



## **Supported Independent Living (SIL) and Therapeutic Supported Independent Living (TSIL) – Service Overview**

For Supported Independent Living (SIL) and Therapeutic Supported Independent Living (TSIL) providers and Department of Communities and Justice (DCJ) practitioners supporting young people and young adults residing in these models

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# Document approval

The Supported Independent Living and Therapeutic Supported Independent Living Service Overview has been endorsed and approved by:

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Matthew Jones, A/Executive Director Child and Family  
Approved: 19 November 2024  
Document version control

Distribution:	Supported Independent Living and Therapeutic Supported Independent Living service providers, and DCJ Districts
Document name:	Supported Independent Living and Therapeutic Supported Independent Living Service Overview
Version:	Version 1
Document status:	Final Version
File name:	Supported Independent Living and Therapeutic Supported Independent Living Service Overview
TRIM Reference:	AF24/23464
Authoring unit:	Residential OOHC, System Reform Division   Child and Family Directorate
Date:	December 2024
Next Review Date:	July 2024

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# 1 Introduction

## 1.1 Purpose

The Supported Independent Living (**SIL**) and Therapeutic Supported Independent Living (**TSIL**) overview has been designed to outline a shared, consistent, clear view of these models across the sector and to identify and define key requirements for SIL and TSIL service providers.

The overview details the service requirements and expectations of SIL/TSIL service providers and Department and Communities and Justice (**DCJ**) to collaboratively support young people transition to independence with a network of family, social and community supports.

## 1.2 Background

SIL and TSIL are models providing support and accommodation for young people in statutory out of home care (**OOHC**) that are over 16 years of age. SIL and TSIL are designed to prepare and support young people to make a smooth transition from OOHC to independent living, self-reliance, and adulthood.

SIL and TSIL models are available to assist young people for **up to 24** months and are one of the many pathways considered when supporting young people to transition to adulthood from OOHC. SIL and TSIL are not designed to replace essential leaving care planning or be an exit point for leaving care.

## 1.3 Policy

SIL and TSIL are delivered under the Permanency Support Program (**PSP**) and subject to all relevant policies outlined in Schedule 4 of [the PSP Program Level Agreement](#).

The SIL and TSIL Service Overview sits alongside and is not intended to duplicate or supersede the range of resources available on the [DCJ Website](#) for service providers delivering SIL and TSIL under the PSP.

The following documents should be read in conjunction with this Service Overview:

### Leaving Care casework resources

- [Leaving and after care resources](#)
- [Developing a leaving and after care plan](#)
- [Leaving care planning and the NDIS](#)
- [Guide -NDIS Leaving Care Case planning document.](#)
- [PSP Learning Hub](#)

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- [Your Choice Your Future Independent Living Allowance](#) – accessible upon exiting SIL /TSIL model if aged 18-20 years old.

Other resources available on the [DCJ website](#) include information about the PSP funding model, contractual information, legislation, and policy that informs PSP practice, record keeping, and sector workforce development and training

## 2 Service Overview

SIL and TSIL aim to provide integrated accommodation and support for up to 24 months which is holistic and tailored to the young person's readiness for independence. This is achieved through the provision of suitable living arrangements, individualised case management and providing a range of support services to build the young person's skills to successfully transition from OOHC to independence.

The goals of the program are to:

- prevent young people transitioning from out of home care to homelessness
- maximise young people's capacity to live independently in the community
- improve social, economic, educational and health outcomes for young people leaving care.

TSIL provides a step-down placement option for young people from more intensive placement types following the application of therapeutic interventions.

SIL and TSIL are not a substitute for appropriate leaving care planning, which is mandated within the [Children and Young Persons \(Care and Protection\) Act \(1998\)](#). Leaving care planning is also mandated under the [Permanency Case Management Policy](#) and the [Office of Children's Guardian NSW Child Safe Standards for Permanent Care](#).

This means there needs to be a continued focus on leaving and aftercare planning to reduce the need for young people to remain in SIL and TSIL after their 18th birthday.

### 2.1 Delivery Structure

SIL and TSIL models do not have a prescriptive delivery structure. This is to give service providers' flexibility to deliver a service which is tailored to the individual needs of young people.

To support successful transitions to independence from SIL and TSIL, comprehensive and individualised planning is required to ensure outcomes for young people align with SIL and TSIL service expectations.

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## 3 Eligibility and referrals

### 3.1 Eligibility criteria

The target client group for SIL and TSIL are young people aged 16 to 17 years old at entry who:

- are in statutory OOHC
- are preparing to transition from OOHC to live independently
- have been assessed by DCJ Child and Family District Unit (SIL) or Central Access Unit (TSIL) as having the capacity to live in a supported independent living program and will have the capacity to live independently after a period of tailored support
- a Child Assessment Tool (**CAT**) outcome of low or medium needs for SIL, or a CAT outcome of high for TSIL.

Referrals for SIL/TSIL will only be considered where it can be demonstrated that the referring provider has undertaken work with the young person to prepare them for leaving care/independent living. This includes identifying areas for further skill development and a plan to achieve these skills (including timeframes).

In order to determine if a young person has capacity to be placed in SIL and TSIL, referrals must include evidence of:

- a comprehensive, targeted, individualised leaving care plan which outlines current independent living skills, goals, strengths and needs to support successful transition to independence
- access to (or in the process of accessing) financial assistance via youth allowance and/or employment
- completed Independent Living Skills Checklist
- the young person's views on transitioning to SIL or TSIL.

If the young person is unlikely to be able to live independently after a period of tailored support, SIL and TSIL is not an appropriate placement type at this time. The CFDU or CAU will work with the referring service provider to identify alternative options.

### 3.2 Unsuitable referrals

SIL and TSIL referrals are considered as part of a planned transition for young people with a level of independence and stability to engage in the model and live independently. It is not intended:

- for young people who require intensive (up to full time) additional rostered staff for a sustained period of time with no planned step down
- as an immediate/crisis placement option for young people, for example if there is a placement breakdown or the young person is aged 17 and 10 months or older and does not meet the eligibility criteria
- as a leaving care option or a supplementary source of after care

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funding due to lack of leaving care planning.

Approval to enter SIL and TSIL in the above scenarios will only be approved in very exceptional circumstances. If the young person is case managed by DCJ, Principal Officer endorsement is required. If the young person is case managed by a service provider, the provider's Principal Officer or equivalent endorsement is required.

All are subject to final approval from the Executive Director responsible for the CAU.

If a young person has previously been deemed ineligible, they can be re-referred to SIL or TSIL when they meet the eligibility criteria and there is supporting evidence to address previous feedback on the ineligible referral. Re-referrals will need to follow the appropriate referral pathways listed in below in 3.3.

### **3.3 Referral pathways**

Referrals for SIL are managed by the Child and Family District Unit (CFDU).

Referrals for TSIL are managed by the Central Access Unit (CAU).

Once a referral is accepted a transition plan will need to be developed by the referring casework team with the young person and negotiated with the agencies involved in the change of placement to SIL or TSIL.

If the young person is entering a SIL/TSIL placement in another District, the referring CFDU or CAU (TSIL) should engage the local CFDU so they are aware of the referral and the young person's individual needs prior to placement commencing.

### **3.4 Timeframes for SIL and TSIL**

The maximum amount of time a young person can remain in SIL or TSIL is 24 months.

Continued placement for young adults when they turn 18 years, is subject to ongoing DCJ monitoring and approval, please refer to Section 7 of this Service Overview for further information.

## **4 Service Responsibilities**

### **4.1 Department of Communities and Justice (DCJ)**

DCJ is a statutory agency responsible for keeping children safe. [The Children and Young Persons \(Care and Protection\) Act 1998](#) (the Care Act) allows DCJ to:



- 
- Respond to child protection reports meeting the risk of significant harm (ROSH) threshold or that are otherwise screened in for assessment
  - Exercise functions of parental responsibility for children in out-of-home care (OOHC), allocated to the Minister
  - Perform statutory duties in relation to all orders made under the Care Act, whether or not they involve the re-allocation of parental responsibility.

#### 4.1.1 Child and Family District Units (CFDU)

Local Child and Family District Units (CFDU) play an important part in referral, support and monitoring for SIL and TSIL placements.

CFDUs will:

- undertake the Child Assessment Tool with referring casework teams if needed to determine if a young person is considered for SIL or TSIL. (Note if the young person is transitioning from another ITC placement, this is not required)
- manage referrals for SIL and progress TSIL referrals to the CAU
- provide support and guidance to SIL and TSIL service providers who have case management responsibility for young people residing in SIL and TSIL
- provide secondary case management for young people when the SIL and TSIL provider hold primary case responsibility, including reviewing after care plan financials
- review a young person's continued need for a SIL/TSIL placement at 17.5 years or older as outlined in **section 7.4**.

For young people who are determined eligible for a referral to SIL, CFDU will speak with the referring casework team to ascertain whether the young person can reside with sibling, friends or others and determining what service provider is most appropriate to assist a young person's transition to adulthood based on the individual supports required.

#### 4.1.2 Central Access Unit

The Central Access Unit (**CAU**) is the centralised referral point for all Intensive Therapeutic Care (**ITC**) referrals, including TSIL.

The CAU will speak with the referring casework team to ascertain whether the young person can reside with others and determining what Service Provider is most appropriate to assist a young person's transition to adulthood based on the individual supports required.

#### 4.1.3 DCJ Commissioning and Planning (contract managers)

DCJ contract managers work closely with PSP providers, to ensure:

- 
- PSP contracts are achieving better outcomes for children and families
  - PSP providers have capacity and capability to deliver the outcomes agreed in contracts
  - issues and risks are being managed to ensure effective service delivery
  - clarity and accountability as to how funds are being used to meet clients' needs
  - monitor compliance in SIL and TSIL placements including but not limited to; case plans, not in placement, length of time in SIL and TSIL.

Contract Managers collaborate with CFDUs and PSP providers to:

- review a young person's continued need for a SIL/TSIL placement at 17.5 years or older as outlined in **section 7.4**.
- ensure PSP providers are receiving the correct funding packages
- identify issues and risks impacting effective service delivery.

More information about [roles and responsibilities](#).

## 4.2 Supported Independent Living and Therapeutic Supported Independent Living Service Providers

SIL and TSIL service providers are required to support young people to successfully acquire independent living skills through the provision of accommodation, casework support and structured and individualised life skills programs. SIL and TSIL provides a comprehensive and integrated response that prepares young people for independence by addressing their individual needs and working toward their case plan goal.

SIL and TSIL providers will hold primary case responsibility for young people, unless there are exceptional circumstances as outlined in the [Permanency Case Management Policy: Practice Rules and Guidance](#).

Entry into SIL and TSIL is a planned significant change for the young person. A case plan review will need to be developed with the young person, family and significant others, SIL/ TSIL provider and the referring agency prior to the young person entering the placement in line with [case planning timeframes](#).

# 5 Minimum Service Expectations

## 5.1 Service Expectations for young people under 18 years

SIL and TSIL models are expected to meet the requirements outlined in the [Permanency Support Program PLA and Schedules](#).

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The following service expectations outline standards to be upheld at a minimum to ensure quality support, care and opportunities for young people engaged in SIL and TSIL as they transition from OOHC to independence.

SIL and TSIL models are expected to deliver:

- subsidised accommodation, which is stable, appropriate, and affordable
- early planning with young people to secure stable accommodation to support their transition to independence from the SIL and TSIL model, including a 'stay put' option
- living skills training which include self-care, home management and budgeting
- support to build connection to community and non-service based networks including family and friends
- assistance to facilitate relationships with family, significant others and friends
- access to health and counselling services, therapeutic intervention, welfare and community resources, specialist medical, allied health and dental services.
- support to increase young people's capacity to access universal services as they approach 18 years of age
- assistance with access to education, training, vocational and employment assistance to support financial self sufficiency.
- education and support to develop parenting skills, where appropriate
- education and awareness of safe and appropriate relationships
- awareness of and access to local of aftercare services after completing the program
- ongoing support after completing the program until 25 years of age in line with the PSP PLA.

Service providers are required to ensure casework and youth work staff attend regular house meetings for continuity of care and any carers or volunteers are Authorised Carers.

#### 5.1.1 **Casework**

Each young person in a SIL or TSIL placement must be allocated a caseworker to ensure there is focus on their individual goals, strengths, and needs identified within their case plan and appropriate exit pathways are identified.

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The caseworker is required to support the young person through the process of developing their independent living skills, leaving care and after care case planning. Casework is provided flexibly on an as needed basis with levels of support gradually decreasing as a young person's competencies increase.

The SIL caseworker is required to have contact with the young person every week. Face- to-face contact is required on an as needed basis to ensure consistent support and planned goals are being achieved.

The TSIL caseworker is required to have face to face contact at a minimum once a week.

### 5.1.2 Youthwork

Youth work (rostered direct care staff) is funded within the SIL and TSIL to assist young people to develop the skills required for independent living.

This support can be flexible and tailored around a young person's individual needs, with the goal to step down the level of support towards transition to independence. Youth work support will vary for each young person and vary week to week while in the model.

Youth work supports can assist young people to access specialist services outlined in their case plan related to behavioural, emotional, psychological, educational, and physical health needs.

### 5.1.3 Accommodation

Provision of accommodation, which is stable, appropriate, and affordable is a key component of SIL and TSIL models. Providers are also required to commence early planning with young people to secure stable accommodation to support their transition to independence from the SIL and TSIL model, including a 'stay put' option where possible.

Living arrangements can include lead tenant households, supported tenancies and supported shared housing, described in the table below.

Supported shared housing	Lead tenant households	Supported tenancies
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Suitable for up to 3-4 young people able to live in a share house who do not require daily supervision or intensive case manager support.</li><li>• Casework support provided to young person in an environment of their choice</li><li>• A young person may stay in the accommodation after exiting the program.</li><li>• Young person cannot take</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Suitable for up to 2-4 young people requiring daily supervision.</li><li>• Live-in volunteer or carer as an Authorised Carer is the lead tenant and receives free rent and utilities to oversee the day-to-day running of the home and provides positive role modelling and informal personal support.</li><li>• The lead tenant has access</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Suitable for 1-2 young people who are not yet ready to live in a share living situation, are not suitable for lead tenant arrangement and require daily casework support.</li><li>• Intensive daily case work support provided to young people</li><li>• Support is gradually reduced as young person's</li></ul>

<p>over the tenancy as vacancies in share housing are to be filled when they become available.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A property owned by the Service Provider can be used for this type of arrangement because it remains open to new participants.</li> </ul>	<p>to 24 hour support.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Casework support provided to young person.</li> <li>• Young person(s) may have option of assuming the lease in cases where they have demonstrated the capacity to meet the obligations of the tenancy agreement.</li> </ul>	<p>competencies increase.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Young person(s) may have option of assuming the lease in cases where they have demonstrated the capacity to meet the obligations of the tenancy agreement.</li> </ul>
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#### 5.1.4 **What is not considered Supported Independent Living/Therapeutic Supported Independent Living accommodation**

The following are not considered suitable long term accommodation options for young people/adults in SIL/TSIL:

- caravans because they do are not secure or stable accommodation arrangements.
- shared households with a partner's family or extended family members' homes.

#### 5.1.5 **Additional expectations for Therapeutic Supported Independent Living**

TSIL is required to be guided by an overarching philosophy of Therapeutic Care, incorporate the Ten Essential Elements of Therapeutic Care and reflect current best practice standards and research around trauma, attachment, and resilience.

Therapeutic Specialists are to provide support to caseworkers, care team, authorised carers and volunteer authorised carers to formulate and implement the therapeutic aspects of the young people's case plans, facilitate access to specialist services and transition to exit OOHHC. They must support staff and volunteers to have a thorough understanding of and commitment to the guiding philosophy of therapeutic care.

## 5.2 **Over 18 year olds residing in Supported Independent Living and Therapeutic Supported Independent Living**

Young adults over 18 years of age who continue to reside in SIL and TSIL placements are no longer legally in OOHHC. For young adults over 18 years of age approved to remain in SIL or TSIL up to the 24 months, the provision of accommodation and targeted support continues to assist young adults to support their transition to independence.

Service providers are expected to:

- 
- act as an advocate for the young adult providing emotional support, guidance and encouragement throughout their journey towards independence
  - collaborate with the young adult to set goals and develop plans for achieving those goals, supporting ongoing growth and development
  - encourage the young adult to participate in social and recreational activities, connect them with local community resources and support networks and foster opportunities for meaningful relationships and social integration
  - support and guide the young adult to develop and sustain connections with family, kin, community, and culture where safe and appropriate
  - show the young adult how to independently access local universal healthcare services and supports, such as medical, dental, mental health, AOD counselling, sexual health
  - support the young adult in pursuing their education or vocational training goals, assist with job search and resume development, providing guidance on interview skills, helping them navigate the transition into the workforce
  - assist with developing essential life skills, such as budgeting, meal planning and preparation, cleaning and maintenance of living space, time management, and personal hygiene
  - link young adults into local education and support services to develop parenting skills where appropriate
  - provide culturally informed care for Aboriginal and CALD young adults
  - collaborate with the young adult to plan for their transition to independence from SIL/TSIL
  - assist the young adult to secure stable accommodation including stay put options or accessing housing initiatives such as Rent Choice Youth and contribute costs to their accommodation
  - support the young adult to access and maximise entitlements under available government supports, including NDIS, Centrelink, Your Choice Your Future initiative (once they exit SIL/TSIL), and their after care financial plan
  - update whereabouts record and inform contract manager if young adult is away from placement
  - notify police, fire, ambulance and other emergency services if there is a situation of immediate risk, including when a life is in danger, there is immediate risk of significant harm, young adults' behaviour will result in serious harm to themselves or others, a serious crime is taking place, or a situation is serious and could be described by a reasonable person as an emergency.
  - inform DCJ of any situation outlined above involving a young adult residing in SIL/TSIL.

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As young adults transition to independence:

- link the young adult with an after care support services as they prepare to exit SIL/TSIL to promote their independence
- update placement record if young adult has left SIL/TSIL placement
- provide access to aftercare support as required up until the age of 25 years

#### **5.2.1 Additional information for Therapeutic Supported Independent living for over 18 year olds**

The provision of a Therapeutic Specialist is not a requirement for over 18 year olds in TSIL, however funding can be used flexibly for this purpose depending on the provider's service delivery model and the needs of the young adult.

When supporting placements for over 18 year olds, service providers will need to consider how a young adult provides consent for the Therapeutic Specialist to work with their care team.

## **6 Funding Packages**

SIL and TSIL placements are funded under the [PSP funding packages](#).

The SIL and TSIL baseline package supports the young person in their placement. The baseline package includes the service providers' accommodation, overhead, administration, casework and other staffing costs.

For additional information please refer to [Permanency Support Program \(PSP\) Packages: Eligibility Rules and Inclusions](#).

### **6.1 Funding for young people (under 18 years of age)**

Each young person (under 18 years of age) also receives a case plan goal package and a child needs package which is guided by the CAT outcome.

### **6.2 Funding for young adults (over 18 years of age)**

Young adults over 18 years of age residing in SIL and TSIL will be funded under a standalone baseline package. This package acknowledges that as young adults they are no longer legally in statutory OOHC, therefore the case plan goal and child's needs package are no longer required.

## **7 Data, reporting and monitoring**

[Schedule 2 of the PLA](#) sets out DCJ's performance and outcomes data reporting requirements for SIL and TSIL, including the Key Performance



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Indicators and other outcomes measurement data that service providers will be required to report on.

#### **7.1.1 Data Collection and Record Keeping**

SIL and TSIL service providers must maintain accurate and comprehensive child centered records for all young people and young adults residing in SIL and TSIL including updates to ChildStory placement and whereabouts records.

All records relating to the young person and young adults must be kept securely to ensure privacy and security.

All life story work and original identity documentation is to be provided to the young person when they transition to independence or turn 18 years of age.

For additional information please refer to the [PSP Funding Deed](#), [PLA](#) and [Managing your OOHC records](#).

### **7.2 Regular reviews**

Young people (under 18 years) and young adults (over 18 years) residing in SIL and TSIL are to be discussed during contract and/or operation meetings to confirm the young person or young adult is engaged in the model, ensure the model continues to meet the needs of the young person and they are progressing towards exiting to independence at 18 years of age if possible, or as soon as possible within the 24 months.

This promotes ongoing oversight of the young person's transition to independence and allows collaborative discussions around any identified gaps or barriers.

### **7.3 Away from Placement**

The [Away from Placement](#) policy applies to young people under 18 years and young adults over 18 years of age in SIL and TSIL. The policy outlines:

- definition of away from placement
- notification process
- case and casework responsibility during an away from placement period.

Any away from placement period needs to be reviewed and monitored in line with the policy.

For young adults over 18 years of age, there is no not in placement period or funding available. If the young adult has been away from placement for 4 weeks or longer, the service provider, contract manager and local CFDU should discuss the placement being closed with individual supports (such as youth work or mentoring support) built into the young adult's after care case plan.



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Placement record will then need to be updated accordingly by the agency with case management responsibility.

## **7.4 Review prior to 18 years of age**

The SIL and TSIL review form (annexure A) is required to be completed by the agency with primary case responsibility for young people 17.5 years residing in a SIL or TSIL placement who are seeking approval to remain in SIL/TSIL beyond 18 years of age. The review form is to be submitted to the local Child and Family District Unit for review and is subject to DCJ approval outlined in section **7.4.1**.

The purpose of the review form is to:

- capture how the young person is progressing towards their transition to independence
- provides the opportunity to capture the young person's voice and experience in SIL/TSIL
- confirm the young person continues to meet eligibility criteria to support the decision as to whether the young person is approved to remain in SIL/TSIL after turning 18 years
- ensure SIL/TSIL is the most appropriate option to meet the needs of the young person or if they could successfully transition to independence with less intensive or alternative supports
- confirm similar accommodation and/or independent supports are not available or already being provided through another program such as Premier's Youth Initiative (PYI) or as part of their NDIS plan
- ensure there is targeted focus from SIL/TSIL service providers on early planning to build support networks and successfully transition young people from the model into independence.

If there is a planned exit date from SIL or TSIL within 3 months of turning 18 years of age, a review form does not need to be completed and approval to remain in SIL/TSIL for this period is not required.

If circumstances change, and the planned exit may not occur within the 3 months, the review form should be submitted to DCJ to seek approval to remain in SIL/TSIL placement before the 3 month period is over.

If a young person has only just entered a SIL or TSIL placement at 17.5 years old or enters SIL or TSIL after this time, the review form is to be completed by the referring provider as part of their referral.

### **7.4.1 Timeframes for completing the review form:**

The agency with case management responsibility is to complete the review form for young people:

- 
- at 17 years and 6 months of age in SIL/TSIL who require approval to remain in SIL/TSIL beyond 18 years of age (not required if the young person has a planned transition within 3 months of turning 18)
  - if the young person enters between the ages of 17 and 17 and 5 months the referral form is required to be completed 6 months after entry
  - if young people are being referred for SIL/TSIL at 17 years and 6 months (or older), the **referring** service provider is required to complete all sections at the time of referral, outlining targeted supports and timeline to successfully transition from SIL/TSIL to independence.

#### 7.4.2 Approval to remain in SIL and TSIL over 18 years of age

Approval to remain in SIL/TSIL post 18 years of age will only be considered based on individual needs of the young adult and supporting documentation outlining timeframes and level of support required to successfully transition to independence.

SIL and TSIL service providers are required to provide the completed SIL/TSIL review form and supporting documentation to their local CFDU.

- The following approvals are required to determine if the extension is supported or not supported in SIL, DCJ manager client services, CFDU and contract manager to document the rationale for the extension to be supported/not supported. AND
- Director (Commissioning and Planning or Community Services as per district processes) in the district with secondary case responsibility.

The following approvals are required to determine if the extension is supported or not supported in TSIL:

- DCJ manager client services, CFDU and contract manager to document the rationale for the extension to be supported/not supported.
- Director CAU

#### 7.4.3 Approval to remain in SIL and TSIL over 18 years of age is not endorsed

If approval to remain in SIL or TSIL after turning 18 years of age is not endorsed, the agency with primary case responsibility will need to continue to explore all alternate options available and ensure the aftercare case plan and financial plan reflects their current needs.

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If the review identifies concerns about service delivery, these may be raised as part of contract management.

## 8 Exit outcomes

Service providers are required to provide DCJ CFDU (SIL), CAU (TSIL), and contract manager with information on all exits using the SIL and TSIL exit form (annexure B). This form is to be submitted to relevant DCJ contacts within five days of the young person/adult transitioning from SIL/TSIL.

DCJ program manager (Child and Family) will use this data to track model outcomes and trends.

## 9 Annexures

- Review form
- Exit form