture, Country and Community
- Education, training, and employment
- Accessing stable income or financial support that meets their cost of living
- Budgeting and other independent living skills
- Physical and emotional wellbeing

Facilitated referrals and advocacy to access other resources and services, including specialist services for young people with complex support needs, such as NDIS funding.

One of the program's objectives is to increase the service user's connection to a support network and to identify a potential mentor, as these significant people will assist the young adult in the future. With consent, the Transition Mentor explores these relationships with the young person/adult, seeking to build relationships and engage them in the planning process.

The Transition Mentor accesses a range of tools to support the assessment and planning process, including:

- Independent Living Skills Assessment and Goal Setting Tool
- CREATE Go Your Own Way Information Kit
- Ecomap
- The Three Houses
- The Future House.

Financial Plan

The Financial Plan considers the young adult's primary identity and belonging, as well as the hierarchy of social and recreational needs, ensuring funds are used to complement existing sources of support to maximise opportunities. Developing a financial plan is utilised to empower young adults to make sound, sustainable financial decisions. This plan is reviewed in line with the Goals and Outcome Plan.

Goals and Outcome Plans are monitored by the Transition Mentor and reviewed at three months and formally at six months, at minimum, with the young adult and relevant stakeholders. Anglicare care teams

are purposeful in celebrating young people/adults' successes and creative in ensuring celebrations are meaningful to the young person/adult.

2.3.3 Service Delivery

Delivery involves day-to-day case work and support with a strong emphasis on the ethical and just delivery of services. Delivery involves implementing individual plans that align with the above-mentioned domains and the Improving Lives Practice Framework for trauma informed care. Intervention provided during the ages EPCS phase is designed to be flexible and responsive to young adults' needs, recognising that the young adult may require more support around points of transition, for example, new tenancy, new housemate, changes in employment or changes in other domains.

One-on-One Meetings

Meetings are held one-on-one with service users to discuss and support their progress toward goals contained in their plan. These meetings aim to discuss goals, views, wishes, and needs and review and update the young person's plan.



Assertive Outreach

Proactive approaches to engage hard to reach young people/adults in spaces where they feel comfortable. Assertive outreach aims to find flexible ways to work with young people rather than reducing or ending support. Over time, workers build relationships of trust with service users and encourage participation in culturally appropriate support activities. Young people/adults who become disconnected or choose not to seek support are supported through a proactive approach. Research suggests that the most effective and assertive outreach approaches combine persistent engagement, practical assistance, self-determination and access to services (Phillips and Parsell, 2012). Anglicare's approach to assertive outreach includes persistent efforts to engage with young people/adults in their own space, at their pace, providing practical support at contact, and demonstrating flexibility, responsiveness and reliability. Efforts to connect occur in locations that young people/adults currently access, including collaboration with the young person/adult's network.

Capacity Building

Building service users' knowledge, skills, and confidence allows for their development and sustained learning and growth that promotes skills to be continued independently. Anglicare provides and brokers capacity building services to ensure service users obtain the relevant skills and knowledge to feel supported in their transition from care, addressing topics such as managing money and entitlements, housing, employment, legal advice, and health.

Housing

Supporting young adults in securing and maintaining stable accommodation is one of the priorities of Next Step Plus. The Transition Mentor assists young adults, following their wishes and goals, to build their tenancy skills, connect with housing organisations, complete paperwork and access financial resources etc.

Education and Employment

Anglicare values and promotes young people's participation in appropriate education and or vocational activities. Suitable options are explored with the young person and stakeholders, and where possible, the young person's connection with existing activities is maintained.

Personal Mentor

A key component of the service delivery is assisting the young adult to identify and build their connection with a mentor for their transition to independence. First Nations Community Controlled Organisations and other community partner organisations are engaged to support First Nations young people in being mentored by family, elders, or community members who support young people to build their network and feel connected to culture and country. The team supports the personal mentor/service user relationship. The personal mentor may contribute information to the strengths and needs assessment, support the young adult's goal setting, and help the young adult progress towards achievement.

Carer Support

Direct support to Foster and Kinship Carers includes the Transition Mentor meeting the carer household, including children, to introduce the service, explain their role, and share information about the service and what supports could be offered, including training opportunities. Where possible and practical, carers are introduced to other carers locally, to help build a network of support. Anglicare provides training opportunities for carers, including Transition to Adulthood (T2A) forums to educate carers on supporting young people transitioning from care. These forums focus on topics such as developing life skills, practice tasks such as budgeting, maintaining a home, the importance of community and social connections and building resilience. The Transition Mentor recognises that this can be a time of grief and loss for carers and offers support and referrals to the carer with this focus.

Cultural Connection

Service delivery to First Nations service users involves Anglicare connecting with First Nations specific partner agencies to promote the service user's cultural identity, connections and create a sense of belonging. Wherever possible, First Nations service users receive support from First Nations youth workers and cultural support workers who are employed by Anglicare and develop a cultural support plan. First Nations service users may be supported by an Indigenous Support Worker (ISW) or Elder from a local First Nations partner agency to promote the service user's connection and sense of belonging to culture. Cultural connection is an important factor in identifying a suitable personal mentor, as mentioned above.

Legal Support

Anglicare provides legal support, advocacy and education. Service users are supported to access the National Redress Scheme and Victims of Crime where relevant. Service users are supported to access legal representation and resources, attend court, and understand legal documentation.

3. Context for Delivering Next Steps Plus and Extended Post Care Support

3.1 Operating hours

Anglicare's office hours are generally 9am to 5pm on Monday to Friday.

3.2 The care team

The Service Manager oversees the service operations, ensuring the organisational strategic plan is enacted. They work with the Group Manager to provide leadership and support to the service in service delivery, client-centred culture development, human resources management, business performance and financial management, quality care governance, contractual compliance and risk management, innovation and best practice.

The Transition Mentor's role is to work with and support service users individually or in groups by developing goals that address social, behavioural, welfare, developmental and protection needs. This role can include several different duties and is tailored to meet

2.3.4 Exit

Service engagement may end for a variety of reasons, including:

- Planned move out of catchment
- Change in level of support required by young person/adult
- Young person/adult declines service
- Transfer to Aboriginal Controlled Community Organisation.

A service user's transition is planned wherever possible with the young person/adult and key stakeholders. This includes discussion of goals, progress and needs assessments where required. Anglicare teams can support young people/adults by offering referrals and introductions to other services, including other Anglicare support services in the Social and Community Services stream, e.g. counselling and housing. Where a young adult has withdrawn or decreased engagement, Anglicare contacts the young adult six monthly to conduct a check in and offer further support.

the needs of the young person/adult to achieve their goals.

3.3 Diversity and Cultural Inclusion

Anglicare has an organisation wide Diversity, Equity, Inclusion and Belonging Strategy. Anglicare staff receive Diversity, Equity, Inclusion and Belonging (DEIB) training, which has been co-designed by Anglicare specifically for the context of our practice in the child protection sector, including a specific module for leaders to ensure the concepts are embedded in our workplace cultures and foundational concepts around bias, power, privilege, language, intersectionality and positionality which can be applied across all elements of diversity. Staff also receive Cultural Capability and Awareness training led by a respected First Nations community member, with mandatory refresher requirements. Staff consider all information relevant to the individual needs of young people/adults during referral, intake, assessment and planning, delivery

and review, and exit processes, focusing on the unique lived experience and their intersectional identity. Service delivery governance responsible for guiding frontline practice (specifically Care Arrangement Matching Procedure, Assessment and Planning, and Care Planning) requires staff to consider elements of diversity in collaboration with the children and young people's care team, including those who identify as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander, Culturally and Linguistically Diverse (CALD), diverse gender and sexual orientation, immigrant or refugee, living with disability and/or mental health.

Anglicare acknowledges that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families and communities have endured significant human rights violations, which continue to impact their daily lives. Anglicare acknowledges the profound grief, suffering and loss caused by the removal of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children from their families, their community and their culture, and Anglicare continues to be committed to ensuring Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children's cultural identity and relationships with their families and communities are maintained. Cultural Mentors support non-Indigenous staff to better understand the needs of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander children in care and receiving service and respond holistically to consider family, spiritual, community and individual needs. They work closely with Child Safety service centres to achieve the young person's cultural plans in consultation with the Department's Cultural Practice Advisor. They also assist other team members to better understand Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and families and support them toward the best outcomes for safe care and connection. Young people can request a worker who identifies as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander. If Anglicare cannot provide an identified worker, access to additional culturally appropriate services or other local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Community Services will be facilitated.

Anglicare supports self-determination for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people/adults by partnering with Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisations, proactively collaborating with service users and ACCO partners to transition First Nations families to ACCO's. The Cultural Practice Lead implements a cultural protocol practice tool connected to the Improving Lives Framework for practice to better equip staff to enable more meaningful self-determination for First Nations young people/adults, their families, and their communities.

3.4 Participation of young people/adults

In ensuring the participation of young people/adults and their families, Anglicare:

- Conducts genuine, ongoing consultation and facilitates the participation of young people/adults and their families in the making of decisions that affect them;
- Provides young people/adults and their families with information (in a manner and language that they can understand) that facilitates their participation;
- Conducts genuine, ongoing consultation and facilitates the participation of young people/adults and their families in decision-making processes; and
- Supports young people in care to access the Community Visitor from the Office of the Public Guardian.

Anglicare creates opportunities to hear the voices of young people/adults. Current methods of seeking feedback include but are not limited to care planning, compliments and complaints processes, and Client Voice surveys.

3.5 Workforce capability

Anglicare supports the team to meet the requirements of their role successfully. This occurs through induction, internal and external training, professional development plans, and professional supervision.

Communities of Practice

The Anglicare Children, Youth and Families Practice Development team facilitates Communities of Practice (COP). COP's focus on sharing practice wisdom, better practice and new knowledge on a specific topic. The COP occurs once every eight weeks. The Department also hosts a COP, specifically for EPCS providers focused on practice and professional development.

Anglicare provides a space for the team to engage in safe, supportive supervision for critical reflection and practice improvement; self-care and professional safety planning; incident debriefing; and post crisis support. In keeping with the Improving Lives Practice

Framework, it's expected that supervision is provided through a trauma informed lens. Supervisors are provided with a day of Improving Lives training focusing on the supervision relationship to support this.

Complex Case Panels

Anglicare established Complex Case Panels to promote internal reflection and planning for employees working alongside clients with complex support needs. The process seeks to leverage the panel members' knowledge, skills and expertise and the referring care team to support contemporary, high quality, evidence-based service delivery. Panel members work collaboratively with the team to develop and implement a risk management/action plan that provides clear direction, a fresh and creative perspective, decision making and recommendations for the next steps to support practice and encourage the development of best practice.

4. Data Collection and Reporting

4.1 Performance Management Framework and Performance Measures

The Department's Performance Management Framework for funded service providers sets out how the Department will monitor and assess all the outsourced service delivery contracts.

5. Next Steps Plus Program Logic

Objective/s

Supporting young people/adults to prepare for and build skills to experience an effective transition from care and realise their potential for independence.

Needs statement

Young people leaving OOHC encounter significant barriers during their transition to adulthood, including developing social networks and engaging with support services (Malavaso et al., 2017). Young people leaving OOHC are more likely to experience poor life outcomes compared to their peers who were never in care

(Campo and Commerford, 2016). This includes higher rates of homelessness, mental illness, substance abuse, poor education and employment opportunities, and greater exposure to the criminal justice system. They are also more likely to become parents at an early age and are at greater risk of having their child involved in the child protection system (Beauchamp, 2014). These young people also experience significantly shorter transition to independence than those who were never in care and have less support to assist with that transition (Department of Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs, 2010).

Inputs	Activities	Outputs	Short-term outcomes 15.5 - 21 years	Medium-term outcomes 21-25 years	Long-term outcomes 25+ years
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Funding • Partner organisations • Qualified and experienced staff and managers • Data collection and CIS • Research and evidence about what works. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Information, Referral and - Advocacy • One-on-one support • Skills assessment and development • Goals outcome planning • Financial planning and support • Build safety and support network • Practical support • Plan reviews • Skill development groups • Role modelling • Personal mentor identification and support • Carer support • Case management • Stakeholder liaison. 	<p>P2I reporting requirements.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Access to entitlements and records • Increase awareness of and connection/participation with service system • Developing core life skills – money, meal prep, driving, shopping • Increased rate of suitable accommodation • Enrolment, retention of education, training or employment • Immediate and ongoing health and wellbeing supports in place • Re/connect with family members, network • Increased understanding of and support for legal matters. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Secure accommodation • Participation in service systems, if needed • Regular use of life skills • Improved physical, mental health and wellbeing • Improved social and family connections • Reduced rate of subsequent contact with the justice system • Increased social connection • Increased self-directed participation in education, training and employment. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stable social network • Secure accommodation • Stable employment • Connection with and access to services to maintain health and wellbeing as necessary • Reduced recidivism/contact with the justice system • Own children (if relevant) not in contact with Child Safety • Overall wellbeing and increased resilience, knowledge and networks to deal with issues when they arise.

5.1 Theory of Change Statement

Underpinning the activities of the Anglicare Next Step Plus and Extended Care Post Support program is a foundation of core principles and assumptions that are drawn from practice experience, the OOHC literature and the Child Protection Act (1999) – Queensland.

To deliver quality services, Anglicare believes that:

- The welfare and best interests of young people leaving care are paramount
- NSP and ECPS support and case management practices are person-centred, trauma informed, and family focused. Teams will be supported through tailored learning and development opportunities to meet the needs of the service users they support
- Actions taken, whilst in the best interest of young people, seek to maintain family relationships and cultural connections
- Quality post care support services respect and recognise the importance of the ethnic and cultural heritage, religious beliefs, and language of service users and their families. Where possible, the support of First Nations people is transferred to Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisations as best practice
- Quality post care support is needs-based, trauma sensitive and attachment focused. The team identify, emphatically understands and responds to the needs of each person, is sensitive to the effects of the trauma they have experienced, recognises the issues and impacts of intergenerational trauma, and seeks to develop caring and nurturing relationships to facilitate the healing process
- Service users receiving post care services are supported to feel safe and protected from further harm. Emotional and psychological healing and the development of skills required for a successful transition to adult living occur in a caring and nurturing environment
- Service users need to be supported in a healthy environment that is characterised by positive practices, including:
 - Structure and routine
 - Reliability and transparency
 - Guidance, support and encouragement
 - Positive reinforcement
 - Fair, consistent and reasonable boundaries, natural consequences; and
 - Demonstrating tolerance for typical and/or symptomatic behaviour.
- Regardless of the young person's unacceptable behaviours, they're entitled to be listened to and treated with respect. Service users need to receive appropriate positive guidance to help them develop self-regulation techniques
- Service users are given age and developmentally appropriate opportunities to grow in identity, intimacy and independence. They should be able to engage in the full range of acceptable activities available to their peers in the general community
- Positive experiences and participation in activities are essential for the young person's wellbeing. Opportunities to participate in critically important 'therapeutically based activities' are unconditional
- Continuity in the lives of young people post care is critical for psychological wellbeing. All efforts are taken to support the maintenance of relationships with family, friends, schools and communities to which the young person has links
- NSP and EPCS is a partnership embracing service users, their families, Department of Child Safety staff, other stakeholders and Anglicare teams – all planning and working in the service user's best interest
- The provision of ongoing information, training, support and supervision is critical to a professional care team.

6. Conclusion

Next Step Plus represents a vital option in the service continuum. The Anglicare Southern Queensland Next Steps Plus program is founded on being needs-based, trauma informed, and relationship focused. By providing support that focuses on these areas, service users can develop new skills, build on existing skills and have new adult living opportunities in an environment of safety and encouragement. The relational aspect of service delivery provides them with new pathways in

the brain that will help them manage their experiences of past trauma and increase their resilience. Overall, the support provided in the program is aimed at preparing service users for the most successful transition to independent living, reaching their goals and full potential, and having enhanced connections with their families, cultures, communities, and support networks.

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