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| Young people on permanent care orders |
| Information for Better Futures providers |
| OFFICIAL |

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# Purpose

This document provides an overview for Better Futures providers on the new referral pathway for young people on a permanent care order to access Better Futures and Home Stretch.

# Background

The Victorian Government is committed to ensuring young people who are, or who have been, on a permanent care order are supported to transition to adulthood. This is via two programs: Better Futures (for young people aged from 15 years and nine months) and Home Stretch (from 18 years). The government will invest $38.9 million over the next four years and $13.8 million ongoing to ensure young people subject to permanent care orders can access these supports.

Young people who turned 18 before 1 July 2021 are not eligible for Better Futures or Home Stretch.

# How the process differs for young people on permanent care orders

Young people eligible for Better Futures and Home Stretch are referred through their child protection case manager. Because young people on permanent care orders no longer have child protection involvement, Permanent Carers and Adoptive Families (PCA Families) have been engaged as the key agency to support the new referral process.

The Victorian Aboriginal Child Care Agency (VACCA) have been engaged as the key agency to refer Aboriginal young people on permanent care orders into these programs. VACCA will refer young people to an Aboriginal community-controlled organisation for Better Futures and Home Stretch support. The young person can also choose to get support from a mainstream Better Futures provider.

## What is PCA Families’ and VACCA’s role?

PCA Families and VACCA play an administrative and information sharing role for young people on permanent care orders. PCA Families and VACCA will proactively communicate with young people on permanent care orders and their carers to let them know they are eligible for the programs. They are also the first point of contact for any young person or carer wanting to find out more information about Better Futures and Home Stretch.

PCA Families will also refer young people who are ineligible for Better Futures and Home Stretch to other supports where appropriate.

## What will this mean for Better Futures providers?

PCA Families and VACCA will take on the role for young people on permanent care orders that is currently being done by child protection case workers for all other types of care orders. Once a young person expresses interest in accessing Better Futures and Home Stretch, PCA Families and VACCA will complete the Better Futures checklist. They will then send the referral to a Better Futures provider (either directly or via a triage organisation).

PCA Families and VACCA only complete sections 1 to 4 of the Better Futures checklist. This is because they do not have an existing relationship with the young person or access to extensive information about them. It is also to reduce the young person needing to share their story and experience with multiple people.

Better Futures provider, through their contact with the young person, will develop an understanding of their goals and aspirations. Better Futures will work with that young person to develop an individual plan for support.

# Roles and responsibilities for young people on permanent care orders

PCA Families and VACCA has an administrative and information sharing role in the referral pathway for young people on permanent care orders to access Better Futures supports. They will ensure Better Futures providers get the information they need to start connecting the young person to supports.

There are two key components to the role:

* communication about Better Futures and Home Stretch with young people and carers/guardians
* completing administrative/system processes to refer all eligible young people on permanent care orders to Better Futures and Home Stretch.

Before a young person on a permanent care order is referred to a Better Futures provider, PCA Families and VACCA will:

1. Confirm their eligibility for Better Futures support.
2. Complete (with the information available) the Better Futures checklist (sections 1–4). Better Futures providers will need to engage with the young person to build rapport and understand their goals and aspirations.
3. Allocate the young person to a Better Futures provider (or Better Futures triage organisation) through the Client Relationship Information System for Service Providers.

Once the Better Futures referral is made, the provider must ensure the young person receives Better Futures support. The Better Futures provider is responsible for initiating the Home Stretch application.

# Who to contact for more information?

Better Futures providers can get support through two avenues:

* [Email PCA Families](mailto:info@pcafamilies.org.au) <info@pcafamilies.org.au> or phone them on 9020 1833. PCA Families can help you understand the referral process.
* Email VACCA [pcopathways@vacca.org](mailto:pcopathways@vacca.org) .VACCA can help you understand the referral process.
* Speak to the Better Futures and Home Stretch senior project worker in each departmental operation division, who can answer any questions about Better Futures funding and other departmental supports. Resources available for Better Futures providers:
  + West Division: [betterfutureswest@dffh.vic.gov.au](mailto:betterfutureswest@dffh.vic.gov.au)
  + South Division: [betterfuturessouth@dffh.vic..gov.au](mailto:betterfuturessouth@dffh.vic..gov.au)
  + East Division: [betterfutureseast@dffh.vic.gov.au](mailto:betterfutureseast@dffh.vic.gov.au)
  + North Division: [betterfuturesnorth@dffh.vic.gov.au](mailto:betterfuturesnorth@dffh.vic.gov.au)

Find more information on the department’s [Better Futures providers webpage](https://providers.dffh.vic.gov.au/better-futures) <https://providers.dffh.vic.gov.au/better-futures>.

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