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| Better Futures performance and reporting |
| Practice advice updated June 2024 |
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# Introduction

Better Futures is a new way of supporting care leavers. Better Futures aims to support young people achieve successful and independent adult lives; helping them to have an active voice in decisions about their future and guiding their transition to adulthood and independent living across a range of life areas, including:

* housing
* health and wellbeing
* education
* employment, and
* community and cultural connections.

Young people who meet the eligibility criteria can access Better Futures from 15 years and 9 months up until their 21st birthday. Better Futures service response includes:

* case work support (levels of support will flex up and down according to their needs, existing support networks and the transition goals identified)
* information and advice
* access to flexible funding (to facilitate the young person’s access to housing, education, employment, health and wellbeing support)
* community connections, and
* Home Stretch.

Better Futures service delivery is monitored through a range of targeted ‘activities’ specific to Better Futures program delivery.

For more information about the Better Futures model, refer to relevant practice advice and published documentation available at [providers.dffh.vic.gov.au/better-futures](file:///C:/Users/cspo2506/Downloads/providers.dffh.vic.gov.au/better-futures) <https://providers.dffh.vic.gov.au/better-futures>

# Purpose

Better Futures is a service and practice model designed to improve outcomes for young people transitioning from care to supported independence, up to the age of 21. It is guided by a Better Futures (Advantaged Thinking) practice framework and support is tailored to meet the individual needs of young people.

This practice advice outlines performance and reporting requirements for organisations delivering Better Futures (including Home Stretch) as per the activities contained in the service agreement.

This document should be read in conjunction with individual funded activity descriptions accessible via the [DFFH website](https://dhhsvicgovau.sharepoint.com/sites/ChildrenYouthFamilies-DHHS-GRP/Shared%20Documents/CRIS%20CRISSP%20for%20Better%20Futures/Information%20Sheets/Better%20Futures%20website%20Published%20docs%20edited/HS%20Sent%20to%20Karen%20for%20approval/DFFH%20website) <https://providers.dffh.vic.gov.au/families-fairness-housing-health-activity-search>.

# Audience

Better Futures providers and Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisations delivering Better Futures, Department of Families, Fairness and Housing (‘the department’) Agency Performance and System Support teams and divisional Better Futures/Home Stretch senior project officers.

# Performance and reporting requirements

This practice advice outlines the department’s performance monitoring tools and steps out the activities required of Better Futures service providers.

## The department’s service agreement requirements

Service agreements are used to manage departmental funding to organisations. The service agreement establishes the standard terms and conditions that apply to all funded organisations and provides organisation-specific information regarding funding and payments in its schedules.

Part of the Service Agreement is the ‘Service Agreement Requirements’ which outlines the policies and obligations that form part of the service agreement and can be found at: [fac.dffh.vic.gov.au/service-agreement-requirements](https://fac.dffh.vic.gov.au/service-agreement-requirements) <https://fac.dffh.vic.gov.au/service-agreement-requirements>

To meet the terms of the service agreement, funded organisations must ensure they comply with:

* the service agreement
* the standard policies and obligations in the service agreement requirements
* the specific policies and obligations in each relevant activity description.

To access funded activity descriptions, refer to the department’s activity search website: <https://providers.dffh.vic.gov.au/families-fairness-housing-health-activity-search> <https://providers.dffh.vic.gov.au/families-fairness-housing-health-activity-search>

The online search functionality requires the individual activity name or number. Use the relevant Better Futures activity names or activity numbers referenced in this document to undertake the search.

## The department’s reporting tools

### Service delivery tracking

Service Delivery Tracking (SDT) supports organisations in managing their progress towards meeting agreed targets and assists the department to manage its reporting commitments. Service delivery tracking is an online tracking tool that service providers are required to use to report monthly service delivery against the service agreement.

The service delivery tracking acquittal templates are available for updating and submission from the first day of the month, following the reporting month.

More information about SDT can be found on the [Funded Agency Channel website](https://fac.dffh.vic.gov.au/service-delivery-tracking): <https://fac.dffh.vic.gov.au/service-delivery-tracking>

### Client Relationship Information System for Service Providers

The Client Relationship Information System for Service Providers (CRISSP) is a flexible client information and case management system, developed by the department for the community services sector. CRISSP provides a range of functions for recording client information, assisting case management and enabling electronic reporting of data required by the department.

Funded Better Futures providers can extract the following reports from CRISSP:

* Better Futures Monthly Report CP504R
* Client Expenditure Report CP506R

### Outcomes Tracking System

The Outcomes Tracking System (OTS) is used to record young people’s responses to Better Futures outcomes questions. OTS enables electronic reporting of data required by the department. The Full Data Extract provides data required by the department.

# Information regarding Better Futures funded activities

The following five activity descriptions set out the department’s approach to measuring the performance of Better Futures providers. For more detailed information on funded activities refer to individual activity descriptions accessible via the department’s website as noted above.

## Intake and Access – Better Futures 31289

*Currently this activity description only applies to intake and access service delivery provided by the Leaving Care Hotline, Permanent Care & Adoptive Families (PCA Families) and the Victorian Aboriginal Child Care Agency (VACCA).*

Organisations must report on the

* number of hours of service provided, monthly
* number of new cases receiving a service

Service hours are defined as hours spent by staff providing intake and access including providing services to young people and to carers, community and professionals. Service hours include time spent writing case notes, face to face contact, making referrals, emailing, telephone contact, and other activities directly related to service provision to a young person. Refer to the [Guidelines for Service Hours](#_Guidelines_for_number) section in this document for guidance on estimated hours delivered by individual tasks.

The number of hours of service provided is recorded on CRISSP by the service provider, generated into the monthly CRISSP report and entered into SDT.

Better Futures providers undertaking triage functions, are to report the number of hours of service via this activity description. Where the number of triaging hours cannot be recorded via the youth case in CRISSP, the triage hours should be captured via the running sheet function in CRISSP.

Impacted organisations should use the CRISSP running sheet function to record service activities and hours delivered. An extract of the running sheet should be used to record service activities delivered by the triage agency in the reporting period.

A new case is a young person receiving an intake and accessing services during the reporting period. The number of new cases receiving a service is recorded in CRISSP by the service provider and generated into the monthly CRISSP report. All other activities and hours delivered not attached to a specific case in CRISSP will be reflected in the Triage Running sheet.

When reporting on new cases receiving a service in the reporting period, the funded provider will need to extract relevant data from the Triage Running sheet to supplement the monthly CRISSP report. This report must be sent to the local APSS advisor at the end of each month.

### Requirements

#### Activity Intake and Access – Better Futures 31289

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Measure | Description | Count | Reporting frequency | Report |
| Key performance measure 1 | Number of hours of service provided | Cumulative | Monthly | SDT |
| Performance measure 2 | Number of new cases receiving an Intake and Access – Better Futures service | Cumulative | Monthly | CRISSP |

## Individual, Child and Family Support – Better Futures 31290

This activity relates to Better Futures and Home Stretch case work support provided to young people transitioning from care, including young people still in care and preparing to transition and those who have left care. It applies to young people who are receiving active hold, limited support, and active support from Better Futures funded organisations.

Organisations must report on the

* total number of hours of case work provided (service hours) to new and existing clients.

Case work support includes a range of service activities such as assessment, active engagement, planning and review. Service hours are defined as hours spent by the service provider’s staff providing Better Futures or Home Stretch case work support to young people. Service hours include time spent writing case notes and other activities directly relating to individual young people. A guideline for calculating service hours is provided below. The total number of service hours is recorded on CRISSP, generated into the monthly CRISSP report, and entered into SDT.

Better Futures providers undertaking triage functions, and considering referrals at leaving care panel meetings, are to report the number of hours of service via this activity description. Better Futures triage agencies or lead consortium agencies are currently unable to capture intake related activities in CRISSP as cases are referred on to other funded providers. Impacted organisations should use the CRISSP running sheet function to record service activities and hours delivered.

An extract of the running sheet should be used to supplement the Better Futures monthly report – producing the record of service activities delivered by the triage agency or lead consortium agency in the reporting period.

Counting the total number of hours provided per young person (via a Better Futures or Home Stretch response) each month should be used to correlate a level of support received: brief intervention (active hold), foundation (limited support) or sustained (active support). This data is generated into the monthly CRISSP report and used to inform SDT reporting.

### Requirements

#### Activity Individual, Child and Family Support – Better Futures 31290

Program component: Better Futures and Home Stretch casework support

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Measure | Description | Count | CRISSP Report | Reporting frequency | Report |
| Key performance measure 1 | Number of service hours - Better Futures and or Home Stretch | Cumulative | Better Futures Monthly Report CP504R | Monthly - Better Futures providers should extract the CRISSP report at the end of the month to inform the SDT report. | SDT - due on 10th day of the following month |

## System Enablers – Better Futures 31291

This activity supports delivery of Community Connections within the Better Futures model. Community Connectors build, strengthen, and maintain partnerships within and across local communities, including with local businesses, services, government, and philanthropic organisations. Community Connectors seek out and build networks with the purpose of leveraging community investment to strengthen social relationships and community connectedness for young people transitioning from care. They focus on strengthening young people’s social capital as well as building support networks for young people beyond the service system; this may include matching young people with a mentor based on their interests, goals and aspirations. Community Connectors do not provide case work support.

Organisations must report on agreed objectives for the Community Connectors, Community Integration Program and Ramp Mentoring Program.

The Community Connections Directions Plan should include the planned objectives, priorities, directions, and activities for the coming financial year. The Community Connections Outcomes Report should identify the outcomes for young people as a result of the planned objectives determined in the Community Connections Annual Directions Plan for the previous year.

The Community Integration Program and the Ramp Mentoring Program are also delivered via this activity however are not Better Futures services. These programs are required to report quarterly to the central Transitions from Care team or the local APSS advisor in relation to the number of young people referred to the service, number of mentors trained and matched with young people, and outcomes for young people and one case example.

There are no SDT reporting requirements for System Enablers – Better Futures.

### Requirements

#### Activity System Enablers – Better Futures 31291

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Measure | Description | Reporting frequency | Report |
| Community Connections Annual Directions Plan | Community connector | Annually (due on 31 July) | APSS advisor |
| Community Connections Annual Outcomes Report | Community connector | Annually (due on 1 June) | APSS advisor |
| Quarterly report | Community Integration Program | Quarterly | Transitions from Care team |
| Quarterly report | Ramp Mentoring Program | Quarterly | APSS advisor |

## Flexible Funding – Better Futures 31292

This activity supports Better Futures and Home Stretch flexible funding and accommodation allowance responses provided to young people transitioning from care (including young people preparing to transition and those who have left care). It applies to young people who are receiving active hold, limited support, and active support from Better Futures funded organisations.

Organisations must report on the

* total amount of Better Futures and or Home Stretch flexible funding expended
* total amount of the Home Stretch Flexible Funding Independent Accommodation Allowance expended
* number of Better Futures or Home Stretch Flexible Funding packages provided and the type of expenditure
* number of Home Stretch Flexible Funding Independent Accommodation Allowance packages provided and the type of expenditure.

“Expended” refers to funds spent and not funds approved. The total flexible funding expenditure is recorded on CRISSP, generated into the monthly CRISSP report, and entered into SDT.

‘Packages’ refers to an instance of Better Futures or Home Stretch Flexible Funding expenditure. For example, one package may be an instance of funding a telephone for a young person or one package may be funding for a bed, a fridge, and a washing machine for a young person. The number of young people receiving flexible funding packages is recorded by an organisation on CRISSP. A bi-annual report is then generated by organisations and sent to the local APSS advisor.

### Requirements

#### Activity Flexible Funding – Better Futures 31292

**Program components: Better Futures and Home Stretch Flexible Funding**

| Measure | Description | Count | CRISSP Report | Reporting frequency | Report |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Key performance measure 1 | Amount of flexible funding **expended** in the reporting period – Better Futures and or Home Stretch | Cumulative | Client Expenditure Report CP506R | Monthly: Better Futures providers extracts data from the CRISSP report at the end of the month to inform the SDT report. | SDT - due on 10th day of the following month |

**Program component: Home Stretch Independent Accommodation Allowance**

| Measure | Description | Count | CRISSP Report | Reporting frequency | Report |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Key performance measure 2 | Amount of Home Stretch - Independent Accommodation Allowance funding **expended** in the reporting period | Cumulative | Client Expenditure Report CP506R | Monthly: Better Futures providers extracts data from the CRISSP report at the end of the month to inform the SDT report. | SDT - due on 10th day of the following month |

**Program component: Better Futures and Home Stretch Flexible Funding**

| Measure | Description | Count | CRISSP Report | Reporting frequency | Report |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Performance measure 3 | **Number of flexible funding packages** - Better Futures and or Home Stretch and the type of expenditure | Cumulative | Client Expenditure Report CP506R | Bi-annually: Better Futures providers submits CRISSP report for the following reporting periods -1 Jul to 31 Dec  -1 Jan to 30 Jun | CRISSP Report submitted to APSS Adviser at the end of the reporting period |

**Program component: Home Stretch Independent Accommodation Allowance**

| Measure | Description | Count | CRISSP Report | Reporting frequency | Report |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Performance measure 4 | **Number of flexible funding packages** – Home Stretch – Independent Accommodation Allowance and the type of expenditure | Cumulative | Client Expenditure Report CP506R | Bi-annually: Better Futures providers submits CRISSP report for the following reporting periods -1 Jul to 31 Dec  -1 Jan to 30 Jun | CRISSP Report submitted to APSS Adviser at the end of the reporting period |

#### Care Allowance Payments - Fortnightly Verification Reports (Home Stretch)

Fortnightly verification reports are provided by the Care Allowance Helpdesk to funded Community Services Organisations (CSOs) and Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisations (ACCOs) after each fortnightly care allowance payment cycle. The objectives of the verification reports are for CSOs and ACCOs to:

* confirm that young person, carer and care allowance details for all new Home Stretch arrangements that commenced in the previous fortnight are correct (including checking that the HBC arrangement is recorded against the correct division and Better Futures provider)
* verify that home-based care (HBC) arrangements for which a care allowance is received remain active and end any Home Stretch HBC arrangements if they have ceased.

Better Futures providers supporting Home Stretch (HBC) living arrangements are required to check and respond to fortnightly verification reports and other reports provided by the Care Allowance Helpdesk, to monitor the accuracy of care allowance payments and to avoid overpayments to carers.

## Specialised Interventions – Better Futures 31293

This activity applies to interventions providing specialised or therapeutic services for young people transitioning from care. This includes interventions that are innovative or experimental, or have a high cost due to specialist staffing, and require funding different to case work support provided via the Individual, Child and Family Support – Better Futures - 31290.

Organisations must submit a report including the number of young people, type of service (housing, education, employment, health and wellbeing or community connections), and outcomes of the service provision for young people, where service has been provided during the reporting period. Reports are submitted via CRISSP or supplementary reporting to the local APSS advisor, as agreed.

### Requirements

#### Activity Specialised Interventions – Better Futures 31293

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Measure | Description | Count | CRISSP Report | Reporting frequency | Report |
| Key performance measure 1 | This performance measure provides information about the number of young people receiving support and the type of service received from a specialised intervention | Non-Cumulative | Better Futures Monthly Report CP504R | Monthly | CRISSP or supplementary reporting as agreed |

# Guidelines for number of service hours

The table below provides an estimated number of minutes or hours allocated to tasks undertaken by Better Futures providers. The estimated number of hours have been developed incorporating feedback from service providers and have been rounded. Tasks may take less or more time and the actual time taken should be recorded in CRISSP.

These are guidelines only and should be applied flexibly.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Task | Estimated number of hours |
| Text sent | 10 minutes |
| Text response | 10 minutes |
| Phone not answered voicemail left | 10 minutes |
| Outreach/face to face contact | 1hr |
| Telephone call | 10 minutes |
| Email | 10 minutes |
| Email received and case noted | 10 minutes |
| Email sent and case noted | 10 minutes |
| Provided secondary consultation | 30 minutes |
| Undertaking a consultation | 30 minutes |
| Travel time | 10 minutes |
| Administration | 10 minutes |
| Flexible funding request administration | 30 minutes |
| Intake triaging | 1hr |
| Research and information gathering in relation to the young person’s goals | 30 minutes |
| Referrals | 30 minutes |
| Writing assessments, case notes, support plans etc | 10 minutes |
| Attending meetings, events, appointments etc with or on behalf of the young person | 1hr |

# Additional Information

Supporting documentation and publications may be accessed via the DFFH website:

[providers.dffh.vic.gov.au/better-futures](https://providers.dffh.vic.gov.au/better-futures) <https://providers.dffh.vic.gov.au/better-futures>

[providers.dffh.vic.gov.au/home-stretch](https://providers.dffh.vic.gov.au/home-stretch) <https://providers.dffh.vic.gov.au/home-stretch>

[providers.dffh.vic.gov.au/leaving-care](https://providers.dffh.vic.gov.au/leaving-care) <https://providers.dffh.vic.gov.au/leaving-care>

[services.dffh.vic.gov.au/leaving-care](https://services.dffh.vic.gov.au/leaving-care) <https://services.dffh.vic.gov.au/leaving-care>

[Funded Agency Channel](https://fac.dhhs.vic.gov.au) <<https://fac.dhhs.vic.gov.au>>

Funded activity descriptors are accessible via the [providers.dffh.vic.gov.au/families-fairness-housing-health-activity-search](https://providers.dffh.vic.gov.au/families-fairness-housing-health-activity-search) <https://providers.dffh.vic.gov.au/families-fairness-housing-health-activity-search>

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