

# Staying On

# Home Stretch

WA

## Practice Guidelines



Government of **Western Australia**  
Department of **Communities**

Produced by:  
**Anglicare WA**  
Home Stretch WA Team

## Acknowledgements

We acknowledge all of the elders, foster and family carers, residential care programs, biological families and young people who have so generously and courageously contributed their learned and lived expertise in the design and development of the Home Stretch WA's Staying On approach.

We acknowledge Aboriginal people as the Traditional Custodians of this land. We pay our respects to their strength, cultural resilience and the Elders past and present.



## How to use this Guide & Contents

The Practice Guidelines has been developed for everyone working and training to implement Staying On Agreements in Western Australia as part of the Home Stretch WA program. It provides a simple framework for supporting a young person to Stay On in a stable living arrangement from 18 to the age of 21.

Introduction	1
Home Stretch WA Background	1
What is Staying On?	2
Staying On Guiding Principles	2
Learnings	3
What have we learned?	4
The Staying On journey	5
Awareness	9
Making an Agreement	11
Application	13
Payment	14
Review	14
Exit	17
Key Documents	18
Roles & Responsibilities	18
Staying On - Frequently Asked Questions	20
Staying On - Info Session Guide	22
Staying On - Review Guide	24

## Introduction

Staying On gives young people and their foster carers the opportunity to be supported to continue a living arrangement up to the age of 21.

For young people, it means they do not have to leave their former foster carers' home until they reach 21, or when they are ready to move on.

For foster carers, it means they can be financially supported to continue to provide a young person a home.

Many young people have already been staying on if it is in the young person's interest, and both the carer and the young person want it to happen. Staying On is about supporting these arrangements to be successful, it is one part of the support offered through Home Stretch WA to care leavers.

## Home Stretch WA Background

Home Stretch WA provides an enhanced support system for young people transitioning from out-of-home care, providing them with additional support and resources from the ages of 18 to 21 years.

The aim is to improve care leavers' access to housing, health, education, training and employment through the provision of practical one-on-one assistance from 18 years to when they turn 21 years of age.

### Safety Net

The right to a visible and viable, secure safety net to ensure access to housing, foster care, health education and life skills

### Transition Support

Flexible, one-to-one support focused on coaching towards interdependence

### Support Circles

Supporting a young person to establish an enduring network of personal, family and community connections

Staying On Agreements  
Housing Subsidy  
Invest In Me Funding

Smooth Transition  
Transition Coach

Support Circle  
Nitja Nop Yorga Ngulla Mia  
Footprint Pathways

**Aboriginal Culture Framework underpins all the core elements**

## What is Staying On?

Staying On is one part of the Safety Net of resources for young people in the Home Stretch WA program. Young people and their carers have the option to continue their stable living environment until the young person turns 21. There is a continuation of payments to support the foster and family carers and an expectation the young person contributes to the living arrangement.

Home Stretch WA supports young people and their carers to develop and maintain a Staying On Agreement that establishes the expectations, payments and conditions of the stable living arrangement until they are ready to leave or turn 21.

For young people who are not continuing in a Staying On Agreement, support to find and maintain stable and safe housing is provided through the Transition Coach and they can access a Housing Allowance.

### Why is Staying On Important?

Many young people aren't ready and cannot afford to move out at 18; and leaving their stable living environment can have a serious negative impact. Young people value stability, support and connection but want to be respected as a young adult. Paying a Staying On Subsidy provides stability in the living arrangement for the young person and the carer.

## Staying On Guiding Principles

A secure & visible safety net is accessible by right, not by discretion

Young people make an informed choice about their involvement

Home Stretch WA offer is simply & clearly communicated across channels

Foster & family carers are included in early planning – there are no shocks

Staying On must be a collaborative choice (both foster carers & young people agree)

'Chipping In', young people have incomes at this age, they should contribute to paying costs

Do not duplicate existing resources (payment of financial subsidy shouldn't impact or replace income support)

Young people need to hold decision making power – the approach must value and celebrate an emerging independence and right to agency

Milestones are acknowledged & celebrated, recognising traditional rites of passage & rituals of transition

Support must be consistent & persistent but not intrusive

## Learnings

What young people have told us is important to them

Be responsive & accessible, treat us as individuals

Help us learn how to become financially independent

Support us unconditionally; failure & bad choices are learning opportunities

Be persistent & consistent, 'like a text message' not a 'knock on the door'

Focus on maintaining & building our sense of belonging & connection to others



Value & encourage our independence by supporting our decisions & choices

## What have we learned?

- Staying On Agreements must be highly individualised to respect and strengthen the existing relationships within families
- Regular support and structured reviews of Staying On Agreements is an important part of the model
- Staying On Agreements support the young person's home - not the room they are sleeping in
- The choice to Stay On must be communicated early to allow future planning for families and carers
- It is no longer a 'placement' but a supported agreement made by the young adult and their carer
- The separation of the Staying On Facilitator and Transition Coach role is important
- Aboriginal families require a culturally informed understanding of living arrangements

## The Staying On journey

### **AWARENESS**

Find out about Staying On

### **MAKE AN AGREEMENT**

Work out a Staying On Agreement

### **APPLICATION**

Apply for the Staying On Subsidy

### **PAYMENT**

Receive the Staying On Subsidy

### **REVIEW**

Review how things are going

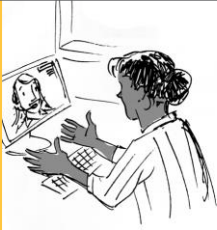
### **EXIT**

Staying On finishes when the young person turns 21 or decide to move on

## AWARENESS Finding out about Staying On

### IDENTIFY YOUNG PEOPLE

This starts at least 6 months before you turn 18



Case Worker/s identify young people in stable & safe living arrangements who are leaving care in the next 6 months

### FIND OUT ABOUT HOME STRETCH WA



Case worker discusses Home Stretch WA with the young person & carer

Check Out: Home Stretch WA- Fact Sheet- Young People & Staying On Guide for Carers & Young People

### MAKE AN APPOINTMENT

Helps you make a decision about Staying On



Young person & carer organise to meet with the Home Stretch WA Coach

### DISCUSSION



The Coach explains Home Stretch WA & the option to be supported to Stay On, they are given info & how Staying On Agreements work

## MAKING AN AGREEMENT Working out how Staying On works for you

### DECISION TO STAY ON

If you agree to Stay On let's do some planning



Young person & carer agree the young person can 'Stay On' in the living arrangement

### SMOOTH TRANSITION OF CARER SUPPORTS

The Staying On Facilitator works with the carers' support circle to smoothly transition support to Home Stretch WA, they agree on how things might work to support a carer with other children in the living arrangement



Check Out: Staying On Facilitator- Role in Onboarding, Setting up a Staying On Agreement Discussion Guide & Staying On Agreement Template

### PREPARE AGREEMENT

We can help you make an agreement



The Transition Coach supports the young person to work out how things might be different after 18, the Home Stretch WA Staying On Facilitator supports the carer to do the same

### STAYING ON AGREEMENT

Young person & carer are supported to negotiate a Staying On Agreement, the Home Stretch WA Staying On Facilitator facilitates the process



## APPLICATION Applying for the Staying On Subsidy

### SUBSIDY APPLICATION

With the agreement done, now you can apply for the subsidy



Coach helps the young person & carer submit the subsidy application paperwork for approval

### SUBSIDY APPROVAL



Carer & young person receive call/email /SMS notification of Staying On Subsidy approval

## PAYMENT Getting Paid

### SUBSIDY PAYMENT

Let's check to make sure you are getting paid & things are OK



After 18 the carer receives the Staying On payment, & the young person makes their agreed contribution

## REVIEW Your First Review

### 4 WEEK REVIEW



Young Person and Carer meet with the Staying On Facilitator and Coach to check in and tweak the agreement



## REVIEW

Ongoing to make sure things are still OK, report changes, review the agreement & subsidy

### CHECK IN (Ongoing)

We keep in contact & provide support when needed

Young person meets with the Transition Coach monthly to report any changes, they also offer more intensive support to the young person

Staying On Facilitator checks in every 3 months or as agreed with the carer



### REPORT CHANGES



The young person lets the Transition Coach know if things change, the carer can call the Staying On Facilitator to let them know how things are going

### AGREEMENT REVIEW

We review your agreement & subsidy each year

If things change, the young person or carer can ask to review the agreement; if it's time to move on, the Coach can help the young person with housing options



### SUBSIDY REVIEW

The young person & carer meet with the Staying On Facilitator & Coach to review the subsidy agreement 3 months before it ends, they check the long-term plan & make sure the family is prepared for the reduced payment



## EXIT Young person turns 21 or decides to move on

### FINAL REVIEW

We start planning early so you have time

When they turn 20, the young person and carer meet with the Staying On Facilitator & Coach to work out what happens after 21



### MOVING ON

The subsidy payment ends at 21 & the young person follows their housing pathway, there is an opportunity to celebrate & reflect on the Staying On period



Staying On finishes when you turn 21 or move on

## AWARENESS Finding out about Staying On

### Identify Young People



Case Worker/s identify young people in stable & safe living arrangements who are leaving care in the next 6 months

<b>Timeframe</b>	Leaving Care planning prior to 17 ½
<b>Who</b>	<b>Actions</b>
Dept Case Worker/Leaving Care Team	As part of leaving care planning, explores opportunities for stable and safe placements to be extended
Foster Carer Supports	Provide information to foster carers about the option of Staying On when a young person turns 18
Young Person	Contact your Department of Communities Case Worker if they have not contacted you before you turn 17 ½
Family	Contact the Department Of Communities Case Worker if Staying On is an option they would like to explore
Home Stretch WA Coordinator	Provides information to Department Case Workers about eligibility
Documents	Home Stretch WA Staying On Guide for Young People and Carers

### Awareness Building



Case worker discusses Home Stretch WA with the young person & carer

<b>Timeframe</b>	Leaving Care planning prior to 17 ½
<b>Who</b>	<b>Actions</b>
Dept Case Worker/Leaving Care Team	Discuss Home Stretch WA with the young person and carer, provide information on Staying On
Foster Carer Supports	Support foster carers to understand Home Stretch WA Staying On using the Staying On Guide for Young People and Carers
Young Person	Receives information about Home Stretch WA & Staying On and thinks about if this is an option
Family	Receives information about Home Stretch WA & Staying On and thinks about if this is an option
Documents	Home Stretch WA – Fact Sheet-Young People Home Stretch WA - Staying On Guide for Young People and Carers

## AWARENESS Finding out about Staying On

### Make an Appointment



Young person & carer organise to meet with the Home Stretch WA Coach

<b>Timeframe</b>	Leaving Care planning prior to 17 ½
<b>Who</b>	<b>Actions</b>
Department Case Worker	Completes referral to Home Stretch
Young Person	Attend meeting with Home Stretch WA Coach
Family	Attend meeting with Home Stretch WA Coach
Transition Coach	Contacts Young Person/ Family to arrange meeting.
Documents	Home Stretch WA - Staying On Guide for Young People and Carers

### Discussion



The Coach explains Home Stretch WA & the option to be supported to Stay On, they are given info & how Staying On Agreements work

<b>Timeframe</b>	Leaving Care planning prior to 17 ½
<b>Who</b>	<b>Actions</b>
Young person	Thinks about whether Home Stretch and Staying On is an option.
Family	Thinks about whether Home Stretch and Staying On is an option.
Transition Coach	Provides information about Home Stretch WA and Staying On
Staying On Facilitator	Provides information directly to the carer about Staying On, Home Stretch WA and the role of the Transition Coach
Department Case Worker	Helps to build trust and provides handover information to the Staying On Facilitator
Documents	Home Stretch WA - Staying On Guide for Young People and Carers Home Stretch WA – Fact Sheet- Young People

## MAKING AN AGREEMENT

### Working out how Staying On works for you

#### Decision to Stay On



Young person & carer agree the young person can 'Stay On' in the living arrangement

<b>Timeframe</b>	Prior to the young person reaching 18
<b>Who</b>	<b>Actions</b>
Young Person	Decide if Staying On is an option and notify the Coach
Family	Decide if Staying On is an option and notify the Coach or Staying On Facilitator
Transition Coach	Supports the young person to decide if Staying On is the right choice for them
Staying On Facilitator	Supports the carer to make an informed choice about Staying On
Documents	Home Stretch WA - Staying On Guide for Young People and Carers Home Stretch WA – Fact Sheet- Young People

#### Smooth Transition of Carer Supports



The Staying On Facilitator works with the carers support circle to smoothly transition support to Home Stretch WA, they agree on how things might work to support a carer with other children in the living arrangement

<b>Timeframe</b>	Prior to the young person reaching 18
<b>Who</b>	<b>Actions</b>
Young person	Speak to their family about Home Stretch WA and how things might work
Family	Agree to sharing of information between the foster carer supports and Home Stretch WA
Transition Coach	Provides information and support to the young person
Staying On Facilitator	Works with a foster carers' supports to understand how to support the family and clarifies boundaries of Staying On support offered
Documents	Home Stretch WA - Staying On Guide for Young People and Carers Home Stretch WA – Fact Sheet- Young People Home Stretch WA - Stage II Referral Form

## MAKING AN AGREEMENT

### Working out how Staying On works for you

#### Prepare an Agreement



The Transition Coach supports the young person to work out how things might be different after 18, the Home Stretch WA Staying on Facilitator supports the carer to do the same

<b>Timeframe</b>	1 week
<b>Who</b>	<b>Actions</b>
Young Person	Speaks to the Transition Coach about Staying On
Family	Receive a call from the Staying On Facilitator to discuss the Staying On Agreement and make time to meet
Home Stretch WA Coach	Supports the young person to understand their rights and responsibilities in Staying On. Helps them identify things they would like to work out and agree with their carer.
Staying On Facilitator	Supports the carer to understand how Staying On is different to a foster placement and their rights and responsibilities in a Staying On Agreement. Assists them to identify any 'house rules' or expectations they might have in the agreement.
Documents	Home Stretch WA - Staying On Guide for Young People and Carers Home Stretch WA - Setting up a Staying On Agreement Discussion Guide

#### Staying On Agreement



Young person & carer are supported to negotiate a Staying On Agreement, the Home Stretch WA Staying On Facilitator facilitates the process

<b>Timeframe</b>	1 meeting (2 hours)
<b>Who</b>	<b>Actions</b>
Young person	Listens to the expectations and ideas of the family or carer. Discusses what's important to them in the living arrangement and comes up with an agreement to make it work.
Family	Listens to the expectations and ideas of the young person. Discusses what's important to them in the living arrangement and comes up with an agreement to make it work.
Home Stretch WA Coach	Supports the young person in the discussion to identify and explore issues that are important to them.
Staying On Facilitator	Facilitates a solutions focused discussion to develop the Staying On Agreement. Supports the family or carer to identify and explore issues important to them.
Documents	Home Stretch WA - Staying On Agreement Template Home Stretch WA - Setting up a Staying On Agreement Discussion Guide Home Stretch WA - Staying On Subsidy Application Form Home Stretch WA - Staying On Agreement Card Sort Tool

## APPLICATION Applying for the Staying On Subsidy

### Subsidy Application



Coach helps the young person & carer submit the subsidy application paperwork for approval

<b>Timeframe</b>	1 meeting (Can be completed in the same meeting as the Staying On Agreement)
<b>Who</b>	<b>Actions</b>
Young Person	Completes the Staying on Subsidy Application Form with the Coach
Family	Completes the Staying on Subsidy Application Form with the Coach
Transition Coach	Helps the young person and carer complete the Staying On Subsidy Application Form and emails to Home Stretch WA Staying On Facilitator for approval
Staying On Facilitator	Emails completed Staying On Subsidy Application Form to Department of Communities Subsidies Processing Unit
Dept of Communities Subsidies Processing Unit	Receive Staying on Subsidy Application Form and begin processing
Documents	Home Stretch WA - Staying On Subsidy Application Form Home Stretch WA - Staying On Agreement Template

### Subsidy Approval



Carer & young person receive call/email /SMS notification of Staying On Subsidy approval

<b>Timeframe</b>	1 week from application submission
<b>Who</b>	<b>Actions</b>
Young person	Receives an email/text notifying on Staying On Subsidy approval
Family	Receives an email/text notifying on Staying On Subsidy approval
Transition Coach	Receives an email/text notifying on Staying On Subsidy approval
Staying On Facilitator	Receives an email/text notifying on Staying On Subsidy approval
Dept of Communities Subsidies Processing Unit	Notify Home Stretch WA Staying On Facilitator, Home Stretch WA Coach, Young Person & Carer via email or text that the Staying On Subsidy has been approved
Documents	Home Stretch WA - Staying On Subsidy Application Form

## PAYMENT Getting Paid

### Subsidy Payment



After 18 the carer receives the Staying On payment & the young person makes their agreed contribution

<b>Timeframe</b>	1 week from application submission
<b>Who</b>	<b>Actions</b>
Family	Receives Staying On Subsidy payment into nominated bank account
Young Person	Makes payment or contribution as agreed in Staying On Agreement

## REVIEW Your First Review

### 4 Week Review



Young person & carer meet with the Staying On Facilitator & Coach to check in and tweak the agreement

<b>Timeframe</b>	4 weeks after original agreement, 1 x 1 hour meeting
<b>Who</b>	<b>Actions</b>
Young person	Reflects on how the agreement is going and identifies any changes to be made
Family	Reflects on how the agreement is going and identifies any changes to be made
Home Stretch WA Coach	Supports the young person to raise any issues with the agreement
Home Stretch WA Staying On Facilitator	Facilitate discussion with family, young person and coach to review the agreement; and provide support for the carer to raise any issues
Documents	Home Stretch WA - Staying On Agreement Home Stretch WA - Staying On Agreement Review Template

**REVIEW** Ongoing to make sure things are still OK, report changes, review the agreement & subsidy

Check in (Ongoing)



Young person meets with the Transition Coach monthly to report any changes, they also offer more intensive support to the young person

Staying On Facilitator checks in every 3 months or as agreed with the carer

<b>Timeframe</b>	As agreed by the young person and coach (min once per month)
<b>Who</b>	<b>Actions</b>
Young person	Meets with the Coach for support and continues working towards their goals; and raise any concerns about the Staying On arrangement or plans to move on
Transition Coach	Regularly meet with the young person to work towards a housing pathway plan and other agreed goals as needed; and supports them with things the Staying On carer may not have capacity or resources to assist with
Staying On Facilitator	Checks in with the carer every 3 months or more, based on the Staying On Agreement; and supports the Transition Coach with any issues in the living arrangement and contacts the carer if needed
Documents	Home Stretch WA - Transition Coaching Housing Pathway Plan & Budget Home Stretch WA - Transition Coaching Practice Guide Home Stretch WA - Staying On Agreement Review Template

Report changes



The young person lets the Transition Coach know if things change, the carer can call the Staying On Facilitator to let them know how things are going

<b>Timeframe</b>	Ongoing or as required
<b>Who</b>	<b>Actions</b>
Young person	Reports any issues to the Home Stretch WA Transition Coach or if they want to move on
Family	Reports any issues to the Home Stretch WA Staying On Facilitator
Transition Coach	Supports the young person to address arrangement issues or with moving on
Staying On Facilitator	Available to assist the carer to access living arrangement support or resources; and notify Subsidies Processing Unit if the living arrangement ends
Documents	Home Stretch WA - Staying On Agreement Review Template



**REVIEW** Ongoing to make sure things are still OK, report changes, review the agreement & subsidy

**Agreement Review**



If things change, the young person or carer can ask to review the agreement; if it's time to move on, the Coach can help the young person with housing options

<b>Timeframe</b>	Ongoing or as required
<b>Who</b>	<b>Actions</b>
Young person	Contacts the Coach to request a review if needing support, circumstances change, or they want to move on
Family	Contacts the Home Stretch WA Coordinator to request a review if needing support or circumstances change
Transition Coach	Supports the young person to raise any issues with the agreement, make any changes or to move on
Staying On Facilitator	Facilitate discussion with family, young person and Coach to review the agreement; and provides support for the carer to raise any issues
Documents	Home Stretch WA - Staying On Agreement Template Home Stretch WA - Staying On Agreement Review Template

**Subsidy Review**



The young person & carer meet with the Staying On Facilitator & Coach to review the subsidy agreement 3 months before it ends, they check the long-term plan & make sure the family is prepared for the reduced payment

<b>Timeframe</b>	9 months after the commencement of Staying On Subsidy
<b>Who</b>	<b>Actions</b>
Young person	Discuss contributions towards living arrangement and longer-term housing plans with Coach
Family	Supports young person to discuss contributions towards living arrangement and longer-term housing options
Transition Coach	Supports young person with budgeting and longer-term housing plan for after 21
Staying On Facilitator	Organises a review meeting and facilitates discussion with family, young person and Coach to review agreement, long term plans and advise of subsidy payment reduction for the following year; and notifies Subsidies Unit of any reductions in payment
Dept of Communities Subsidies Processing Unit	Notify Home Stretch WA of 12-month review date
Documents	Home Stretch WA - Staying On Agreement Review Template Home Stretch WA - Staying On Subsidy Application Form

## EXIT Young person turns 21 or decides to move on

### Final Review



When they turn 20, the young person and carer meet with the Staying on Facilitator & Coach to work out what happens after 21

<b>Timeframe</b>	Age 20 or prior to 21
<b>Who</b>	<b>Actions</b>
Young person	Discuss with Coach and Staying On Facilitator, long-term housing options and prepare for subsidy payment to end
Family	Discuss with Coach and Staying On Facilitator, long-term housing options and prepare for subsidy payment to end
Transition Coach	Support the young person to plan for long-term housing options after 21 and prepare for the subsidy payment to end
Staying On Facilitator	Facilitate discussion with family, young person and Coach around long term plans and prepare for subsidy to cease when the young person turns 21
Documents	Home Stretch WA- Staying On Agreement Review Template

### Moving On



The subsidy payment ends at 21 & the young person follows their housing pathway, there is an opportunity to celebrate & reflect on the Staying On period

<b>Timeframe</b>	Age 21 or as agreed prior
<b>Who</b>	<b>Actions</b>
Young person	Reflects on Staying On journey with carer and Coach; and receives an email/text notification of Staying On Subsidy ending
Family	Reflects on Staying On journey with carer and Coach; and receives an email/text notification of Staying On Subsidy ending
Transition Coach	Facilitates a discussion to reflect on the end of the Staying On journey; and receives an email/text notification of Staying On Subsidy ending
Staying On Facilitator	Receives an email/text notification of Staying On Subsidy ending
Dept of Communities Subsidies Processing Unit	Ends subsidy payment
Documents	Home Stretch WA - Staying On Subsidy Application Form

## Key Documents

### Core Documents - Staying On Agreements

- Home Stretch WA Staying On Guide for Young People and Carers
- Home Stretch WA – Fact Sheet- Young People
- Home Stretch WA Setting up a Staying On Agreement Discussion Guide
- Home Stretch WA Staying On Agreement Template
- Home Stretch WA Staying On Subsidy Application Form
- Home Stretch WA Stage II Referral Form

### Core Documents - Staying On Agreement Reviews

- Home Stretch WA Staying On Agreement Review Template
- Home Stretch WA Staying On Subsidy Application Form

### Supporting Documents - Transition Coach

- Home Stretch WA Transition Coaching - Housing Pathway Plan and Budget Template
- Home Stretch WA Transition Coaching - Practice Guide

### Supporting Documents- Practice Tools & Guides

- Home Stretch WA Staying On Agreement Card Sort Tool

## Roles & Responsibilities

### What are the responsibilities of a carer/s and family?

- Support and encourage the young person with their transition to independence, including contribution to costs
- Discuss any issues or concerns with the young person (with support from Home Stretch WA, if required)
- Inform Home Stretch WA of any changes to the agreement or discuss any issues or concerns
- Participate in reviews of the living arrangement with Home Stretch WA
- Notify Home Stretch WA as soon as the young person leaves the living arrangement, to avoid liability for overpayment

### What are the responsibilities of a young person?

- Meet with the Home Stretch WA Transition Coach as agreed, to work towards a housing pathway plan, agreed goals and transition to independence
- Contribute to living arrangement costs once receiving an income
- Discuss living arrangement issues or concerns with carer/s or family
- Contact Home Stretch WA to discuss living arrangement issues or concerns
- Participate in living arrangement reviews with Home Stretch WA
- Notify Home Stretch WA if you are no longer in the living arrangement

## Roles & Responsibilities

### **What are the responsibilities of the Home Stretch WA Transition Coach?**

- Support the young person to explore their goals and aspirations, develop a housing pathway plan and assist transition to independence
- Support the young person to develop the Staying On Agreement
- Support the young person if they need living arrangement assistance

### **What are the responsibilities of the Home Stretch WA Staying On Facilitator**

- Support the carer/s and family to develop the Staying On Agreement
- Support the carer/s and family with the living arrangement including access to resources and specialised supports
- Facilitate and organise reviews of the Staying on Agreement and Staying On Subsidy, as required

### **What are the responsibilities of Home Stretch WA provider?**

- As part of their role, the Transition Coach works with the young person to explore housing options, develop a pathway plan, budget and assist with support and resources to transition into independence
- Transition Coach and Staying On Facilitator support the young person and carer to establish a 'Staying On Agreement' which includes the expectations of staying on
- The Staying On Facilitator provides the carer support and resources if assistance is needed with the young person or the living arrangement
- The Home Stretch WA provider advocates on behalf of the family/young person to the Department of Communities for subsidy payments

### **What are the responsibilities of the Department of Communities ?**

- Identify young people early to discuss Staying On
- Refer appropriate families to Home Stretch WA by the time the young person reaches 17 ½
- Establish and maintain payment of a Staying On Subsidy through the Subsidies Processing Unit

## Staying On – Frequently Asked Questions

### What is Staying On?

As part of the Home Stretch WA program, young people and their carer/s have the option to continue their current living arrangements after they turn 18 and up until the age of 21. Many young people have already been staying on in the past, if it is in the interest of the young person and the carer. Staying On is about financial support to continue this, as well as provide support to the young person to become independent when they are ready.

### What are the benefits of Staying on?

Many young people are not ready to leave home by the time they turn 18 or are still learning skills to be independent. Having the option to Stay On means young people have access to safe and stable housing and more support to help them get into, or continue, education and training.

### What is the Staying On Agreement?

Home Stretch WA assist young people to develop Staying On Agreements between them, their foster carer/s and the Department of Communities which establishes expectations, payments and conditions of staying on in a stable living arrangement up until the age of 21.

This may include basic house rules, how the Staying On Subsidy is used and clarification around what the relationship looks like now the young person is an adult and the carer is no longer a legal guardian.

The Home Stretch WA Transition Coach supports the young person, and the Staying on Facilitator supports the carer to address any issues that arise whilst living together. This approach supports the young person with their transition into adulthood and longer-term housing.

### What is the Staying On Subsidy?

The Staying On Subsidy is a payment made directly to the Staying On carer while the young person is living with them. The intention of the payment is to support the living arrangement and take some of the financial pressure off the carer and the young person. It is a payment to help ensure the young person's basic needs can be met and support the family to be able to continue to provide a safe and stable living arrangement. There is an expectation the young person also contributes to the living arrangement.

## Staying On – Frequently Asked Questions

### How much is the Staying On Subsidy?

The Staying On Subsidy is a single fortnightly payment, paid directly to the carer to support costs associated with a young person continuing to stay on in the living arrangement. The subsidy rate is reviewed every 12 months and the amount is reduced each year. As the Staying On Subsidy decreases it is encouraged that the young persons' contribution increases. This helps the young person prepare for their future housing costs. In the second year, the Staying On Subsidy is reduced to 75% of the base rate subsidy amount and in the third year, reduced to 50%.

As of 1 July 2021, these fortnightly rates apply:

- Year 1 - \$450 (base rate)
- Year 2 - \$337.50 (75% of base rate)
- Year 3 - \$225 (50% of base rate)

### How long can the young person Stay On?

- The length of time is agreed by the young person and the carer
- The young person or carer can end the Staying On Arrangement at any time before the young person turns 21
- The Staying On Arrangement is voluntary, the young person or carer can ask for it to be revisited or ceased at any time

### Who is eligible For Staying On?

- Young people who are 17 ½, in care of the Department of Communities and in a stable living arrangement
- Young people and carers who agree to extend their living arrangements
- It is in the young person's best interest to remain in the living arrangement
- Carer or young person does not receive equivalent subsidy payments elsewhere

### What are the conditions of Staying On?

- Young person and carer meet with Home Stretch WA to negotiate what a 'Staying On' Agreement looks like
- Young person agrees to sign up for Home Stretch WA support as part of the Staying On Agreement
- Young person is encouraged to chip in from their income and contribute to the living arrangement
- Young person ongoingly engages with the Transition Coach
- Young person and carer participate in ongoing reviews of the Staying On Agreement, as required
- Engage in yearly reviews of the Staying On Agreement Subsidy
- Subsidy is only paid whilst the young person is living with the carer

Refer to the '**Staying On Guide for Young People and Carers**' for more frequently asked questions.

# Staying On - Information Session Guide

## Brief Summary of the Info Session

The purpose of the Info Session is for the Staying On Facilitator or other delegated worker to provide information to the carer, young person, Transition Coach or other supports on what Staying On is and how it works. The below points are a guide for the initial discussion and can be used in collaboration with the 'Staying On Guide for Carers and Young People' and 'Setting up a Staying On Agreement Discussion Guide'.

## Step by Step Guide

### 1. Introduction - Validate and celebrate what's working well already

- You've agreed things have been working well and want to continue living as a family together.
- Staying On provides extra support and resources to help it work for everyone.

### 2. Why - Home Stretch WA and Staying On?

- Most young people aren't ready at 18 to make their own way, Home Stretch WA is working with families and young people to support them to Stay On until 21 with additional supports.
- Staying On is one part of the Home Stretch WA Offer.
- Staying On is different to foster care and a placement- adults living together.
- The intended outcome is to prepare a young person to launch themselves into the life they want and take on the responsibilities that come with it.

### 3. What - Staying On and Staying On Agreement?

- Staying On is about creating an agreement on how things are to work, now that it isn't a placement, and the young person is an adult.
- The agreement is not an official contract but an opportunity to get things out in the open and work out how to make things work, how to deal with things when they don't, and what resources you can use from Home Stretch WA.
- The agreement changes as things change in your lives. Figure out how Home Stretch WA can support what's working well and help with anything that isn't.
- Reviewed yearly (at least) with ongoing support for carer and young person.

### 4. Roles and Responsibilities

- Staying On is focused on the young person and what's working well for them at home.
- The Transition Coach supports young person with what is important to them- the role is to build capacity, life skills and connections with as much or little support as the young person needs.
- Staying On Facilitator supports the family and carers, and can help with the living arrangement and works in collaboration with Transition Coach

## 5. Staying On Subsidy

- As part of Home Stretch WA's support there is continuation of a subsidy to contribute to the costs of the living arrangement.
- It's not about paying the carer to have the young person live there, it's about financial security and stability to the family and house. It's your choice what you do with the money but generally used for living costs. Encourage open communication as a family about finances.
- Staying On Subsidy is a set amount then staged down every 12 month and young people encouraged to chip in to costs.
- 'Chipping in' - Part of being an adult means we encourage the young person to contribute to the costs of living together. Every person over 18 should have an income, by 'chipping in' they are learn to look after themselves for the future and learn independent living skills.
- We encourage the young person to contribute from the start, and as they earn more money over time and as the subsidy decreases there creates an expectation that the young person will chip in more as they become more independent.

### Staying On Facilitator - Points to make with the carer separately

- What you think is fair and what the young person might be financially ready to contribute? How can the young person 'chip in'?
- Contributions could go towards savings for the young person if rental/board not needed to encourage skill development and practice chipping in.
- What they do with the money is their choice, the expectation is it supports the living costs of having a young person stay on.
- It is not a foster placement - Subsidy is different, support is different, and the Department is no longer involved.
- The Transition Coach works with the young person and can offer other support as part of the Home Stretch Offer
- Generally, we share the information provided by the carer to the young person in collaboration with the Transition Coach. We want to encourage open communication between the young person and carer as part of the agreement.

### Supporting Tools or Documents

- Home Stretch WA - Staying On Guide for Carers and Young People
- Home Stretch WA - Setting up a Staying On Agreement Discussion Guide





## Staying On - Review Guide

### Brief Summary of the Session

The purpose of the review is for the Staying On Facilitator to provide ongoing support for the Staying On Agreement and facilitate discussions between the Transition Coach, young person and carer for the living arrangement.

Reviews can be completed via phone or in person depending on the family's preference. An in-person review is preferable for the 12 month Staying On Agreement Review.

It is important that both the young person and carer contribute, and their voices are heard. It is important to highlight strengths and achievements in the review and to be guided by the family with how formal/informal the review needs to be.

### Step by Step Guide

#### Ongoing Reviews

- Transition Coach and Staying On Facilitator liaise to determine if an in-person review is needed or if a phone review is sufficient
- Staying On Facilitator calls carer to check in (4 weeks, 3 months or as agreed in Staying On Agreement)
- Coach checks in with young person for any review feedback, going through the original Staying On Agreement
- Staying On Facilitator goes through 'Prompting Questions for Reviews' or reviews original Staying On Agreement, and Transition Coach does the same
- Any feedback is passed on from the Staying On Facilitator to the Transition Coach to provide to the young person

#### 12 Month Review

- Staying On Facilitator arranges review meeting 3 months prior to the 12 Month Subsidy Review
- Young person meets with Transition Coach to complete Budget/Housing Pathway Plan and discuss the Staying On Agreement
- Staying On Facilitator meets/talks with the carer to go over subsidy staging down, Staying On Agreement, young person's contribution and the Housing Pathway Plan
- Young person and carer complete and sign the Staying On Review Form
- Young person and carer complete Staying On Subsidy Application Form

## Staying On - Review Guide

### Prompting Questions for Reviews - Staying On Facilitator

- How are things going in the living arrangement?
- What is going well?
- How is the family going?
- How is everyone getting along?
- How is the young person going? (goals/aspirations/housing plans)
- Have there been any issues or challenges to work through?
- Is there any support the young person needs?
- Is there any support the carer or family needs?

### Finances & chipping In

- How is the young person's contribution going?
- Can they work towards contributing more?

### Supporting Tools or Documents

- Home Stretch WA - Staying On Review Form
- Home Stretch WA - Staying On Agreement
- Home Stretch WA - Staying On Subsidy Application Form



# Home Stretch WA

