

Targeted Care Packages

Program manual (2022)

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In this document, ‘Aboriginal’ refers to both Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. ‘Indigenous’ or ‘Koori/Koorie’ is retained when part of the title of a report, program or quotation.

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Available at [Funded Agency Channel - Policies and procedures](https://fac.dffh.vic.gov.au/policies-and-procedures) <https://fac.dffh.vic.gov.au/policies-and-procedures>.

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Glossary of terms

| **Term** | **Definition** |
| --- | --- |
| **Aboriginal** | The term ‘Aboriginal’ refers to the First Peoples of Australia and includes Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. |
| **Care allowance** | Financial support paid by the department to foster care, kinship and permanent carers to contribute to the reimbursement for costs associated with caring for children and young people in the carers home. Primary and respite carers are eligible for care allowance. Assessment and registration criteria apply. Care allowance is paid at five different levels that reflect the diverse needs of children and young people in care. Care allowance levels are to be applied according to Care Allowance Policy and Procedures. The care allowance level is subject to change throughout the lifespan of a TCP and is regularly reviewed by TCP staff. |
| **Care Team** | Refers to all family members, carers, professional service providers and departmental staff who are involved with the care needs of a child or young person. The care team is inclusive of the child or young person. Where it is not appropriate for a child or young person to actively participate in their care team, their voice must be facilitated in all decision-making. |
| **Carer** | A carer is recognised as a person who provides direct care to a child or young person. This may include the parent/s, kinship care, permanent care and foster care of a child or young person. The primary carer is defined as the person which the child or young person resides with (overnight) for majority of time and is responsibility for their daily care needs. |
| **Child Protection** | Is the statutory body assigned legislative functions under the *Children, Youth and Families Act 2005* for the care of a child or young person. Where applicable, this may include authorised ACCO’s under the ACAC program.  |
| **Community Service Organisation (CSO)** | Are funded by the department to deliver community-based child, youth, and family services.An organisation must be a registered Out-of-Home Care service provider and have accreditation under the Department of Families, Fairness and Housing Standards to provide Targeted Care Packages (activity code 31209).CSO’s delivering TCP’s are also referred to as the ‘funded organisation’ in this document. |
| **TCP staff** | Departmental staff responsible for planning, coordinating, and implementing TCPs are referred to as TCP staff. TCP staff may be a singular role or several people sitting under the DFFH - Care Services Operations Support branch. |

# Framework

TCPs were introduced by the Victorian Government in 2015 to enable a child or young person’s transition from residential care to an alternative living arrangement and to enable appropriate supports to be developed to prevent a child or young person from entering residential care.

TCPs are an opportunity to consider more innovative, flexible and client-centred approaches to the living arrangements and care needs of children and young people, consistent with the child or young person’s goals and desired outcomes and case plan direction. The department and funded organisations have an opportunity with TCPs to move from fixed funded service models to individualised and innovative approaches.

The design and delivery of TCPs for children and young people who are engaged with Child Protection is critically linked to existing legislation, and the range of Child Protection and Out-of-Home Care principles, policies, standards and frameworks, including the *Targeted Care Packages Guidelines (January 2018)*.

Refer: [Targeted Care Packages Guidelines (January 2018)](https://fac.dffh.vic.gov.au/policies-and-procedures) <https://fac.dffh.vic.gov.au/policies-and-procedures>.

## Guiding Principles

Consistent with the overarching *Targeted Care Packages Guidelines (January 2018)*, the implementation of TCPs is underpinned by eight guiding principles. These are:

Table 1: Guiding Principles

| Principle | Description |
| --- | --- |
| **Child (and young person’s) best interests** | All decisions will be focused on the child’s best interests and will involve the application of the Best Interests Principles of the *Children, Youth and Families Act 2005.* |
| **Care team approach** | A care team approach to delivering TCPs and decision-making will be adopted, and involves the participation of departmental staff, placement providers, children or young people, families and funded organisations. The care team approach facilitates regular monitoring of package progress and associated supports. This approach requires the care team to understand the trauma children and young people in out-of-home care have experienced in their lives and apply a therapeutic approach to the development and implementation of their package. |
| **Creative planning** | In developing and implementing TCPs, the thinking and planning should be creative, flexible, and optimistic to achieve the goal of identifying new solutions and supports for the child or young person. Organisations leading the delivery of TCPs need to be able to work creatively and flexibly, build a culture of innovation within their organisation, and demonstrate a capacity to engage with other service providers. They need to demonstrate a willingness to support their staff to embrace the role of a key worker. A key worker is expected to work in new and creative ways and move beyond the traditional roles defined in other programs. |
| **Collaborative practice** | All parties involved in supporting and caring for a child or young person will work together collaboratively and in partnership, treating each other with respect and considering each other’s views. |
| **Culturally competent** | The services and supports a child or young person receive through a package must be culturally appropriate. For Aboriginal children and young people, this requires the application of the Aboriginal Child Placement Principle as outlined in the *Child, Youth and Families Act 2005*. The Aboriginal Child Placement Principle establishes decision-making requirements in relation to an Aboriginal child or young person in out-of-home care. ACCOs should first be considered as package providers to Aboriginal children and young people. These organisations are best placed to identify appropriate Aboriginal placements, and to ensure the continuation of the client’s identity and connection to culture and community.When Aboriginal children and young people are engaged with non-Aboriginal organisations, the package annual review must include assessment of its cultural appropriateness in reflection of the child or young person’s Cultural Support Plan. The review should also establish if there is a need to partner with an ACCO or make an ACCO the lead service provider. |
| **Collective impact** | The way we approach TCPs should bring together cross-sector organisations and focus on facilitating long-lasting benefits for children and young people. |
| **Co-design and engagement of children and young people** | Children, young people, carers and other stakeholders will play an active role in shaping the initiative – in particular package design, implementation, review and evaluation. As outlined in the *Client voice framework for community services,* regular engagement of children, young people and carers is essential and continual. |
| **Connection** | Positive relationships held by children and young people will be essential to the success of a package. Where a pre-existing positive connection exists, every opportunity to maintain that relationship should be explored through the package. This includes support for sustaining relationships between children/young people and carers, family and social connections, and engaged organisations. |

## Description

TCPs enable the flexible delivery of a suite of services to support a child or young person’s exit from residential care or prevent them from entering residential care and assist with the achievement of case plan directions and desired outcomes.

The package is supported by an allocation of funding that is:

* attached to a child or young person
* based on an assessment of the child or young person’s needs, and aligns to their case plan, desired outcomes and the permanency objective
* used for one or more clearly articulated supports to meet the child or young person’s needs
* financially acquitted annually at the end of each financial year.

## Eligibility

Children and young people subject to a Child Protection order are eligible for a TCP when they are:

* currently in residential care
* at risk of entering residential care.

Funding is available to create a TCP for a child or young person where the existing models of care, or levels of support available are insufficient to:

* support a successful transition out of residential care, or
* prevent the child or young person being placed in residential care, and
* the preferred care arrangement is assessed to ensure it meets the permanency objective and provides improved outcomes.

### Priority children and young people

Any child or young person in or at risk of entering residential care is in-scope to receive a TCP, but the three groups below are prioritised:

* Aboriginal children or young people
* children aged 12 and under
* children and young people with disability, as defined under the *Disability Act 2006*.

## Living arrangements

The living arrangements supported by a package for a child or young person include, but are not limited to:

* at home with parents
* with kith or kin
* with a registered carer
* independently or semi-independently
* any other arrangement that accommodates the child or young person’s needs.

Any form of rostered paid staff performing as a primary carer cannot be considered under this arrangement as it contravenes the purpose of transitioning from residential care or entering residential care.

## Key elements

A key worker who provides primary support to the child or young person (and carer if applicable)

TCPs include funding for a key worker to provide support and coordination to the child or young person and their carer(s). Each proposed TCP considers the necessary role and responsibilities of a key worker and how they will support the best interests of the child or young person and their case plan.

A key worker forms part of the broader `care team’ and has a role in the achievement of improved outcomes for the child or young person. The specific case plan directions and cultural support plan drive anticipated outcomes for a child or young person, and the responsibilities of the key worker.

While a key worker provides support and service coordination to the child or young person and their family, the Child Protection case manager maintains legislative functions under the Children, Youth and Families Act 2005 to ensure the implementation of the case plan and provides ongoing risk assessment. It is encouraged that Case Management is contracted to the key worker’s organisation when appropriate.

Key worker standardised hourly payment rates ensure a fair and reasonable cost for services delivered and support consistent application of key worker costs across the state (see section: [7.5 Standardised key worker rates](#_Standardised_key_worker)).

Care allowance

Care allowance is paid to kinship and home-based carers fortnightly and is intended to contribute to a range of day-to-day expenses incurred in the provision of care.

While care allowance is based on established levels and rates, there is flexibility within a package to adjust the level in consideration of the needs of the child or young person (see section: [15. Care allowance](#_Carer_allowance)).

Refer: [Support for home based carers in Victoria](https://services.dffh.vic.gov.au/support-home-based-carers-victoria) <https://services.dffh.vic.gov.au/support-home-based-carers-victoria>

A range of flexible targeted supports

Items and services can be purchased through a TCP if they are directly related to a child or young person exiting residential care to an alternative living arrangement, or to support an existing living arrangement to prevent the child or young person entering residential care. However, alternative funding avenues must first be exhausted prior to TCP funding being sought.

A TCP may include establishment items and supports such as transport, health, life and living skills, education, therapeutic and family support. Any identified disability supports require consultation and linkage with the client’s nominated National Disability Insurance Agency (NDIA) planner (see section: [7.6 NDIS and Targeted Care Packages](#_NDIS_and_Targeted)). Young people aged 16+ require consultation and linkage to Better Futures if eligibility criteria is met.

Refer: [NDIS: Who can help start your plan](https://www.ndis.gov.au/participants/using-your-plan/who-can-help-start-your-plan) < https://www.ndis.gov.au/participants/using-your-plan/who-can-help-start-your-plan>.

Refer: [Leaving Care](https://fac.dffh.vic.gov.au/policies-and-procedures) <https://fac.dffh.vic.gov.au/policies-and-procedures>.

## Service provider registration and accreditation requirements

For an organisation to be eligible for TCP funding (activity 31209), it must be a registered Out-of-Home Care provider and have accreditation under the Human Services Standards. It is through this registration and accreditation process that funded organisations demonstrate evidence of capacity to deliver services with the appropriate safeguards for children and young people.

In addition, organisations must ensure they comply with the relevant program requirements. These program requirements are set out in the *Targeted Care Packages Guidelines (January 2018)* section `Who can deliver a targeted care package?’

Refer: [Human Services Standards - DFFH Service Providers](https://providers.dffh.vic.gov.au/human-services-standards) <https://providers.dffh.vic.gov.au/human-services-standards>.

Refer: [Targeted Care Packages Guidelines (2018)](https://fac.dffh.vic.gov.au/policies-and-procedures) <https://fac.dffh.vic.gov.au/policies-and-procedures>.

# Key roles and responsibilities

For TCPs to achieve the best outcomes for children and young people, collaboration between departmental and community service organisation staff is essential. TCP planning, delivery, monitoring and review is undertaken by the department’s TCP staff, Child Protection or authorised ACCO, Care Services Operations Support, Agency Performance and System Support (APPS), divisional financial teams and funded sector organisations where appropriate.

The next section defines the roles of departmental units and staff and funded organisations in TCP processes. The allocation of tasks between department units and staff and funded organisations may vary slightly among Local Areas and from the descriptions below. Department units are expected to define these differences in their documented work processes with funded organisations.

Table 2: Overview of roles and responsibilities

| Group / Business Area | Actions and responsibility |
| --- | --- |
| **Targeted Care Package department staff / Care Services Operations Support** | **Consultation*** undertake effective consultation and collaboration with other program areas or services to ensure consideration of individual client needs and/or risks
* participate in contingency and residential care planning meetings to access the information and resources necessary to conduct the referral process
* assess a child’s eligibility for a package and request a completed referral form from Child Protection or ACAC.

**Referrals*** identify, prioritise, review and monitor package referrals in consultation with Child Protection or ACAC
* seek a completed client fire risk assessment from the case manager and liaise with the DFFH Fire Services team for assessment and recommendation
* coordinate client presentation and direct allocation meetings with CSOs, Child Protection, ACAC and Placement and Support Planning Unit where applicable.

**Proposals*** support organisations to develop proposals that address the identified care needs of the child or young person as governed by TCP guidelines.
* assess proposals alongside Case Planner and Case Management
* review and submit proposal assessments for approval by the financial delegate.

**Implementation and monitoring*** work with TCP funded organisation and care team to establish TCP implementation plan
* support TCP funded organisations, Child Protection and fully authorised ACCO’s in the delivery of packages in line with goals, case plan and funding arrangements
* provide departmental oversight and monitoring of TCPs where Child Protection involvement ceases
* maintain period monitoring of all active packages
* work with the division’s finance team to ensure tracking and monitoring of the TCP budget. This includes the approval of care allowances and reimbursement to the Care Allowance Management Unit.

**Funded organisations*** provide a copy of approved package plans to the allocated funded organisation and Child Protection or ACAC
* continuously engage and communicate with APSS about program requirements, onboarding new CSOs, expected funded organisation performance
* provide a list of children and young people in receipt of an approved package to the APSS (package plans are not required) to assist with performance tracking.

**Reviewing*** maintain local monitoring processes for all active packages
* review and submit proposal assessments and package variations for approval by the relevant delegate
* manage formal annual review processes in the fourth quarter of the financial year and identify funding commitments for the next financial year or move the package to closure
* manage and record package financial acquittals at the end of the financial year linked to annual review processes
* manage out-of-schedule reviews whereby a package end date doesn’t align with the financial year, there is a significant change to the package goals, or there are significant concerns regarding the sustainability and/or delivery of a package.

**Package closures*** oversee the development and monitoring of exit plans to ensure they demonstrate a transition to sustainable services and supports in the community
* oversee package closures and record the formal departmental approval and communication to service providers.

**Systems and processes*** drive divisional sector development in collaboration with APSS
* develop and implement divisional package systems and processes

**Reporting/recording*** ensure approved packages are entered on the Individualised Funding Allocation Management System (IFAMS)
* adhere to CRIS/SP service provision, case notes and caregiver reimbursement procedures
* provide monthly package reports to Central and local division executive groups as applicable.
 |
| **Placement and Support Planning Unit** | **Placement Coordination*** discuss with TCP staff, service providers, and Child Protection about the potential eligibility of a child or young person for a package
* participate in the client presentation and direct allocation meetings as required
* approve home-based care allowance and 28day+ respite activity via the CRIS – Care allowance payment workspace.
* notify TCP staff about individual respite arrangements to ensure the package budget is accurate
* support TCP staff with information sharing of residential care and contingency data.

**Kinship Engagement Team*** discuss with TCP staff, service providers, and Child Protection about the potential eligibility of a child or young person for a package
* participate in the client presentation and direct allocation meetings as required.
 |
| **Child Protection Unit / Aboriginal Children in Aboriginal Care agencies** | **Referrals*** facilitate referrals and engagement with service providers in accordance with the case plan
* make a referral to the National Disability Insurance Scheme if a child or young person has a disability
* complete client fire risk assessments where applicable
* ensure the quality of referral content.

**Implementation*** develop the case plan and ensure it is implemented according to legal requirements, the provisions of the protection order and the child or young person’s needs
* ensure a cultural plan is developed for an Aboriginal child or young person
* negotiate contracted case management responsibilities, timelines and lines of communication with funded organisations
* participate in implementation meeting.

**Reviews and assessments*** Conduct child protection functions and responsibilities as per usual business
* communicate changes to placement or circumstances, and progress or issues to TCP staff.

**Reporting/recording*** maintain client records according to program and statutory requirements (this includes CRIS records)
* adherence to CRIS/SP caregiver reimbursement procedures
* record and update package living arrangements and accommodation on CRIS.

**Note:** If the funded organisation is responsible for case contracting, the tasks described above also apply to the contracted case manager, in addition to case planning responsibilities.  |
| **Agency Performance and System Support (APSS)** | * when required, inform TCP staff about the funded organisations performance and how it could impact on their capacity to deliver TCP
* routinely undertake service delivery tracking of funded organisations to ensure compliance with records and information management.
* support TCP staff and funded organisations to address concerns regarding package delivery when required.
 |
| **Divisional / Area finance teams** | * where applicable, confirm package funding allocation for IFAMS entry and SAMS2 scheduling prior to the monthly variation window
* develop a year-to-date budget for all TCPs based on TCP staff monthly costings to ensure robust tracking of package expenditure
* assist TCP staff with expenditure projections in outgoing years
* reimburse the Care Allowance Management Unit quarterly for approved TCP care allowance payments.
 |
| **Divisional subcommittee responsible for finance oversight** | * monitor the TCP budget and expenditure, determine risk mitigation strategies if TCP budget is at risk of being fully committed.
 |
| **Care Allowance Management Unit** | * provide divisions/areas with a fortnightly statement of the care allowance payments associated with TCPs for review and reimbursement.
 |
| **Community Service Organisations and ACCO’s** | * identify suitable children and young people to refer for a package
* undertake the recruitment, support, supervision and staff training (including carers where relevant), to facilitate effective package delivery
* ensure a key worker is in place at package commencement
* maintain communication with the department’s Child Protection and TCP staff regarding package delivery and program issues
* routinely review and monitor package delivery to ensure outcomes are achieved, including the assessment of quality and safeguarding mechanisms
* undertake routine risk assessment alongside Child Protection or ACAC
* monitor TCP funding expenditure in accordance with the approved budget
* prepare reports and assessments, e.g., transition plan, safety plan, case contracting quarterly report etc.
* comply with the [Looking After Children framework](https://providers.dhhs.vic.gov.au/looking-after-children-framework) and related program requirements
* adherence to guidelines when responding to abuse in care and/or quality of care concerns and Client Incident Management System (CIMS) reporting
* adherence to CRIS/SP case records, service provision and caregiver reimbursement procedures (includes maintaining CRISSP case-notes post statutory involvement).
 |
| **Key Workers** | * provide direct support to the child or young person, their family and carers, for the duration of the package
* ensure all Aboriginal children and young people are provided with appropriate cultural supports in line with their cultural support plan
* provide risk assessment and case management to support the child or young person’s case plan
* coordinate care team processes for the child or young person in partnership with other services to develop, delivery and review the package plan
* work outside traditional program boundaries to facilitate flexible and creative support responses
* advise Child Protection and TCP staff of changes, issues, and risks to the child or young person’s living arrangement or package delivery
* ensure CRIS/SP is up to date with activity records, service partner consultations, decisions and actions for the duration of the TCP (includes post statutory involvement)

**Note:** Where case contracting is not delivered by an agency, CRIS responsibilities outlined above apply to Child Protection. Key workers remain responsible for ensuring CRISSP is up to date with activity records and coordinating the care team. |

# Targeted Care Packages Model

The start-to-end process of developing a Targeted Care Package is supported by a sequence of stages and documentation marking each progressive phase of the package.

**Figure 1: Targeted Care Package Model**



## Process summary

Table 3: Process stages and required documentation.

| Phase | Description overview | Documentation required |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Confirm eligibility** | The department, service provider, or member of the care team request a consultation with TCP staff to determine the eligibility of a child or young person for a TCP. Child Protection or ACAC must support the recommendation for TCP and be represented during the consultation.Outcomes from the consultation may include:approval to proceed to referral stagerecommendation of actions to be undertaken by the care team before the child or young person can be considered for TCPchild / young person deemed ineligible for TCP.  | * TCP: Consultation (DFFH-TCP completes)
 |
| **Referral** | A referral is completed by Child Protection, ACAC or the contracted case manager upon request by TCP staff.Referrals must clearly identify the child or young person’s strengths and areas requiring support as this information will be used to identify goals for the child or young person in the package proposal. The child or young person is to be consulted to inform the outcome areas.Referral content is reviewed by the Case Planner and endorsed by the next line of management before submitting to TCP staff.Once received by TCP staff, the referral will be used to commence scoping for a suitable provider. The approach undertaken is decided in consultation with the care team and must respect the Aboriginal Child Placement Principle and wishes of the child or young person. | * TCP: Referral (Case Manager completes)
 |
| **New Proposal**  | A new proposal is submitted by a CSO in the following instances:* new TCP for a child or young person
* TCP is transitioning to a new service provider
* a child or young person is returning to a TCP after having exited a package previously.

If a CSO is developing a new proposal via the client presentation process, they should speak directly to TCP staff if they require further information.CSO’s developing new proposals via the direct allocation approach may consult with the child or young person, carer, Child Protection and extended care team where appropriate.TCP staff will work with the CSO to resolve any issues which may be identified prior to the CSO’s final submission. TCP proposals must be signed by the appropriate level delegate within their organisation, equivalent to operations director or above before being submitted.  | * TCP: New proposal (CSO complete)
* TCP: Funding schedule (CSO complete)
 |
| **Assessment and approval** | The department will undertake an assessment of the submitted proposal. Where an invited submission process has been conducted, the assessment phase will provide recommendation as to the preferred provider based on proposal comparison.Outcome of the assessment phase may include:* approve and fund the proposal
* approve and fund the proposal subject to recommended amendments
* decline proposal
* request resubmission of proposal with recommendation for an alternative response to one or more support components.

If the proposal has been approved subject to recommended amendments, the amendments must be communicated and agreed to by the authorising CSO delegate.If a resubmission of the proposal is requested, the department will refer the document back to the CSO and provide recommendation regarding specific support components to be revised. It is the responsibility of the CSO to consider alternative responses, sign the amended proposal and re-submit to the department.The department will inform the CSO of the assessment outcome and in cases of an invited submissions process will provide feedback if a proposal was not successful. TCP staff are to keep local records of all unsuccessful proposal rationales.  | * TCP: New proposal assessment and approval (DFFH-TCP completes)
 |
| **Implementation** | The department, CSO and extended care team will meet to confirm the implementation strategy and timeline for approved support component, transition arrangements and reporting requirements. | * TCP: implementation meeting (DFFH-TCP completes)
 |
| **Variations** | Variations to a package can be requested by a funded organisation when a support component, goal or administration arrangement is no longer meeting the child or young person’s needs and an adjustment is recommended for approval by the department. A variation request without adjustment to the funding schedule may include the following:* variation to package administration arrangements such as a change to placement type/living arrangement.
* variation to amend existing goals/support components
* redirection of existing funding.

A variation requesting adjustment to the total funding amount may include the following:* increase/decrease of an existing support component (including care allowance level)
* increase the duration or quantity of an existing support component
* price adjustment for an existing support
* termination of one or multiple support components
* package breakdown prevention strategy

A variation request can recommend one or multiple changes simultaneously. All package impacts must be outlined when completing the variation form. Variations that include amendment to the care allowance level must follow the care allowance policy and CRIS/SP procedure.It is at the discretion of departmental divisional TCP teams whether minor package variations under $5,000.00 can be executed via an email between the department and the funded organisation. Endorsement must still be provided by the TCP organisation’s program/senior manager for all variations. It is the responsibility of TCP staff to record communication of all variation agreements on CRIS.  | * Variation request email (CSO sends)

{or}* TCP: Variation request and approval (CSO completes)
* TCP: Funding schedule (CSO completes)
 |
| **Package monitoring** | All active packages are monitored by TCP staff to support goal progression and the overall effectiveness of a package in meeting the child or young person’s needs.Funded organisations are expected to contact TCP staff directly if needed and participate in regular care team meetings.  |  |
| **Formal review** | In the fourth quarter of the financial year all packages are formally reviewed by the department in consultation with the funded organisation, Child Protection or ACAC and the broader professional care team where appropriate. The child or young person and carer must be consulted through this process. The process is initiated by TCP staff. Progress towards goals and outcomes, alignment to case plan, and transition of supports to alternative services or funding streams will be considered in the review process. The annual review meeting outcome may include:* review of support components and recommendation for continuation of TCP into the new financial year
* package closure.

Packages recommended for continuation will require the funded organisation to submit a TCP review proposal and funding schedule. Review proposals then undergo the assessment and approval process.For packages ceasing within the fourth quarter of the financial year, a package closure process will replace the annual review.By exception, a formal out-of-schedule review may also be conducted by TCP staff in the following circumstances:* package end date does not align with the end of financial year
* significant concerns regarding the delivery of the TCP
* significant concerns regarding the sustainability of a placement type/living arrangement
* significant changes to case plan and/or permanency objective.

**Please note:** changes to supports during the life of a package does not necessarily indicate a need for formal review. The process undertaken will depend on the scope of changes proposed. It is at the discretion of the department as to whether changes can be managed via the variation process or formal review process.  | * TCP: Review (or closure) meeting (DFFH-TCP completes)
* TCP: Review proposal (CSO completes)
* TCP: Funding schedule (CSO complete)
* TCP: Review proposal assessment and approval (DFFH-TCP completes)
 |
| **End of Financial Year Acquittal** | The budget for any package which was active in the given financial year is subject to the end of financial year acquittal process. This is a compulsory process and applies to all packages, regardless of their active status during the acquittal period. For more information refer to: *End of financial year acquittal information for community service organisations* or *Guide to end of financial year acquittal for departmental staff.* | * Budget year targeted care package funding acquittal and reconciliation (CSO completes)
 |
| **Closure** | A package closure process is undertaken for all TCP closures. The package closure process includes:* reporting on achievements against goals
* transition exit planning for supports and service’s
* feedback by the child or young person and carer
* program learnings.

Financial commitments for TCP funded supports will be terminated on the established package closure date as recorded in IFAMS. The department will work with funded organisations and Child Protection to confirm funding termination dates in the event of an unplanned closure.Financial reconciliation does not occur during the closure process. It is the responsibility of the CSO to discuss any variation to funding prior to the package termination date as funding is not approved in retrospect. It is the responsibility of Child Protection or ACAC and the CSO to end any associated care allowances that are included in the TCP. If a package is terminated and the child or young person is allocated a new package, a new proposal is to be submitted addressing the challenges and issues which led to the initial package breakdown.  | * TCP: Review (or closure) meeting (DFFH-TCP completes)
 |

# Identification, consultation and referral

## Identification of children and young people

The suitability of a child or young person for a TCP is based on the eligibility criteria and the assessed needs of the child or young person. When identifying eligible children and young people, priority is given to Aboriginal children or young people, children aged 12 and under, and children and young people with disability.

The suitability of a package for a child or young person is considered by departmental staff. TCP staff, Placement Coordination Unit and Child Protection review all children in residential care or at risk of entering residential care to identify and prioritise eligible children and young people that require the support of a TCP.

## Consultation

An organisation, worker or carer may also identify a child or young person as suitable for targeted care package consideration. In these instances, the care team member can contact the child or young person’s case manager (or equivalent) to discuss the suitability for a TCP consultation request. The Child Protection or ACAC Practitioner and/or the organisation with case management responsibility then contact TCP staff to request a consultation.

Initial consultations are convened by TCP staff to consider the child or young person’s suitability for a package. This includes eligibility criteria confirmation and discussion with key care team practitioners regarding the suitability of TCP in addressing the identified care needs requiring support. Child Protection or ACAC Practitioners must participate in the initial consultation process.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
|  | Documentation required* TCP: Consultation template.
 |

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
|  | TCP staff tasks* consult with Child Protection or the fully authorised ACCO
* establish a review process with Placement Coordination and/or Child Protection for all children in residential care or at risk of entering residential care
* record all TCP consultation outcomes on CRIS.
 |

## Referral

When a child or young person’s eligibility for a TCP is confirmed, TCP staff will request Child Protection, ACAC Practitioner, or the community service contracted case manager complete a referral form. The referral is then approved by the Case Planner and their line manager or above before submission to TCP staff.

Referrals need to clearly identify a child or young person’s strengths and areas of support. The referral needs to include the voice of the child or young person and the carer where applicable. Goals and desired supports need to be clearly articulated as the information will be used to inform the development of a TCP proposal. Child Protection are required to complete a Client Fire Risk Assessment for tentative leaving care packages.

Refer: [Fire Risk Management](https://fac.dffh.vic.gov.au/policies-and-procedures) <https://fac.dffh.vic.gov.au/policies-and-procedures>.

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
|  | Documentation required* TCP: Referral
* NDIS plan (where applicable)
* Client Fire Risk Assessment (where applicable).
 |  |

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
|  | TCP staff tasks* build the capacity of stakeholders in Child Protection and Community Service organisations (including ACCO’s) in TCP requirements
* progress referral through the division/area package approval process
* progress *Client Fire Risk Assessment* through the central fire services assessment process
 |

# Scoping for a TCP

The departments divisional and area TCP staff seek expressions of interest from organisations for the delivery of TCPs. Equally, organisations can express interest in delivering TCPs at any time. All organisations are supported to understand TCP delivery requirements, and routinely asked to reconfirm their interest and update their areas of interest and contact details.

TCP contact Agency Performance and System Support (APSS) when onboarding prospective organisations to verify viability, relevant experience, and expertise of the organisation.

## Provider selection

TCP staff work with Child Protection, ACAC, contracted case managers and the voice of the child or young person to decide which approach to use in selecting a TCP provider. The provider selection approaches are:

1. direct allocation
2. invited submissions process.

This process is used when there is an organisation that:

* has an existing relationship with the child or young person
* has detailed knowledge of the child or young person’s needs and effective support arrangements
* it is not in the best interests of the child or young person to engage another organisation.

The organisation familiar with the child or young person should be encouraged to propose creative and new approaches for the package.

If the proposed package is for an Aboriginal child or young person, the ACCO with interest and capacity to deliver a package must first be approached for direct allocation. If the local or relevant ACCO has not accepted direct allocation, TCP staff must ensure that the Aboriginal Child Placement Principle is followed, and consultation occurs between Child Protection and ACSASS (see section: [6.2 Aboriginal children and young people](#_Aboriginal_children_and)).

### Invited submissions process

During invited process, multiple organisations that registered interest in TCP delivery are engaged. This process provides wide scope for creative approaches to service delivery. The following steps are taken in this process:

* confirm organisations interest in attending a client presentation meeting
* provide interested organisations with information about the meeting, the child or young person’s de-identified profile information, and proposal requirements
* schedule a client presentation meeting and invite interested organisations (see section: 5.2 [Client presentation meeting](#_Client_presentation_meeting)).

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
|  | TCP staff tasks* maintain a register of organisations interested in TCP delivery
* determine the provider selection process
* direct allocation: consultation with relevant ACCO or identified agency
* Invited submission process: consultation with registered organisations to determine their capacity and interest to deliver TCP. Provide all interested organisations with preliminary de-identified profile information and proposal requirements
* schedule client presentation meeting
* consultation with APSS (if required)
 |

## Client presentation meeting

The client presentation meeting is chaired by TCP staff who facilitate the presentation of the child or young person’s profile, their support needs, and information about package proposal key requirements.

Presentations are led by Child Protection, ACAC or the contracted case manager and includes input from Care Services Operations Support, Placement Support and Planning, the placement provider, and/or other professionals and care team members as required.

The role of the chair includes:

* encourage consideration of creative and innovative approaches to TCP delivery
* advise the proposal should include transition arrangements and associated costs if a funded transition period will be considered
* confirm organisations will be contacted post meeting about their intention to develop a proposal within the agreed timeframe
* encourage organisations to collaborate during the proposal development
* provide contact details for further questions about the client or proposal.

The following documentation is provided at the meeting:

* the child or young person’s completed referral **if** the organisation is considering submitting a proposal
* *Targeted Care Package guidelines* (January 2018)*, Targeted Care Package Program Manual (2022) and Key Worker FAQ*
* full suite of TCP documents to facilitate understanding and adherence to the documents and processes required by TCP providers for developing and submitting a proposal, formal (annual and out-of-schedule) reviews, variations, closures and end of year acquittal guide
* other papers as deemed relevant.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
|  | TCP staff tasks* chair the client presentation meeting as outlined
* confirm which organisations are interested in developing a TCP proposal
* provide the full referral document and all relevant TCP program documents to interested organisations
* manage general queries regarding the proposed TCP, its components, and funding requirements
* may convene a further meeting if additional information is required and/or issues with the proposal are emerging
 |

# Proposal development

A TCP proposal defines the goals and objectives of the package, the duration period of the package and the activities and supports proposed to achieve the desired outcomes for the child or young person.

**Figure 2: Out-of-home care framework**



[See section: Appendix 4. Out-of-home care framework figure description](#_Appendix_4:_Out-of-home)

## Proposal submission

A TCP new proposal is submitted when:

* it is the child or young person’s first proposal
* an active TCP is transitioning to a new organisation
* a child or young person has previously had a TCP that was closed.

A TCP proposal comprises of the following templates:

* TCP: New proposal
* TCP: Funding schedule

To enable children and young people to live a full life and achieve their potential, the supports identified in TCP proposals must adhere to the *Outcomes framework: how to track outcomes (March 2015)* see [Figure 2. Out-of-home care framework.](#_Proposal_development) The framework has a range of indicators, measures and questions to evaluate the effectiveness of services and positive changes.

The following questions can be used to guide organisations when defining TCP goals and outcomes (always in the context of the case plan):

* what are the specific needs of the child or young person and the carer, and how can these be articulated as identifiable goals?
* what does the child or young person and the carer identify as their goals?
* what is currently working well for the child or young person and what can be improved and/or changed to ensure achievements for each relevant outcome area?
* how can a TCP create positive connections within the child’s community?
* how can a package maintain and further encourage achievements in areas that are working well?
* how can a TCP ensure continuity in environments and relationships that are working well?
* what supports are required to ensure goal implementation and achievement?

Organisations can complete the goals and outcomes section of the proposal with the framework and questions guiding them to form the TCP proposal. The proposed goals, activities and support components should sit within the eight outcome areas.

The TCP proposal includes information about:

* the goals and supports proposed to meet the needs of the child or young person
* how each support leads to one or more outcome, and is in line with the child or young person’s case plan
* how the continuation of any existing support services involved with the child or young person will contribute to the proposed goal outcomes
* the key worker role, direct service hours and service level intensity
* the care allowance level
* whether supports are funded in a lump sum or monthly instalments (funding schedule), and any additional budget inputs from other initiatives (e.g., Better Futures)
* whether a transition period is proposed and the transition arrangements (including transition start and end dates), and the associated costs
* duration (start and end dates).

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
|  | Documentation required* TCP: New proposal: developed by the organisation with the care team based on the child and young person’s support needs
* TCP: Funding Schedule.
 |

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
|  | TCP staff tasks* consultation and provision of information to organisations regarding TCP process and key requirements
* if a direct allocation, schedule and chair draft proposal meeting, with the purpose to discuss, clarify and refine proposal submission
* review draft proposals and disseminate with stakeholders ahead of draft proposal meeting where applicable
* consultation and negotiation with key stakeholders to strengthen proposal components
* receive final TCP proposal and ensure quality of accuracy of content.
 |

## Aboriginal children and young people

The delivery of TCPs to Aboriginal children and young people must abide by the Aboriginal Child Placement Principle.

*‘The objectives of the principle are to ensure that, recognition is given to an Aboriginal child’s right to be raised in their own culture and, to the importance and value of family, extended family, kinship networks, culture and community in raising, - ‘growing up’ - Aboriginal children. The principle defines the process of ensuring that, Aboriginal community representatives are consulted and involved in the decision-making regarding the care arrangements for Aboriginal children and young people.’* (Aboriginal Child Placement Principle Guide, p.3, 2002)

If an ACCO has not accepted the direct allocation to deliver a TCP, the TCP proposal must identify the local or relevant ACCOs role within the package. If the child or young person has an existing relationship with a non-Aboriginal organisation, the participation of an ACCO must still be proposed.

Consideration should also be given to the Commission for Children and Young People’s report in the child’s best interests: inquiry into compliance with the intent of the Aboriginal Child Placement Principle in Victoria (October 2016) which establishes the need for improved practice compliance with all five key domains of the Aboriginal Child Placement Principle.

**Table 4: Adapted summary of five domains and actions**

| Domain | Targeted Care Package related actions |
| --- | --- |
| **Identification of Aboriginality** | Has the Aboriginality of the child or young person been correctly determined?This information should be specified at the initial identification of potential eligibility for a package for an Aboriginal child or young person. The package referral form also seeks information about Aboriginality and cultural planning requirements. |
| **Aboriginal Child Specialist Advice Support Service (ACSASS)** | Has regard been given to the advice of ACSASS at every significant decision point?When an Aboriginal child or young person starts or changes a living arrangement, ACSASS must be consulted.  |
| **Aboriginal family-led decision-making (AFLDM)** | Has an AFLDM meeting been convened (or did the family decline an AFLDM meeting)?AFLDM is a culturally based approach to decision-making and planning with Aboriginal families involved with child protection about the safety needs of their children and how these can be met. The AFLDM meeting should occur as per Child Protection practice and prior to referral for a package. The AFLDM meeting is important to improving and supporting kinship options for Aboriginal children and young people.  |
| **Aboriginal child placement principle (ACPP) placement hierarchy** | Is the proposed living arrangement placing the child or young person at the highest possible level of the ACPP placement hierarchy?A key role of the ACSASS worker in relation to TCPs is to participate in decision-making and to assist with identifying members of the child or young person’s kinship or community network who may be suitable to provide a living environment in accordance with the Aboriginal child placement principle. |
| **Maintaining cultural identity** | Is there a completed cultural support plan or case plan that considers opportunities for continuing contact with Aboriginal family, community and culture?TCP proposals must reference the cultural support plan for Aboriginal children and young people. This is important to ensuring the Aboriginal child or young person is connected to their Aboriginal community and culture. Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisations should be first approached for the development of proposals irrespective of their prior involvement with the young person. |

Refer: [Aboriginal children in Out-of-Home Care](http://www.cpmanual.vic.gov.au/advice-and-protocols/advice/aboriginal-children/placing-aboriginal-children-out-home-care) <http://www.cpmanual.vic.gov.au/advice-and-protocols/advice/aboriginal-children/placing-aboriginal-children-out-home-care>.

Refer: [In the child's best interests report](https://ccyp.vic.gov.au/upholding-childrens-rights/systemic-inquiries/in-the-childs-best-interests/) <https://ccyp.vic.gov.au/upholding-childrens-rights/systemic-inquiries/in-the-childs-best-interests/>.

## Duration

The duration of TCPs varies for each child and young person and is subject to review. Duration can be determined by the evaluated stability of the placement arrangement, and/or ability to appropriately transition supports to alternatively funded targets or programs. Packages can continue for up to 12-months post statutory order ceasing if the department has assessed that transitional supports are required whilst alternatively funded supports are implemented,

Most TCPs are expected to be completed within 12 months, although the duration may be expected and planned to run over several years or can be shorter if it is enough to fulfil TCP goals.

The TCP proposal should state the start and end date of the package within the same financial year. The associated funding is approved by financial year (1 July to 30 June inclusive) and cash-flowed through the department’s IFAMS package system.

When a package is developed between 1 April and 30 June, it is reasonable for an agency to propose package funding for up to 15 months (see section: [7.4 TCPs created in the last quarter of the financial year](#_TCPs_created_in)).

The duration of a package can be varied at the annual review or earlier should circumstances change prior to review.

All active packages are subject to annual review in the fourth quarter of each financial year. The annual review process will consider whether a package should close at term or is recommended for extension into the new financial year (see section: [10.3 Formal and annual reviews](#_Formal_and_annual)).

Approved funding is provided to activate the package once the child or young person commences in the living arrangement and/or when services to the child or young person commence under the package.

## Transition planning

Placement planning principles promote a therapeutic approach and trauma free transition of children and young people leaving residential care or changing living arrangements.

The decision to fund a transition period is negotiated between the department and prospective TCP organisation during the proposal phase. When all parties have agreed that funding is required to support transition, TCP staff invite the organisation to develop a transition plan with key professionals and the child or young person and their family. Transition plans can be discussed at care team meetings if the timing is appropriate and relevant services are involved.

Transition plans are to be clearly identified in the new package proposal and funding schedule (see section: [9.2 Transitioning to a new TCP placement/living arrangement](#_Transitioning_to_a)).

# Proposal funding

A TCP proposal includes an itemised budget of what is to be purchased, the timeframe and the costs.

## Assessment principles

The key consideration when assessing proposal budgets for items is whether:

* the item or service is consistent with the child or young person’s case plan and desired outcomes, and
* is needed to transition the child or young person out of residential care or prevent them from entering residential care, and
* whether supports can be attained through alternative and sustainable funding sources, services, or program areas.

Table 5: Applying the proposal budget assessment principles

##### Context information for proposal

| Reference | Criteria |
| --- | --- |
| **Criteria 1** | Is there sufficient information to enable understanding of the child or young person’s situation and support needs that require funded support through a targeted care package? |
| **Criteria 2** | Are the child or young person’s goals and strategies well defined and documented? |

Assessment against the principles

| **Reference** | **Principle** | **Principle not met** |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Principle 1** | Are the proposed supports directly related to the child or young person’s support needs and aimed at achieving their goals? | CSO’s propose alternative supports. |
| **Principle 2** | Can some/all the proposed supports be accessed through a more appropriate funding source (e.g. NDIS, Kinship Supports, Better Futures, Home Stretch, Client Support Brokerage). | CSO’s adjust proposal and funding schedule to include the appropriate funding source as associated to the identified goal/s. |
| **Principle 3** | Do the proposed supports represent the most cost effective and relevant option? | CSO identifies the most cost-effective support. |

## Proposal budget inclusions

Where assessment has been made that alternative funding sources have been exhausted, TCP funding can be used to:

* fund the child or young person’s package transition arrangements such as:
	+ accommodation set-up
	+ transport assistance
	+ overnight respite with a carer
	+ 1:1 support.
* fund a key worker and/or additional support workers (see section: [7.5 Standardised key worker rates](#_Standardised_key_worker))
* purchase supports relevant to the child or young person’s case plan goals such as:
	+ health
	+ life and living skills
	+ education
	+ therapeutic support
	+ family support
	+ transport.
* purchase services from private providers if these services are more effective, cost effective and timely
* contribute to additional costs for carers such as:
	+ renting a larger property
	+ enhancing a property
	+ acquiring a larger vehicle
* build the capacity of the carer/family to look after and support the child or young person, e.g. family or carer education to manage complex behaviours
* contribute to the purchase of an item or service essential to the child or young person and too costly for the carer. Philanthropic foundations and organisations can also be explored for this funding type
* support a child or young person to be part of community life, e.g. participation in education, sport, recreation
* support the child or young person’s cultural identity.

When assessing TCP funding inclusions, application of caregiver reimbursement policy must be considered (see section: [15. Care allowance](#_Carer_allowance)).

After hours/on-call services are not included in key worker rates and may be included in the proposal budget if assessed as necessary. It is expected that organisations will leverage these costs against existing programs where possible.

Larger purchases such as vehicles and home modifications may require a Deed of Agreement. TCP staff should refer to local advice regarding these processes.

### Planning and development

All new TCPs will include a one-off contribution towards the work providers undertake in coordinating and developing a package prior to service commencement, including but not limited to proposal development and preparing for service provision.

The funding provided will be the equivalent of one week of the package’s key worker cost. This non-recurrent payment is applied only to all new TCPs at the beginning of the package. It is not applied to package reviews.

Funding can be used at the sole discretion of the provider. It is not expected that the key worker will be employed during the planning and development phase of the package, that this funding be directed to the key worker, or that case management will have commenced.

The planning and development contribution is to be identified as a separate line item by the organisation on the proposal and funding schedule submitted to the department.

### Head leasing property

Head leasing is where an organisation enters into a rental agreement with a housing provider and then sublets the property to a third party (young person or carer). The intention of the strategy is for the lease agreement to transfer from the organisation to the third party at the end of the lease agreement, providing them with long-term housing which they can maintain independently. Alternatively, head lease arrangements may enable an organisation to use the property as a transitional housing option whilst long-term housing is secured. If agreement is made for transitional head leasing, organisations must manage tenancies efficiently to minimise vacancy periods.

Head lease agreements can be arranged directly by the TCP organisation, or through a TCP partnership arrangement with a community housing service. It is the responsibility of the organisation to monitor the property during tenancy and inform TCP staff of any risks or damages.

When considering head lease arrangements in a TCP, organisations and the department assess whether the young person or carer will be able to financially sustain the tenancy post head lease period. Based on Transitional Housing Management (THM) guidelines, rent should not exceed 55% of the tenant’s income or it is assessed as unsustainable and alternative options should be sought.

When considering head leasing for a young person leaving care, organisations are to explore available resources post TCP that may be of benefit and assist with longer term stability and sustainability. Programs such as Home Stretch, Better Futures, Youth Housing, Transition to Independence Allowance (TILA) and the National Rental Affordability Scheme (NRAS), may provide further rental subsidy if the young person is eligible. Organisations must outline the long-term housing plan when developing proposals and ensure fire risk management processes are followed (see section: [13.3 Fire risk management](#_Fire_risk_management)).

Sharing a head lease property is a financially viable option for young people. In this scenario, all young people residing in the property sign a sublet agreement and contribute to household expenses equally. If one young person enters or exits the tenancy after the head lease agreement commences, the funded organisation may be required to recalibrate the approved TCP funding subsidies to account for changes in total costs and submit a TCP variation to increase or decrease funds as required.

In the event of a head lease agreement ceasing prematurely, agencies will need to discuss resolving any financial obligations with their local TCP staff member. This includes financial implications of property damages. Such examples will be considered on an individual bases, however it is the responsibility of the head leasing agency to ensure that that property Condition Report is completed at the start and end of a tenancy agreement. For this purpose, it is recommended that photos are taken of any pre-existing damage and provided with the Condition Report.

## Proposal budget exclusions

Package funding cannot be used to:

* replace or duplicate supports that are already in place or available through other funding sources, including local, state and commonwealth government programs such as:
	+ National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS)
	+ Multiple and Complex Needs Initiative (MACNI)
	+ Better Futures / Home Stretch
	+ Kinship First Supports
	+ Health and Education Assessment Coordination (HEAC)
* fund additional administrative costs or agency overheads on top of key worker payments
* provide an income for the young person, parent or voluntary home-based carer. In some circumstances a higher care allowance can be allocated for a limited time
* finance items or services that, although consistent with the case plan direction, are not the most cost-effective or critical options (e.g. overseas travel). Return to Country for an Aboriginal child or young person is an exception to this funding exclusion
* replace state funded educational services and eligible supports (e.g. Program for Students with Disabilities)
* cover costs that the carer would reasonably be expected to pay outside the carer role (see section: [15. Care allowance](#_Carer_allowance)).

## TCPs created in the last quarter of the financial year

If a TCP is due to commence in the last quarter of the financial year, the organisation proposes one total funding amount for the duration of the proposal across two financial years.

Subject to approval, the initial TCP proposal and agreed funding will continue in the new financial year unless there are significant changes. Funding to organisations starting TCPs in the last quarter will flow through the Service Agreement Management System (SAM2) as per the usual monthly payment schedule.

## Standardised key worker rates

The Key Worker has a pivotal role in supporting TCP implementation through case management functions that adhere to the child or young person’s case plan and cultural support plan.

Key worker standardised hourly payment rates were established in October 2017 to provide a fair and reasonable service cost, and to ensure consistent application of these rates across TCP funded organisations and divisions. The hourly rates represent fair and reasonable prices for the delivery of high-quality case management service delivery outputs. The levels of worker classification provide flexibility for the delivery of key worker functions and/or case contracting responsibilities.

Funded organisations and departmental staff must ensure that package standardised hourly rates are appropriately reflected in the proposal, funding schedule and proposal assessment and approval documents.

Proposals must provide a clear description of the key worker services in the *New proposal* form under sections: *5. Key worker*

### Expected rates and inclusions

The key worker hourly rates include all face-to-face direct care service costs. Face-to-face direct care service costs are defined as key worker activities that require direct contact with either the child or young person, carer, and professionals. The standardised key worker rate includes the delivery of these services at a prescribed level.

The hourly rate is inclusive of:

* salary and associated salary on-costs
* supporting non-wage costs
* fully costed case worker supervision allowance.

Non-wage standardised items include:

* management costs
* staff vehicle allowance costs
* administrative costs
* agency overheads.

In addition to salary on-costs and supporting non-wage costs, these rates include an allowance for part lease of a motor vehicle and backfill allowance for compliance requirements.

Key worker hourly rates include administrative costs, on cost items or non-wage items. Additional administrative costs, including agency overheads will not be approved.

The key worker hourly rates do not extend to services purchased from other service providers (e.g. funding for a therapeutic specialist service purchased from another agency).

The hourly payment rates do not include key worker afterhours services.

Support workers undertaking services, such as assisting with transportation or day-to-day care, do not fall within the key worker hourly payment rates.

### Payment rates

In general, an appropriate number of key worker hours should be allocated to support clients and be proportionate to the child or young person’s complex needs.

The three key worker levels take into consideration the complex nature of care required to support children and young people transiting from residential care or at risk of entering residential care.

The Key Worker Level 3 rate is applied when the TCP provider is also delivering contracted case management.

Key worker hourly rates are indexed every 1 July to reflect the application of NGO indexation.

Workers are to use the Funding Schedule form to calculate the annual cost of weekly face-to-face direct contact hours. This will calculate the EFT required for the number of direct face-to-face hours needed to support the child or young person. For example, 25 hours of direct face-to-face key worker hours per week equates to a full-time position.

## NDIS and Targeted Care Packages

From 1 July 2019, Victoria reached a full scheme agreement with the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS). Management and funding for disability-specific supports and services have transitioned from State Government (the department) to the National Disability Insurance Agency (NDIA) and all eligible Victorians now have access to the NDIS.

The NDIS Quality and Safeguards Commission (NDIS Commission) provide a nationally consistent system to safeguard the rights of NDIS participants under the NDIS Quality and Safeguarding Framework, taking over Victoria’s previous quality and safeguard arrangements for NDIS participants and services.

Refer: [NDIS providers in Victoria](https://www.vic.gov.au/ndis-providers-victoria) <https://www.vic.gov.au/ndis-providers-victoria>.

The NDIS Commission’s website also has further information:

Refer: [The NDIS Quality and Safeguards Commission](https://www.ndiscommission.gov.au/) <https://www.ndiscommission.gov.au/>.

Many children and young people in receipt of TCP may also be eligible to receive a service plan from the NDIS. No package/plan takes precedence over another and the two exist side-by-side with specific functions.

To avoid duplication of funding, knowledge of what may be funded via the NDIS plan is required before TCP funding can be committed. For example, the NDIS plan may include provisions for assessments or specific behavioural intervention and should not be included in the TCP. Where a child or young person is in receipt of a NDIS plan, TCP should not fund services that would normally be funded by the NDIS, including psychosocial disability support. If there are concerns that a child or young person’s NDIS package is not sufficient, the care team is responsible for responding appropriately. For example, the case manager may seek consultation with the Principal Disability Practice Advisor for support and guidance in submitting access requests or a plan review.

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|  | TCP staff tasks* ensure supports that should be funded via the NDIS are not included in the TCP
 |

# Proposal assessment and endorsement

## Assessment

TCP staff review submitted proposals (TCP: New proposal and Funding Schedule) and assess if the proposed arrangements, items and services:

* are in the child or young person’s best interests and support their case plan goals, and transition to a permanent living arrangement outside residential care
* responds to the child or young person’s goals and views
* are affordable and cost effective (noting a proposed cost may initially be high but will reduce over time as outcomes are achieved). Cost effective services should also lead to immediate or longer-term financial savings for the community
* are not available through alternative means.

Departmental staff have responsibility to maintain and address probity principles at all stages of funding, procurement and contract management. It is important the department assesses submissions consistently and equitably, within the parameters of procurement and funding principles, and the goals and needs of the child or young person. Funded organisations must also adhere to the department’s policy and funding guidelines in the appropriate and accountable use of government funding.

TCP proposal costs must include robust assessments and satisfy the department’s probity and purchasing requirements and meet the Victorian Government Purchasing Board (VGPB) procurement activity directives:

* value for money
* accountability
* probity
* scalability.

The proposal feasibility depends on the organisations capability to deliver the TCP. Agency Performance and System Support (APSS) are critical in holding and sharing local knowledge about an organisations capacity, performance, culture, relationships with other organisations, and adherence to standards, program requirements and accreditation. When onboarding a new organisation, TCP staff must collaborate with APSS to confirm that the organisation submitting the TCP proposal meets the standards and criteria to deliver the package.

Refer: [Policies and procedures (dffh.vic.gov.au)](https://fac.dffh.vic.gov.au/policies-and-procedures) <https://fac.dffh.vic.gov.au/policies-and-procedures>.

## Department requirements

To assess a proposal, TCP staff:

* check all forms have been submitted and signed by the organisation
* undertake the division’s approval and financial endorsement processes
* recommend amendments
* advise the submitting organisation of the assessment outcome:

if successful, provide formal outcome advice

if unsuccessful, provide constructive and detailed feedback to inform future proposal developments

* ensure the signed proposal assessment and approval form, and the proposal and funding schedule, are kept on file as an official record according to the department’s *Records management policy* and associated procedures and standards.

Refer: [Records management requirements](https://fac.dffh.vic.gov.au/policies-and-procedures) <https://fac.dffh.vic.gov.au/policies-and-procedures>.

If there are concerns/uncertainties about any parts of the proposal, the department will:

* refer the proposal back to the submitting organisation for further information and justification
* indicate it is not prepared to fund a support and/or requires evidence for costs (e.g. quotations) in adherence to the department’s purchasing framework
* suggest amendments if the proposal requires more focus on the child or young person’s needs and goals.

It is the responsibility of the submitting organisation to:

* consider and incorporate the department’s suggested amendments
* sign the proposal and re-submit it to the department if significant changes have been negotiated.

## Proposal activation

When a TCP proposal is endorsed, TCP staff:

* confirm the following information to the successful organisation:

the approved TCP components, including transition period, costs and timelines if applicable

TCP start and end dates

formal review process

local monitoring requirements

end of financial year acquittal process

confirmation that approved funding will be transacted against the Targeted Care Packages activity 31209.

* provide Child Protection or authorised ACCO, details about the successful proposal and next steps
* fulfil CRIS and IFAMS recording requirements (see section: [Appendix 2. CRIS/SP troubleshooting](#_Appendix_2:_CRIS/SP)).

**Care allowance paid through TCP**

Packages that include care allowance will need to be recorded on CRIS/SP as a TCP placement. This can only be completed once the TCP Service Provision process is complete.

TCP staff need to provide clear instructions on who is responsible for required actions and confirm when the process is complete by checking CRIS and the fortnightly care allowance report.

See section: [Appendix 3. Overview of CRIS/SP care allowance procedure](#_Appendix_3:_Overview) for instructions to commence, adjust or end care allowance payments.

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|  | Documentation required* TCP: New proposal assessment and approval
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|  | TCP staff tasks* receive and assess the signed proposal and funding schedule from the TCP organisation
* confirm divisional and financial delegate endorsement of proposal
* advise submitting organisation of formal assessment outcome
* save the proposal on CRIS as a case note
* submit Referral for Service on CRIS
* where applicable, follow CRIS/SP care allowance procedure for foster care and kinship placements (see Appendix 3: Overview of CRIS/SP care allowance procedure).
* recording funding schedule on IFAMS
 |

# Delivery

Once a TCP has been approved, the care team work collaboratively to implement and deliver the package.

## Implementation

Upon endorsement of a package, an implementation meeting is scheduled and chaired by a TCP staff member within five working days either side of the package start date. Implementation meetings ensure a collaborative approach is undertaken by the care team in the delivery and setting expectations of the package. The funded organisation will present how they plan to operationally implement each of the endorsed support components.

Implementation arrangements discussed during the meeting are:

* support component implementation strategy and timelines
* roles and responsibilities
* reporting requirements
* case contracting process and timelines (where applicable).

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|  | Documentation required* TCP: Implementation meeting.
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|  | TCP staff tasks* chair implementation meeting
* ensure CRIS reporting requirements are completed.
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## Transitioning to a new TCP placement / living arrangement

Transition planning starts at the proposal development stage and is an ongoing process to support significant case plan changes. For example, transition planning is needed when the child or young person is returning home, and parents are engaged to achieve reunification. Transition planning can run in parallel to TCP supports and not all transition plans will require TCP funding.

The TCP budget can be used to fund a child or young person’s transition into a new placement or living arrangement at the discretion of TCP staff and in consultation with the care team. Transition plans are to be clearly outlined and approved within the proposal submission. Funding will not be provided prior to the identification and approval of the new care arrangement.

Transition arrangements discussed during the TCP implementation meeting are:

* transition of the child or young person from residential care to the alternative TCP arrangement
* transition start and end dates – as early as possible to move the child or young person out of residential care
* roles and responsibilities of each party involved in the child or young person’s transition
* child protection case manager, authorised ACCO or contracted case manager’s routine review of transition progress until transition completion.

TCP staff continue to have a direct role in supporting professionals to implement the transition plan and resolve issues unforeseen in the initial transition plan.

## Carers

Key workers have a critical role in communicating with carers at the onset of a TCP about the potential for package changes and the child or young person’s support level. Via the key worker, Carers will be able to provide input into the review assessing the need for support level changes.

Care allowance may be adjusted in line with any support level change. Ideally, overall TCP expenses will decrease as supports take effect and have a positive impact on the child or young person’s living arrangements and development (see section: [15. Care allowance](#_Carer_allowance)).

## Contracted case management

The transfer of contracted case management to the organisation delivering the TCP is an expectation for all packages. All proposals and contracted case management transfer discussions are to consider the following principles:

* Child Protection or authorised ACCO determines when case management will be contracted to the organisation
* Child Protection and the funded organisation include agreed timelines in the proposal and at the implementation meeting.
* by exception, Child Protection or authorised ACCO may decide that case management will not be contracted in the initial stages of TCP due to exceptional circumstances such as; court activity, or complex risks. This should remain an ongoing conversation throughout the life of the TCP.

Where an organisation is delivering contracted case management (including the intensive case management service; ICMS) to a child or young person before their TCP start date, an agreement is reached on the date this service will cease and case management transferred to the TCP funded organisation. The transfer period should not be more than four weeks after the package start date. ICMS targets cannot be maintained through TCP funding.

If the key worker assumes a contracted case management role post package approval, the TCP budget is adjusted and the case contracting role is recorded in the CRIS/SP client file. TCP staff record the increase of the key worker level as a variation to the package.

If the key worker is not the contracted case manager, they are still required to manage and coordinate the various services provided through the TCP and will assume the role of a case manager but without the contracted case management statutory obligations.

Refer: [Case contracting](http://www.cpmanual.vic.gov.au/policies-and-procedures/phases/protection-order/case-contracting) <http://www.cpmanual.vic.gov.au/policies-and-procedures/phases/protection-order/case-contracting>.

## Post-Child Protection involvement

The [*Targeted Care Packages guidelines* (January 2018)](https://providers.dhhs.vic.gov.au/targeted-care-packages-guidelines-january-2018-word) specifies that a TCP may remain in place until:

* the child or young person no longer requires it, and
* for up to a maximum of 12 months following the Statutory Order ceasing if continuing transition support is needed whilst alternative support arrangements are identified and implemented (subject to review).

If Child Protection involvement ceases while a TCP is active, the following applies:

* a case review assesses the child or young person’s needs post-case closure, and if necessary the TCP supports are adjusted or cease if no longer required
* the TCP key worker rate decreases to a Level 1 or 2 (Level 3 is no longer applicable)
* the organisation continues to be contractually responsible for package coordination, delivery, monitoring and review, and must remain compliant with legislative, service contract and program guidelines – including information management and CRISSP recording
* TCP staff close the TCP referral on CRIS while the service provision remains active in CRISSP
* TCP staff maintain broad oversight of TCP progress and outcomes, and continue to coordinate the formal review process
* incident reports are directed to Agency Performance and System Support
* the key worker confirms the young person’s consent to continue TCP services as a non-statutory client.

## Package transfers

The Child Protection case transfer policy states the procedures to transfer funding with clients moving between divisions, interstate, and New Zealand. Workers should refer to the Child Protection manual for the most updated information.

Refer: [Case transfers policy](https://www.cpmanual.vic.gov.au/policies-and-procedures/case-allocation-and-transfers/case-transfers-policy) <https://www.cpmanual.vic.gov.au/policies-and-procedures/case-allocation-and-transfers/case-transfers-policy>.

The following steps refer to divisional transfers:

1. when a child or young person needs to change division, the division who holds current responsibility for the TCP notifies the new division with the anticipated transfer date in accordance to Child Protection transfer arrangements
2. the current and new division jointly conduct the formal review process and negotiate transition arrangements to ensure TCP continuity
3. the current division case manager communicates arrangements and contact changes to the child or young person, their carers and current services
4. TCP documentation not attached to CRIS is to be forwarded by the current division to the new division for historical context and future reference
5. the current division maintains coordination responsibility until the case is formally accepted by the new division proceed
6. the current and new division negotiate the effective start date of the TCP transfer, noting that the Child Protection transfer must occur before the TCP transfer
7. the current division will close the TCP IFAMS funding schedule as of one day prior to the agreed transfer start date and enable IFAMS client record access for the new division
8. the new division will enter the new IFAMS funding schedule as of the transfer commencement date
9. the current division will close the CRIS Referral for Service, and the new division will submit a new CRIS Referral for Service under their own division Provider Group.
10. where applicable, Child Protection or the placement provider in the current division are to submit a Care allowance – change of details form on CRIS in line with the transfer commencement date
11. the current division ensures CRIS - TCP Workspace case notes are up-to-date, inclusive of the appropriate documents being attached.

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| --- | --- |
|  | Documentation required* Original TCP Referral
* TCP: Review (or closure) meeting template
* TCP: Review proposal
* TCP: Funding schedule
* TCP: Review proposal assessment and approval
* CRIS/SP Care allowance – change of details.
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|  | TCP staff tasks* conduct out-of-schedule review meeting
* negotiate transfer date between current and new division in line with Child Protection transfer date
* ensure CRIS records are up-to-date and critical TCP documents are attached
* current division to provide relevant non-CRIS TCP documentation to new division
* current division enable access to client record on IFAMS for new division
* current division terminates IFAMS funding schedule one day prior to agreed transfer date
* new division enters funding schedule on IFAMS
* CRIS Referral for Service.
 |

# Reviews and monitoring

The TCP review process is critical to monitor progress and achievement against the child or young person’s case plan and desired outcomes. Review participants include:

* TCP provider organisation
* Child Protection or authorised ACCO
* Care Services Operations Support
* other services relevant to the review
* children and young people and carers

The opportunity to transition supports to non-TCP funded services must be considered on an ongoing basis and discussed during all care team meetings, professional meetings, and reviews. Opportunities to reduce the package or to transition to mainstream funded services over time should be explored in line with the best interests of the child or young person, their assessed needs and case plan goals. As TCP’s are time-limited, transition of support services towards sustainable options is essential for the child or young person’s long-term success.

Funded organisations need to consider the transition of support services when developing goals. For example, the TCP may fund regular babysitting as a form of respite until a regular respite carer is recruited.

## Ongoing review

Package review is an ongoing process and is conducted by the care team led by the key worker through the following:

* funded organisation reports to the care team on package progress during regular care team meetings
* the child or young person and their carer/s are consulted as members of the care team or separately where more appropriate
* the care team consider proposed TCP adjustments against the case plan and desired outcomes and submit a variation request to TCP staff (see section: [11. Variations](#_Variations))
* key worker, case manager and/or planner updates TCP staff on issues and/or positive results.

The key worker has a critical role in conveying package living arrangement issues and required variations in reflection of the case plan. TCP staff work with the key worker, Child Protection or ACAC practitioner, case planner and funded organisation to resolve issues as they arise.

## Package monitoring

TCP teams are to establish and maintain periodic monitoring mechanisms for all active packages. These arrangements may vary across divisions, areas, or individual packages but must be conducted on a routine, no less than quarterly basis. Processes may include:

* care team participation
* regular agency interface

In collaboration with TCP organisations, the intent of package monitoring is to enable the early identification and resolution of issues that may impact the successful delivery of an active package. This process also provides TCP organisations with a regular opportunity to discuss package variations, case drift, and program updates.

TCP organisations and key workers should not wait for these processes to discuss concerns.

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|  | TCP staff tasks* maintain ongoing monitoring mechanisms for all active TCP’s
* case note TCP updates on the TCP workspace in CRIS.
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## Formal and annual reviews

TCPs undergo a formal annual review process in the last quarter of the financial year to assess if the TCP:

* continues to meet the child or young person’s case plan needs and goals
* fulfils the permanency objective of an ongoing care arrangement and promotes the child or young person’s safety, development and sense of belonging
* adheres to legislation
* is financially viable
* will continue in the next financial year or move to closure
* requires component adjustments (e.g. increase, decrease or changes to supports) while remaining aligned to the case plan.

TCP staff lead the review and include all key professionals to discuss the current package and assess progress against goals. Recommendation of whether the TCP should be redeveloped for the next financial year or closed at term will be established in the meeting.

If the TCP is to continue, each support component will be evaluated, and recommendations discussed for inclusion into the reviewed package.

The key worker must attain the voice of the child or young person and carers to enable their contribution to the review and proposed support level or service type changes.

TCP reviews for Aboriginal children and young people must include evaluation of the TCP effectiveness in supporting the child or young person’s cultural identity and rights.

If the TCP lead organisation is not an ACCO, the review should consider these three principles:

* the child or young person is connected to their local Aboriginal community and ACCO, how strong that connection is and if it can be strengthened
* the TCP lead organisation works in partnership with an ACCO
* lead TCP delivery should be transferred to an ACCO if it is in the best interest of the child or young person.

All TCP reviews must ensure that an Aboriginal child or young person’s package compliments and references their most recently updated cultural support plan and abides by Aboriginal Child Placement Principle.

Funded organisations will be given a submission due date for the review proposal and funding schedule to be submitted to the department for endorsement process.

The due date must allow time for the department to complete the assessment and approval process prior to the start of the new financial year. The approval process undertaken by the department follows the same process as for new packages (see section: [8. Proposal assessment and endorsement](#_Proposal_assessment_and)).

Upon receiving the review proposal and funding schedule, TCP staff will complete the review assessment and approval document using the same methodology and assessment criteria as new proposals.

TCP staff then seek approval by the listed signatories before endorsement for the reviewed package is formalised and processed.

**Note that item-level expenditure reporting is not required during quarterly and annual package reviews.**

Outside of the annual review process, formal reviews may be conducted by the department as follows:

* the TCP end date does not align with the end of financial year
* out-of-schedule by exception as identified by the department
* rapid response to a presenting issue.

If it has been identified that a TCP will be moving to closure at term, the closure process will replace the annual review process (see section: [12. Closure](#_Closure)). If the review meeting determines that the TCP has been successful and a further package is not needed to support the child or young person’s goals and case plan, the review meeting can continue as a closure meeting.

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|  | Documentation required* TCP: Review (or closure) meeting template
* TCP: Review proposal
* TCP: Funding schedule
* TCP: Review proposal assessment and approval.
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|  | TCP staff tasks* initiate and lead TCP review process from start to end.
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# Variations

Figure 3: Overview of variation request process



TCP variations allow flexibility to address a child or young person’s changing needs and respond to TCP issues.

Variations can occur at any time during the child or young person’s TCP delivery. Variations to supports can be proposed when the child or young person expresses changed goals and different supports are needed to accommodate these changes.

As TCP’s are a collaborative approach, funded organisations need to discuss the variation with the care team and the child, young person, or carer where appropriate. This is to be done prior to seeking variation approval with TCP staff, whilst acknowledging that there is an approval process when holding discussions. Variation requests that impact the case plan or propose a change to living arrangements are to be discussed with the case planner and ACSASS where appropriate.

Variation requests fall under two categories

* minor variations (under $5,000 change to funding schedule or no change to funding schedule)
* major variations significant (more than $5,000 change to funding schedule)

When applying for a variation, the TCP funded organisation should first seek direction from TCP divisional staff to determine whether they need to submit a variation form or complete the request via email.

All variations must include the organisations appropriate level delegates recommendation for the variation request.

## Minor variations

Minor variations are classified as:

* change to administration arrangements without a change to the TCP funding schedule (such as change to a partnership arrangement)
* redirection of funding under $5,000
* increase of package funding up to $5,000
* decrease of package funding

To request a minor variation, funded organisations are to speak to their local TCP staff to discuss whether these requests require a variation request and approval form, or whether the request can be processed via email. This decision will depend on the significance of the request and the level of impact it will impose on the package.

To request a minor variation, funded organisations are to email TCP divisional staff with the following information:

* full name and CRIS identification number of the child or young person
* rationale for variation and how it will benefit the child or young person
* itemised financial details including applicable dates
* child/young persons or carers view of the proposed variation
* recommendation endorsement by the appropriate organisation delegate

The email must be cc’d to the Child Protection or authorised ACCO practitioner and the appropriate organisation delegate (Team Leader or Program Manager equivalent or above).

For minor variation requests, TCP staff will assess the request and:

* request further information or clarification regarding the variation
* decline the request with a rationale
* make recommendation to the appropriate departmental delegate for approval. The approving delegate will depend on the requested amount and local financial delegation arrangements within divisions. Signatories are identified by the TCP staff member.

Minor variation approval advice will be emailed to the organisation by the TCP staff member and saved as a case note on CRIS.

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|  | Documentation required* email correspondence
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|  | TCP staff tasks* ensure [variation](https://fac.dhhs.vic.gov.au/policies-and-procedures) request states agreed TCP changes
* changes are approved and endorsed
* TCP provider and Child Protection are advised of the variation outcome
* variation outcome details saved to CRIS as a case note
* IFAMS is updated to reflect funding schedule changes.
 |

## Major variations

This variation type can be utilised to:

* redirect approved funding between supports
* increase or decrease support level
* increase the duration of the support
* change a unit price
* end a support component/s
* add support component/s.

To undertake a variation to funding for scheduled items, the TCP funded organisation completes a variation request and approval form and attaches an amended funding schedule. This is submitted to TCP staff for approval by the appropriate departmental financial delegate. The approving delegate will depend on the request amount and local financial delegation arrangements within divisions. Signatories are identified by the TCP staff member.

To prevent over-commitments, before making a request for a variation to increase funding, TCP organisations and the department must consider whether funds can be redirected within the approved package against an unspent or partially spent support component. Variations should be requested while a package is active and should not be submitted in retrospect or outside the relevant approved package period.

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| --- | --- |
|  | Documentation required* TCP: Variation request and approval
* TCP: Funding schedule.
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|  | TCP staff tasks* ensure [variation](https://fac.dhhs.vic.gov.au/policies-and-procedures) request and approval form states agreed TCP changes
* changes are approved and endorsed
* TCP provider and Child Protection are advised of the variation outcome
* IFAMS is updated with approved changes and payments
* save the variation request and approval form to the child or young person’s CRIS file.
 |

# Closure

In consultation with the care team, it is the role of TCP staff to determine when a TCP moves to closure.

## Planned closure

The overarching goal of TCPs is to realise a child or young person’s case plan goals and desired outcomes and to permanently house them in alternative arrangements to residential care.

Planned TCP closure reasons are:

* TCP goals met
* family reunification achieved
* TCP in place for a period of up to 12 months following the closure of child protection statutory involvement.

## Disruption to package

TCP delivery may be disrupted for several reasons and result in temporary suspension while the child or young person enters an alternative placement.

When there is scope to redesign a disrupted TCP within an agreed and reasonable timeframe, the TCP remains active, and an out-of-schedule formal review is held. This is then followed by the variation process or unplanned closure. It may be reasonable for specific funding components to be suspended and reactivated during the disrupted period.

TCP disruption reasons may include:

* client complexity factors
* carer capacity
* quality of care (QOC)
* lack of engagement.

## Unplanned closure

Unplanned TCP closure reasons encompass the disruption reasons listed above, and health/medical factors or other reasons. These disrupting factors cannot be resolved in a short period of time and the TCP is terminated after which the child or young person enters an alternative placement.

Unplanned TCP closure reasons may include:

* client complexity factors
* client challenging behaviour
* carer capacity
* quality of care (QOC)
* lack of engagement
* health/medical factors
* other

Funded organisations must advise Child Protection or the authorised ACCO and TCP staff of unplanned TCP closures in writing as soon as possible.

In recognition of the impact that unplanned TCP closures can have on a child or young person and an organisation’s overall funding and key worker payments, when a TCP has an unplanned (premature) closure, the funded organisation and department will agree on the package end date together. Services and funding will be adjusted as guided by the following general rules:

* non-essential staff and recurrent package components will be ceased from the agreed package end date (noting that some payments, such as sporting club memberships, may have been made by agencies up front and that pro rata reductions should not be applied to these items. These are to be identified to TCP staff by the funded organisation when discussing the termination and transition of each funded support (TCP staff may be required to adjust these line-items on IFAMS before terminating funding).
* a grace period of two weeks from the agreed package end date can be considered for the key worker to support the child or young person’s exit transition and to finalise any outstanding administration
* support workers will generally not be extended unless agreed between the agency and department due to extenuating circumstances (e.g., child or young person has trusted relationship with a support worker who may help transition them to their new placement)
* therapeutic supports that the child or young person is engaging in cannot be funded by TCP, but must not be ceased and another funding source must be sought by the care team to continue them
* if unapproved urgent supports were implemented or late invoices are received, the funded organisations are to discuss a final variation submission with TCP staff.

## Exit planning (applicable to all packages)

Throughout the life of the package the TCP provider and broader care team are required to consider options for service transition/exit planning. In the last six-months of service provision, an exit transition plan should be implemented. The TCP exit transition plan facilitates changes in the provision of services as an adjustment to meeting the needs of the client beyond the life of the TCP. This planning requires liaison and negotiation with the relevant stakeholders and should demonstrate a transition to sustainable services and supports in the community.

Exit transition planning is to be outlined during the annual/formal review proposal for planned closures. Details of the plan are to be developed in consultation with the care team and support the case plan. Exit transition plan end dates should not exceed the established package end date. Where possible, designed supports should taper off within the transition period.

For unplanned closures, the funded organisation is to provide TCP staff with a proposed transition plan for supports and TCP end date which is discussed during a closure meeting with the care team and Case Planner. The department will consider all support components of the package and reach agreement with the funded organisation on a package termination date and how they will be transitioned to alternative funding sources.

### Actions to close a package

The department and funded organisations must consider a child or young person’s best interests when TCPs are closed for planned or unplanned reasons. Contractual obligations should also be resolved at this stage.

The TCP closure process includes a final review meeting led by TCP staff. It involves the funded organisation, Child Protection or ACAC practitioner and other professionals as appropriate. In the event of unplanned closure, the meeting may also include the Case Planner, Placement Coordination Unit, and/or Kinship Engagement Team. The meeting function is to confirm:

* goal achievements and program learnings
* voice of the child or young person and carer (where applicable)
* confirmation of support component end dates and how supports will be transitioned to alternative funded sources
* exit transition plan, and post closure contact arrangements
* safeguarding
* recording requirements
* submission of outstanding documentation.

Financial reconciliation does not occur during the closure process. If funds have been released via SAMS2 for dates post the negotiated closure date, a financial adjustment will occur via IFAMS/SAMS2 in the next payment window. Funding adjustments are created by the systems due to overpayment and is not a recoup of funding.

The package will be acquitted once, during the end of financial year acquittal process.

TCP staff should ensure all payments, including TCP commitments in IFAMS and in the Care Allowance database, are managed in line with the actions to close a package.

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| --- | --- |
|  | Documentation required* TCP: Review (and closure) meeting template
* TCP: Variation request and approval form / funding schedule where applicable.
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| --- | --- |
|  | TCP staff tasks* chair review/closure meeting and confirm exit transition plan
* consult with DFFH staffing groups in the event of unplanned closure
* negotiate support component end dates where applicable
* attach closure meeting minutes to CRIS
* action all divisional financial notifications, reporting and record-keeping to finalise package closure. Includes: IFAMS, CRIS/SP, care allowance and central data.
* ensure caregiver reimbursement is transferred from the TCP budget.
 |

# Client safeguards and critical events

The department’s standard quality safeguards and critical event instructions are applicable to all programs including TCPs. The *Child protection manual* is a key resource for TCP delivery and encompasses these standards and contracted case management advice and procedures.

Refer: [Child Protection Manual](https://www.cpmanual.vic.gov.au/) <https://www.cpmanual.vic.gov.au/>.

## Privacy

The protection of vulnerable children and young people is a fundamental responsibility of the department. Staff have responsibility to protect the interests of clients across all Department of Families, Fairness and Housing services, to respect their privacy and share information appropriately when it is in a client's best interests.

There are a range of department policies and resources to guide information sharing practice.

Refer: [DFFH | Privacy statement](https://www.dffh.vic.gov.au/privacy-statement) <https://www.dffh.vic.gov.au/privacy-statement>.

Refer [Child protection manual](http://www.cpmanual.vic.gov.au/our-approach/privacy-0) <http://www.cpmanual.vic.gov.au/our-approach/privacy-0>.

## Client incident management system (CIMS)

The department’s Client Incident Management System (CIMS) started in January 2018 and is used by all department and funded organisation services, except services that report incidences to the Victorian Health Incident Management Systems (VHIMS). Care Services Operations Support, Child Protection, and Agency Performance and System Support report to CIMS.

Where Child Protection services are concurrent with TCP delivery, incident reports are directed to Child Protection for action. Where Child Protection involvement has ceased, incident reports are directed to Agency Performance and System Support for action.

CIMS reporting applies to all TCP organisations and the key worker role. It is imperative that all key workers are familiar with their reporting obligations.

Refer: [Client incident management system - DFFH Service Providers](https://providers.dffh.vic.gov.au/cims) <https://providers.dffh.vic.gov.au/cims>.

## Fire risk management

In accordance with the Fire Risk Management Strategy, the department is responsible for the fire safety of a child or young person in properties owned, funded and/or department operated. Compliance with the *Capital Development Guidelines – Series 7 – Fire Risk Management: Out of Home Care Practice Note\_2019-05* integral to all package development and delivery.

Table 6: Overview of fire safety management requirements

| Placement or accommodation type | Recommendations |
| --- | --- |
| **All placement and accommodation types** | * Compliance with Building Regulatory requirements (e.g. smoke alarms)
* Consultation to occur with Fire Services if property ownership does not observe requirements outlined in Capital Development Guidelines - Series 7 - Fire Risk Management: Out of Home Care Practice Note\_2019-05: Table 1
 |
| **Home based care (foster care and kinship care)** | * No additional fire safety recommendations
 |
| **Home based care - includes paid overnight respite staff** | * Case Manager to complete Client Fire Risk Assessment
* Property to comply with the fire safety strategy
 |
| **Lead Tenant** | * Case Manager to complete Client Fire Risk Assessment
* Refer to: Capital Development Guidelines Series 7, Fire Risk Management Practice Note\_2019-04 Lead Tenant
 |
| **Semi-independent – no paid respite (movable unit)** | * Movable unit must be provided with a smoke alarm that is interconnected to the main house.
 |
| **Independent living****(Young person 16-18years living by themselves)** | * Case Manager to complete Client Fire Risk Assessment
* Property to comply with the fire safety strategy
 |

Where applicable, it is recommended that a Client Fire Risk Assessment is completed during the consultation phase and prior to the TCP referral being completed. This optimises the opportunity for consultation with the Fire Services team and will assist TCP Organisations when seeking and securing property.

TCP organisations must determine whether a property is suitable for the child or young person to be evacuated safely. Consideration is to be given to the fire systems installed and the capacity of the client to evacuate. Where changes occur that may affect the client's ongoing ability to evacuate safely, the suitability of the placement must be reassessed immediately, and appropriate action taken as soon as possible.

The department’s Fire Risk Management Unit can be emailed for support: fireservicesteam@homes.vic.gov.au

Refer: [Fire Risk Management procedures and guidelines](https://providers.dffh.vic.gov.au/fire-risk-management-procedures-and-guidelines) <https://providers.dffh.vic.gov.au/fire-risk-management-procedures-and-guidelines>.

# Financial management

Organisations deliver TCPs in accordance with their Service Agreement.

The *Department of Families, Fairness and Housing and Department of Health, Service Agreement Requirements (1July 2021)* is a contractual document that outlines the departmental responsibilities and the policies and obligations that all funded organisations must comply with under their Service Agreement. This includes financial management responsibilities for Community Service Organisations.

Refer: [Service agreements](https://fac.dffh.vic.gov.au/policy-and-funding-guidelines) <https://fac.dffh.vic.gov.au/service-agreement>.

## TCPs and existing service targets

Community service organisations including ACCOs are formally advised by the department that a TCP represents a stand-alone service type (activity 31209 Targeted Care Packages). In the interests of transparency, financial responsibility and performance accountability, TCPs cannot be used to subsidise or top-up other service type targets (such as foster care, kinship and ICMS targets). TCP funded supports and services are not recorded in the service delivery tracking (SDT) reporting tool. Services and supports that were in place before TCP commencement, continue as separately funded services and are recorded and acquitted independently of TCP processes. These services may include Take Two regional targets and Better Futures.

The TCP start date is when a new living arrangement or TCP services commence. Any placement service target attached to the child or young person starting a TCP can be transferred to another child or young person.

TCP is unable to commence until the placement or case management target has ceased unless a transition period is negotiated. In these circumstances, the target remains whilst TCP funds the transition period.

Funded organisations can propose to temporarily relinquish a placement service target and replace it with a TCP funded placement. For example, a target funded lead tenant organisation can propose to temporarily relinquish one target and use the bed for a TCP funded enhanced lead tenant arrangement. APSS and Area Directors must confirm the relinquished target can be absorbed elsewhere before approval is given for this arrangement.

## Funding schedule activation

Afunding schedule is included with the TCP proposal submitted by organisations to the department. This form is an Excel spreadsheet with-built in formulae to calculate support costs. Care allowance is represented in a distinct section on the spreadsheet. Items are categorised by funding period; recurrent, nonrecurrent (one-off).

To activate an approved TCP funding schedule, TCP staff email the:

* community service organisation
* key worker
* Child Protection Area Manager and child protection practitioner, case planner/team manager, principal practitioner, or ACAC Program Manager, case planner/team manager and practitioner
* other staff involved with TCP procedures (such as Placement Coordination)
* other DFFH staff as per local monitoring arrangements such as APSS, divisional finance and TCP team leader or manager.

These email recipients are sent the following information:

* TCP start date
* TCP details
* total TCP funding (including care allowance) and funding flow timeline
* TCP funding activation and review dates.

TCP staff may choose to advise APSS and their local finance units of funding activation in a separate email. Proposal document and/or other sensitive information should not be attached.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
|  | Documentation required* TCP: Funding schedule.
 |

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
|  | TCP staff tasks* email key stakeholders to activate TCP funding
 |

## Funding tracking

A child or young person can be allocated more than one TCP, but not concurrently. TCP amendments or variations donot result in the termination of one TCP and the start of another.

TCP staff are responsible for recording TCP details on IFAMS (activity 31209). IFAMS interfaces with CRIS, SAMS2 and Oracle and creates payment schedules for the organisation package provider.

IFAMS is used by the department to monitor individual TCP funding and generates financial year acquittal and budget reports. The TCP total cost and its components at a point in time or at completion can be determined in IFAMS, and divisions can use IFAMS to project future budget commitments.

TCP staff record care allowances on IFAMS as a ‘direct payment’ to reflect the total package amount. Care allowance payments are not processed via SAMS2 and should not be recorded under the TCP organisations payment schedule on IFAMS.

Once TCP staff have entered and committed funding plans in IFAMS, APSS release TCP funding to organisations through SAMS2, as fixed-term funding, and advise organisations funding is available. Fixed-term funding is subject to the standard clauses regarding suspension (clause 12), cessation (clause 13) and termination (clause 14).

### Recording variations on IFAMS

During the lifespan of a TCP, funded organisations can request a variation to the package (see section: [11. Variations](#_Variations)). Approved variations that result in a change to the funding schedule must be recorded on IFAMS. Variation types to be included on IFAMS are:

* redirection of approved funding
* new funded support components
* increase or decrease to the cost of an existing funded support
* extension of a funded support end date
* early termination of a funded support.

All approved variations for redirection of one-off unspent funding requires TCP staff to enter a notation in brackets against the line-item description. The notation is to include:

* variation approval date
* brief description of variation.

Example: Removalist (14/06/2021: redirection of $100 for carer training).

This enables the funded organisations finance department to accurately track funding adjustments against line-items. TCP staff may also enter a comment on the line-item record, however this is only viewable on IFAMS and is for TCP staff reference only.

Different variation types will entail different adjustment processes in IFAMS to affect the funding schedule. When a redirection of funding has been approved for a recurrent/non-recurrent line-item, TCP staff are to terminate the initially approved funding line-item on the negotiated cease date and enter the new support component.

When a variation includes an adjusted funding schedule, funded organisations are to provide the updated funding schedule to their finance departments once approved.

Refer: IFAMS User Guide (2022)

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
|  | TCP staff tasks* record and monitor TCP details on IFAMS
 |

## Financial acquittal

TCP funding is acquitted at the end of each financial year to ensure accountability for the use of government funds. Consistent with the *Targeted Care Packages Guidelines* (*January 2018)*, when the acquittal reveals a surplus of funding, the funds are redirected to support other children or young people with a TCP.

Financial acquittal of TCP funding will be conducted only once per year, during the end of financial year acquittal process.

### End-of-financial-year acquittal

The TCP proposal establishes the services and costs for the duration of the TCP in a financial year. The IFAMS acquittal process covers all these costs except care allowance. The care allowance TCP component is processed by the department’s Care Allowance Helpdesk.

The financial year TCP acquittal is conducted on a per package basis and is made up of:

* total amount of funds allocated to the financial year[[1]](#footnote-2)
* less the total expenditure[[2]](#footnote-3)
* equals a balance of funds that are unspent.

For example: **Amount of funds allocated – total expenditure = balance of unspent funds.**

An item-level acquittal of expenditure is not required unless specifically requested by the department. The department will only request an item-level acquittal of expenditure in the following circumstances:

* where information provided in the acquittal is incongruent with feedback received in care team meetings or other meetings with the funded organisation
* where full year expenditure affect has been reported in the acquittal, but the package ceased before the end of the year
* where a community service organisation is reporting a material overspend of greater than 5 per cent for which they wish to be reimbursed that has not been raised with the department prior due to unforeseen circumstances (noting that, in this instance, item-level acquittal would only be required for the overspent item)
* where APSS, child protection, ACAC or TCP staff have raised concerns about a community service organisation’s acquittal or broader financial management processes.

In most cases the department will only request line-item acquittal for the package(s) under consideration. If there are broader concerns about how the acquittal template has been completed, the department has the discretion to request item-by-item acquittal of all packages.

### Acquittal process

To initiate the acquittal process in July of the following financial year, TCP staff advise funded organisations of the requirements for the acquittal process, applicable timelines, and ask funded organisations to submit their financial year expenditure and unspent funds in the *Budget year TCP funding acquittal and reconciliation form*. Organisations must explain and justify variation to the proposed TCP budget and expenditure.

In instances where an overspend is identified during the end of financial year acquittal, it is at the discretion of the department to reimburse the organisation for the additional costs incurred. Where an organisation has a small overspend on a package (less or equal to five per cent of package value), the rationale for the overspend should be noted in the comments section of the acquittal template for departmental consideration. The department will than advise the organisation whether reimbursement for the over expenditure will be approved and processed on a case-by-case basis.

If there is a material overspend (greater than five per cent) that has not been raised with the department previously due to unforeseen circumstances, a rationale and item-level acquittal of expenditure for the overspent item/s should be provided for departmental consideration if the organisation is seeking reimbursement.

Unspent funds are managed via the prior year adjustment process, whereby the SAMS2 payment schedule is automatically adjusted to include the value of unspent funds.

Table 7: Timeline for financial acquittal

| Month | Step | Actioned by |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Jul-Aug** | Receive invoices and process payments for services received during previous financial year of which they were approved. | Funded organisation  |
| **By 30 Jul** | Advise funded organisation of upcoming acquittal requirements/ timeframes. | Department |
| **By 31 Aug** | Provide acquittal template to all funded organisations involved in the provision of TCP’s. | Department |
| **By 30 Sep** | Provide expenditure information to the department and resolve expenditure inconsistencies in negotiation with the department. | Funded organisation |
| **By 31 Oct** | Complete acquittal calculation, adjust organisations funding in SAMS2/IFAMS and advise funded organisation of outcome. | Department |
| **By 31 Oct** | Financial delegate signs the acquittal template for return to the department. | Funded organisation |

Refer: [Service agreement - Funding](https://fac.dffh.vic.gov.au/service-agreement) <https://fac.dffh.vic.gov.au/service-agreement>.

[Targeted Care Packages: guide to end of financial year acquittal for departmental staff](https://fac.dffh.vic.gov.au/policies-and-procedures) <https://fac.dffh.vic.gov.au/policies-and-procedures>.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
|  | Documentation required* [Targeted Care Packages: guide to end of financial year acquittal for departmental staff](https://fac.dhhs.vic.gov.au/policies-and-procedures)
* [Targeted Care Packages guide for end of financial year acquittal for CSOs](https://fac.dhhs.vic.gov.au/policies-and-procedures)
* [Budget year Targeted Care Packages funding acquittal and reconciliation form](https://fac.dhhs.vic.gov.au/policies-and-procedures).
 |

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
|  | TCP staff tasks* when a TCP is approved, provide the funded organisation with the financial year review and acquittal guidelines
* request funded organisations submit the Budget year TCP funding acquittal and reconciliation form
* negotiate reported funding anomalies with the organisation
* fulfil all recording and administration tasks required for acquittal processing.
 |

# Carer allowance

When a child is placed in foster care, kinship care or permanent care, carers are eligible for allowance at the home-based-care level rates 1 to 5 to assist with the day-to-day costs of providing care for children and young people. The level of care allowance is dependent on the child or young person’s age and care needs. The care allowance level approved within a package is determined by the TCP staff member in consultation with the care team and in adherence to the state-wide *Care allowance policy and procedure guidelines (February 2021).* Care allowance is administered by the department’s Care Allowance Management Unit under the *Financial Management Act (1994).*

Workers are to refer to the *Care allowance policy and procedure guidelines (February 2021),* when determining the appropriate care allowance level.

Refer: [Support for carers in Victoria](https://services.dffh.vic.gov.au/support-home-based-carers-victoria) <https://services.dffh.vic.gov.au/support-home-based-carers-victoria>.

Refer: [Care allowance policy and procedure: Foster Care, Kinship Care, Permanent Care and additional needs local adoption](https://fac.dffh.vic.gov.au/policies-and-procedures) <https://fac.dffh.vic.gov.au/policies-and-procedures>.

## TCP care allowance adjustments

In exceptional circumstances, carers may be eligible for a care allowance adjustment. Adjustments are only possible when children are subject to statutory orders during a period of active child protection involvement.

Care allowance may be adjusted when a child or young person needs services to improve their health and wellbeing, and due to compelling circumstances, is unlikely to receive the services without additional carer financial support. Compelling circumstances may be social or financial and will generally be beyond the control of the carer and the care team.

A care allowance adjustment can be included in the TCP proposal for assessment and approval at the commencement of a package. They are subject to approval by the Executive Director responsible for the TCP budget when endorsing a package at the recommendation of TCP staff. When developing proposals, TCP staff will consult with the care team to determine the appropriate level of care allowance in accordance with the *Care allowance policy and procedure guidelines.* In instances of preventative TCP’s whereby a child or young person is already living with their carer, it is important that the organisation, care team and carer understand that the care allowance level will be reviewed and is subject to change in conjunction with the increase of supports and funding offered through TCP.

Care allowance adjustment can be required after TCP approval and is requested via the variation process to increase funding.

As per all TCP funded supports, care allowance levels are subject to review on an annual basis at minimum. This is consistent with policy and practice for all foster care and kinship care placements.

Kinship and foster care respite arrangements should be included in the TCP proposal as a support component. Changes to respite arrangements can be advised via email, or during review.

Respite placements are paid at the same care allowance level as the primary placement. It is the responsibility of Child Protection or ACAC Practitioners to adhere to the approval process for 28day respite arrangements.

Upon closure of a TCP, continuing carer allowance payments will be reviewed by the appropriate program area accepting responsibility for reimbursement. It is the responsibility of the key worker and/or case manager to discuss this with the carer and be transparent about the process of reviewing care allowance levels both within and post TCP.

Refer: [CRIS forms](http://www.cpmanual.vic.gov.au/advice-and-protocols/forms/cris-forms) <http://www.cpmanual.vic.gov.au/advice-and-protocols/forms/cris-forms>.

Refer: [Care allowance policy and procedure: Foster Care, Kinship Care, Permanent Care and additional needs local adoption](https://fac.dffh.vic.gov.au/policies-and-procedures) <https://fac.dffh.vic.gov.au/policies-and-procedures>.

Refer: [Support for carers in Victoria](https://services.dffh.vic.gov.au/support-home-based-carers-victoria) <https://services.dffh.vic.gov.au/support-home-based-carers-victoria>.

## Divisional reimbursement of care allowance

The Care Allowance Management unit centrally administer TCP care allowance payments. Divisions then transfer budget to central office as reimbursement.

The process for divisional reimbursement is:

* the Care Allowance Helpdesk emails divisional package group email contacts (includes the divisional finance manager) every fortnight with care allowance TCP payment details in the fortnight following each payment
* divisions check the accuracy and completeness of these payments and promptly respond to the Care Allowance Helpdesk if changes are required
* divisional finance managers transfer the care payment amount to central office quarterly
* the budget transfers raised by divisions must include reference to the fortnights in question (e.g. dd-mm-yyyy to dd-mm-yyyy).

Budget transfers for June will need to be estimated based on the preceding fortnight and remaining number of days in the financial year. Similarly, budget transfers for July should be paid pro-rata based on the number of applicable days for the new financial year.

Where care allowance is transferred to the Care Allowance Management Unit and the care arrangement ceases, unused funding from the care end date is returned to the division for TCP use.

# Governance and oversight

TCPs follow an individualised funding service model promoted by the department and is a flexible innovative means to achieving positive and permanent living arrangements for children and young people in out-of-home care. The effectiveness and viability of the TCP program is assessed by governance groups.

## Governance

In partnership, Community Services Operations Division (CSOD) and Children, Families, Communities and Disability (CFCD) hold oversight of TCP program delivery across the state. Whilst CFCD provide oversight of TCP policy underpinning operational practice, the CSOD Executive maintains oversight of TCP operations including the monitoring of budget and expenditure on a regular basis.

TCP divisions, CSOD: Care Services Design and Improvement, and CFCD: Care Services Policy, attend a bi-monthly TCP state-wide meeting to:

* advise on policy, program, and practice issues from an operational perspective
* identify and examine issues, propose solutions, and implement actions to support consistency and best practice
* highlight opportunities to further develop processes and practices
* identify opportunities to strengthen collaboration and partnership between the department and the community service sector.

Divisional Performance and Finance Committees (or equivalent) will monitor TCP budget expenditure and will determine risk mitigation strategies if the TCP budget is at risk of being fully committed.

## Performance monitoring

For children and young people to have full lives and realise their potential, TCP proposals should apply the *Outcomes framework: how to track outcomes* (March 2015). Funded organisations should also deliver TCP services within the framework.

The organisation needs to work creatively and flexibly to build an innovative service culture and deliver effective services within the limited TCP budget.

Organisations selected to deliver a TCP are required to demonstrate how they will use existing:

* resources and build off their other services to achieve client outcomes and case plan objectives
* partnerships and relationships with other services and local community connections, including Aboriginal communities.

The funded organisation must comply with program requirements and openly communicate risks and issues for the child or young person and/or their living arrangement.

Where the child or young person’s case management is contracted to an organisation, TCP staff and Agency Performance and System Support (APSS) ensure mechanisms are in place to monitor the TCP. TCP staff monitor outcomes, and work with APSS to share information on broader service performance issues, strengths, deficits and themes as they may impact on current and/or future TCP service delivery.

Child Protection and authorised ACCO’s continue their role in case planning and supervising the care and support provided by funded organisations to children and young people in out-of-home care.

APSS Advisors should also have TCP discussions as a standing agenda item at operations meetings with funded organisations.

## Data collection and reporting

Data collection

Client and service data collection and reporting is a legislative and service contract obligation. The department and funded organisations record TCP client and service information on CRIS and CRISSP. This record is a key source of information for the successful implementation and monitoring of TCPs.

IFAMS information is recorded by the department’s divisional staff and is vital to monitor and report budget allocations and acquittals.

Funded organisations **do not** record TCPs on the service delivery tracking system.

Divisions also prepare regular residential care or out-of-home care reports for divisional executive groups. These reports help identify children and young people that are eligible for a package.

State-wide divisional data

The department’s Operational Performance and Quality (OPQ) branch requires monthly TCP data to monitor divisional and state-wide service delivery, and report TCP goals and outcomes back to divisions and central executive members.

A few of the most pertinent topics reported from this data collection are:

* numbers and limited demographic details of children and young people exiting residential care or prevented from entering residential care
* numbers of allocated and closed TCPs
* duration of TCPs
* cost associated with TCPs.

OPQ send monthly emails to divisions to remind them of the monthly data requirements and the due dates for submission.

## Records management

The department’s *Records management policy* is to ensure that comprehensive and accurate records of all activities and decisions of departmental staff are created, managed and kept in accordance with relevant legislation. This requires recordkeeping practices and systems that ensure the creation, maintenance and protection of accurate and reliable records. Records underpin the department’s transparency and accountability by providing proof of business practices, communications, decisions and actions. Records are an important information asset of the department and must be managed from the point of creation to their eventual destruction or transfer to the State Archives. The department also owns all records created by organisations in the delivery of services funded by the department.

# Quality and Safeguards

The department’s standard quality safeguards and critical event instructions apply to the delivery of TCP services (see section: [13. Client safeguards and critical events](#_Client_safeguards_and)).

## Child Safe Standards

Victorian organisations that provide services or facilities for children, including the department, are required by law to implement and comply with the *child safe standards*. The standards are designed to:

* drive changes in organisational culture to embed child safety in the everyday thinking and practice of leaders, staff and volunteers
* provide a minimum *standard* of child safety across all organisations
* highlight that we all have a role to keep children safe from abuse, encourage reporting of any harm or abuse that does occur and improve organisational responses to allegations.

New Victorian Child Safe Standards will commence on the 1 July 2022. Key changes in the new requirements include:

* greater focus on safety for Aboriginal children and young people
* involvement of families and communities in organisations’ efforts to keep children and young people safe
* to manage the risk of child abuse in online environments
* governance, systems and processes to keep children and young people safe.

Refer: [Child Safe Standards - DFFH Service Providers](https://providers.dffh.vic.gov.au/child-safe-standards) <https://providers.dffh.vic.gov.au/child-safe-standards>.

Refer: [Commission for Children and Young People](https://ccyp.vic.gov.au/) <https://ccyp.vic.gov.au/>.

## Human Rights Charter

The *Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act 2006* (the Charter) is a Victorian law that sets out the basic rights, freedoms and responsibilities of all people in Victoria. The Charter requires public authorities, such as Victorian state and local government departments and agencies, and people delivering services on behalf of the government, to act consistently with the human rights in the Charter.

Twenty fundamental human rights are protected in the Charter because the Victorian Parliament recognises that we all have basic rights, including the right to be treated equally, to be safe from violence and abuse, to be part of a family and to have our privacy respected. In certain circumstances, some rights may be limited but this must be necessary and reasonable, with clear reasons for the decision.

The delivery of TCP services must comply with the Charter.

Refer: [Victorias Human Rights Charter](https://www.humanrights.vic.gov.au/legal-and-policy/victorias-human-rights-laws/the-charter/) <https://www.humanrights.vic.gov.au/legal-and-policy/victorias-human-rights-laws/the-charter/>.

## Privacy and confidentiality

The department and funded organisations have access to personal and health information about clients. The department and funded organisations are obliged to protect the privacy of this personal and health information.

However, sharing information about clients is a legitimate part of providing services and keeping people safe. In sharing information, staff have a responsibility to protect the interests of clients, to respect their privacy and share information appropriately when it is in a client’s best interest. Information may only be shared in accordance with the law.

## Client feedback and complaints

The department’s *Feedback including* c*ompliments and complaints management policy* and associated procedureprovide the overarching framework for how the department manages compliments, complaints and the role and responsibilities in relation to these matters.

Where a client raises a complaint, they should be supported to seek to resolve the matter directly in the first instance (whether that is to a community organisation or the department).

TCP clients typically receive services through a funded community service organisation. The community service organisation will have a complaint and feedback process in relation to the services it delivers. The organisation is responsible for ensuring TCP clients are familiar with processes for making a complaint.

Where the matter is unable to be resolved at this level, the complaint should be referred to the department.

Refer: [DFFH - Making a complaint](https://www.dffh.vic.gov.au/making-complaint) <https://www.dffh.vic.gov.au/making-complaint>.

## Accessing records

A client can ask for access to their personal, health and sensitive information held by the department by contacting:

* their nominated case manager/TCP worker
* the department area that has the information
* the Freedom of Information Unit via 1300 650 172 or 03 9096 8449.

Clients receiving services from Aboriginal community-controlled and community service organisations should approach their worker or staff in the organisation to understand the policy and process for accessing their records held by that organisation.

## Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultural safety framework

The department believes that everyone has a responsibility for the cultural safety of Aboriginal people in their organisation and how they work with Aboriginal staff, health consumers and clients.

The Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultural safety framework has been developed to help mainstream Victorian health, human and community services and the department to create culturally safe environments, services and workplaces. Cultural safety is about creating an environment that is safe for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

The framework provides a continuous quality improvement model to strengthen the cultural safety of individuals and organisations. It aims to help the department and mainstream health, human and community services to strengthen their cultural safety by participating in a process of continuous learning and practice improvement.

The development of the framework is a key commitment in the department's Aboriginal employment strategy 2016–2021 and in Korin Korin Balit-Djak: Aboriginal health, wellbeing and safety strategic plan 2017– 2027. The framework will support Korin Korin Balit-Djak to achieve the Victorian Government's vision of 'self-determining, healthy and safe Aboriginal communities'.

Refer: [Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultural safety framework](https://www.dffh.vic.gov.au/publications/aboriginal-and-torres-strait-islander-cultural-safety-framework) <https://www.dffh.vic.gov.au/publications/aboriginal-and-torres-strait-islander-cultural-safety-framework>.

## Wungurilwil Gapgapduir Aboriginal children and families agreement

Wungurilwil Gapgapduir, which means ‘strong families’ in Latji Latji, is a tripartite agreement between the Aboriginal community, Victorian Government and community service organisations. It outlines a strategic direction to reduce the number of Aboriginal children in out-of-home care by building their connection to culture, Country and community. It serves as a landmark partnership between the Aboriginal community, Government and community service organisations to commit to better outcomes for Aboriginal children and young people. The Strategic Action Plan details the steps which the sector needs to take in addressing the over-representation of Aboriginal children and young people in the child protection and out-of-home care systems.

Wungurilwil Gapgapduir has five central objectives:

encourage Aboriginal children and families to be strong in culture and proud of their unique identity

resource and support Aboriginal organisations to care for Aboriginal children, families and communities

commit to culturally competent and culturally safe services for staff, children and families

capture, build and share Aboriginal knowledge, learning and evidence to inform practice

prioritise Aboriginal workforce capability.

Wungurilwil Gapgapduir is guided by the Government’s vision to increase Aboriginal self-determination for Aboriginal people and to ensure that all Aboriginal children and young people are safe, resilient and can thrive in culturally rich and strong Aboriginal families and communities. It follows the Department’s release of Korin Korin Balit-Djak in 2017, which serves as a 10-year plan to revolutionise Victoria’s health and human services’ work with Aboriginal communities.

Refer: [Wungurilwil Gapgapduir Aboriginal Children and Families Agreement](https://www.dffh.vic.gov.au/publications/wungurilwil-gapgapduir-aboriginal-children-and-families-agreement) <https://www.dffh.vic.gov.au/publications/wungurilwil-gapgapduir-aboriginal-children-and-families-agreement>.

Refer: [Korin Korin Balit-Djak](https://www.dffh.vic.gov.au/publications/korin-korin-balit-djak) < https://www.dffh.vic.gov.au/publications/korin-korin-balit-djak>.

## Aboriginal Children in Aboriginal Care (ACAC)

As part of the Wungurilwil Gapgapduir: Aboriginal Children and Families Agreement, Aboriginal Children in Aboriginal Care is a program for Aboriginal children and young people subject to a Children’s Court protection order.

Section 18 of the *Children, Youth and Families Act 2005* enables the Secretary of the Department of Families, Fairness and Housing (DFFH) to authorise the principal officer of an approved Aboriginal Agency the responsibility for an Aboriginal child or young person’s case management and case plan.

ACAC is in response to the government’s commitment to Aboriginal self-determination and self-management and to address the over-representation of Aboriginal children and young people within the child protection and care system. It recognises the right of Aboriginal self-determination and strengthens Aboriginal children’s connection to culture, community and Country which is fundamental to supporting their safety and identity.

Aboriginal Children in Aboriginal Care aims to:

* improve the support and decision-making for Aboriginal children who have been placed on Children’s Court protection orders
* maintain Aboriginal children’s cultural identity and promote connection to family, community and culture
* support Aboriginal children to return home to parents or extended families where it is safe to do so, or support the identification of culturally safe alternative care
* maintain connection to Country for Aboriginal children.

Within areas/divisions whereby ACAC authorisation has been implemented, children and young people under the program remain eligible for TCP as per criteria

Refer: [Aboriginal Children in Aboriginal Care (ACAC) program](https://www.dhhs.vic.gov.au/publications/aboriginal-children-aboriginal-care-program) <https://www.dhhs.vic.gov.au/publications/aboriginal-children-aboriginal-care-program>.

## Community services quality governance framework

Effective quality governance is fundamental to consistently delivering safe, effective, connected and person-centred community services. Developed by the Community Services Quality and Safety Office, the *community services quality governance framework* sets the objective of safe, effective, connected and person-centred community services for everybody, every time.

High-quality services and outcomes for every Victorian require everyone at every level in community services to play a role. Everyone from support staff to practice leaders, CEOs and departmental staff should focus on:

* partnering with clients, families and communities
* regular reviews, evaluation and identifying areas for improvement
* ownership and accountability for the quality of services provided.

The framework has been developed to align with and complement existing quality and safety accreditation or frameworks that organisations currently have in place. The S*ervice provision framework: Complex needs* aligns closely with the principles outlined in the *Community services quality governance framework*.

Refer: [Community services quality governance framework](https://www.dffh.vic.gov.au/publications/community-services-quality-governance-framework) <https://www.dffh.vic.gov.au/publications/community-services-quality-governance-framework>

## Client voice framework for community services

The *Client voice framework for community services* responds to one of the core best practice domains outlined in the *Community services quality governance framework -* partnering with clients, families and communities. The framework also aligns with *Safer Care Victoria’s Partnering in Healthcare Framework* released in March 2019.

Client voice refers to all expression of the views, needs, experiences or outcomes of people with lived experience of community services. This includes children, young people, families and carers.

The framework promotes the status, presence and influence of the client voice in all aspects of community services delivery and design. Client voice is relevant at all stages of a person’s involvement with the system. It is also relevant at all levels, from direct client care, to service planning and design. Individuals at every level of an organisation have a role to play in seeking, hearing and responding to the client voice. In the context of TCP’s this includes all members of the child or young person’s care team, departmental staff, policy makers and members of governing bodies.

Refer: [Client voice framework for community services](https://www.dffh.vic.gov.au/publications/client-voice-framework-community-services) <https://www.dffh.vic.gov.au/publications/client-voice-framework-community-services>.

## Multi Agency Risk Assessment and Management Framework (MARAM) and Information Sharing Schemes

In 2018, the Victorian Government introduced family violence and information sharing reforms to promote the wellbeing of children, to keep women, children, and families safe from family violence, and to hold perpetrators accountable for their actions and behaviours. Under the new laws, professionals now have increased ability and responsibility to collaborate with each other and better support the children and families they are working with. Child Protection and registered Care Service Providers are both prescribed to MARAM framework and information sharing schemes. Although TCP staff are not yet prescribed, it is anticipated that they will be prescribed under the reforms as part of Phase Three.

Refer: [Information sharing schemes and the maram framework](https://www.vic.gov.au/information-sharing-schemes-and-the-maram-framework) <<https://www.vic.gov.au/information-sharing-schemes-and-the-maram-framework>>.

Multi Agency Risk Assessment Management (MARAM)

MARAM sets out the responsibilities of different workforces in identifying, assessing and managing family violence risk across the family violence and broader service system. It supports prescribed services to effectively identify, assess and manage family violence risk. It creates a shared responsibility and a collaborative approach between prescribed services and sectors. Through the assessment framework and related information sharing schemes, it details the shared responsibility and allows increased options to keep victim survivors safe and a coordinated approach in keeping perpetrators in view and accountable. This is done through:

* Information sharing that increases and enables early interventions to prevent trauma and harm for families and children.
* Identify risk to families and children through use of evidenced based screening tools
* Improved decision making through evidenced based risk assessments.

The Family Violence Information Sharing Scheme (FVISS)

The FVISS enables information to be shared between prescribed services to assess and manage family violence risk. Under the guidance of the MARAM framework, the scheme enables the service system to manage victim survivor safety by permitting the sharing of perpetrator (or alleged) information without consent. Consent from an adult victim survivor is required, only when it is appropriate, safe and reasonable to do so. Consent is not required from anyone to share information if a child is involved.

The Child Information Sharing Scheme (CISS)

The CISS enables information to be shared between prescribed services in the interest of promoting the wellbeing or safety of children. The scheme also permits sharing of information with a child, a person with parental responsibility for the child or a person with whom the child lives when scheme thresholds are met.  CISS prioritises the wellbeing and safety over privacy by allowing professionals to collaborate and share information without consent, where they can prevent potential future harm or help the child thrive.

These reforms aim to streamline information sharing arrangements by promoting a shared responsibility for child wellbeing and safety and family violence enabling increased collaboration and better risk assessment and management across the service system.

# Departmental contacts

Table 8: Divisional email addresses

| Division | Contact email |
| --- | --- |
| **South Division** | targetedcarepackagessouth@dffh.vic.gov.au |
| **East Division** | targetedcarepackageseast@dffh.vic.gov.au |
| **West Division** | targetedcarepackageswest@dffh.vic.gov.au  |
| **North Division** | targetedcarepackagesnorth@dffh.vic.gov.au  |

Appendix 1: Acronyms

Table 9: Acronym definitions

| Term | Definition |
| --- | --- |
| **ACAC** | Aboriginal Children in Aboriginal Care |
| **ACCO** | Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisation |
| **ACSASS**  | Aboriginal Child Specialist Advice and Support Service. Includes Lakidjeka |
| **APSS** | Agency Performance and System Support |
| **CISS** | Child Information Sharing Scheme |
| **CRIS** | Client Records Information System |
| **CRISSP** | Client Records Information System for Service Providers |
| **CSO** | Community Service Organisation |
| **DFFH** | Department of Families, Fairness and Housing |
| **FAC** | Funded Agency Channel  |
| **FVISS** | Family Violence Information Sharing Scheme  |
| **ICMS** | Intensive Case Management Service |
| **LAC** | Looking After Children |
| **MARAM** | Multi Agency Risk Assessment Management  |
| **NRAS** | National Rental Affordability Scheme |
| **NDIA** | National Disability Insurance Agency |
| **NDIS** | National Disability Insurance Scheme |
| **PCU** | Placement Coordination Unit |
| **IFAMS** | Individualised Funding Allocation Management System |
| **SAMS2** | Service Agreement Management System |
| **THM** | Transitional Housing Management |

Appendix 2: CRIS/SP troubleshooting

Referral for Service

When the package has been approved and commences, the completion of referral for service in CRIS must adhere to the [Referral for Targeted Care Packages: CRIS for Child Protection guide](https://fac.dffh.vic.gov.au/policies-and-procedures) <https://fac.dffh.vic.gov.au/policies-and-procedures>.

The key worker then ensures a referral for service is accepted and created in CRISSP in accordance with the [Contracted case manager and TCP Key Worker: CRIS and CRISSP user guide](https://fac.dffh.vic.gov.au/my-agency-non-dffh-and-dh-staff) < https://fac.dffh.vic.gov.au/my-agency-non-dffh-and-dh-staff>.

Adding a new service provider group to CRIS/SP

To add a service provider group under TCP in CRIS/SP, TCP staff are to conduct the following steps:

* determine the service outlet location of the key worker
* check that the service provider does not currently exist in the drop-down list under another division.
* if the organisation is a new provider without a standing agreement with the department, APSS will need to complete a form to register them on CRIS/SP which is provided to the internal IT department. This step is not applicable to organisations who are already using CRIS/SP in other program service areas
* organisational users are required to self-register to use CRIS/SP. This step will enable workers to access the service provision group once it’s created
* TCP staff are to submit a request through OurService for a new provider group be added to the system. Include the following information:

Provider Group Name:

Division ID:

Location (agency outlet address):

Service Type: Targeted Care Packages

Members (organisation users names and titles).

# Appendix 3: Overview of CRIS/SP care allowance procedure

Please note: the following instructions maybe be subject to change from September 2022 in response to system upgrades.

Table 10: CRIS/SP process tips

| Activity | CRIS/SP process |
| --- | --- |
| 1. **Commencing a TCP**

**(Applicable to all TCP’s)** | * TCP Coordinator submits TCP referral for service in CRIS.
* TCP organisation accepts the referral and creates the TCP service provision record in CRIS/SP.
* TCP Coordinator can close the referral in CRIS once the above actions are completed.

**Important: this is to be done for all TCP’s regardless of placement/accommodation type. For kinship and foster care placements, this process must be conducted before the placement is created in-order to activate the TCP care allowance checkbox.** |
| 1. **Commencing a new TCP Foster Care placement and caregiver payment**
 | * TCP/PCU Coordinator submits referral for placement in CRIS.
* CSO placement provider accepts the placement referral and creates the placement.
* CSO generates *Form B – commence care allowance*, ensuring the placement is identified as a TCP placement at the agreed care allowance level.

PCU endorse the commencement of payments via the CRIS – Care Allowance Payment workspace. |
| 1. **Commencing a new TCP kinship placement/caregiver payment**
 | * Child Protection creates the kinship placement in CRIS through the relationships page.
* Child Protection generate *Form B – commence care allowance form*, ensuring that the placement is identified as a TCP placement (kinship care allowance payments default to level 1).

If a higher care allowance level has been approved by TCP, Child Protection generate *Form E – request for higher care allowance* in CRIS. Practitioners can complete the required fields with simple statements such as: *“level X payments negotiated and approved by DFFH targeted care package team”.* |
| 1. **Converting an existing FC placement to TCP**
 | * CSO Placement provider ends the current placement on CRISSP under “component for placement” and enters a new placement component start date.
* CSO generates *Form B – commence care allowance*, ensuring the placement is identified as a TCP placement at the agreed care allowance level.
* PCU endorse the commencement of payments via the CRIS – Care Allowance Payment workspace.

**Important: this action can only be done once the TCP agency has accepted and created the Service Provision record.** |
| 1. **Converting an existing kinship placement to TCP**
 | * Child Protection complete *Form C – change of details form* and identify the placement as TCP.

If a higher care allowance level has been approved by TCP, Child Protection generate *Form E – request for higher care allowance* in CRIS. Practitioners can complete the required fields with simple statements such as: *“level X payments negotiated and approved by DFFH targeted care package team”.* |
| 1. **Increase/decrease of care allowance for established TCP foster care placement**
 | * CSO placement provider generate *Form C – change of details form* and identify the new care allowance level.

PCU endorse the increase of payments via the CRIS – Care Allowance Payment workspace. |
| 1. **Increase/decrease of care allowance for established TCP kinship placement**
 | * If a higher care allowance level has been approved by TCP, Child Protection generate *Form E – request for higher care allowance* in CRIS. Practitioners can complete the required fields with simple statements such as: *“level X payments negotiated and approved by DFFH targeted care package team”.*

Child Protection can decrease a care allowance level by generating *Form C – change to details form*. |
| 1. **TCP transfers between divisions**
 | Child Protection (kinship) or CSO placement provider (foster care) submit *Form C – change of details form* in CRIS/SP to notify the Care Allowance Help Desk (CAHD) of the change. |
| 1. **TCP ends, and placement reverts to a target funded Foster Care placement (child on an order)**
 | * CSO Placement provider ends the current placement on CRISSP under “component for placement” and enters a new placement component start date.
* CSO Placement provider generates a new *Form B – Commence care allowance,* ensuring the TCP identification box is unticked and any changes to the care allowance rate are included.

PCU endorse the commencement of payments via the CRIS – Care Allowance Payment workspace. |
| 1. **TCP ends, and placement reverts to kinship (child on an order)**
 | Child Protection generate *Form C – change of details form* to notify of TCP ending.  |
| 1. **Child exits kinship or foster care placement (child remains on an order)**
 | * Child Protection (kinship) or CSO placement provider (foster care) end the placement in CRIS/SP.

**Important: This action must be done in CRIS/SP as close to the end date as possible to prevent overpayment.** |
| 1. **Order ceases, TCP continues in either foster care or kinship placement**
 | * The Care Allowance Management Unit extend the TCP care payment end date to the young person’s 19th birthday unless the Care Allowance Database specifies an earlier date.

When a TCP closes, Child Protection and/or funded organisation case managers complete the care allowance cease form in CRIS/SP. |
| 1. **Ending a foster care placement (no order)**
 | * CSO placement provider end the placement in CRIS/SP

**Important: This action must be done in CRIS/SP as close to the end date as possible to prevent overpayment.** |
| 1. **Ending a kinship placement (no order)**
 | * TCP key worker notifies the Care Allowance helpdesk of the kinship placement end date.

**Important: This action must be done in CRIS/SP as close to the end date as possible to prevent overpayment.** |
| 1. **Ending TCP and 18+ payments commence**
 | * TCP key worker to assist/ensure that the carer has returned the completed *Senior Secondary Verification form* to the CAHD (preferably prior to TCP ending the placement).

Follow procedure to end a placement (refer: 13 or 14). |
| 1. **Ending TCP and Home Stretch commences**
 | * TCP Coordinator, key worker and Better Futures provider confirm the Home Stretch commencement date.
* The TCP key worker (kinship) or CSO placement provider (foster care) close the placement in CRIS/SP (refer: 12, 13 or 14).

Better Futures create placement/care allowance in CRISSP. |
| 1. **TCP ends**

**(Applicable to all TCP’s** | * TCP organisation ends the TCP Service Provision record in CRIS/SP.
 |

# Appendix 4: Out-of-home care framework figure description

| Strategic objective |
| --- |
| Children and young people in out-of-home care living a full life and achieving their potential. |

| Domains | Description |
| --- | --- |
| **Personal** | Children and young people in out-of-home care are healthy and well. |
| **Social / Community** | Children and young people in out-of-home care are safe and connected to others in positive and culturally supportive communities. |
| **Economic** | Children and young people in out-of-home care have the skills and support to participate in the economy and their community to their fullest ability. |

| Outcome areas | Description |
| --- | --- |
| **Housing** | Children and young people have suitable and stable placements.* Suitable placements.
* Stable placements.
 |
| **Meaningful use of time** | Children and young people are meaningfully engaged.* Work status.
* Engagement in meaningful activity.
 |
| **Learning and development** | Children and young people are learning and developing.* Early childhood development.
* School achievement
* Self-care skills.
 |
| **Cultural & social wellbeing** | Children and young people are culturally and socially connected.* Family and relationships.
* Sense of place and belonging.
 |
| **Aboriginal identity and rights** | Children and young people are proud of their Aboriginal identity and exercise their rights as Aboriginal people.* Aboriginal identity.
* Exercises rights.
 |
| **Health** | Children and young people are physically and mentally well. * Physical health.
* Mental health.
* Free from injury.
 |
| **Safety** | Children and young people are safe. * Safe from child abuse, neglect and family violence.
 |
| **Behaviours** | Children and young people practise positive behaviours.* Reduced offending.
 |

[Back to Figure 2: Out-of-home care framework](#_Proposal_development)

1. Includes adjustments where a package is varied, either to increase or reduce funding, late in the financial year such that the department’s finance system is not able to process the change until the following financial year [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
2. Includes invoices relating to that financial year that are not received by the community service organisation until the following financial year [↑](#footnote-ref-3)