

Information for Non-Government Organisation Service Providers - Transferring client related files to the Department of Communities (Child Safety Services)

The department of Communities (Child Safety Services) (the department) aims to work in partnership with Non-Government Organisation Service Providers (NGOs) to keep children and young people's client records secure and accessible for many years to come. In addition the department is strictly governed by laws to ensure both privacy and Freedom of Information for its clients. For these reasons the department requires that closed client files (relating to children and their families) are transferred from the NGOs to the department.

All files transferred from NGOs will be recorded in the department's records management database ensuring that files can be easily found and retrieved.

This document provides advice to NGOs on transferring paper based client files to the department.

The files that the department wants NGOs to send to it are those that contain client related records created by NGOs while providing services to clients of the department.

The client files which are to be transferred to the department for storage include those that are:

- closed
- from an NGO that has stopped providing services to a client or family group of the department
- from an NGO that has stopped providing their services to the department
- from an NGO which will or has closed
- related to a departmental client who has reached the age of 18 years.

In addition:

- All transportation costs will be met by the department. The department will also supply archive type boxes or sturdy post packs.
- Carer files are not required to be sent to the department.
- Soon after client files are closed (after the NGO has stopped working with the client) they should be transferred to the department.

Access to information

- Once transferred to the department all files (including personal items such as photographs) will be available to clients free of charge through the department's normal Freedom of Information process.
- NGO's may have access to a photocopy of the file they transferred to the department if required for future administrative purposes. The original, however, will not be returned to the NGO, as it will be required for FOI purposes of the department.

The department requires the transfer of client files, but not NGO administrative files, because:

- A client file contains all documents relating to the provision of service to an individual or family group. These records are subject to Freedom of Information requests and should be kept for a long time, so that clients can access their own records.
- Administrative records held on client files, that provide evidence (e.g. of items purchased) as part of the service to the client, may be transferred with the client file.

- Administrative files contain records that relate to general activities resulting from NGOs undertaking normal business. These files include staff rosters or timesheets. Administrative files must be retained by NGOs for their own records.

This form is available on the Internet at: <http://www.childsafety.qld.gov.au/partners/documents/ngo-transfer-client-files.pdf>