



Setting Up a Staying On Agreement

Purpose

The 'Staying On Agreement' is formed between the young person and the carer and family, so everyone is clear about the living arrangement. It clearly establishes the house rules, expectations and how the subsidy payment is used for the duration of the stay.

People Involved

Young person, carer/family, Home Stretch WA Transition Coach, Home Stretch WA Staying On Facilitator, Child Protection Worker (where relevant), Foster Care Supports (where relevant).

Process

- The Transition Coach or Staying On Facilitator explains to the carer and young person why a Staying On Agreement is important, a copy of 'Staying On Guide for Young People and Carers' can be provided
- The Staying On discussion guide below; card sort or topic list activity can be used to bring up items for discussion to put into the agreement
- The Staying On Facilitator supports the young person and their carer to come to an agreement about the different topics and how to make the living arrangement work
- Discuss essential house rules and non-negotiables
- Discuss how the subsidy payment is going to be used by referring to the 'Staying On Guide for Young People and Carers'
- Discuss when the agreement is reviewed and what to do if the agreement isn't working
- Complete the Staying On Agreement and have the young person and carer sign
- Complete the Staying On Subsidy Application Form

Staying On Discussion Guide

The Guide can be used to discuss and explore what is important in the living arrangement, expectations from both the carer and young person around house rules and finances, to come up with an agreement that works for everyone.

If the young person and carer have been living together for a while, these things may be in place so not much may need to change. For families who have not had a living arrangement discussion, the guide can be helpful to set some basic expectations of each other in the living arrangement and talk about what's important.

It is also helpful for the young person to have these discussions, particularly for when they get their own place or live with housemates. The young person can practice negotiating agreements with others and see how it is a part of being independent.

It can be helpful to talk about how things might be different now the young person is 18 and what this means.

It is important to discuss the topics below when making an agreement, so everyone is clear about the living arrangement and what's important to them.

1. Difference between foster care and staying on
2. Expectations of living together and what's important
3. Finances
4. What happens if things don't work out?
5. How to end the agreement (moving out or moving on)
6. Roles and responsibilities and support for the living arrangement

1. Difference Between Foster Care and Staying On

Talk about the young person's rights and responsibilities; the difference between foster care and staying on; and how things are different now the young person is 18.

2. Expectations of Living Together and What's Important

Discuss what's going well in the living arrangement (such as how everyone gets along, what's already in place and goals of the young person and carer, strengths).

Go through the below list or use the topic guide/card sort activity to prompt items for discussion.

Household tasks/chores

Cooking meals, cleaning the house and room, laundry, shopping and other chores

- Who does the cooking, cleaning, shopping, and washing? What time is dinner? Is there a schedule?
- What are the expectations?
- What is the agreement?

Visitors

- What are the rules around having friends or visitors over?
- Can they visit during the day? How often and what time?
- How many visitors are allowed?
- What are the expectations?
- What is the agreement?

Friends staying over

- Are friends allowed to stay over? How many? How often?
- Do you need to ask for permission?
- What are the expectations?
- What is the agreement?

Partners staying over

- Are partners allowed to stay over?
- Do you need to ask for permission? How often can they stay over?
- What are the expectations?
- What is the agreement?

Going out and curfew

- Is there a curfew? Do we need to let each other know if we are going out?
- What if you are home later than agreed?
- Do we need to set rules around this?
- What are the expectations?
- What is the agreement?

Going away

- What happens if you want to go away for a long period of time?
- Do we need to communicate about this?
- What are the expectations?
- What is the agreement?

Parties

- Are parties allowed at the house?
- What would be the conditions?
- What are the expectations?
- What is the agreement?

Drugs and alcohol

- What are the rules around this?
- Is drinking, smoking or other drugs in the house allowed?
- What happens if someone breaks this rule?
- What about visitors/partners?
- What are the expectations?
- What is the agreement?

Privacy

- Do we have our own keys?
- Is my bedroom locked?
- Who can enter my room?
- What are the expectations?
- What is the agreement?

Arguments or disagreements

- What happens if we are not getting along?
- How do we resolve this?
- Are there any topics likely to cause arguments?
- How do we communicate to each other?



- What about yelling, swearing or name calling?
- How do we want to communicate to each other?
- What happens if I get kicked out?
- What are the expectations?
- What is the agreement?

Relationships with family (carer, biological family, siblings)

- What are the expectations around contact with biological family or visiting siblings?
- What is the difference in relationships in the house now the young person is 18?
- What are the expectations?
- What is the agreement?

Other topics:

- Education
- Employment
- Health
- Getting Help
- Confidentiality
- Other



3. Finances

Paying for things

Rent or board, food, internet, fuel, transport, bills, education, clothes and going out

- Who pays for things?
- Are there any things the young person can afford to pay for?
- Can the young person contribute to rent or board costs?
- Is there anything the young person can work towards paying for?
- Has a budget been completed?
- How can the young person 'chip in'?
- What are the expectations?
- What is the agreement?

Staying On Subsidy

- What is the maximum amount to be paid?
- What is the subsidy going to be used for - costs it is going to cover?
- What do we use it for?
- What are the expectations?
- What is the agreement?

4. What happens if things don't work out?

- How do we review the agreement?
- What happens if we want to make changes?
- What happens if we are having problems or things aren't working out?
- Who do we talk to for support?
- What are the expectations?
- What is the agreement?

Explain the role of Home Stretch WA including the role of the Transition Coach and Staying On Facilitator, and how they can support the young person and carer if there are issues or agreement questions.

5. How to End the Agreement (Moving Out or Moving On)

- How do we want to end the agreement?
- How much notice should we give?
- What happens if I want to move out but I'm not ready yet?
- Can I try out another housing option and then move back?
- What are the expectations?
- What is the agreement?

6. Roles and Responsibilities and Support for the Living Arrangement

- Carer/s and family
- Young person
- Staying On Facilitator
- Transition Coach
- Home Stretch WA
- Department of Communities
- Foster Care Support Service or CSO



Activity Options

Group discussion:

1. As a group, go through the discussion guide; topic checklist or card sort activity and select what topics are important to discuss
2. Discuss expectations, current issues and ways to deal with them if they arise
3. Come up with an agreement on how to make it work
4. Fill in the 'Staying On Agreement Template' with what has been agreed and sign

Take turns:

1. Carer/family and Staying On Facilitator meet to go through the discussion guide; topic checklist or card sort activity and discuss important topics and expectations
2. Young person and Transition Coach meet to discuss topics important to them and their expectations
3. Young person and carer/family meet Transition Coach and Staying On Facilitator to discuss and compare topics
4. Fill in the 'Staying On Agreement Template' with what has been agreed and sign

Topics to Discuss when Living Together

- Helping out around the house
- Cleaning my room
- Cleaning the house
- Cooking meals
- Doing laundry
- Friends staying over
- Partners staying over
- Other people living here
- Going out
- Curfew
- Going away
- Parties
- Drugs and alcohol
- Drinking at home
- Smoking in the house
- Privacy in the house
- House keys
- Arguments or disagreements
- Yelling
- Swearing
- Breaking things
- Talking to each other
- Talking to family
- Feeling safe
- Relationships with siblings
- Relationships with carers
- Looking after siblings
- Getting around
- Driving
- Confidentiality
- Talking to the Department
- Other things we should discuss
- Getting help
- Education
- Paying for things
- Rent
- Board
- Bills
- Wi-Fi
- Phone credit
- Internet
- Petrol
- Role of Home Stretch WA