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Established 1977

**Stretch-A-Family Inc. Public Documents
Protocol & Guidelines for referral to “On Track”**

ON TRACK REFERRALS

BEFORE MAKING A REFERRAL TO “ON TRACK: TRANSITION TO INDEPENDENT LIVING PROGRAM”, PLEASE READ THE FOLLOWING GUIDELINES

For more general information about Stretch-A-Family’s programs please look at the website www.stretchafamily.com.au

The On Track Program

Stretch-A-Family ‘s (SAF) On Track program is a Department of Community Services (DoCS) out-of-home-care (OOHC) funded service predominantly for DoCS clients who originate from the DoCS Metro Central Area.

Referrals to the On Track program can only be made through the DoCS Metro Central Regional Child and Family Unit. The email address is MetroCentralRegionalChildandFamilyUnit@community.nsw.gov.au .

The Phone number of the Intake team is **02 8303 7644**

Young people who are suitable for referral to “On Track”.

1. Males and females aged 15-18 who need long-term accommodation and who are ready to participate in a transition to independent living program. Referrals of young people aged 14.5 or older may also be considered if certain conditions are met. These young people must be in need of out of home care and are generally subject to Care Orders or Care Orders are pending.
2. On Track residents must be willing to participate in a preparation for independent living program. Young people aged 14-15 will be considered as *pre-transitional* but must still be willing to follow an individual program. All young people at On Track have a SAF Caseworker and a Key Worker who will work with them to implement their Care Plan and individual program.

3. On Track is a moderate intensity service which provides for a moderate level of supervision and support. One worker is available for up to six young people except at peak times when there are two youth workers. A worker sleeps over every night but there is no night worker on duty unless there is a specific emergency or high risk situation. Young people who are suitable for On Track must be capable of being left unsupervised for brief periods (up to two hours). The On Track funding contract allows for On Track to provide care for up to 6 residents – 3 low needs, 2 medium intensity needs, and 1 high needs young people. SAF will assess level of need using the Intensive Care Assessment Tool (ICAT) employed by the agency.
4. The young person must not currently be using or addicted to illegal drugs and/or alcohol.
5. The young person must be willing to attend school or another educational facility, be working, be actively seeking work or attending a job training program.
6. Young people can continue to reside at On Track until they are ready to move to other long-term accommodation. The program aims to transit young people to an independent living arrangement after they turn 18 however, some young people may be ready to leave earlier and some later.
7. Suitable exit points from "On Track" may include:
 - restoration to family
 - supported boarding with approved carer/s
 - a long term group home for young adults
 - a semi independent/supported accommodation
 - independent living situation

When a young person leaves On Track, after care support will continue to be provided. The level and intensity of this support will be dependent on available funding and the individual needs of the young person. This support will become part of the exit care plan.

PLEASE NOTE:

“On Track” IS NOT A CRISIS ACCOMMODATION SERVICE. YOUNG PEOPLE IN CRISIS MAY BE REFERRED, BUT THE REFERRING OFFICER WILL NEED TO ARRANGE TEMPORARY ACCOMMODATION FOR THE YOUNG PERSON PENDING ASSESSMENT.

IF THE YOUNG PERSON YOU WISH TO REFER IS AGED 12-16 AND REQUIRES MEDIUM TERM ACCOMMODATION PENDING A MORE SUITABLE LONG TERM OPTION, A REFERRAL TO STRETCH-A-FAMILY STANMORE HOUSE MAY BE MORE APPROPRIATE. A SEPARATE PROTOCOL EXISTS FOR THESE REFERRALS.

PROTOCOL FOR MAKING A REFERRAL TO ON TRACK

1. Referrals to On Track can only be received by SAF from the DoCS Metro Central Child & Family unit. Community Service Centres in the DoCS Metro Central Region, (or from any other region if it is considered that a placement in this program is in the young person's best interest) should direct all referrals to On Track to the DoCS Metro Central Child and Family Unit. Phone **02 8303 7644**
2. The DoCS Metro Central Child and Family unit makes the referrals on the DoCS **Attachment 3 DoCS Client Information Form.**
3. On receipt of this information the On Track SAF Caseworker will ensure that adequate information has been provided including:
 - family background and history
 - history of Dept of Community Services involvement (including name of DoCS Caseworker)
 - reasons for referral
 - details of current care plan
 - court reports and psychological assessments need to be supplied with the written referral or immediately upon being available during the assessment process
 - details of other agencies involved with the young person and/or the young person's family
 - school history
 - medical history

These details can also be faxed to (02) 9703 0521 or emailed to saf@stretchfamily.com.au

4. The information provided will be reviewed by the On Track Program Manager, and the On Track Caseworker. Prior to conducting background checks on the young person, the On Track Caseworker needs to obtain a SIGNED CONSENT FORM from the young person, and it is the responsibility of the person who made the referral to obtain this signed consent document. SAF will not be able to conduct the required checks until this consent form is received. After all the checks are conducted, the referred young person's needs will be assessed against the *SAF Intensive Care Assessment Tool* (SAF ICAT) . This assists us to determine the level of needs of the young person/s being referred and ensures that On Track continues to operate with a manageable level of client needs. A risk assessment will also be conducted to consider if the client being referred poses unmanageable risks to other young people in the program and staff of SAF.
5. SAF will respond to the Metro Central Child and Family as to whether the referral is considered suitable. If the referral is deemed to be unsuitable, the reasons for this will be

outlined. If the referral is deemed suitable, the assessment of the young person for the program will commence. If there is more than one young person considered suitable for the vacancy, a decision will be made by the SAF team in consultation with DoCS Metro Central Child and Family Unit as to which young person will be given the priority to be considered in the first instance.

6. As part of the assessment, the On Track Caseworker will make arrangements for the young person to attend an interview accompanied by the referring office. The On Track program Manager and On Track Caseworker will also attend this interview. During this meeting the young person will be shown around the house and given a copy of the Information booklet for On Track residents. The young person's wishes to move to a transition to independent living program will be given serious consideration.
7. If the assessment is to continue, the SAF Caseworker will provide the referring DoCS worker with copies of five LAC Forms. These are Forms EIR 1 and EIR 11, PP1 and PP11 and the LAC Care Plan up to question 12. These forms will need to be completed by the referring officer and returned to the On Track caseworker PRIOR to the case conference if the referral proceeds to admission.
8. As part of the assessment, the young person will be invited to come for a meal to meet other residents and staff. The young person will later be invited to come for a minimum two night stay. If there is doubt about the appropriateness of the placement, this introductory period and overnight stays may be extended.
9. The SAF On Track team in conjunction with the CEO will make a decision about the young person's suitability, and the referring person and the DoCS Metro Central Child and Family Unit will be informed. If it is decided that the referral is not appropriate at this stage, SAF will outline the reasons for this in writing and forward these to the referring office and to the DoCS Metro Central Child and Family Unit.
10. If the placement is to proceed, and the young person is on assessment, the young person can continue to stay at On Track pending the confirmation of the placement. The On Track caseworker will convene a case conference to be held as soon as possible. The young person will need to be present during the case conference as well and his/her DoCS Caseworker, Manager and other relevant people. Staff from the Department of Community Services, Lakemba CSC will also be invited. During this Case Conference, a Care Plan will be formulated for the young person and a review date set. The possibility of Case Management transfer will be discussed during this meeting.

On Track is a fully funded OOHC service and all placement and establishment costs will be met by the agency if the referral proceeds to admission.

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