

Managing Case Loads in a Home Stretch WA Team

Introduction

Home Stretch Transition Coaches work an intentional way with all young people, focused on growing their interdependence in their community, self-reliance and will vary depending on each young person's individual needs and circumstances, balancing the case loads of coaches is a critical part of creating a healthy and sustainable team.

Transition Coaches should support a case load of 12 young people, shaped through understanding of things like travel distance, level of support need, case complexity and gender/cultural fit.

Some young people may choose to access the full Home Stretch WA Service Offer and positively engage with a Transition Coach on an ongoing basis. Other young people may have a positive & stable support circle already, have lower support needs or only require support on an ad-hoc basis in times of crisis, to access financial support or through the Staying On Agreement and Housing Allowance.



Stepping Back, Opting Out and Disengagement.

As young people progress through their journey with Home Stretch and move towards interdependence the goal is for young people to start “stepping back” as they rely more on their natural networks and support circles as they approach 21. There will be a natural transition as young people step back from support and develop their interdependence and some young people may choose to opt out of the program prior to turning 21 and this should be supported.

Young people may disengage from support at different periods either due to their current circumstances or not knowing what support is available to them through the Home Stretch program. Young people will need to be ‘opted out’ of the Home Stretch Program if they disengage from support. This is an important aspect of managing demand for a Home Stretch Team and to ensure all young people have access to the Home Stretch WA Service Offer.

Negotiating Engagement

Through their ongoing relationship with young people, Transition Coaches will individually negotiate with young people the level of support and contact they want from a Transition Coach based on their goals and needs and revisit this on a regular basis. Staying On Agreements and Housing Allowance have minimum levels of engagement due to the provision of a financial subsidy.

Engagement in support should be monitored and revisited regularly each Home Stretch Provider team to ensure balanced caseloads and managing future demand for the Home Stretch Service.

This guide provides some general guidelines and protocols for managing demand, engagement and opt out and some practical tips for Coordinators and Transition Coaches. Demand Management will continue to be tested through the roll out.

Strategies for Managing Demand – Intake and Onboarding

Hold Regular Intake Meetings

- Meet with your team regularly to review referrals and update progress.
- Intake meetings are not case discussion – keep them short and focused on onboarding not support planning.
- Create a culture of mutual respect, transparency and joint accountability.
- Encourage collaboration and sharing of engagement strategies/solutions.
- Secondary Support allocation is an important mechanism to allow for balancing case-loads.

Streamline your Process and Practice

- Better relationships with Districts and Champion can reduce time taken for smooth transition – Making time to connect regularly will save time
- Stage I Forms will identify Foster/Family Care – Involving the Staying On Facilitator at the beginning can speed up the process.
- Stage II Forms are used to guide engagement and onboarding – not a Transition Coach planning tool or assessment form.
- Find out who the young person trusts – Explore how they might support engagement.
- Expedite the process for young people who are willing to meet independently - Stage II can be a direct conversation with a young person about where and when to meet, and who they would like to be there.
- Use a combination of face to face and digital mediums to communicate the service offer to young people.
- Encourage your team to be consistent around 6-week limits – ensure extensions are to address barriers, not build motivation or appease referrers.
- Consider offering quarterly Info Sessions to target peak demand in districts, or to raise awareness of specific cohorts like Family/Foster Carers.

Use Your Data to Manage Intake

- Openly Track and Monitor Referral Progress on a Weekly Basis with Your Team
- Review the time taken between allocation, info sessions and onboarding as part of your allocation meetings.
 - Look for patterns by coach/district or young person e.g Young people in family care take longer to complete info sessions – How can the Staying On facilitator help?
 - Identify examples of fast engagement and onboarding of young people – What/Where is it working well?
 - Celebrate engagement wins with your team – what is the story behind the data.

Respect Young People's Right to Say No

- Cost benefit on team capacity of undertaking assertive follow-up for more than 12 weeks
- Trauma Informed Practice means restoring young people's choice and control – Giving them the chance to say "No" may encourage them to say "Yes" later

Regular Communication with District Office Staff & Champions

- Better relationships with Districts and Champion can reduce time taken for smooth transition – Making time to connect regularly will save time.
- Consider having referral meetings or updates with District Staff using a By Name list.
- Co-Location is an important mechanism for build trust and relationships that can reduce delays in onboarding and improve efficiency of referral.



Managing Demand Engagement and Opt-Out Protocols



Working Together

Working together with
DOC Case Manager from
17.5 to 18

- DoC provide primary support and case coordination
- Focus on building trust and relationship
- Smooth transition support to Home Stretch WA Provider by 18
- Funding, placement support and case management remain DoC responsibility.
- See *Working Together Resource* for more information and practice guidance

Active

Holistic,
Individualised, Flexible
and Relational.

- All Funding through Home Stretch WA
- Engagement is responsibility of Transition Coach - consistent, reliable and persistent.
- Frequency of contact based on need, agency and interdependence of young person
- Minimum 6 weekly contact through digital channels
- Assertive follow-up after 6 weeks of no response

Stepping Back

Supporting an Emerging
Interdependence

- Young Person has positive support circle and support needs are being met
- Young person has safe and stable housing
- All Funding through Home Stretch WA
- Negotiate reduced contact by coach
- Minimum 3 Monthly check
- Staying On/Housing Allowance continues to be reviewed as per agreement.
- Additional Engagement as directed by young person
- Opportunity to return to Active if needed
- In some teams this might be managed by a Duty system, the coordinator, a peer worker or the Staying On Facilitator

Opt-Out Voluntary

Young Person Chooses to
Opt- Out of Home Stretch
WA

- Young Person no longer wishes to engage with service
- Young person no longer identifies any support needed through the program
- Young person moves to a location that support cannot be realistically offered.
- Offer option to change Transition Coach where possible
- Provide information about right to return to support
- Provide information on rights to access supports through district office.
- Handover Summary provided to District Office

Opt-Out Disengagement

Young Person
disengages for more
than 12 weeks.

- Young person is uncontactable for more than 12 weeks
- Team have spent at least 6 weeks assertive follow up and attempting to engage.
- If no engagement, case reviewed by team and decision/time frame to Opt-Out is made.
- After 12 weeks, young person can be opted out of the program
- Staying On Subsidy or Housing Allowance Payment terminated.
- Handover Summary provided to District Office

Example Script- Email/Phone Call/Text Message

The below script can be used as a guide for re-engaging young people in support and explaining to young people the different levels of support available through Home Stretch and to negotiate or renegotiate the support that can be provided.

Below is a guide - language should be changed/considered depending on the young person's individual circumstances and relationship the Coach has.

Hey _____ I haven't heard from you in a while. I just wanted to check in to see how you are going and that you are still interested in receiving support from Home Stretch. Home Stretch isn't for everyone, and I wanted to let you know what we can offer and give you the option to "Opt Out" or "Step Back".

What does this mean?

OPT OUT- You no longer want to be involved in Home Stretch at all and want me to stop contacting you. You can still Opt back in at any time if you change your mind.

STEPPING BACK- You aren't sure **OR** you have too much going on right now to make a decision **OR** you need more information on what's on offer **OR** things are going well and you still want support but just don't have time or need to catch up that often.

What will we do if you choose to STEP BACK? We can discuss how often you want to hear from us and what our support looks like- this might be a phone call / visit every few weeks or you just contact us when you need support with something. At a bare minimum to stay on the program we will check in every 3 months and see how you are going and complete some basic outcomes tool- we can do this over the phone, online or in person. You might have to get help from someone else if I am not available.

What will we do if you choose to OPT OUT? We will complete basic email handover to the district office. You can opt back in at any time.

What do you need to do?

Please Let us know by responding to this text/call/email what you want to. We will give you follow up call/text on **DATE (2 weeks)** to check in on your response.

What will we do if we do not hear from you at all ?

If we don't hear back from you by (DATE- 2 weeks from Text/Email/Call) We will assume you no longer want to be involved in the Home Stretch program and want to "Opt Out". We will send you text to confirm that you have Opted out and complete an email handover to the District Office. You can still contact us if you want to OPT back in

Using Data to Manage Demand – Tips for Coordinators

Home Stretch WA is a commitment to offering young people a choice to Opt In and Opt Out by right, not by discretion. But this does not mean that the system needs to fund a coaching place for every eligible young person. Monitoring your Program Data will help you maintain a quality service and a healthy team.

Review Transition Coach Case Loads to ensure they are sustainable (quarterly).

Identify any coaches who might have;

- More than 50% of their case load as Low Needs or Stepping Back young people
- More than 50% of their case load being young people ageing out within a 6 month window.
- More than 80% of their case load high and moderate needs.

Raise in supervision and then use secondary support reallocation to begin reallocating cases to restore balance.

Review and track referral progress in a regular intake meeting (weekly or monthly), providing your team with a space to discuss together next

- Young people who have still not had an info session for over 6 weeks since they were allocated.
- Coaches with more than 50% case load still in allocation.
- Referrals that remain unallocated for more than 2 weeks – Stage I is a referral for an info session.

Assertive Follow up and then Opt-Out

- Any young person who signed up, but then has not engaged or responded for more than 6 weeks, followed by another 6 weeks.

Review and monitor the progress of onboarded young people in the Transition Coach Data Set as a way to improve practice and make the most of your service capacity.

Stepping Back

- 19+ young people in Stable Staying On with low needs, engaged in long term EET.
- 20+ with low support needs, and low engagement
- 20+ with low needs and high engagement

Emphasising a Support Circles Approach and Managing Balanced Case Loads in Supervision

- Role Model to your team (particularly in 1:1 with coaches) a commitment to reflective practice, and a respectful but consistent approach they should take with young people
- Be Persistent and Consistent as a Supervisor when you have identified specific issues or young people who needs to have their case reviewed, an engagement plan made, or potentially opted out. Follow up within 2 weeks to explore.
- Follow the Home Stretch WA Supervision practice guide and templates for inspiration about how to balance management of workload with reflective practice.
- Frame any conversation about transitions as a trauma conversation, using the Transition Coach Practice principles provides a youth friendly language to discuss difficult decisions.
- Ensure Coaches can identify a YP strengths and support circles before prompting them to discuss with young people Stepping Back or Opting Out.
- Healing of relation trauma, and the experience of being supported by a reliable transition coach who understands how to be transparent, and role models the experiencing of changes or ending of relationships and saying goodbye. Discussions about transitioning might trigger anxiety and fear, some young people might reject the coach entirely, others may start to experience more problems to justify ongoing engagement.
- Be attuned to vicarious trauma that can often be expressed as coaches feeling they 'are the only one' who can help the young person

- **Celebrate and focus attention on examples of support circles approach in team meetings.**
- **Ask Coaches to show you the eco-map or footprints tool they have used with young people to identify strengths and connections.**
- **Normalise Stepping Back as a goal by 20 and a way to ensure young people are ready to transition at 21.**
- **Avoid role modelling or communicating to coaches that this is about “making space” for managing demand and efficiency. It will foster resistance and devalue young people and make coaches roles become transactional.**

Demand Management – example scenarios (After a young person has onboarded)

| Possible Scenarios | How Home Stretch will respond | What happens to their allocated place? | How to Record |
|--|---|--|--|
| Dis-Engagement Young person not engaging after assertive follow-up, and attempts to offer an alternative worker or approach to engagement. Identify if support circle or contact that the young person is wanting to continue to engage. problems with making contact on current details or not responding to requests. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assertive Follow up to re-engage • Offered option of stepping back from support • If no engagement after 2 months Coach to action handover process and young person advised. • After 3 months then young person and District Office are advised, and place can be re-allocated. • Staying On Subsidy Payment ends • Handover Summary provided to District Office | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • After 3 months then young person and District Office are advised, and place can be re-allocated. <p><i>Can opt back In if current capacity from Home Stretch Provider 18-21</i></p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Updates status to “Opt Out-Disengage” |
| Opt Out (Voluntary) Young Person has positive support circle and limited support needs (safe and stable housing, Positive EET, low risk) Young person may have been supported to overcome crisis and connect with supports <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Young person may decide they do not want Home Stretch Support | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consider using “stepping back” to trial reduced contact and ensure support circles are meeting needs. And then plan to opt out as part of 'ageing out' early. • Handover Summary provided to District Office (with consent) • Access Funding through Leaving Care Fund and post care supports • Staying On/Housing Subsidy ends | <p>Place can be re-allocated</p> <p>Can opt back in in if current capacity in Home Stretch Provider from 18-21</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Updates status to “Opt Out – Voluntary |
| Opt Out (Disengaged) -Young Person has been ‘opted out’ due to non-engagement -Several Contact attempts have been made with no success. | <p>Text/email sent to YP acknowledging they have been “opted out” due to non-engagement and advising they can opt back in at any time but may be not get the same coach, or there may be some wait to be fully supported due to demand.</p> <p>Be honest and transparent, but do not attempt to pressure them to re-engage because they might 'miss out'</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assertive Follow up to re-engage • Offered option of stepping back • If no engagement after 2 months Coach to action handover process and young person advised. • After 3 months then young person and District Office are advised, and place can be re-allocated. • Staying On Subsidy Payment ends • Handover Summary provided to District Office • Opt back In if current capacity from Home Stretch Provider 18-21 | |

Demand Management – example scenarios (Stage I&II- 6 week referral/allocation period)

| Possible situations | How Home Stretch will respond | What happens to their place in the Program? |
|--|---|--|
| <p>Participant Non -Engagement</p> <p>Problems with making contact on current details</p> <p>Doesn't respond to any contact requests after several attempts</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Attempt to make contact at least once every week (email, text, phone, district office or via Support Circles) • If no contact has been received within 4 weeks after several attempts, then send notice giving the option to “opt out” or “step back” from support and to reply with answer (script can be used as a guide and can be personalized depending on situation) • Let them know if you do not hear from them by a certain date (e.g. if no contact within 4 weeks give them 2 weeks to respond- 6 weeks total) then you will take it that they don't want to be involved in Home Stretch • If no contact after 6 weeks then take it as a no. let the Young Person know they can opt be re-referred or contact at any time. • Participants that are receiving a Housing Allowance or Staying On Subsidy Are required to engage in support minimum- 3 monthly. • Young person remains on the list for 3 months as an allocated place to give time to opt back in? | <p>Young person can still opt back in at any time***</p> <p>Remain on list as “opt out”-non engagement</p> |