



Deputy Ken O'Flynn
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29th July 2026

Dear Deputy,

Further to Parliamentary Question PQ 41015/26, namely

I refer to the PQs below for answer on whether Tusla operates any specific transition framework for young people leaving special care settings into adult or community-based living arrangements; whether any national standards apply in this area; and if she will make a statement on the matter.

Special care units are secure, residential facilities for children in care aged between 11 and 17 years. They are detained under a High Court care order for a short-term period of stabilisation when their behaviour poses a real and substantial risk of harm to their life, health, safety, development or welfare. Statutory responsibility for the provision of aftercare rests in the first instance with Tusla, as set out in the Child Care Act 1991 and the Child and Family Agency Act 2013. Tusla is independent in the performance of its duties and may exercise discretion in carrying out its statutory functions.

The Child Care Act 1991 (as amended) sets out that aftercare eligibility applies to those up to the age of 21 who were in the care of the Child and Family Agency for a period of not less than 12 months in the 5-year period immediately prior to the person attaining the age of 18 years.

Upon reaching the age of 18, a young person is deemed to have left State care. All eligible care leavers are supported through aftercare services provided by Tusla. Care leavers, depending on need, may be allocated an aftercare worker. All care leavers, without exception or age limit, can attend drop-in services organised by the Tusla aftercare service.

Tusla have advised that the effectiveness of aftercare supports is evaluated primarily at an individual level. Namely, the assessment of need, the preparation, implementation, and ongoing review of an aftercare plan. The aftercare plan is focused on assessed needs and assisting the young person in progressing towards improved outcomes.



Additionally, the Child Care Act sets out that the aftercare assessment of need will include the young person's needs in relation to accommodation. The majority of young people who leave the care of the State each year, having reached 18, do so with secure, stable, safe accommodation in place such as remaining with their foster carers, moving to independent living or returning home to live with their families.

In 2023 Tusla published the Strategic Plan for Aftercare Services for Young People and Young Adults 2023 - 2026. The Department continues to engage with Tusla on the implementation of this plan with a view to improving aftercare services for care leavers, particularly those at risk of homelessness.

The primary responsibility for housing and managing homelessness lies with the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage and the local authorities. Currently, care-leavers who are at risk of homeless are assisted by the Child and Family Agency, in partnership with other Government Departments or agencies. This includes finding accommodation in supported lodgings, sheltered housing, or facilitating independent living. Since 2017, care-leavers have also been included as a separate category for funding under the Capital Assistance Scheme (CAS). This scheme provides targeted assistance to the most vulnerable care leavers by enabling Approved Housing Bodies (AHBs) to acquire residential units to accommodate them.

Tusla provides financial support to eligible care leavers who are engaged in a qualifying educational course or training programme. The aftercare allowance amounts to €300 per week and is dependent on the eligible young adult attending an accredited education course, third level course or training programme as outlined in the young adult's aftercare plan. The allowance is provided to cover a young adult's day to day costs, including accommodation, as they progress in their education or training.

The Programme for Government 2025 commits to examining ways to further support all young people as they age out of state care and foster care. Officials in the Department of Children are currently developing a National Policy Framework for Alternative Care. This will deliver on a commitment in the Programme for Government to develop a national plan on alternative care, including articulating a long-term vision for alternative care in Ireland.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read 'Norma Foley'. The signature is written in a cursive style with a horizontal line underneath.

Norma Foley TD.

Minister for Department of Children, Disability and Equality