

It's OK to speak up

The ACT's Charter of rights for kids in care



Your rights are in the *Charter of rights for kids in care*. If you are unhappy about your care or think your rights are not being respected, there are people you can talk to for help.

YOUR RIGHTS

You have the right to **feel safe** and **tell someone** if you are **unhappy** or **worried** about something. Often you can talk to someone you know and they will try and make things better. If you think someone looking after you or working with you has made a mistake, treated you badly or unfairly, or made a wrong decision, there are people you can talk to who will help.

TALK TO SOMEONE YOU TRUST AND FEEL SAFE WITH

It's a good idea to talk to someone you trust about what has happened. They can help you to try and make things better.

TALK TO YOUR FAMILY, CARER OR CASE MANAGER

Sometimes talking to your family, carer, residential worker or case manager is the best thing to do first. You can also speak to your case manager's supervisor if you prefer. If you are not sure who your case manager or their supervisor is, you can:

- > ask your carer
- > call Child and Youth Protection Services on 6207 1069 or 6207 1466 and say you would like help to find your case manager or would like to speak to their supervisor.

TALK TO SOMEONE IN CHILDREN, YOUTH AND FAMILIES

The ACT Government has a **separate** office that listens to people who want to raise a concern or make a complaint about something that might be happening for a child or young person in care. You can also contact them and talk about what's bothering you and they will try and help you. It doesn't matter if you are living with your family in kinship care, with a foster family or in a residential house, this office can talk to all children and young people in care. You can contact them by:

- > calling 6207 5294
- > sending an email to cyf@act.gov.au
- > sending a letter to:

Community Engagement and Client Services
Community Services Directorate
GPO Box 158
CANBERRA ACT 2601

TALK TO SOMEONE AT ACT TOGETHER

ACT Together is a group of agencies that provide out of home care services for children and young people in the ACT. If you have a complaint or feedback about these agencies and you want to talk to them, you can:

- > call 6110 2200
- > email feedback@acttogether.org.au



TALK TO THE CREATE FOUNDATION

CREATE is an organisation especially for children and young people in care. You can talk to someone at CREATE about any problems. They can let you know what your rights are and help you get in touch with someone who can help. You can contact them by:

- > calling 6232 2409
- > emailing act@create.org.au

TALK TO THE HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION

The Children and Young People Commissioner and the Public Advocate work at the Human Rights Commission. They are **separate** from Child and Youth Protection Services and ACT Together, and help to make sure children and young people are being looked after well. You can talk to them about what's bothering you and they can work out ways of fixing the issue or making sure it doesn't happen again. You can contact them by:

- > calling 6205 2222
- > emailing actkids@act.gov.au

TALK TO AN OFFICIAL VISITOR

If you are in residential care or the Bimberi Youth Justice Centre you can ask to have an Official Visitor come to see you. Their job is to visit young people who are in residential care, in a youth justice centre or another place getting help with their mental health, to make sure they are being looked after properly. If you have a complaint you can let an Official Visitor know and they can help you resolve it. You contact an official visitor by:

- > calling 1800 150 036

TALK TO THE ACT OMBUDSMAN

The ACT Ombudsman can help you if your complaint relates to an ACT Government agency, such as Child and Youth Protection Services or the Police. If you have spoken to your carer, case manager or their supervisor and you're not happy with how they have responded, you can then talk to the Ombudsman. You can contact them by:

- > calling 6276 3773
- > emailing ombudsman.act.gov.au

TALK TO KIDS HELPLINE

If you're not sure how to raise what's bothering you or just want to talk to someone outside of your current situation, Kids Helpline can help. They provide free, 24/7, confidential and private counselling for children and young people aged five to 25 years old. You can talk to them about anything – anytime and for any reason. You can contact them by:

- > calling 1800 55 1800
- > emailing counsellor@kidshelpline.com.au
- > going online to www.kidshelpline.com.au

WHAT HAPPENS WHEN I GIVE FEEDBACK OR MAKE A COMPLAINT?

All these people will do their best to help you sort things out, or help you get in touch with someone who can better help you.

What happens after you make a complaint depends on what it is about. You might get some extra support, or there may be changes to how things are done in the place that looks after you. A decision that was made might be reviewed, or you might get more information about why that decision was made.

If you are not happy with the response given to you, you can ask why that decision was made about your complaint or feedback. You can also let the person know if you are not happy about it.

No matter what your concerns are, you should be kept up-to-date about what is happening with your complaint and how long it might take to work it out.

REMEMBER



Your rights are important, no matter where you live or who you live with. If you need to speak to some about your care, please speak up.

My case manager is:

Their number is:



ACT
Government
Community Services

