



Transitioning to an Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisation (ACCO)

October 2024

Information for carers

This document is for carers who have Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children in their care in New South Wales.

What is happening?

The NSW Government is committed to transferring the case management of Aboriginal children and their carers from Non-Government Organisations (NGOs) to Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisations (ACCOs) by June 2026.

Why is this happening?

ACCOs are community organisations that are Aboriginal-led and governed at all levels, so they are best placed to provide culturally safe care, carer support and case management to Aboriginal children and young people. This will help to ensure Aboriginal children and young people in out-of-home care can maintain and strengthen connections to their culture, belonging and identity. The NSW Government expects that all Aboriginal children and their carers will transition to an ACCO.

When is this going to happen?

The NSW Government is committed to transferring all Aboriginal children to ACCOs by June 2026.

If your child lives along the coast of NSW or close to a city or big town, there's likely to be an ACCO ready to go. You can ask your child's caseworker if they're already chatting with an ACCO.

If you live where there isn't an ACCO close enough, or there isn't one ready to go yet, it may take a little longer. Please click [here](#) to view the list of ACCOs currently providing OOHG services in NSW.

Every child and young person, family and carer household is unique, so it will take time and consideration to ensure that all transitions are as smooth as possible and suited to everyone's needs. When you, the child/ren and the ACCO are all ready, the transfer can happen smoothly and swiftly.



Communities and Justice

How will this happen? Who should I be talking to?

All the changes will be discussed with you, the child or young person, and their birth family prior to the transition to ensure the move to an ACCO is managed in a way that best supports the stability and wellbeing of the child/ren you care for, yourself and your household.

If you have any concerns or worries, ask your case worker to arrange for you to meet with your local ACCO (where appropriate) or for further information on the organisation and the support they can provide you, so you can learn more about their services and ask them questions.

To support you and the child/ren you care for throughout this process, you can expect that your current agency will:

- work with you to develop an individual and tailored transfer plan.
- build strong working relationships with the ACCOs in your area.
- arrange a time to meet with a case worker from any of the ACCOs in your area, once they are ready.
- address any questions that you may have or help find answers for you.

I have some concerns about the transition process and need further support. What should I do?

We encourage all carers of Aboriginal children and young people to transfer to an ACCO as it is in the best interests of the child and supports their right to cultural connection and safety. If you have any concerns or worries, we encourage you to raise these with your current NGO case worker to work out a plan that best suits your needs.

We encourage carers to reach out to their local ACCO to get to know them and have any

questions answered. Your current case worker can help arrange this for you.

I'm a non-Aboriginal carer. Will an ACCO accept my transition?

Yes. The focus of this project is to embed culturally appropriate case management and care for children and young people living with non-Aboriginal carers.

Will non-Aboriginal carers receive a different service to Aboriginal carers at an ACCO?

No. Transitioned non-Aboriginal carers will experience the same professionalism and services as transitioned Aboriginal carers. Your move to an Aboriginal agency demonstrates your commitment to providing the child in your care an enriched and ongoing lived experience of their culture. ACCOs work with Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal carers.

Is ACCO accreditation different from other NGOs?

No. ACCOs undergo the same rigorous accreditation processes and requirements as NGOs.

Do ACCO caseworkers have the same skills in case-management and child protection as other caseworkers?

Yes. Operationally, caseworkers, carer support staff, family time workers and therapeutic specialists have the same skillsets and knowledge as non-ACCO practitioners. Additionally, most ACCO staff will have important lived experiences and cultural knowledge that allows for a more culturally sensitive approach to working with Aboriginal children in care.



Communities and Justice

What if there are no ACCOs in my area currently providing foster care services?

There may not be an ACCO currently providing out-of-home care services in your area. Your current agency will keep you informed of any changes to this. Until there is an ACCO that provides OOHHC services within your local area, you will continue to work with your current agency.

Will ACCOs be provided with all the necessary background information on the child's care journey?

Yes. The case management transfer process includes your agency and the ACCO sharing important information about care arrangements, ongoing supports, needs and routines prior to the transition.

Can my current agency and the ACCO use dual authorisation for my household?

Dual authorisation may be possible. However, it is not always realistic or the preferred

Where can I find information and support?

Specific case enquiries should be made to your current agency. You can also engage a local ACCO directly, however, we advise that you keep your current agency informed of these conversations.

For general information and support, please visit the [ACWA Transition Hub](#) and the [AbSec Transition App website](#) which provide a suite of resources tailored to carers, young people, and NGO practitioners.

You can also contact My Forever Family, who are working with AbSec and ACWA to support carers through this process.

Further information

- [Department of Communities and Justice - Transition to Aboriginal out-of-home-care agencies](#)
- Office of the Children's Guardian – [Transition of Aboriginal children and young people](#)
- [ACWA Aboriginal OOHHC Transition Hub and Resources](#)
- [AbSec Aboriginal Transition Project Web App](#)
- [My Forever Family](#)

option for Permanency Support Program (PSP) providers or carers. The decision must be made on a case-by-case basis, be in the best interest of the child/ren and must be agreed to by all parties.

The child in my care has other strong cultural connections and heritage. How will their cultural care be managed by an ACCO? Will Aboriginal cultural planning be a priority?

All foster care providers have a responsibility to ensure a child's cultural background is celebrated, embraced, and included in case planning. There is no "picking one over the other" or prioritisation for children with multiple cultural connections and heritage. ACCOs understand the importance of connection to culture. Where children have multiple connections, the ACCO will support them in embracing all aspects of their heritage.