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## **Auditor General calls on agencies and service providers to work together to better support young people leaving care**

In her latest report, Western Australia's Auditor General, Caroline Spencer, has found that while support services for young people leaving State care make a positive difference, around 65% were not getting the services early enough, or at all.

Ms Spencer said without appropriate support services, young people leaving care were at higher risk of being homeless, unemployed, missing out on education and training, and not getting the physical and mental health care they need.

'Overall, the Department of Communities, leaving care providers and other agencies are not effectively communicating and working together to link young people to vital services like housing or health care,' she said.

'The leaving care support the Department provides changes the lives for the better of the young people who receive it.

'However, many care leavers, especially those with complex needs, are not well prepared to leave care and start living independently.

'Planning for young people leaving care and referrals to leaving care providers often happens too late, and many young people are not effectively engaged in their plans - as a result, the young person's needs are often not adequately captured.'

Ms Spencer said there was much work to be done to achieve effective coordination between the Department and its service providers, and to get other government agencies to be an active part of meeting care leavers' needs.

'In many ways the support that care leavers need is not complex – somewhere to live, access to education and training, help finding a job and getting healthcare,' she said.

'But providing that support can be complex. Partly, because these young people can be difficult to engage, but also because effective support relies on a network of government agencies and service providers working together.

'While this has happened for some young people, it has not been consistent enough to make sure that all the young people who need support get it.

'The Department advised that it is already progressing improvements in this area.

'My recommendations should assist the Department to achieve better targeted support for more young people leaving care, helping them make a successful and stable transition to life after care.'

The Auditor General's report, *Young People Leaving Care* (Report 2 of 2018-19), is available on the Office of the Auditor General website at [www.audit.wa.gov.au](http://www.audit.wa.gov.au).

ENDS

