



Carer approvals, agreements and cancellations for family-based carers Procedure

1. Purpose

This procedure describes the Department for Child Protection's (DCP) processes related to:

- assessment and approval of family-based carers including foster, kinship and specific child only (SCO) carers
- processing carer agreements
- cancellation of family-based carers.

2. Scope

This procedure applies to DCP Carer Approval and Review Unit (CARU) staff involved in administering and undertaking carer approvals, agreements, and cancellations for family-based carers.

3. Authority

3.1 Legislative Context

- [Children and Young People \(Safety\) Act 2017](#)
- [Children and Young People \(Safety\) Regulations 2017](#)
- [Child Safety \(Prohibited Persons\) Act 2016](#)
- [Child Safety \(Prohibited Persons\) Regulations 2019](#)
- [Family and Community Services Act 1972](#)
- [Criminal Law Consolidation Act 1935](#)
- [State Records Act 1997](#)

Section 69 of the *Children and Young People (Safety) Act 2017* (CPYS Act) defines out of home care as care provided to a child or young person where:

- the child or young person is in the custody or under the guardianship of the DCP Chief Executive; and
- the care is provided by a person with whom the child or young person is placed pursuant to section 84; and
- the care is provided on a residential basis in premises other than the child or young person's home; and
- the provider of the care receives, or may receive, payment, or financial or other assistance, in relation to the care provided; or
- any other care of a kind declared by the regulations to be included in the ambit of this definition.

Out of home care does not include care of a kind declared by the regulations to be excluded from the ambit of this definition.

Section 71 of the CPYS Act stipulates that out of home care must only be provided by approved carers. Sections 72-74 of the CPYS Act govern the approval, review and cancellation of approved carers. Section 77 of the CPYS Act permits the temporary placement of a child or young person with a non-approved carer, where certain criteria can be met.



Licensed children's residential facilities and residential facilities established by the Minister under the *Family and Community Services Act 1972*, are excluded from the definition of out of home care through Regulation 18 of the *Children and Young People (Safety) Regulations 2017*.

Section 64A of the *Criminal Law Consolidation Act 1935* outlines additional responsibilities for DCP employees (including students, volunteers and agency carers) in responding to allegations of sexual harm of a child or young person under the age of 18 years perpetrated by another DCP employee.

If DCP staff suspect that a child or young person is at risk they must refer to the [Reporting a suspicion a child or young person is at risk Procedure](#). In alignment with section 64A of the [Criminal Law Consolidation Act 1935](#), it is an offence for a DCP employee not to report to SAPOL if they know, suspect, or should suspect sexual harm of a child or young person under the age of 18 years perpetrated by another DCP employee (maximum penalty imprisonment for three years).

3.2 Whole of Government Requirements

- [Code of Ethics for the South Australian Public Sector](#)
- [National Standards for out-of-home care 2009 - 2020](#)

3.3 DCP Requirements

- [Strategic Plan 2022-2026](#)
- [DCP Practice Principles](#)
- [Statement of Commitment](#)
- [Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Child Placement Principle](#)
- [Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Child Placement Principle Practice Paper](#)

4. Procedure Requirements

Where the safety needs of children and young people cannot be met at home, they may require placement in care. DCP recognises the critical role carers play in supporting the safety and wellbeing of children and young people and is committed to supporting and working in partnership with carers. In recognition of the importance of carers, DCP has partnered with the non-government sector to sign a [Statement of Commitment](#) that outlines DCP's commitment to ensuring carers are informed, supported, consulted, valued and respected.

4.1 Pre-application child protection (CP) history check

Service providers have the option to conduct pre-application CP history checks for individuals who have shown an interest in fostering before they officially submit an application form. For foster care applications, service providers are required to submit a consent to share information form, which can be found on the [Step-by-Step South Australia 2023 portal](#).

CARU will review C3MS (including CIS) and Connect for Safety (C4S) for individuals with signed consent forms, excluding those in their network, and share relevant information with the service provider.

To record this information, CARU will raise an administrative application in C3MS and inform the service provider that:

- an application form must still be submitted to CARU before starting a foster care assessment
- if an application for individuals subject to a pre-application check does not proceed, the service provider should notify CARU of this outcome and the reason why the application did not move forward. This allows the administrative application to be closed, and any relevant information regarding the decision not to proceed can be recorded.



4.2 Application child protection (CP) history check

It is a mandatory carer approval requirement that all family-based care applicants, their adult household members and regular guests (who will have a supervisory role with the child or young person in care) must undergo a CP history check.

For foster carer applications, service providers will submit the carer applicants' details using the relevant DCP application form. The form must be signed by the carer applicants. The signed form provides CARU with consent to conduct a CP history check and to share relevant information with the assessing service provider.

CARU will undertake CP history checks for all foster care applicants, adult household members and regular guests, by reviewing C3MS (including CIS) and C4S records to confirm that there are no known child protection issues that would pose an unmanageable risk to the safety of the child or young person entering the foster care applicants' care.

If a carer applicant, household member or regular guest has lived interstate or in New Zealand at any time, their consent must be obtained for a CP history check from the relevant child protection authority in the state/s where they have lived. This is required prior to a service provider commencing an assessment or when individuals join carer households.

For kinship and SCO carer applications, the DCP case worker for the child or young person requiring placement will complete a CP history check:

- prior to placing the child with the carer applicant/s in a temporary placement pursuant to section 77 of the CYPS Act (for further guidance, refer to 'Conduct an initial suitability assessment of a proposed temporary carer' under [Assess and seek approval for a temporary placement \(if required\)](#) in the Place a child or young person in care chapter of the Manual of Practice); or
- when a member of the child or young person's family or kinship network submits an application to become an approved carer (for further guidance, refer to 'Identify potential placement pathways' under [Gather and assess information to identify placement pathways](#) in the Place a child or young person in care chapter of the Manual of Practice).

The screening threshold for family-based carers is higher than the threshold established by the Department of Human Services (DHS) for a [Working with Children Check](#) (WWCC) due to the nature of the carer's role and interaction with the child or young person primarily occurring in private settings.

Any identified CP history should be clearly documented on the approval page of C3MS. The assessment of the CP history should include details of any mitigating factors.

CARU staff are responsible for:

- generating the carer application in C3MS
- creating relationship and household member records in the C3MS record for each person listed on the application form
- uploading all CP history check documentation and information shared with the service provider to the application.

For kinship and SCO carers, these tasks are performed by the DCP Kinship Assessment team.

For all approved South Australian carers residing interstate, it is mandatory to conduct interstate checks as part of the two-yearly carer reviews. This process is carried out by service providers both internal and external to DCP. Refer to 'Child protection information requests' on the [Interstate Liaison Unit intranet page](#) for further guidance.



4.3 Carer assessment

Service providers external to DCP are responsible for:

- conducting foster carer and SCO carer assessments
- facilitating the carer applicant's, adult household members and regular guests submission of a WWCC
- completing all mandatory requirements (other than pre-application CP history check) for carer approval
- presenting CARU with completed carer assessments and assessment recommendations to enable carer approval decisions to be made.

Approved assessment tools for family-based carers include:

- Step by Step 2023 (*for foster carers*)
- [Winangay](#) (*suitable for all carers, including non-Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander carers*)
- [Carer assessment Report](#) (*psychosocial assessment for kinship and SCO carers*)
- [Carer assessment Report \(17 year old\)](#) (*psychosocial assessment for kinship and SCO carers where the young person in care is turning 17 years during the initial temporary placement period*).

The DCP Kinship Assessment team and Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisations (ACCOs) conduct kinship care assessments. The referral process for these assessments depends on the relationship between the child or young person and the carer applicants, as well as the child or young person's cultural background. In cases where a child or young person is assessed to have significant and complex care needs, the DCP Kinship Assessment team may refer these assessments to a specialist foster care service provider. Refer to the [Carer assessment Procedure – Kinship and Specific Child Only](#) for further guidance.

The assessor will also assess the extent to which the carer understands the particular child or young person's needs and has the ability to meet these needs. This includes supporting their trauma recovery and connection to family and culture.

Guardianship Family Day Care (GFDC) carer assessments are submitted by the Department for Education (DfE) for carer approval under a Memorandum of Administrative Agreement between DCP and the DfE, the latter retaining responsibility for assessing carers' suitability to be approved to provide GFDC. Refer to the [Guardianship Family Day Care Procedure](#) for further guidance.

The final approval decision and recommendations for foster carer assessments must be made by the Manager, Carer Assessments, as delegate of the Chief Executive. The decision and recommendations must be made prior to the placement of children or young people with a foster carer.

For kinship and SCO carers being assessed whilst providing care in a temporary placement, assessments and recommendations for approval must be approved by the Manager, Carer Assessments, as the delegate of the Chief Executive. The decision and recommendations must be made within three months of the temporary placement start date.

4.3.1 Aboriginal Kinship Care Support Program – carer assessment

ACCOs assess, support, train and undertake the ongoing review of kinship carers caring for Aboriginal children and young people. This includes facilitating the carer applicant's application for a WWCC and completing all mandatory requirements (other than pre-assessment CP history check) for carer approval.

ACCOs provide CARU with completed carer assessments and assessment recommendations to enable carer approval decisions to be made.

4.4 Carer approval criteria

The carer applicant must be able to demonstrate that they are willing and able to care for a child or young person in accordance with Chapter 2 of the CYPS Act and the CYPS Act more generally. This includes



providing opportunities for the child or young person in their care to maintain connection with their family and community of origin. The carer must also support the child or young person's contact arrangements and reunification (where appropriate).

All family-based carers are required to complete various checks, training, and competency requirements based on the category of care they intend to provide. These requirements must be met to satisfy carer approval criteria under section 72(3) of the CYPs Act, as detailed in sections 4.1 and 4.2.

In addition to the carer competencies, kinship and SCO carers must also be able to demonstrate:

- an understanding of the particular child or young person's needs and the ability to meet these needs
- capability to safely manage family dynamics/interactions and contact with the child or young person's family.

The approval of non-Aboriginal carers to care for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and young people is contingent on the carer:

- attending cultural awareness training (*not mandated for kinship and SCO carers*); and
- demonstrating cultural competencies, knowledge and capacity to support the child or young person's ongoing relationship with their extended family, community and connection to culture.

Foster carers must meet the criteria outlined in Step by Step 2023 Competency A5.

The approval of carers who are not from a culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) background to care for children and young people from a CALD background is contingent on the carer:

- developing an understanding of the child or young person's cultural background, traditions, and values
- demonstrating cultural competence by actively applying this knowledge in their caregiving practices, ensuring that the child or young person's identity, language, and customs are respected and maintained
- recognising that fostering a child or young person's ongoing connection with their family, community and culture identified are essential for the child or young person's emotional and social wellbeing.

4.5 Carer approval process

The Manager, Carer Assessments, as the delegate of the Chief Executive, makes all decisions regarding approval of carers.

CARU is responsible for reviewing the assessment report to determine whether:

- sufficient evidence has been provided to meet carer approval requirements
- risks identified in the applicant's CP check or throughout the assessment have been mitigated in the assessment material.

CARU will evaluate the potential carer's ability to care for children and young people by demonstrating the key carer competencies, as specified within the assessment tool and [Carer Approval Requirements Matrix](#). If there are identified gaps in the assessment, CARU will contact the service provider, DCP assessor or DCP case worker to gather the required information.

If the applicant meets the criteria for becoming an approved carer, CARU staff will prepare a carer approval summary and an approval outcome letter. These documents will then be submitted to the Manager, Carer Assessments, via the CARU supervisor, for an approval decision.

CARU will upload all documentation relating to the assessment, approval and non-approval of family-based carers to the carer's C3MS approval file. This includes (but is not limited to) records of:

- the date the approval decision was made
- the legislative provision under which the decision was made
- information considered in making the decision
- the rationale for the decision and how the decision was communicated to the applicant



- completed assessments and recommendations
- evidence of the carer's completion of all approval requirements
- details of changes to household membership
- dates of completion for all mandatory training
- confirmation of a valid WWCC
- the category of care to be provided
- the maximum number of children and young people the approved carer is permitted to have in their care
- any conditions imposed on the approval.

CARU must provide the service provider with written notice of the carer approval outcome including:

- approval conditions and preferences
- recorded training
- household membership with WWCC details.

The service provider is responsible for communicating this information to the carer.

4.5.1 Carer approval conditions and preferences

Under section 72(4) of the CYPS Act, the Chief Executive must impose certain conditions on each approval. As part of the carer assessment, the service provider or DCP assessor must recommend to CARU the carer's 'approval conditions' and reach an agreement with the carer in relation to 'carer preferences'.

Approval conditions include:

- the number of children or young people a carer is authorised to care for (*for kinship and SCO carers this will also include which children they are approved for*)
- approval to provide specialist care
- approval to care for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and young people
- the category of care being provided (*for example, foster, kinship or SCO*).

CARU may also impose other approval conditions if there are risks in the placement that require mitigation.

Carer preferences include:

- the age and gender of the children or young people (*for foster carers only*)
- placement types (*for example, long-term, short-term, respite, or emergency care*).

Service providers collaborate with the carer applicant to establish an agreement on the preferences documented in the carer's approval. Kinship and SCO carers are approved specifically for the children and/or young people they care for. This information is communicated to CARU via a [Carer Agreement - foster care Form](#) or the [Carer Agreement - Kinship and SCO Form](#) to ensure that the preferences are accurately reflected in the approval.

Family-based carers wishing to provide specialist care for children and young people who have been approved for a specialist placement must demonstrate additional criteria in relation to the type of specialist care they wish to provide.

Recommendations regarding the condition to be imposed on the number of children or young people a carer is able to provide care for should be accompanied by an assessment of:

- the carer's demonstrated capacity, skills and experience to provide the requested care
- history of quality and stability of care
- supports required
- capacity of the home environment (*for example, whether there is sufficient room in the house*)



- the impact on others in the household including current placements and biological children or young people
- feedback from service providers, kinship care workers and DCP case workers
- care concern history
- placement breakdown history
- training, experience, knowledge and demonstrated capabilities.

4.6 Develop a carer agreement

Upon the completion of a family-based carer's initial assessment and approval (and at the time of review), a carer agreement must be established in collaboration with the approved carer. This should be completed using either the [Carer Agreement - Foster care](#) or the [Carer Agreement - Kinship and SCO](#) forms. The information collected during the initial assessment should be used to inform the carer agreement.

Service providers should detail the following in the carer agreement:

- responsibilities of the approved carer, DCP and the responsible carer support worker and service provider
- detail about the information to be provided to the carer, the nature of ongoing support and carer training.

Responsibility for developing the carer agreement			
Category of carer	Role responsible for developing agreement	When agreement must be completed	What must be included
Foster carers	Relevant foster care service provider support worker	A carer agreement must be completed within four months for general (foster, SCO and kinship) carers and two months for specialist carers from the date of carer approval	<p>Approval conditions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • category of care (for example, foster, kinship or SCO) • number of children or young people • approval to provide specialist care • approval to care for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and young people • other approval conditions as determined by CARU or the location supervising. <p>Preferences:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • care type (for example, short term, long-term, respite) • age range and gender (note: these are not required for SCO and kinship category of care). <p>Learning and support activities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • recommended (in addition to mandatory training)
SCO carers	Relevant SCO service provider support worker		
Kinship carers	DCP Kinship Care Program (kinship care worker) Relevant ACCO support worker		



			requirements). Other considerations: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • cultural factors • additional attributes of the child or young person.
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The supervisor or manager of the relevant service provider or the DCP Kinship Care Program is responsible for approving the carer agreement. As the conditions and preferences contained in this document are reviewable, all parties (including both carers if there are two) must sign the carer agreement. Once completed and approved, the carer support worker must provide a copy of the signed carer agreement to:

- CARU to be recorded on the carer's profile in C3MS; and
- the carer.

The carer support worker is responsible for ensuring that the carer agreement is implemented and monitored, including participation in any identified learning and support activities.

Carer agreements are updated each time a change is required to the carer approval conditions or preferences and/or every two years as part of the carer review.

4.6.1 New partner assessments

If the approved carer has children placed with them under the CYPs Act, an adult cannot reside in the home without having completed a WWCC. A partner, or new adult household member, would need to have a WWCC in place prior to them joining the household. It is expected that a carer's partner will be assessed as a carer when they move into the carer household as their primary place of residence. This also applies if they are involved in decision-making or care provision for children and young people living there (including biological children and young people) even if they do not reside in the household.

The DCP Kinship Assessment team is responsible for conducting new partner assessments for kinship carer households. In cases where an urgent new partner assessment is required, initial consultation should be made with the DCP Kinship Assessment supervisor. If the requested timeframe cannot be met by the Kinship Assessment team, DCP case workers are able to undertake these assessments.

Service providers are responsible for conducting new partner assessments for SCO and foster carers. This also applies to kinship carers, who are likewise supported by a service provider. The DCP Kinship Assessment team is responsible for conducting new partner assessments for kinship carers who are supported by the DCP Kinship Care Program.

When a carer support worker becomes aware of a partner seeking to join the household, they should:

- prior to the partner moving in, discuss with the carer and partner about the requirement to obtain a WWCC for the partner, if they do not already hold one, and obtain permission to undertake a CP history check
- discuss with the carer and partner the expectation for the partner to participate in a carer assessment
- request a halt on any new placements if it is determined that a new partner has already moved into the residence
- notify the DCP case worker of any children or young people in placement with the carer
- submit an [Application to become a Kinship/SCO/ Foster Carer Form](#) or a [Household Membership Advice Form](#) if the assessment has not yet begun, to inform CARU of the partner's details
- submit a [Carer agreement - foster care Form](#) or [Carer Agreement - Kinship and SCO Form](#) (including the modification form) to inform CARU of the service provider's plan for screening and assessment.



If CARU becomes aware of a new partner in the home via a Household Membership Advice form, CARU will impose a 'no new placements' condition until the partner's assessment is complete, even without the receipt of a Carer Agreement Form. CARU will inform the service provider to submit a Carer Agreement form matching the approval, keeping the 'no new placements' condition in effect.

A carer assessment can be a lengthy and intrusive process. Carers may form relationships and cohabit with people who may not necessarily be prepared to undergo the assessment. If a carer's partner moves into the household while no children or young people are in the placement and is unwilling to be assessed, the service provider should not put the carer forward for any new placements.

The service provider should also discuss modification of the carer's approval conditions to prevent new placements from being made or consider recommending the cancellation of their approval by CARU. If the service provider considers there to be exceptional reasons why an approval should be maintained for the carer despite the circumstances, the service provider must discuss this with CARU.

New partners must undergo the same checks, training and competency requirements according to the category of care they wish to provide. These requirements are set out in the [Carer Approval Requirements Matrix](#).

If a carer is already providing care to children or young people when a new partner joins the household, and the partner is unwilling to participate in a carer assessment, this alone is not grounds to remove the child or young person from the placement. However, where this situation emerges, the following must be considered:

- the impact of the partner's presence in the household on the children and young people in the placement and on the primary carer
- their reasons for not engaging in the assessment process
- the DCP case worker's assessment of the level of risk posed by the partner and whether this can be managed without a carer assessment
- the service provider's assessment regarding the type of care the carer should be approved for.

The above factors are assessed by CARU on a case by case basis in order to determine the most appropriate conditions of approval for carer households in this situation.

4.6.2 DCP employee carer approval requirements

Where an applicant for family-based care is an existing employee of DCP and wishes to provide care for children or young people under the guardianship of the Chief Executive, service providers (for foster care applicants) or DCP managers (for kinship or SCO applicants) must ensure that the applicant has:

- discussed their intention to apply to become a carer with their line manager
- identified any potential conflicts of interest and proposed how these will be addressed
- completed an internal memorandum outlining the above.

Before submitting an application to be assessed as a carer to CARU, DCP employees must obtain approval from the Executive Director, Out of Home Care, via an internal memorandum. This approval is required both before the assessment begins and prior to submission to CARU.

Due to the range of potential conflicts of interest, [temporary placement](#) is not a suitable mechanism for placing specific children or young people with DCP employees. However, if a child or young person is placed with a DCP employee or the placement commenced prior to their employment within DCP, the kinship or SCO carer will be transferred to a non-government service provider.



4.7 Changes to carer approval conditions

Under section 72(4) of the CYPs Act, the Chief Executive must impose certain conditions on each approval. The Chief Executive may also impose other conditions as appropriate. The Chief Executive (or delegate) may, by notice in writing, vary, substitute or revoke a condition of an approval.

If an approved carer and the service provider wish to change the carer's approval conditions, the service provider must make a request in writing using the relevant Carer agreement form (inclusive of the modification form). The service provider must provide evidence of the carer's capacity to effectively manage the requested changes and seek CARU's approval.

CARU will assess the appropriateness of the proposed modification and consider the carers:

- current WWCC
- care concern history
- history of placement breakdowns
- capacity in the home to accommodate the proposed sleeping arrangements and any potential impact this may have on other children and young people placed or residing in the home
- approval conditions impacting on care arrangements
- last carer review, including training needs that have been identified.

CARU should also consider other relevant information obtained from:

- the DCP case worker
- other child/ren or young people in the placement
- any other supporting information from the service provider.

If additional information is required to assess the proposed changes, CARU will contact the service provider. All proposed changes must be approved by the CARU supervisor, who also has the discretion to decline changes to approval conditions.

CARU must:

- record the approved changes
- upload all documents and correspondence relating to the modification process
- generate a Carer Approval Confirmation in C3MS
- advise the carer in writing (via their service provider) of the updated conditions of approval condition, including the Carer Approval Confirmation.

The service provider must provide notice to the carer personally.

4.7.1 No new placements condition

CARU may apply a 'no new placements' condition to the approval of any carer for whom a concern is raised. Examples include, but are not limited to:

- a request made by a carer or service provider, kinship care worker or DCP case worker (reasons may include pregnancy, illness or work constraints)
- a carer or adult household member not having a current WWCC
- a request made by the service provider:
 - due to the carer's refusal to meet service provider expectations (such as training)
 - a care concern being raised with respect to a carer household, where further investigation is required to demonstrate the carer's capacity to provide care to an acceptable standard
 - a carer's inability to meet one or more care domains in a way that would affect their quality of care provision.



A 'no new placements' condition is automatically placed on the carer approval record when a Serious Care Concern is raised. This also applies to any carer who is recorded as a household member of another carer where a Serious Care Concern has been recorded.

A 'no new placements' condition will be removed by CARU upon receipt of further evidence, advice or information (via a carer review and/or carer agreement) and CARU is satisfied that there are no further risks in relation to providing care for additional children or young people.

CARU will remove a 'no new placements' condition if a risk management plan is agreed upon and approved by the Manager, Carer Assessments, in consultation with the Manager, Placement Services.

A 'no new placements' condition can be temporarily lifted by CARU under specific circumstances and reinstated thereafter. Such circumstances include:

- recording a placement that has already occurred to enable the carer to receive carer payments
- extending a placement for a child or young person who was already placed with a carer before the imposition of the 'no new placements' condition.

This action should only be taken as a last resort. In circumstances where it is necessary to temporarily lift the 'no new placements' condition CARU must:

- undertake a thorough assessment in consultation with the child or young person's care team and CARU
- document the decision and rationale.

CARU must:

- notify the service provider or DCP case worker of the change in approval conditions by emailing two copies of the Carer Approval Confirmation from C3MS; and
- ensure the carer is provided with advice about changes to their carer approval.

Carers with a 'no new placements' condition remain approved and must undergo regular reviews and fulfill all mandatory requirements according to their approved category of care.

4.8 Carers approved interstate now residing in South Australia

Service providers must complete the following to enable a carer approved interstate to be approved in South Australia:

- consult with CARU (via the Interstate Liaison Unit)
- obtain written consent from the carer for the exchange and release of information between service providers and the relevant government departments responsible for the approval of carers
- obtain a record of child protection and care concern history from the interstate government department responsible for the carer's approval
- obtain details of the completed carer assessment
- obtain details of the screening clearances held by the carer(s) and any adult household members
- obtain details of the training courses undertaken by the carer(s)
- obtain the latest carer review report
- negotiate for all relevant documents, reports and carer history (including the information referred to in the above dot points) to be sent to CARU.

To be approved in South Australia, all family-based carers must undergo the same checks, training and competency requirements according to the category of care they wish to provide. The requirements to meet carer approval criteria under section 73(3) of the CYPs Act are set out in the [Carer Approval Requirements Matrix](#). A local service provider must accept their transfer of support.

Once provided with the above information, CARU will advise whether further assessment is required.



4.9 Approved carers seeking to change service provider

Service provider transfers are generally initiated by carers. They may also be requested by the service provider or a DCP office. Refer to the [Agency Transfer Checklist](#) to support the formal transfer of approved carer between support agencies.

To commence the transfer process, the service provider or DCP office must provide the agency transfer checklist and a signed [Consent to share information Form](#). This form must include authorisation for the exchange of information between both the service providers and DCP and be distributed to all parties involved in the transfer, including CARU.

If a general family-based carer wishes to transfer to a service provider as a specialist carer, the receiving service provider must undertake any further assessments and training required for approval as a specialist carer. This will be arranged by the specialist service provider the carer is transferring to and must be approved by CARU prior to the transfer being finalised. Modifications to add specialist care can also be requested following the referral process.

4.10 Approval requirements for applicants who have previously been cancelled

A family-based carer whose approval is cancelled, whether voluntarily or involuntarily, will not be re-approved to provide care unless CARU has received an [Application to become a Kinship/SCO/Foster Carer Form](#) with evidence demonstrating that:

- the reasons for cancellation have been addressed; and
- the person meets the requirements for approval as a carer under the CYPS Act.

CARU may request any of the following evidence prior to making a recommendation to the delegated authority to re-approve the person to provide further care:

- a new carer assessment to evaluate the carer's capacity based on the carer competencies
- a carer review covering the period since the last review/assessment
- a carer agreement form detailing the request to re-approve the carer.

If satisfied, CARU may approve a recommendation that the carer qualifies for approval under the CYPS Act. This will be determined on a case by case basis, taking into account factors such as:

- the views of the service provider or DCP case worker
- the views of the Principal Aboriginal Consultant (PAC) when the carer and/or child or young person is Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander
- the length of time since the carer's approval was cancelled
- the length of time since the carer last provided care
- the length of time since the carer's original assessment and the format of this assessment
- the length of time since the carer's last review
- any concerns or challenges identified at the time of the cancellation
- significant changes in the household since the cancellation
- the outcome of WWCC and CP history checks
- whether current caregiver support is available
- the wishes and intentions of the carer and service provider, or DCP case worker, in terms of future care, incorporating any differences between the carer approval conditions prior to cancellation and the approval conditions proposed for the future.

The Manager, Carer Assessments, has delegated authority to approve carers who have previously been cancelled. Approval by a senior delegate may be appropriate if the carer has previously been cancelled due to concerns regarding their provision of care.



4.11 Internal Review of outcome

All decisions made by CARU in relation to a carer's approval are internally reviewable decisions under section 157 of the CYPS Act. Service providers are responsible for making recommendations to CARU in relation to a carer's approval conditions. These recommendations and decisions should be reached via a process of procedural fairness.

If a carer does not agree with a recommendation and/or decision about their carer approval conditions made by their service provider, they should discuss this with their service provider worker in the first instance. Where required, the carer should follow their service provider's complaints process.

If their grievance cannot be resolved via this process, the service provider should submit their recommended changes with supporting rationale to CARU. The service provider should also provide evidence that they have:

- provided the recommended changes and rationale in writing to the carer
- informed the carer that the final decision will be made by CARU
- afforded the carer a process of procedural fairness in relation to the recommendation
- invited the carer to provide their response to the recommendation in writing to CARU within 14 days of being provided with this information.

CARU should review the information provided by the service provider and the carer's response to that recommendation. CARU is responsible for making a final decision about the carer's approval conditions and preferences.

If the carer disagrees with the decision, the carer can apply for an Internal Review under section 157 of the CYPS Act. The DCP Complaints and Feedback Management Unit can provide information about the [internal review process](#) and external processes. Refer to the [Internal Review Procedure](#) for further guidance.

CARU will document complaints received and actions taken to manage and respond to complaints. The Manager, Carer Assessments, will determine how complaints will be documented and must ensure:

- documentation complies with:
 - Information Privacy Principles Instruction (Premier and Cabinet Circular 012)
 - the *State Records Act 1997*
 - relevant General Disposal Schedules
 - any other legal requirements for the collection, storage and use of information
- documentation is linked to the child or young person and carer; and
- can be retrieved by accessing the child or young person's or carer's records.

4.12 Carer non-approval process

The service provider assessor or DCP assessor may recommend non-approval of an applicant applying to be a family-based carer. As part of the non-approval process, the assessor must have completed all of the following prior to submitting the assessment and recommendations to CARU:

- advised the applicant verbally and in writing that the assessor will recommend non-approval to CARU and explain the reasons for this recommendation
- invited the applicant to address the concerns raised by submitting in writing, within 14 days, any further information they want CARU to consider with respect to their application
- informed the applicant that the approval decision will be made by CARU
- discussed with the applicant whether the applicant wants to continue with or withdraw their application
- advised the applicant that if their application is withdrawn, the applicant may reapply for approval in the future, if the identified issues have been addressed.



If the child or young person is placed with the applicant, the assessor must inform the DCP office and support worker of the recommendation. Further, the DCP case management team must review the assessment and provide feedback, including mitigating factors related to concerns raised in the assessment.

The DCP case worker should convene a case conference, including a CARU supervisor, to plan for the child or young person's care arrangements.

The summary documentation should be completed with a non-approval recommendation if:

- after the 14 day period no response is received; or
- the information provided does not satisfy the requirements for carer approval.

The final approval decision will rest with the Manager, Carer Assessments, who will inform both the applicant and the service provider of DCP's decision in writing.

CARU may also make a recommendation of non-approval if the application has not satisfied the approval requirements. The designated CARU team member is responsible for making a written recommendation to the Manager, Carer Assessments, regarding carer non-approval.

If the Manager, Carer Assessments, upholds the recommendation of non-approval, the steps above must be completed. CARU may request a case conference be undertaken to discuss the concerns and reasons for non-approval.

If the non-approval decision relates to a carer providing care in a temporary placement that is due to end prior to the decision being reached, the service provider or DCP assessor must request an extension of time to allow further assessment information to be provided to CARU. The Manager, Carer Assessments, must seek approval from the Executive Director, Out of Home Care.

If a child or young person is in the placement with the applicant, the DCP case worker will assess and take appropriate action to ensure the child or young person's safety and wellbeing for the time period until the approval decision is finalised.

A letter of non-approval is to be prepared by CARU and signed by the Manager, Carer Assessments, to formally notify the service provider and the applicant of the decision. The letter must include the rationale for the decision and advise the applicant of the DCP complaints process and the service providers' complaints process, should they wish to seek an internal review of the decision.

4.13 Withdrawal of carer applicants

Where an applicant has completed an application form to become an approved carer and then subsequently withdraws their application prior to an approval decision being made by CARU, the service provider or DCP assessor must:

- obtain consent from the applicant to withdraw their application
- complete the [Withdrawal of carer application Form](#)
- provide CARU with the completed form including the information related to the carer assessment undertaken and any other material (such as notes) associated with the carer's decision to withdraw their application and, to ensure all evidence is stored in a central location.

The information will be reviewed by CARU to ensure it meets the requirements of the withdrawal process.

4.14 Carer cancellation process

The Chief Executive, or their delegate, may cancel the approval of an approved carer pursuant to section 74 of the CYPs Act if there is reasonable suspicion that:

- a child or young person in the care of an approved carer is not being adequately cared for



- the approved carer has contravened a provision of the CYPS Act
- the approved carer has refused or failed to comply with a condition of their approval under the CYPS Act
- the person is a prohibited person under the *Child Safety (Prohibited Persons) Act 2016*
- a WWCC has not been conducted in relation to the person within the preceding five years
- it is otherwise appropriate that the approval be cancelled.

Under section 74(2) of the CYPS Act, an approved carer must be given at least 28 days' notice in writing of the Chief Executive's (or their delegate's) intention to cancel their carer approval, except in instances where the person is a prohibited person under the *Child Safety (Prohibited Persons) Act 2016*.

Carers will be sent a notice of intention to cancel which must:

- state the reasons for the proposed cancellation of approval
- inform the carer that the Chief Executive (or their delegate) will consider any representations regarding the proposed cancellation made in writing within the notice period
- state that if the carer does not make any representations, the carer's approval to provide care may be cancelled.

Consultation with a PAC is strongly recommended before an Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander carer's approval is voluntarily or involuntarily cancelled. This ensures a culturally appropriate lens has been applied and that the process has considered all relevant cultural factors impacting on the carer's approval.

If a carer is living in a remote or rural community, and does not have access to a mailbox, DCP staff or a lands based worker will deliver the letter in person which will ensure the carer has been given notice of the cancellation and the opportunity to respond within the 28 day period.

CARU will notify the service provider via email when the approval for a carer has been cancelled.

4.14.1 Involuntary cancellation

The service provider or DCP case worker may recommend involuntary cancellation of the carer's approval where there are concerns about the carer's provision of care. The service provider or DCP case worker should communicate with the carer about the proposed recommendation to cancel their approval. The service provider should provide evidence to CARU that they have:

- provided the rationale for the recommendation to cancel their approval in writing to the carer
- informed the carer that the decision to cancel their approval will be made by the Executive Director, Out of Home Care
- invited the carer to provide their response to the recommendation in writing to CARU, within 14 days of being provided with this information.

Once the above steps have occurred, the service provider or DCP case worker should complete the [Carer cancellation Form](#) and forward it to CARU for review. In addition to this form, the following points should be addressed in the [Carer review Report](#):

- a brief history of the carer's approval (type and length of approval, approval types and numbers of children cared for)
- events or incidents that led to the decision to recommend cancellation
- a summary of care concerns (including outcomes and recommendations), and additional concerns or issues held by DCP and/or the service provider
- the professional view and assessment of the DCP case worker, PAC (if applicable) or practice leader in relation to the concerns held
- evidence of attempts (successful or not) made by the DCP case worker and/or the service provider to engage the carer in addressing the concerns



- the carer's willingness to adhere to the recommendations arising from the care concerns and work with the service provider in formulating an action plan
- supporting documentation (for example reports, meeting minutes, case consultation notes)
- evidence that DCP and/or the service provider has communicated with the carer about the proposed cancellation of approval including the reasons, procedures, implications, outstanding care concerns, support available and the carer's response.

CARU will support the approval of carers to be cancelled if reasonably satisfied that:

- placements for all children and young people specified in the carer's approval have ceased and the children or young people will not be placed with the carers in the future, or the children or young people have attained 18 years of age
- the service provider or DCP case worker has made reasonable efforts to communicate with the carer:
 - that cancellation of approval will be recommended
 - the reasons for the proposed cancellation
 - cancellation procedures and any potential implications of cancellation
 - actions required to respond to outstanding care concerns
 - supports available to the carer
 - the carer's views have been obtained on the proposed cancellation, including whether they agree or object to the proposed cancellation.

CARU will prepare a letter of intent to cancel for consideration to be signed by the Executive Director, Out of Home Care, send it to the carer via post and complete the process outlined in section 4.14 of this procedure.

4.14.2 Carer's response about intent to cancel

If the carer does not respond in writing to the notice of intention to cancel within the 28 day notice period, CARU will update C3MS information to reflect the carer's approval status as 'cancelled'. If the carer responds to the proposed cancellation in writing within the 28 day notice period, CARU will review the carer's response.

If the carer does not agree with the recommendation for cancellation, the Manager, Carer Assessments, must ensure that CARU consults with the service provider and the DCP case worker. CARU should develop strategies to support the carer to meet key carer competencies and re-engage with their service provider. In some instances, a transfer to a new service provider may be explored, in consultation with the current service provider and a designated CARU team member.

An approved carer is entitled to a review of a decision to cancel their approval pursuant section 157 of the CYPS Act. Information about the process for applying for internal review is outlined in the final letter sent to the carer.

4.14.3 Voluntary cancellation

A carer's approval may be voluntarily cancelled at any stage for reasons such as the carer's age, ill health, employment or the carer no longer wishing to provide care. Cancellation of a carer's approval, under the CYPS Act, may be initiated by a carer at their request.

The service provider or DCP case worker should complete a [Carer cancellation Form](#) and forward it to CARU for review to ensure all requirements are adequately addressed.

The cancellation form should outline:

- the reasons for seeking carer cancellation



- confirmation that the carer has requested cancellation of their approval (in writing wherever possible) or has not objected to the proposed cancellation following reasonable efforts to inform them of the service provider worker's recommendation (preferably in writing).

If no further information is required, CARU will upload the documentation to C3MS and prepare a letter of intent to cancel to be signed by the Executive Director, Out of Home Care, and sent to the carer via post.

If no response objecting to the proposed approval cancellation is received from the carer within 28 days of the notice of intended cancellation being sent, CARU will update C3MS to change the carer's approval status to 'cancelled'. CARU will then notify the requesting service provider, kinship care worker or DCP case worker by email of the cancellation and arrange for the closure of the carer's hardcopy '70' file.

Service providers should offer an exit interview opportunity when carers request to cancel their approval, in accordance with their contractual arrangements with DCP. Exit interviews are managed internally by each service provider.

4.14.4 Voluntary cancellation where CARU is aware of care concerns

In instances where a carer requests cancellation and there are current open care concerns, the service provider or DCP case worker must:

- communicate with the carer about the potential impact of the proposed cancellation on the:
 - outcome of the care concern/s investigation process
 - support available to the carer through any ongoing investigation
 - information that is recorded about them on file
- provide the carer with information regarding options available to them
- provide information to the carer about the cancellation process.

When these discussions occur with an Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander carer, consultation with a PAC and/or ACCO is strongly recommended. Where possible, an Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander family support person must be in attendance when these discussions are held to support the carer's cultural safety.

CARU must be satisfied that the carer has made an informed decision to seek immediate cancellation, rather than wait for the finalisation of the investigation, to commence carer cancellation when there are open care concerns.

If CARU cannot be satisfied of these matters after reviewing the cancellation documents, CARU must contact the service provider and DCP case worker before proceeding with the carer cancellation.

When CARU finalises the voluntary cancellation of a carer due to care concerns, or investigation of the alleged concerns are still in progress, details of the care concern/s are recorded in C3MS as an alert. The alert should briefly set out the concerns held in relation to the carer and identify key issues to be addressed.

4.14.5 Cancelling carers who are deemed as a prohibited person under the *Child Safety (Prohibited Persons) Act 2016*

The Manager, Carer Assessments, will seek to cancel a carer's approval if they are identified as a prohibited person under the *Child Safety (Prohibited Persons) Act 2016*.

Upon receiving notification of a prohibited WWCC outcome for a carer, CARU will impose a condition prohibiting new placements. CARU will notify the service provider and the DCP case worker regarding this change and request information regarding the carer's intention to appeal the WWCC decision.

If the carer intends to appeal, the cancellation process cannot proceed until the appeal decision is finalised. Should the carer decide not to appeal the decision, a cancellation letter will be prepared. The Manager,



Carer Assessments, is responsible for reviewing the cancellation letter before forwarding it to the Executive Director, Out of Home Care, for approval.

Once the Executive Director, Out of Home Care, signs the cancellation letter, the carer's approval will be cancelled immediately. Any child or young person must transition to an alternative placement. If there is a non-prohibited carer available, the prohibited carer must leave the household.

The Executive Director, Out of Home Care, will provide the carer with written notice of the cancellation of their carer approval and inform them of their right to seek a review of the prohibited person status by the DHS Screening Unit. The carer may also be eligible for an internal review under section 157 of the CYPs Act. The [DCP Complaints and Feedback Management Unit](#) can provide information about the internal review process and external processes. Refer to the [Internal Review Procedure](#) for more information.

4.15 Changes to carer's circumstances

Carers are required to notify their service provider or the DCP case worker, as soon as reasonably practicable, of changes to their circumstances as per section 75(1) of the CYPs Act, including:

- change of address
- changes to household members.

When a carer changes their household address, a [Change of Address](#) should be completed by the carer or service provider and submitted to the Carer Payments team. The service provider must complete a [Home and Environment Checklist](#) (and updated house plan for foster carers) and provide it to CARU as soon as practicable.

When new individuals enter or leave a carer household, whether they are a regular guest or household member aged over 18 years or a child or young person living in the household (excluding children and young people in placement), CARU must be informed of these changes via a [Household Membership Advice Form](#). This ensures that the household membership tab in the application or approval screens of C3MS is accurately updated.

Ensuring that the household membership for all carers is up to date at all times ensures:

- accurate reporting on outstanding WWCCs for adult household members and regular guests
- if an intake or care concern is raised about any household members or regular guests, this information can be used to connect the relevant individuals to the intake or care concern. This means that an intake for a household member or regular guest could also result in a care concern needing to be addressed, and vice versa.

In circumstances where there are changes to the membership of a carer household, including a new partner, the carer must notify the service provider, kinship care worker or the DCP case worker of the change(s).

All new members of the household and regular guests must have a current WWCC and have undergone a CP history check. Until evidence of this has been received by CARU from either the carer or service provider, the approval conditions for the carer must be modified by CARU to place conditions of 'no new placements' if the person is living in the household.

In the case of a regular guest, the carer must be advised that they are not to allow unsupervised contact with children in their care until the CP history check and the WWCC have been received. CARU will record the changes to the membership of a carer household in C3MS.

5. Compliance, monitoring and evaluation

Compliance, monitoring and evaluation of this procedure will be undertaken by the DCP Out of Home Care Division. This document will be reviewed every three years, or more frequently, if required.



6. Related documents

Related documents, forms and templates
Children and Young People (Safety) Act 2017
Children and Young People (Safety) Regulations 2017
Child Safety (Prohibited Persons) Act 2016
Child Safety (Prohibited Persons) Regulations 2019
Family and Community Services Act 1972
Criminal Law Consolidation Act 1935
State Records Act 1997
Manual of Practice: Place a child or young person in care
Reporting a suspicion a child or young person is at risk Procedure
Strategic Plan 2022-2026
DCP Practice Principles
Statement of Commitment
Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Child Placement Principle
Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Child Placement Principle Practice Paper
Working with Children Checks Procedure
Working with Children Checks for family-based carers Procedure
Guardianship Family Day Care Procedure
Carer Approval Requirements Matrix
Carer assessment Report – Kinship and Specific Child Only
Carer assessment Report (17 year old) – Kinship and Specific Child Only
Carer assessment Procedure – Kinship and Specific Child Only
Application to become a Kinship/SCO/Foster carer Form
Household Membership Advice Form
Carer agreement - foster care



Carer agreement - kinship and specific child only care
Agency Transfer Checklist
Consent to share information Form
Internal Review Procedure
Home and Environment Checklist
Withdrawal of Carer Application Form
Carer cancellation Form
Carer review Report
Change of Address

7. Glossary

Term	Meaning
Foster carer	<p>A foster carer is an approved person (not being a guardian, relative or kin of a child or young person) who provides overnight care, typically in their own home, for a child or young person under custody or guardianship of the Chief Executive.</p> <p>Foster carers must be assessed and supported by a licensed foster care agency that has responsibility for facilitating placements of children and young people in care.</p> <p>Foster carers must be Australian citizens or permanent residents.</p>
Kinship carer	<p>A kinship carer is a person approved to provide care, in their own home, to one or more specific children or young people with whom they have a family or kinship connection. A kinship carer may be directly related to the child or young person in their care by blood, marriage, own community or according to Aboriginal cultures and/or kinship rules or Torres Strait Islander cultures and/or kinship rules.</p> <p>A person may also be considered a kinship carer in instances where they have a close, family-like relationship with the child or young person or where there is a close, long-standing connection to the child or young person's family of origin, as determined by DCP.</p> <p>In relation to Aboriginal kinship care, consideration of who is 'kin' to an infant, child or young person is the decision and responsibility of the family and those with cultural authority for the infant, child or young person.</p>
Specific child only (SCO) carer	<p>A specific child only carer is a person approved to provide care, in their own home, to a specific child or young person with whom they have a connection (that does not fit the definition of kinship care) through their personal,</p>



	<p>professional or ethno-specific community life (which includes sharing a cultural, ethnic or religious community connection with the child or young person).</p> <p>The definition of a specific child only carer includes a person of Aboriginal cultural background that is not known to the infant, child or young person and is not considered to be kin by the family or those with cultural authority for the infant, child or young person.</p>
Service providers	<p>Licensed foster care agencies responsible for conducting foster carer assessments, facilitating the carer applicant's submission of a DHS WWCC and completing all mandatory requirements (other than DCP records checks) for carer approval. They are also responsible for conducting SCO carer assessments. This term also encompasses the DCP Kinship Care Program, which provides a state-wide program offering targeted support, information and training to identified kinship carers based on their needs.</p>
Temporary placement	<p>Under section 77 of the CYPs Act, a temporary placement may be made, for a period not exceeding 3 months, with a person who is not an approved carer in instances where: (a) it is a matter of urgency (b) it is not reasonably practicable for placement to occur with an approved carer, or it is reasonably practicable however there is a preference to place the child or young person with the non-approved carer (see regulation 18A), and (c) the risk of harm to the child or young person of not being placed with the person is greater than the risk that the person will cause harm to the child or young person.</p>

Document control

Reference No./ File No.			
Document Owner	Lead Writer (position)		
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Accountable Director: Director, Carer Services	Out of Home Care		
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Risk Assessment Matrix	Minor	Unlikely	Low

REVISION RECORD		
Approval Date	Version	Revision description
30/3/2016	1.0	Original Carer Registration Procedure endorsed by Executive.
27/1/2017	1.1	Elements of document revised based on Crown legal advice, incorporating Carer Cancellation, Modifications to Approval Conditions and Placements On Hold.
16/6/2017	1.2	Carer Cancellation procedure further updated; badging, department name and position titles updated in line with machinery of government changes; appendices removed.
12/10/18	1.3	Procedures updated to comply with the Children and Young People (Safety) Act 2017 (phase 2 implementation on 22 October 2018). New sections added: scope, legislative context, categories of approved carers, carer approval criteria, DCP child protection history checks, carer definitions, carer approval requirements, approval of relative (kinship) carers transitionally approved under section 38 of the Children's Protection Law Reform (Transitional Arrangements and Related



REVISION RECORD		
Approval Date	Version	Revision description
		Amendments) Act 2017, and withdrawal and non-approval of applicants. Further elements of the document revised in line with current CARU business practices.
16/06/2021	1.4	Changes to Care Concern definition.
5 August 2022	2.0	Previously published as Carer Approval Procedures – Family-based Care (v1.4, June 2021). Information related to “carer reviews” was removed and included in Carer reviews for family-based carers Procedure (v2.0, August 2022). Information relating to Carer Agreements for Family-Based Carers Procedure has been included in this procedure (section 4.5 Develop a Carer Agreement).
28 April 2023	2.1	Hyperlink added to the Transferring to a different carer support agency fact sheet.
1 May 2023	2.2	Correction to hyperlinks to Foster Carer Agreement and Kinship/SCO Carer Agreement following intranet update.
30 November 2023	2.3	Minor amendment to update procedure to link to the updated Agency Transfer Checklist in section 4.8
1 December 2023	2.4	Minor amendment to correct the hyperlink for the Agency Transfer Checklist.
12 December 2023	2.5	Strategic Plan link in section 3.3 updated.
1 March 2024	2.6	Minor update to Responsibility for developing the Carer Agreement table to reflect current language
1 August 2025	3.0	Reviewed as per DCP policy review cycle