

The logo for TúsLA, featuring the word 'TúsLA' in a stylized font. 'Tús' is in green and 'LA' is in blue. The letters are bold and sans-serif.

**TúsLA**

An Ghníomhaireacht um  
Leanaí agus an Teaghlach  
Child and Family Agency

A large, stylized gear graphic in shades of green and blue, centered on the page. The gear has a dark blue center and a light green outer ring with several teeth. The text 'ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES in Aftercare' is written in white, bold, sans-serif font across the center of the gear.

# **ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES in Aftercare**

THIS IS A SUPPORTING GUIDANCE DOCUMENT FOR AFTERCARE, WHICH SHOULD BE READ  
IN CONJUNCTION WITH THE 'NATIONAL AFTERCARE POLICY FOR ALTERNATIVE CARE'



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This document should be read in conjunction with ‘The National Aftercare Policy, 2017’.

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## 1.0 Introduction

Preparing children and young people for adulthood life is part of every stage of development. By engaging with children and young people in a meaningful way contributes to the transition into adulthood. Skill development such as making choices starts at an early stage, the foundations for budgeting starts through pocket money, doing chores, little jobs around the house, learning to cook starts when baking/ cooking together, learning to clean starts through getting children and young people to help around the house, learning about health and sex education starts at puberty with open and honest discussions with children and young people, supporting children and young people in challenges in their lives and encouraging them to take on responsibilities is all part of the pathway to adulthood.

It is important to note that preparation for leaving care should commence from when a child comes into the care of the Tusla – Child and Family Agency, and should be addressed as a principle of good practice in the child’s care plan. It is essential that everyone involved is clear about their respective roles and responsibilities in the leaving and aftercare process. It is essential that leaving care is not considered as an event but another transition in a young person’s life.

The aftercare service does not hold the key role in preparing young people for adulthood but offers to support, guide and signpost them throughout their transition. The aftercare service is predominately an adult service.

Of necessity and in keeping with preparation of young people for leaving the statutory care of Tusla, a number of workers will be involved in working with young people in preparing them for the transition from statutory care. These will include the allocated social worker, fostering link workers, residential staff, aftercare workers and foster carers.

While the young person is in statutory care and is under 18 years, all statutory responsibility remains with the young person's allocated social worker. During the process of formal preparation for leaving care, the aftercare worker plays a secondary and supportive role whilst holding primary responsibility for ensuring a needs assessment for preparation for leaving care is carried out in collaboration with significant others, i.e. allocated social worker, residential staff, foster carers, family and other professional agencies who may be involved in the young person's life.

Once a young person has reached 18 years and is therefore no longer in statutory care the aftercare service assumes primary responsibility for those, who do not require a specialist service and have capacity to live independently.

Young people who leave care under the age of 18 years remain the responsibility of the child protection and welfare social work service and may receive support, over 18 years, from the aftercare service where appropriate, as identified in a needs assessment.

Tusla has primary responsibility for the delivery of aftercare services to young people up to the age of 21 years. Under service level agreements the voluntary organisations and private providers in partnership with Tusla provide an essential and valuable service to young care leavers. As a model of good practice for reviewing care plans and tracking young people who have left Tusla care regular update reports should be agreed as part of the young adults aftercare plan.

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## 2.0 The role of the child protection and welfare, children in care and fostering social work services

- The social worker is responsible for completing a written referral to the aftercare service when the young person in care is sixteen and a half years old.
- The allocated social worker will refer young people in care with complex needs, who require multiagency involvement in the development of their aftercare plan, to the local aftercare steering committee at 16 years.
- The allocated social worker is responsible for all statutory requirements arising under legislation and relevant regulations whilst the young person remains subject to care arrangements.
- The social worker/link worker has a key role in supporting foster carers in their role.
- The social worker/link worker must inform foster carers of the standardised aftercare allowance payable to carers if the young adults remains in placement from 18 years should they remain in education or training.
- Where a young person leaves care before their 18th birthday and is no longer subject to care arrangements, the allocated social worker is responsible for ensuring that arrangements are put in place for the referral of the young person to the aftercare service, if they meet the eligibility criteria.
- The role of the allocated social worker is to work in conjunction with the named aftercare worker in completing the assessment of needs and planning for preparation for leaving care and for development and delivery of aspects of the young person's aftercare plan.
- The allocated social worker's role is usually completed when the young person reaches 18 years and is no longer deemed to be in statutory care of Tusla, however it may well be appropriate that the allocated social worker would continue to support the young person, particularly if they have a significant relationship with the young person or if it assessed that a professional social work service is deemed necessary. In such instances primary responsibility rests with the aftercare service.

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## 3.0 Aftercare worker

- The aftercare worker is responsible for ensuring the assessment of need is carried out in conjunction with the allocated social worker, residential staff, foster carers and family. This should be completed within four to six months of referral to the aftercare service taking into account the needs of each young person.
- The aftercare worker is responsible for ensuring the completion of a written assessment report and the development of an aftercare plan which in conjunction with the allocated social worker, is integrated into the young person's overall care plan.
- The aftercare worker has the responsibility to develop an aftercare plan with the young person six months prior to their 18th birthday for young people who are leaving care.
- At 18 years of age the aftercare worker will take the lead on the provision of service to the young adult.
- The aftercare worker will support, guide and signpost the young adult in all aspects of their life for the period up until their 21st birthday unless in full time education to 23 years.
- The aftercare worker is responsible for supporting the implementation of this plan, over 18 years, through engaging with primary carers, keyworkers and relevant others in the delivery of core areas of work as determined by the aftercare plan.
- The aftercare worker has responsibility for providing ongoing support and assessment of need for young people allocated a worker as outlined in their aftercare plan.
- The aftercare worker plays a key role in supporting those who are directly supporting young people in aftercare and for working in close collaboration with all who are making a contribution to meeting the needs of young people in aftercare.
- The aftercare worker plays a key role advocating on the behalf of young people leaving care with other agencies with particular regard to housing, social welfare, education and training, community resources and counselling services.
- The aftercare worker will provide advice, guidance and support to those availing of an aftercare drop-in service.
- The aftercare worker will participate in local aftercare steering committees and refer young adults to same accordingly.
- The aftercare worker will adhere to the aftercare service consent policy at all times when sharing information. The aftercare worker will represent the young adult where consent is given in all inter-departmental discussions in relation to accessing services as an adult, including mental health, on housing issues, accessing financial support.

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## 4.0 The role of the aftercare manager

The role of the aftercare coordinator is to primarily manage the delivery of the aftercare service in the area. This includes:

- The aftercare co-ordinator is responsible for the appointment of a named worker to complete the needs assessment between 16 and a half and 17 years following referral to the service.
- Appointing an aftercare worker where the need has been identified at 17 years.
- Linking aftercare services to other community groups.
- Creating awareness of aftercare services amongst agencies, organisations and other State departments.
- Representing aftercare services at inter-departmental meetings, e.g. the Department of Education, HATS, youth groups, mental health services, SUSI, Disability Services, the Department of Environment, the Department of Social Protection.
- Advocating for positive discrimination for young people and young adults who have experience of care.
- Supervision of staff.
- Payroll returns.
- Managing staff HR issues.
- Case load management.
- Managing allocation of staff.
- Overseeing aftercare plans.
- Overseeing aftercare projects, e.g. peer mentoring, joint working protocols with other agencies.
- Financial management including, financial packages for young people in aftercare and service budgets.
- Considering referrals to the service including validating referrals of young people self-referring over 18 years.
- Responsibility for returning quarterly statistics.
- Chairperson of the local aftercare steering committee.
- Manage drop in services.
- Managing queries regarding the aftercare service.
- Managing complaints and allegations from young adults engaged with the aftercare service.

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## 5.0 The role of the foster carer: under 18 years and over 18 years

- To support and guide young people throughout their placement in making positive choices for themselves.
- To support young people in facing challenges in their lives.
- To support and guide young people in learning about practical elements of life including cooking, cleaning, self-care, managing their money.
- To have open and honest conversations with young people about their health, relationships, sex education and keeping themselves safe.
- To develop trust with young people in allowing them to explore the world in a safe way.
- To provide young people with opportunities to experience new things in life.
- To care for the young person throughout their placement.
- To encourage and support young people with their education and training including accessing grinds where applicable.
- To encourage young people to engage in their communities in a positive way and build on their support networks.

**Note:** It is recognised that many children in care present with challenges that are a result of their early childhood experiences and therefore in many situations support services such as psychology, speech and language, mental health services, may be required to support foster carers in their task. It is also important to note however that many foster carers do all of the above and more for children and young people in care on a daily basis in supporting and caring for them in their placements and throughout their adult lives.



