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| Child and family services new funding model – Better Futures |
| Better Futures funding – Guide for service providers – November 2019 |

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| The way the Department of Health and Human Services funds child and family services is changing. These changes are part of broader reforms underway to redesign the child and family system.  This document provides information on the new funding model, specifically in relation to ***Leaving Care funding (specifically Leaving Care Support Services 31414 and Springboard 31421)*.**  For **further** detailed information regarding the new funding model, please refer to supporting documents available from [Child and Family Funding Reform](https://providers.dhhs.vic.gov.au/child-and-family-funding-reform) <https://providers.dhhs.vic.gov.au/child-and-family-funding-reform>. |

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# **Background**

The department, in consultation with the sector, has designed a new funding model for child and family services.

The new funding model is a shift from activity structures based on programs, to activity structures based on service delivery functions that providers already undertake to support vulnerable children and families.

Funding reform is an important step in creating a more seamless and outcomes-focused service system over the longer term. This increased flexibility will also help to advance Aboriginal self-determination and self-management to meet the needs of Aboriginal children, young people and families.

Stage 1 funding reform occurred in 2018 for a number of child and family service activities. Stage 2 funding reform is now underway for services supporting young people to transition from care. Stage 2 will bring ‘leaving care’ activities under the new Better Futures service model. This Guide provides information about the implementation of the new funding model for Better Futures.

# **The new funding model for Better Futures**

The new funding model for Better Futures comprises five new activities (see Table 1). Several sub-activities will sit within each of these new functional activities to further define service delivery requirements. There will be no change to the level of funding currently received by service providers.

Table 1: The new funding model for child and family services – Better Futures

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| **Activity Number** | **Activity Name** | **Description** |
| **31289** | **Intake and Access – Better Futures** | Referral and allocation processes to determine contact response to individuals, children and families. |
| **31290** | **Individual, Child and Family Support – Better Futures** | Individual, Child and Family Support includes case management functions such as assessment and review of the needs of young people, as well as planning, facilitation and advocacy for services and supports. |
| **31292** | **Flexible Funding – Better Futures** | Brokerage available to young people to purchase items to address the holistic needs, outcomes and objectives identified in their case or care plans. |
| **31293** | **Specialised Interventions – Better Futures** | Highly specialised support or emerging interventions for individuals, children and families. |
| **31291** | **System Enablers – Better Futures** | System-wide or local area approaches and state-wide supports and initiatives that require discrete funding. |

# **Implementation of the new funding model**

## Stage 1 – Family Services

As part of the first stage of funding reform, funding for six child and family services activities was transitioned to a new funding model on 1 October 2018, including:

* Integrated Family Services 31245
* Integrated Family Services – Indigenous 31246
* Stronger Families 31262
* Cradle to Kinder 31264;
* some components of Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisations – Family and Community Services 31260, and
* Placement Prevention Programs 31218.

## Stage 2 – Transitioning from Care

Services supporting young people to transition from care fall within the second stage of funding reform, and will transition to the new Better Futures funding and service model effective from 1 November 2019:

* 31414 Leaving Care Support Services
* 31421 Springboard (Leaving Care)

Better Futures, which will roll out across the state along with Home Stretch from 1 November 2019, is a new way of supporting young people to transition from care. Better Futures workers engage early with young people in care and their support networks, including carers, case managers and care teams, to assist young people to plan for and meet their goals for living arrangements, education, employment, health and wellbeing and community connections as they transition from care.

Stage 2 funding reform is designed to enable implementation of the Better Futures service model, by consolidating existing leaving care funding and allowing the required flexibility to provide wraparound support for young people. The funding model also supports program evaluation by enabling providers to more accurately record how funding is being used.

# **Supporting documents**

This guidance is part of a suite of information developed to support the new Better Futures funding and service model.

For additional information on Better Futures and Home Stretch

* Search for the Better Futures [activity descriptions](https://providers.dhhs.vic.gov.au/human-services-activity-search) <https://providers.dhhs.vic.gov.au/human-services-activity-search> for the new activities (listed above in Table 1),
* See information on services to support young people transitioning from care - [Leaving Care -DHHS Service Providers](file:///C:\Users\Kcai1808\AppData\Local\Microsoft\Windows\INetCache\Content.Outlook\SWE5YKJR\Leaving%20Care%20-DHHS%20Service%20Providers) <https://providers.dhhs.vic.gov.au/leaving-care> - particularly the Home Stretch fact sheets and Better Futures (Post Care Service) Fact Sheet.
* Better Futures operational guidelines are being developed and will be available on the providers leaving care page in late 2019.

For further information specifically in relation to funding reform:

* Please visit the internet https://providers.dhhs.vic.gov.au/child-and-family-funding-reform>.

# **Transition process**

As part of Stage 2 funding reform, for the following activities all funding will be transitioned to the new funding model, and no further funding will be allocated from 1 November 2019:

* 31414 Leaving Care Support Services
* 31421 Springboard (Leaving Care)

Service agreements will display funding and targets for these two activities up to the transition date, meaning that funding for activities 31414 and 31421 will remain in agreements for the time period from 1 July 2019 to 31 October 2019.

Funding against activities 31414 and 31421 will be reconfigured and mapped to the new model during November 2019, with changes effective from 1 November 2019.

## Organisations affected by the changes

All organisations funded under activities 31414 and 31421 as at 31 October 2019 will move to the new funding model effective from 1 November 2019.

# **Funding and targets – Information for funded organisations’ Finance Managers**

There will be no change to the level of funding currently received by service providers as a result of the state-wide roll out of Better Futures, Home Stretch and associated funding reform.

Intake and Access – Better Futures (31289)

Funding for the Leaving Care Information Hotline has been mapped to the new activity: Intake and Access – Better Futures (31289).

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

Case work from Leaving Care Support Services (31414) and Springboard (Leaving Care) (31421) has been consolidated as Better Futures and mapped to the new activity: Individual, Child and Family Support – Better Futures (31290).

It is consolidated under the new funded activity via three levels of service intensity:

* Brief Intervention (10 hours) – Better Futures
* Foundation (40 hours) – Better Futures
* Sustained (110 hours) – Better Futures

Better Futures will be rolled out along with Home Stretch, which will be provided as a ‘service offer’ under the Better Futures model. Case work for Home Stretch also maps to three levels of service intensity:

* Brief intervention (10 hours) – Home Stretch
* Foundation (40 hours) – Home Stretch
* Sustained (110 hours) – Home Stretch

Targets will change to support the new service delivery model but there is no change to the total amount of funding.

## Flexible Funding – Better Futures (31292)

Brokerage from Leaving Care Support Services (31414) and Springboard (Leaving Care) (31421) has been consolidated under a Better Futures flexible funding sub-activity in the new activity: Flexible Funding – Better Futures (31292).

There is no change to an organisation’s total amount of Flexible Funding. The amount of flexible funding a young person can access is based on the young person’s support needs.

## Specialised Interventions – Better Futures (31293)

Planning to Succeed, a specialised program in South Division, previously funded through Leaving Care Support Services (31414) has been mapped to a program specific sub-activity in the new activity: Specialised Interventions – Better Futures (31293).

## System enablers – Better Futures (31291)

A new Community Connections function has been developed as a part of the Better Futures model. The Mentoring sub-activity from Leaving Care Support Services (31414) will be mapped to the new Community Connector function and the funding will be included under the new activity: System Enablers – Better Futures (31291).

# **Service Agreement changes**

The Funding Reform team in central office will complete a bulk upload during November 2019 to process the funding changes to service agreements to effect these changes.

Funding will be mapped to the new activities with an effective date from 1 November 2019. Funding will appear under the new activity headings from 1 November 2019. Old funded activities will still be visible for the remainder of the 2019-20 financial year, but funding will no longer be allocated against old funded activities.

# **Reporting**

## Service Delivery Tracking

All new activities will be monitored through Service Delivery Tracking (SDT) except for Specialised Interventions – Better Futures (31293); and System Enablers – Better Futures (31291). Service providers will be required to submit performance data each month through My Agency, the secure section of the Funded Agency Channel. Further information about SDT can be found on the [Funded Agency Channel](file:///C:/Users/Kcai1808/AppData/Local/Microsoft/Windows/INetCache/Content.Outlook/SWE5YKJR/Funded%20Agency%20Channel) <https://fac.dhhs.vic.gov.au/service-delivery-tracking>.

Specialised Interventions – Better Futures (31293) and System Enablers – Better Futures (31291) will be monitored via performance measures as detailed in the new activity descriptions. The new activity descriptions include details of data collection, counting rules and other performance reporting requirements.

Some new activities – for example, Flexible Funding – have changed SDT reporting responsibilities. Where SDT has been introduced or significantly changed, the first three months following 1 November 2019 will be an agreed adjustment period during which the department will work with service providers to achieve accurate SDT reporting.

A new feature in SDT will enable multiple Key Performance Output Measures (KPOMs) for SDT reporting in the Individual, Child and Family Support – Better Futures (31290) and Flexible Funding – Better Futures (31292) activities.

This means that SDT templates will enable reporting against the following KPOMs:

Individual, Child and Family Support – Better Futures (31290)

Number of Service hours – Better Futures

Number of Service hours - Home Stretch

Flexible Funding – Better Futures (31292)

Expenditure – Better Futures

Expenditure - Home Stretch

* Expenditure - Home Stretch accommodation

## New reporting requirements for Flexible Funding

Flexible Funding – Better Futures (31292) has a monthly reporting requirement via SDT, which is new for this type of funding. Providers will need to report on the expenditure of all Flexible Funding (aggregated under the new activity).

Providers will also need to complete a Better Futures Flexible Funding reporting template. This process ensures there is transparency and accountability for how Flexible Funding is used to support young people and provides an evidence base to inform evaluation and future improvements to this activity.

# **Consultation, information and support**

## Sector consultation

Stage 2 funding reform aims to address the specific issues raised by service providers during consultation that the old funding approach (Leaving Care and Springboard activities) limited their capacity to deliver flexible and tailored wraparound supports for young people.

The new funding model was developed in partnership with the Roadmap Implementation Ministerial Advisory Group (RIMAG) and the dedicated RIMAG Pricing and Funding Reference Group. This Group provided advice on the design of the new funding model for child and family services and the format of individual service provider reports.

The Better Futures model has been tested in a number of pilot sites including South Division, Barwon and Goulburn areas. The department has consulted with Leaving Care and Springboard service providers about the changes and will continue to provide opportunities for the sector to share information through Better Futures governance groups and Community of Practice Forums.

## Support for service providers

### Supporting documentation

The following documentation will be distributed to all affected service providers prior to transition to the new model:

* an email confirming the date that funding will change to the new model
* new activity descriptions for the new activities
* leaving care funding reform summary
  + individual service provider reports demonstrating how existing funding will translate to the new activity structure.

### Individual service provider reports

The individual service provider reports will help each service provider to understand how their current leaving care funding (activities 31414 and 31421) translates to the new funding model for child and family services.

The level of detail included means that the reports are best viewed electronically (rather than in hard copy). The information is provided in an individualised Excel workbook that can be sorted and filtered.

Each agency will be provided with the individual provider report via their lead Agency Performance and System Support Adviser in the department’s operations divisions. The individual service provider reports will also be attached to Service Agreements at the organisational level. Service providers will be able to access their report through the Service Agreement Module in the My Agency portal via the [Funded Agency Channel](https://fac.dhhs.vic.gov.au/service-delivery-tracking) <https://fac.dhhs.vic.gov.au>.

## Support for transition

Your Agency Performance and System Support (APSS) Adviser will be able to provide up-to-date information throughout transition. If you have any queries, please contact your Adviser.

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