



On 16 July 2019, the Out-of-Home Care (OOHC) Service Delivery Program Board (the Program Board) endorsed the primary recommendation of the Independent Reference Group (IRG) to defer the procurement of new OOHC services.

The role of the IRG is to represent the OOHC community services sector on the OOHC reforms to the Program Board. The deferment will allow for further collaboration between: the Department of Communities (Communities); the IRG; young people with care experiences; families; Community Service Organisations (CSOs); Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisations; and the Aboriginal community in relation to OOHC services.

To support this work, CSOs currently funded by Communities to provide OOHC services will receive an extension to their current contracts for 30 months (new expiry date will be 31 December 2022) plus two, six-month extension options that can be used subject to project timeframes. In addition, the IRG has given a commitment to work with Communities and existing providers to negotiate contract variations to address some of the immediate and pressing issues within the system.

Providers will receive an invitation to participate in a workshop to agree on some common changes to all services, or across a particular service group. Additionally, individual meetings will occur to negotiate any individual changes to a specific CSO contract that may be required.

It is anticipated contract extensions will be finalised by November 2019. Negotiations and associated contract variations are expected to be finalised by early 2020.

I would like to take this opportunity to draw your attention to the [Funding and Contracting Services Bulletin: August 2019](#) regarding service sustainability and the Equal Remuneration Order. I encourage CSOs to submit a response by 30 September 2019 and to discuss sustainability concerns relating to wage pressures with your Contract Manager.

Communities remains committed to progressing the OOHC reform agenda as outlined in [Building a Better Future: Out-of-Home Care Reform in Western Australia](#). This includes a commitment to delivering better outcomes for all children and specifically Aboriginal children in care, who are currently over-represented within the OOHC system.

In agreeing to defer the procurement of new services for children in OOHC, there is a recognition that working together, sharing information and keeping children at the heart of our decision-making will help bring about meaningful connection to family and improved life outcomes.

I encourage you to visit the [Out-of-Home Care Reform](#) section on Communities website to read the joint announcement made by the Program Board and the IRG.

Regards,

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Commissioning and Sector Engagement