



# Youth detention centre

## OPERATIONAL POLICY

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**Title:** YD-1-15 Youth detention – Independent living units

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### Policy statement

The department is committed to providing young people in youth detention centres (YDCs) access to a range of programs and supports that assist to address their offending behaviours and successful reintegration back into the community. The use of independent living units is a key mechanism to achieve this.

The department will ensure that young people in youth detention are provided with opportunities to develop independent living skills in accordance with assessed case plan needs.

### Principles

#### 1. General principles

- 1.1 Independent living units are designed to provide opportunities for young people to learn independent living skills while detained in a secure environment.
- 1.2 Independent living units will be considered for young people (remanded or sentenced) where assessed as beneficial to the young person through the case planning process.
- 1.3 Independent living units can also be used for:
  - a reward for young people who demonstrate positive behaviours consistent with the behaviour support framework
  - purposes in accordance with the operational needs of the centre (following a satisfactory risk assessment of the discrete needs of young people, individual unit design and capacity).
- 1.4 Access to independent living arrangements aim to facilitate the protection and promotion of the human rights of young people in accordance with the *Human Rights Act 2019*.

#### 2. Purpose of independent living units

- 2.1 Independent living units are designed to promote and support young people to self-manage their day-to-day requirements within a secure environment.
- 2.2 While living in these units, young people will be provided with interventions based on their assessed case planning needs. These interventions may include a focus on helping young people to:
  - develop independent living skills including contributing to a young person's healing in ways that are meaningful to regain their safety, confidence and optimism
  - develop coping and problem-solving skills
  - develop group and individual decision-making and social skills
  - build self-esteem and self-management skills
  - help young people transition back into mainstream educational, vocational and employment programs
  - establish links with relevant community-based services such as health/mental health services



- support young people to establish non-offending social networks with, for example, sporting clubs and cultural and religious groups
- establish links with family, community members or mentors – leaves of absence should be facilitated for this purpose, as appropriate
- support young people to find suitable accommodation upon release.

2.3 In line with the reintegration and transition planning process, a range of Youth Justice staff and other government and non-government agencies will be engaged to delivering these interventions and supports.

2.4 While in the independent living unit, young people are expected to participate in programs that address their offending behaviour and assessed needs.

### 3. Casework, risk and security assessment

3.1 Independent living unit placements must be managed in a way that balances the needs of the young person with safety and security risks.

3.2 The department acknowledges the risks inherent in providing young people with the opportunity to experience independent living within a secure YDC environment.

3.3 To mitigate these risks, the multidisciplinary team will:

- assess young people identified in 1.2 and 1.3 to determine whether they can be safely accommodated in the independent living unit in accordance with the independent living unit risk assessment framework (refer to Appendix A)
- immediately re-assess a young person's suitability for the independent living unit if individual risk factors change, giving consideration to the human rights of young people record the risk assessment outcome and rationale on DCOIS
- establish a risk minimisation strategy for each independent living unit occupant, inclusive of required staff arrangements, that is regularly reviewed for the duration of the placement in the independent living unit.

3.4 The multidisciplinary team will comprise appropriate Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander representation to ensure that cultural considerations are factored into risk assessments and decision making relevant to the independent living unit.

3.5 Young people's views about living in the independent living unit will also be taken into account at all stages of the planning and assessment process to the fullest extent possible.

3.6 The multidisciplinary team will recommend a young person's placement in the independent living unit to the executive director (ED) following consideration of the case and security risk assessment and development of risk minimisation strategies.

3.7 Based on advice and recommendations from the multidisciplinary team, the ED will decide whether to approve the placement of each young person in the independent living unit.

### 4. Induction

4.1 Prior to transferring into an independent living unit, the unit manager will meet with the young person, in the presence of their caseworker, to discuss:

- purpose and responsibilities of the independent living unit
- inventory and supplies
- routine, programs, services and skills instruction
- meals
- safety and security
- contact and communication within the independent living unit
- exiting the independent living unit.

4.2 The young person must agree to the conditions of the independent living unit. In order to help them to make an informed decision, the unit manager will make arrangements for eligible



young people to visit the independent living unit and meet other young people living in the unit (where applicable) before making their decision.

## 5. Monitoring and review

5.1 The multidisciplinary team will:

- monitor the young person's behaviour, wellbeing and progress against case planning and goals on a weekly basis (or more frequently as required)
- determine the consequences for a young person who breaches the agreed expectations of living in an independent living unit (transfer from the independent living unit may be considered where appropriate).

## 6. Supervision of the independent living unit

- 6.1 The unit manager, will determine supervision arrangements as required in consultation with the multidisciplinary team. Supervision arrangements should be culturally appropriate and gender specific.
- 6.2 The unit manager will review supervision arrangements as required in consultation with the multidisciplinary team noting that the level of support young people will require should reduce over time as they learn the skills associated with independent living.
- 6.3 The ED will approve additional funding for staff as necessary.

## 7. Exiting the independent living unit

- 7.1 The unit manager in conjunction with the caseworker, will conduct an exit interview with the young person about their experience in the independent living unit.
- 7.2 The unit manager will coordinate an inspection of the condition of the independent living unit with the young person.

## 8. Record keeping

- 8.1 All assessments, forms and other records relating to the young person living in the independent living unit must be scanned and uploaded onto DCOIS. Originals must be filed on the young person's file and provided to the caseworker.

## Objectives

This policy aims to ensure the independent living units are used in accordance with the Charter of Youth Justice principle 20(h) that requires that a child detained in a detention centre should receive appropriate help in making the transition from being in detention to independence and case management requirements to support young people as they move towards their release date.

This policy aims to ensure that independent living units are used in accordance with section 263 of the *Youth Justice Act 1992*, which requires that the ED:

- provides services and supports that promote the social and cultural development of young people
- maintains the security and management of the centre.

## Scope

This policy applies to young people remanded or sentenced in a YDC who are accommodated, or will be accommodated, in an independent living unit. It is acknowledged that the use of independent living units may vary across locations in response to operational requirements and the discreet needs of young people. Where physical infrastructure is not used for independent living purposes, individualised YDC operating models ensure young people receive independent living skills through a range of therapeutic programs, services and activities.



The policy is part of a suite of policies and procedures developed to encourage and support independent living skills that will assist young people's reintegration through access to independent living units. This policy is to be read in conjunction with the Youth Detention Centre Operations Manual, in particular Chapter 1 – Care and management of young people.

## Roles and responsibilities

- Director, Statewide Intel and Secure Services Support:
  - review and update this policy as required
  - provide practice advice to support compliance with this policy.
- ED:
  - ensure the use of independent living units is in accordance with this policy and legislative requirements
  - approve placement in the independent living unit
  - approve staff and supervision requirements.
- Multidisciplinary team:
  - through case planning identify, assess and recommend young people who are eligible for transfer to an independent living unit
  - undertake casework and security risk assessment and risk minimisation strategies
  - ensure the young person's case plan is being implemented
  - monitor and review the young person's progress in the unit and provide feedback to young people on their progress
  - make decisions in relation to young people exiting the independent living unit where expectations of the unit are not met.
- Unit manager:
  - discuss individual and group progress in the unit
  - security and risk assessment
  - ensure young people receive the help they need to successfully participate in the unit
  - ensure each young person living in the independent living unit has an individual induction
  - establish supervision requirements
  - manage exit process.
- YDC operational staff:
  - help young people to learn independent living skills through mentoring and practical guidance and support the principles of the unit
  - complete audits of dangerous goods and restricted articles
  - help with food request and bulk stores forms.

## Authority

*Youth Justice Act 1992*

*Youth Justice Regulation 2016*

## Delegations

Position	Delegation
Deputy Director-General Assistant Chief Operating Officer Senior Executive Director Executive Director, Youth Detention Centre Director, Statewide Intel and Secure Services Support	<i>Youth Justice Act 1992</i> Section 263 (5) – comply with youth justice principles.



## Definitions

For the purpose of this policy, the following definitions shall apply:

Term	Definition
Independent living unit	An accommodation unit in a YDC that has been constructed to reflect the living conditions more typically found in a community setting. The units will have shared bathroom, laundry and kitchen facilities.
Multidisciplinary team	Refers to client services at BYDC and CYDC and the therapeutic response team at WMYDC. These teams include therapeutic staff such as caseworkers, psychologists and cultural experts.
Reintegration and transition	The process of progressively preparing a young person for release by making sure support is individualised to meet each young person's needs. Reintegration and transition activities are built into the case plan and should start when a young person's release date is approaching. These activities may include work experience, shopping trips, visits to community organisations, Centrelink, and other social supports.

## Human rights compatibility statement

Youth Justice is committed to respecting, protecting and promoting human rights. Under the [Human Rights Act 2019](#), Youth Justice has an obligation to act and make decisions in a way that is compatible with and properly considers human rights. When making a decision about the care and management of young people, decision-makers must comply with that obligation.

## Multicultural Queensland Charter

Youth Justice supports the [Multicultural Queensland Charter](#), established under the *Multicultural Recognition Act 2016* (Qld). The Charter seeks to promote Queensland as a unified, harmonious and inclusive community.

## Child safe standards

The Royal Commission into Institutionalised Responses to Child Sexual Abuse developed several national [child safe standards](#) for institutions and organisations working with children. Youth Justice is cognisant of these standards when considering operational practice guidelines and service delivery in community and youth detention centres.

## State disability plan

Youth Justice will work with our partners to build a fairer, more inclusive Queensland where people with a disability, their families and carers are able to access the same opportunities, on the same basis as everyone else. We will take actions to progress the priorities of the [All Abilities Queensland: opportunities for all](#) state disability plan and support improved access to services for Queenslanders with disability.

## Feedback and reflective practice

Youth Justice recognise that best practice is a constantly evolving process. The Youth Justice Framework for Practice posits that our values guide us in all aspects of our work, including a departmental commitment to continuous improvement and effectiveness. All Youth Justice staff are encouraged to provide feedback about operational policy and procedure to inform routine review of our work to maintain a high standard of service delivery. Please make your views known through your management team or by emailing [YDCPracticeEnquiries@youthjustice.qld.gov.au](mailto:YDCPracticeEnquiries@youthjustice.qld.gov.au).




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## Communication strategy

- publish on intranet
- publish on internet
- advise staff to read
- supervisors discuss with direct reports

## Links

[Australasian Youth Justice Administrators \(AYJA\) service standards for juvenile custodial facilities](#)

[Human Rights Act 2019](#)

[Queensland Human Rights Commission](#)

[United Nations Rules for the Protection of Young People Deprived of Their Liberty 1990](#)

Youth Detention Centre Operations Manual

Youth Justice Delegations

Youth Justice Policies

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Bob Gee  
Director-General