



**ACT**  
Government



youth  
coalition  
of the ACT

# SAFE AND CONNECTED YOUTH:

## Coordinated Service Response

## Building shared understanding: service models and collective next steps

Community Services Directorate  
in partnership with the  
Youth Coalition of the ACT

August 2021

# CONTENTS

**SUMMARY ..... 3**

**BACKGROUND..... 4**

    Action Learning Approach ..... 5

    What did we learn? ..... 5

    Demand for the Coordinated Service Response ..... 5

**WHERE TO NOW?..... 6**

    Problem Statement ..... 6

    Proposed Solution ..... 6

**THE COORDINATED SERVICE RESPONSE COMPONENTS:..... 8**

    Early Preservation Outreach..... 8

    Therapeutic Respite Accommodation ..... 8

        Which therapeutic care service model is right for us? ..... 8

    Post-Exit Outreach ..... 13

**NEXT STEPS: ..... 14**

    Project principles..... 15

**ALIGNMENT WITH OTHER REFORMS: ..... 16**

**RESOURCES:..... 16**

    Contact Us..... 17

# SAFE AND CONNECTED YOUTH

## Coordinated Service Response

### SUMMARY

Children and young people in their 'middle years' experiencing family conflict may be at risk of homelessness. They may also be disengaging from education, experiencing a lack of support to manage health issues and may be at risk of interactions with the child protection and youth justice systems. These complex multi-faceted issues require wrap-around therapeutic services, which provide support for not only the child or young person, but also their parents, carers and family members to support the resolution of family conflicts and ensure a safe home environment.

The Safe and Connected Youth (S&CY) pilot program responded to a need for a targeted, early support program working with children, young people and their families to reduce the risk of homelessness in the longer term.

The pilot program demonstrated the impact of a service that considers youth homelessness as a social problem, which rebuilds relationships with families to improve family functioning and enable children and young people to return home or remain safely at home where possible. Through the pilot program, children, young people and their families have been supported to have improved outcomes across a range of domains such as housing, education and mental health.

While delivering outcomes for the cohort very early in the life of homeless risk, the pilot program also collected evidence to demonstrate the value of implementing a continuum of support which includes a therapeutic respite accommodation service.

Building on the success of the pilot program and the evidence gathered, the ACT Government has committed to ongoing funding to deliver a coordinated service response for children and young people aged 8 to 15 years who are experiencing family conflict and may be at risk of homelessness.

This expanded offering will be referred to here as the S&CY Coordinated Service Response. The coordinated service response includes:

- Early preservation outreach;
- Therapeutic respite accommodation; and
- Post-exit outreach.

A Housing ACT property is currently being refurbished to support the delivery of the coordinated service response. The property refurbishment is due to be completed in late 2021 or early 2022. With this in mind, it would be ideal for services to be in place from early 2022.

The Community Services Directorate (CSD) is now progressing commissioning of the coordinated service response with support from the Youth Coalition of the ACT.

Strong exploration, service design and engagement activities have been a cornerstone of the S&CY initiative to date. The development and delivery of the pilot program has been well documented and shared as a Commissioning in Practice Case Study. CSD are committed to continue to work in partnership, creating opportunities for genuine engagement and collaboration to support the service planning, procurement and implementation of the S&CY: Coordinated Service Response. We intend to document this work and present it as a follow-on Commissioning in Practice Case Study.

This paper aims to bring the previous work together, creating clear line of sight between the research, learnings and what we have heard along the way. This evidence and information will inform the approach and next steps of the proposed strategy for the next phase of S&CY.

## BACKGROUND

Concern regarding youth homelessness has been brought to the forefront by community sector stakeholders and by the ACT Youth Assembly over recent years. As have concerns about lack of service provision for children and young people in the ‘middle years’ (8-15 years of age).

Risk for children and young people under 16 years was identified in the 2004 ‘Breaking the cycle: ACT Homelessness Strategy’ with increasing complexity, requiring ‘a range of accommodation and support services to prevent a cycle of homelessness and poverty’.

The Youth Coalition of the ACT, Families ACT, ACTCOSS and ACT Shelter came together and presented a solution based on the most up to date research and evidence across Australia. The Preventing Child Homelessness in the ACT Action Plan is available [here](#).

In developing the Action Plan, the partners reviewed key reports and investigated both international and inter-jurisdictional evidence including, but not limited to:

- Youth Homelessness Project Action Plan, November 2017;
- Youth Workers’ Perspectives on Youth Homelessness for 12–15-year-olds in the ACT, July 2018; and
- Nowhere to Go: Investigating homelessness experiences of 12–15-year-olds in the ACT, October 2018 – Australian Catholic University.

CSD built on this work by conducting a literature review of existing youth homelessness services. A copy of the literature review is available [here](#).

The review explored the changing profile of youth homelessness and in particular, the often-complex circumstances of ‘unaccompanied’ homeless children aged 12 to 15 years. These children are often highly vulnerable, with multiple and complex support needs. They are likely already known to a range of services such as youth justice, family support and child protection. However, they may not meet the threshold for statutory involvement, so are not on child protection orders.

The review identified that most of the research on child and youth homelessness relates to children with homeless families, young people aged 16 to 25 years and particularly those who are transitioning from out of home care into independent living. Despite a lack in literature specifically focusing on unaccompanied homeless children aged 12 to 15 years, there was a growing amount of evidence from youth service providers around the country that there is an increasing gap in service provision.

Key findings of the literature review were:

- a significant number of young people first experience homelessness at a very young age, while in primary school, and there is an acknowledged lack of service responses for children under 12 beyond homelessness services which support children as accompanying their parents;
- the needs of children experiencing homelessness aged 12 to 15 years require different considerations and service pathways than those aged 16 to 25 years;
- a health and wellbeing lens is needed to support homeless children and young people;
- housing focused responses for this age group largely promote ‘adult’ capabilities such as independent living and are not child focused;
- there is a need for a trauma-informed and therapeutic care response first and foremost for this age group, and for medium-longer term interventions; and
- homelessness amongst 12- to 15-year-olds is largely ‘hidden’ due to the prevalence of couch surfing for this cohort.

The role that family conflict plays in child and youth homelessness was a reoccurring theme throughout all the reports, with much of the research evidencing family conflict and breakdown as a primary risk factor leading to child and youth homelessness. The analysis indicates that interventions that aim to improve family functioning and reduce family conflict continue to have the most promising evidence base for preventing youth homelessness.

## Action Learning Approach

The pilot program began in October 2019, commencing as an action learning program with the aim of addressing gaps in services for children and young people aged 8 to 15 years experiencing or at risk of homelessness, while developing a sustainable service model.

The development of the pilot program used a commissioning approach based on the following best practice principles:

- a robust evidence base grounded in community sector intelligence, identifying a clear service gap;
- a strong voice from children, young people and families with lived experience of using the current service system; and
- a highly collaborative cross-sector approach using genuine co-design, action learning and strong partnership activities from the beginning.

More information on the commissioning approach is available [here](#).

Since this time, the pilot program has been evaluated and increasing demand has demonstrated the need to expand existing supports while also establishing a longer-term service model for young people who require accommodation.

The full pilot program Evaluation was published in March 2021 and can be accessed [here](#).

## What did we learn?

Through the pilot program we learnt that children and young people who are under the age of 16 and are experiencing or at risk of experiencing homelessness require a coordinated service response that meets their unique needs.

The pilot program was successful in preventing homelessness for most of its clients. However, there remained a group of young people who required a safe place to stay that the pilot program had neither the resources nor the capacity to address. This group was identified as needing safe and stable, short-term accommodation while their situation could be assessed as suitable for reunification with family or needing a more intensive therapeutic intervention.

While the supports provided through the pilot program were an important part of a comprehensive service response, there remained a gap in the ACT for an in-house accommodation model where children and young people would be supported to rebuild their relationships with their family through mediation and counselling. We know that rebuilding relationships is critical to the long-term welfare of the child/young person whether they return home or transition into residential accommodation.

## Demand for the Coordinated Service Response

The pilot program was not actively promoted yet demand for the program exceeded capacity. Service partners identified around 30 children/young people/families who would have benefited from the S&CY Coordinated Service Response if it was available.

When considering national data sources, this is an under-representation of children and young people who would benefit from the expanded service in the ACT.

Respite accommodation offered through the pilot program was restricted to clients who could, wanted to and were safe to live at home, with the rationale that these clients would use respite for one or two nights or not at all. While this exclusion was necessary for the sustainability of the pilot program due to

the high cost of brokered accommodation (averaging \$1,065 per night for 143 nights of accommodation), it left a continuing gap in youth homelessness prevention services.

The Youth Coalition of the ACT used this information, coupled with their previous intelligence to develop and publish the Safe & Connected Youth and Ruby's Reunification Program: Action Plan for an ongoing, coordinated service response for youth homelessness in the ACT. A copy of the Action Plan is available [here](#).

## WHERE TO NOW?

### Problem Statement

We know that a coordinated response is required to support these children, young people and their families.

So, how can we work together to bring non-government organisation (NGO) support sector partners on board to deliver evidence-based coordinated services to children and young people (aged 8 to 15 years) and their families so they can thrive as a family unit?

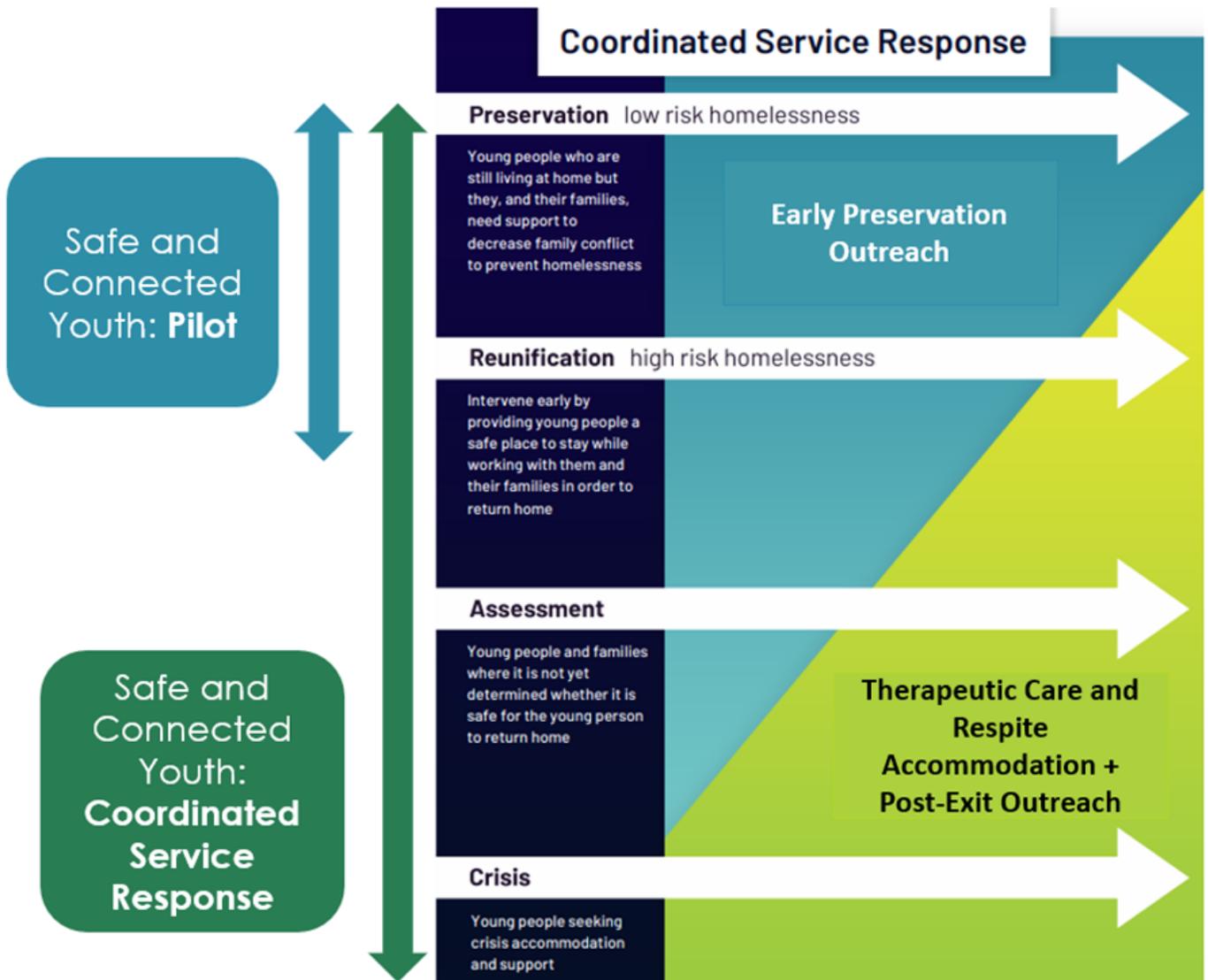
### Proposed Solution

Work together to implement an evidence-based coordinated service response for children and young people aged 8 to 15 years who are experiencing family conflict and may be at risk of homelessness.

The ACT Government has committed to ongoing funding to support a coordinated service response which combines:

- continuation of the early support outreach service model piloted through the pilot program;
- therapeutic respite accommodation which includes a 24/7 therapeutic service offering intensive casework and mediation; and
- post-exit outreach services.

The below diagram<sup>1</sup> demonstrates the spectrum of services needed to provide a comprehensive, coordinated service response for children and young people aged 8 to 15 years who are at risk of homelessness. It identifies the difference between the pilot program and the S&CY Coordinated Service Response:



<sup>1</sup> Diagram adapted from the *Safe and Connected Youth and Ruby's Reunification Program: Action Plan for an ongoing, coordinated service response for youth homelessness in the ACT*, Youth Coalition of the ACT, March 2021

# THE COORDINATED SERVICE RESPONSE COMPONENTS:

## Early Preservation Outreach

This component delivers outreach mediation and casework services for children and young people in the context of their family. It works with children, young people and their families to improve parent-child relationships and family functioning to reduce the risk of homelessness through a child centred/family focused integrated service model.

The S&CY pilot program evaluation found that the provision of this component made a positive difference to the families engaged, that they are better off as a result of the program reducing the risk of homelessness and having positive impacts on:

- Housing and home;
- Access and connectivity;
- Education and lifelong learning;
- Health;
- Identity and belonging; and
- Safety and Social connection.

The program also improved access to supports and services and increased family communication. The pilot program has had the greatest impact on young people and families through the ability to work with, and advocate for, the whole family and provide them with the tools and strategies to improve communication and decrease conflict.

It is expected that the Early Preservation Outreach and Therapeutic Respite Accommodation services will work in partnership to provide an integrated service that covers both the outreach and residential needs of children and young people at risk of homelessness. The Therapeutic Respite Accommodation property could provide an excellent base to deliver the suite of S&CY Coordinated Service services.

The pilot program has provided a tried and tested service model in the S&CY Practice Guide to support the delivery of the Early Preservation Outreach component.

## Therapeutic Respite Accommodation

Guided by several stakeholders, the preliminary design work for the Therapeutic Respite Accommodation component has been based on the Ruby's Reunification Model licensed by UnitingCommunities in South Australia. This preliminary work helped secure the ongoing funding and has contributed to the design and refurbishment of the Housing ACT property that will support the delivery of the suite of S&CY Coordinated Service Response services.

While the preliminary work was based on the Ruby's Reunification Model, CSD in partnership with the Youth Coalition of the ACT has been reviewing therapeutic care models and how they meet the need identified through the pilot program.

## Which therapeutic care service model is right for the ACT?

The benefits of supporting children and young people to remain in the family home until adult independence while addressing the complexities of youth and parent conflict are well documented.

From the pilot program and development work, we know that the ACT community needs a therapeutic care service model which:

- provides crisis accommodation;
- provides short, medium, longer-term accommodation;
- works with the 8 to 15 years age group;
- focuses on family preservation and reunification;

- combines therapeutic care with a safe place to stay;
- is voluntary; and
- is evidenced and can be replicated in the ACT with a high degree of rigour.

There are several service models and frameworks that are used in different therapeutic settings nationally and internationally. However, not all these models meet the specific needs of the coordinated service response the ACT is looking to foster. CSD in partnership with the Youth Coalition of the ACT have reviewed different service models, assessing their suitability to deliver a sustainable model in line with the lessons learned through the pilot program, evaluation and other phases. This is a difficult process, as we are not comparing like for like service models, rather looking across a spectrum and trying to assess what evidence-based service models align with what we have learnt to date. We do not want to disregard what we have learnt and implement a model that somewhat meets our needs but requires significant adaptation for the ACT. A table listing some of the models reviewed and links for further information is provided below:

Service Model	What we learnt	More Information
Children and Residential Experiences (CARE) Model	<p>This model teaches staff how to help children handle stress in constructive ways. Focusing on building constructive and adaptive ways to deal with frustration, failure, anger, rejection, hurt and depression.</p> <p>This Model gravitates to supporting the children and young people, rather than working with the whole family with the aim of reunification. This model is currently delivered in residential care for young people engaged in the statutory care system.</p>	<p><a href="#">CARE model website</a></p>
Keeping Kids at Home / Trauma Informed Framework	<p>Incorporates 5 phases of trauma informed practice, including prevention and early intervention. The therapeutic residential and practice support assists families to work through a planned approach. Transitional arrangements incorporate early intervention, stabilisation and transition back into family and/or mainstream care arrangements with ongoing support.</p>	<p><a href="#">Keeping Kids at Home website</a></p>
Lighthouse Model of Care	<p>The model supports young people to transition into independence as they are coming out of the out-of-home care system or are already homeless, rather than supporting family functioning to reduce the risk of the child or young person becoming homeless.</p> <p>The Lighthouse Model of Care does not support younger children.</p>	<p><a href="#">Lighthouse Model of Care website</a></p>
Ruby's Reunification model	<p>Therapeutic residential and counselling service that works to keep young people (12 to 17 years) out of the homelessness sector and in their family home, offering:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• a safe place for the young person to stay, spending some nights at Ruby's and some at home where appropriate;</li> </ul>	<p><a href="#">Ruby's Reunification Model website</a></p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• family counselling;</li> <li>• 24-hour therapeutic support; and</li> <li>• Access to tailored services for families.</li> </ul> <p>The Ruby’s Reunification Model has been used as a basis to support the design and development of the S&amp;CY Coordinated Service Response and is suitable for children as young as 10 years of age.</p> <p>The Ruby’s Reunification Model is funded through the South Australian Department of Human Services as a voluntary, early support focused program.</p>	
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Sanctuary model	<p>The Sanctuary model is primarily used in residential care settings where a family is already known to statutory services.</p> <p>South Australia operates both the Sanctuary and Ruby’s Reunification Model’s for different purposes.</p> <p>The Sanctuary Model supports all residential care homes operated through the Department of Child Protection.</p>	<p><a href="#">The Sanctuary Model website</a></p>
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Six Core Strengths for Healthy Child Development	<p>Promotes healthy development and focuses on the development of six core strengths that can help promote health and decrease risk of emotional, social, behavioural and cognitive problems.</p> <p>While the model is evidence-based it does not meet the full needs of what we are aiming to implement, including a safe place to stay.</p>	<p><a href="#">Child Trauma Academy website</a></p>
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Teaching Family Model	<p>The model is based on social learning theory and focuses on building the child or young person’s strengths, problem-solving, interpersonal and leadership skills.</p> <p>This model does not specifically support improved family functioning with the aim of reducing the risk of children and young people becoming homeless.</p>	<p><a href="#">Teaching Family Model website</a></p>
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In reviewing the above service models and frameworks against what we know, we were able to narrow the possibilities to two models that fit our needs of providing temporary accommodation and in-house therapeutic support with the main purpose of preserving or reunifying families. The two models are:

- Ruby’s Reunification Model; and
- Keeping Kids at Home.

An overview of the two models is provided in the table below:

	Keeping Kids at Home Youth Care Support Services, Queensland	Ruby's Reunification Model Uniting Communities, South Australia
<b>Longevity</b>	Operational for 11 years.	Operational for 27+ years.
<b>Service Overview</b>	Provides in-home intensive support for young people (aged 12 to 17 years) and families in crisis to prevent further statutory intervention.	Therapeutic residential and counselling service that works to keep children and young people (12 to 17 years target, suitable for children as young as 10) out of the homelessness sector and in their family home.
<b>Evidence-based</b>	Yes – several research studies informed the evidence-based practice implemented in the program.	Yes – all principles and practices central to the Ruby's model are based on current evidence.
<b>Provides crisis accommodation</b>	No. Children and young people are supported to access crisis accommodation through alternative services, i.e. Youth Care Support Services deliver residential out-of-home care including emergency placements for young people known to the Department of Child safety, Youth and Women.	Yes. Ruby's provides emergency accommodation which is not linked to the child protection system.
<b>Provides short, medium, longer-term accommodation</b>	No. The Keeping Kids at Home model supports young people in their homes including residential care.	Yes. Children and young people can split their time between home and the therapeutic respite accommodation while engaging with other supports like family counselling.
<b>Works with the 8 to 15 years age group</b>	12-17 year olds.	Suitable for children and young people aged 10 to 17 years.
<b>Focuses on family preservation and reunification</b>	Yes. The Keeping Kids at Home model builds relationships between young people and their carers through in-home, intensive support.	Yes. Ruby's helps children and young people and their parents/carers to resolve conflict and improve relationships.  Ruby's also works with young people who are currently not at home but would like to find a way to return home.
<b>Combines therapeutic care with a safe place to stay</b>	No. Service is offered in the young person's home (including residential care).	Yes. Ruby's provides: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• a safe place for the young person to stay, spending some nights at Ruby's and some at home as appropriate;</li> <li>• family counselling;</li> <li>• 24-hour therapeutic support; and</li> </ul>

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>access to tailored services for families.</li> </ul>
<b>Voluntary</b>	Yes.	Yes.
<b>Evaluated</b>	No. A three phase evaluation was planned, however it was not undertaken.	Yes. The Ruby’s Reunification Model was evaluated in partnership with Department of Human Services, South Australia
<b>Relevant Data</b>	As the evaluation was not undertaken, we were unable to attain independent data.	<p>In 2018-19, over 80% of young people who stayed at Ruby’s returned home.</p> <p>An analysis of the long-term outcomes of young people who engaged with Ruby’s over a four-year period indicated 89.8% of this cohort did not then present as a client of a homelessness service in South Australia.</p>
<b>Can the Model be replicated in the ACT with a high-level of rigour?</b>	<p>The Keeping Kids at Home Model is not currently licensed and is therefore not currently portable.</p> <p>Youth Care Support Services advises that they require at least six months to license the program.</p>	<p>The Ruby’s model is licensed.</p> <p>The licensing arrangement includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Pre-establishment quality accreditation to ensure alignment of capacity and values;</li> <li>Service model – including critical infrastructure, framework, training modules and therapeutic tools;</li> <li>Initial training – five days of training by qualified and experienced trainer;</li> <li>Toolkit and templates – client assessments, promotional material, position descriptions and supervisions and team meeting agendas;</li> <li>Quarterly reflection meetings with an experienced practitioner;</li> <li>Annual quality audits.</li> </ul>
<b>Experience in managing safe and stable accommodation</b>	<p>The service is flexible and works with young people in their ‘home’ whether that is at home with their parents/carers, in respite accommodation or in residential care.</p> <p>Youth Care Support Services does not manage early support accommodation services in partnership with the Keeping Kids at Home model.</p>	<p>Yes – currently operates four Ruby’s houses in South Australia providing 24-hour support and supervision.</p>
<b>More information</b>	<a href="#">YCSS Website</a>	<a href="#">UnitingCommunities Website</a>

While the Keeping Kids at Home program is an excellent example of intensive support for families focussing on preservation and reunification, the fact that the model is not currently portable and able to be replicated in the ACT with support, provides a barrier that we are unable to overcome in the project's timeline.

A significant benefit of the Ruby's Reunification Model is the additional organisational and peer support that comes from having a relationship with UnitingCommunities in South Australia who manage four Ruby's Houses.

Like the pilot program, the Ruby's Reunification Model is based on the principle of developmental evaluation through participatory action research. This developmental framework promotes continuous improvement through regular feedback which will provide strong organisational support for the implementation of a Ruby's House in the ACT. Sharing 'lessons learned' from existing Ruby's houses in South Australia provides an opportunity to assess the model's practices and processes in different contexts and support more robust evaluation.

Access to peer support from UnitingCommunities will be vital in workforce planning and problem solving to enable the most effective use of the property, supporting as many children and young people as possible to engage with and benefit from the therapeutic care and respite accommodation.

From our collective work to date, CSD and the Youth Coalition of the ACT consider the Ruby's Reunification Model to be the best fit, evidence-based service model to guide delivery of the Therapeutic Respite Accommodation component. We consider the combination of the evidence-based Ruby's Reunification Model with appropriate service provider/s as providing the best chance of meeting the needs of children, young people and their families who are experiencing family conflict and may be at risk of homelessness.

## Post-Exit Outreach

This component of the S&CY Coordinated Service Response is intended to provide post care support outreach to children, young people and their families after they exit the program to ensure that family reunification is stable and early support is available if an issue arises to reduce the likelihood of more intensive interventions.

This component operates as a step down/transition planning support determined on a case-by-case basis engaging in warm referrals and empowering exiting children, young people and their families to continue towards their long-term goals.

A step down/transition planning/exiting approach was trialled in the pilot program as it was recognised early on that the complexity of families often meant that progress towards reducing the conflicts at home was not linear and while families might be going well one week, the next week they might require intensive case work. Through the action-learning approach, the need to support case-by-case basis decision making focused on enabling a long exit and warm referrals to appropriate referrals was embedded.

Both the Early Preservation Outreach and Therapeutic Respite Accommodation components will include a Post-Exit Outreach component.

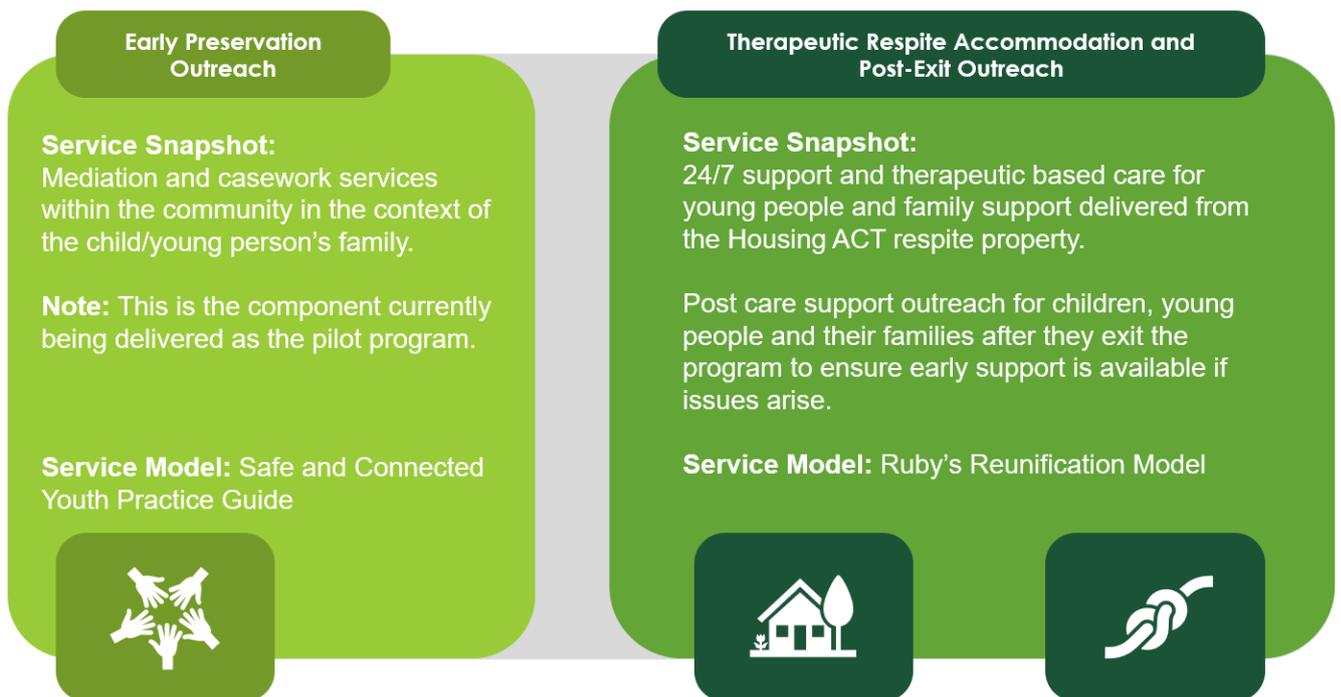
## NEXT STEPS:

In this document, we have outlined the three components of the S&CY Coordinated Service Response, with a particular focus on the therapeutic care service models that we have considered. Our preliminary assessment saw us undertake further investigation of two models, Keeping Kids at Home and the Ruby’s Reunification Model. This review has led us to identify the Ruby’s Reunification Model as the best fit service model to support the delivery of the Therapeutic Respite Accommodation component of the S&CY Coordinated Service Response. The Ruby’s Reunification Model implemented by appropriate service provider/s will meet our needs.

The S&CY Coordinated Service Response project lacks a long lead time. A property is currently being refurbished to support the delivery of the suite of services with an expected completion of late 2021.

With the property works in train, it would be ideal to have services in place from early 2022. However, to do this, we need to work quickly and effectively to source and implement services while actively engaging with commissioning principles and practice.

CSD are now progressing procurement planning and activities for the S&CY Coordinated Service Response. These activities will be progressing over the coming months. We anticipate that some NGO support sector partners may wish to deliver an individual component, while others may opt to deliver the full suite of services under the Coordinated Service Response umbrella, either alone or in partnership. Both options will be considered. To simplify the sourcing phase, we have included the Post-Exit Outreach component with the Therapeutic Respite Accommodation, recognising that the Early Preservation Outreach component has built in transition/exiting planning. A diagram outlining the two components that will be tendered is included below:



We know that the procurement timeline will be compressed, resulting in limited engagement and a standard response period of approximately four weeks. This paper has paid particular attention to the therapeutic care service model as we know that by identifying a therapeutic care service model early, we can streamline our next phase, enabling clear expectations and more time to be afforded to the sourcing phase.

The Ruby’s Reunification Model will be identified in the Statement of Requirements for the Therapeutic Respite Accommodation and Post-Exit Outreach component. NGO support sector partners who wish to tender for this component are not required to have engaged with UnitingCommunities ahead of submitting a tender response. CSD plans to work in partnership with UnitingCommunities to ensure that their partnering needs are met through a combined evaluation process. In responding to the tender, NGO support sector partners will need to indicate their willingness to working in partnership with UnitingCommunities and CSD to licence and implement the Ruby’s Reunification Model.

We will provide project updates through our networks and share a detailed procurement timeline as soon as possible. Interested NGO support sector partners may choose, based on the information provided here, to begin planning and preparing for the tender announcement.

The Request for Tender will be released on Tenders ACT. Interested NGO support sector partners are encouraged to pre-register on Tenders ACT and set up a personalised notification profile with at least UNSPSC – Organisations & clubs (94000000) and Healthcare Services (85000000). Setting up a personalised notification profile will alert you to the release of the pending procurement.

## Project principles

In undertaking this work and in moving forward there are several priority principles that we want to guide us, these are:

Principle	What the principle means to this project	Key Activities
<b>Purpose driven</b>	We spend time building shared understanding.	This collection of information is the key component of this principle. By bringing the information together and sharing it and discussing it with stakeholders we form early consensus which supports moving into the next phase of the project.
<b>Communicative</b>	We are transparent and provide early warning.	Providing well-informed and concise information in limited places, supporting as many stakeholders to engage with the material as possible.  While information may be shared through multiple avenues, such as Commissioning Conversations, a consistent link to the direct source will be provided. We will be aiming to develop an engagement platform that includes

		the relevant source material, updates and opportunities to communicate with a broader group of stakeholders.
<b>Recognise Complexity</b>	We will be upfront about complexity and constraints	Immediate complexities and constraints will be communicated as soon as possible via various networks, government and NGO inclusive.
<b>Deliberative</b>	We will advocate for shared decision making	<p>The co-development of this paper and joint presentation of the service model findings is an example of this principle.</p> <p>We will also look towards shared decision making in other phases of the project where possible.</p>

## ALIGNMENT WITH OTHER REFORMS:

The S&CY Coordinated Service Response intersects, aligns and supports progress against several ACT Government commitments, initiatives and programs, including:

- Raising the minimum age of criminal responsibility
- Youth Foyer
- Inquiry into Youth Mental Health in the ACT
- Early Support: Changing Systems, Changing Lives
- Future of Education Strategy
- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Agreement 2019-2028: *Core Area of Children and Young People: growing up safely in their families and communities*
- ACT Children and Young People's Commitment 2015-25: *Keep children and young people safe and protect them from harm; and Build strong families and communities that are inclusive and support and nurture children and young people*
- ACT Housing Strategy (October 2018): *Prioritise children and young people and reduce the intergenerational impacts of homelessness through early intervention and prevention*
- Parliamentary and Governing Agreement Commitment 19.1: *Delivering ongoing coordinated service response for young people aged 8 to 15 years who are at risk of homelessness, or engagement with the child protection or youth justice systems*

## RESOURCES:

Resources that have been linked earlier in the document include:

- Preventing Child Homelessness in the ACT Action Plan, Youth Coalition of the ACT, Families ACT, ACT Shelter and ACTCOSS, 2018 (linked [here](#))
- Homelessness Amongst Unaccompanied 12-15 year old's, A Literature Review, Community Services Directorate, March 2018 (linked [here](#))
- Commissioning in Practice Case Study: Safe and Connected Youth, Community Services Directorate, 2021 (linked [here](#))
- Evaluation Safe and Connected Youth Program, Youth Coalition of the ACT, March 2021 (linked [here](#))
- Safe and Connected Youth and Ruby's Reunification Program: Action Plan for an ongoing, coordinated service response for youth, May 2021 (linked [here](#))

Additional related resources include:

- Breaking the cycle: ACT Homelessness Strategy, Community Services Directorate, 2004
- Find Their Way Home: Children's Experiences of Homelessness, Australian Catholic University, 2007
- National Child Protection Clearing House Issue Number 35: Therapeutic residential care in Australia – Taking stock and looking forward, 2011
- Home and Away: Child and Youth Homelessness Report, Mission Australia, 2016
- ACT Youth Homelessness Project Action Plan, Community Services Directorate, November 2017
- Youth homelessness and its relationship with family conflict: Models for policy and practice, Institute of Child Protection Studies, Australian Catholic university and Melbourne City Mission, 2017
- Youth Workers' Perspectives on Youth Homelessness for 12–15-year-olds in the ACT, Youth Coalition of the ACT, July 2018
- Nowhere to Go: Investigating homelessness experiences of 12–15-year-olds in the ACT, Australian Catholic University, October 2018
- Child Family Community Australia Paper Number 49: Therapeutic residential care: An update on the current issues in Australia, 2018
- Child Family Community Australia Paper Number 52: Therapeutic residential care services in Australia: A description of current service characteristics, 2019
- Various Mission Australia Reports, including Staying home: A Youth Survey report on young people's experience of homelessness, Mission Australia, Sydney, 2020

## Contact Us

via the CSD Commissioning team at [CSDCommissioning@act.gov.au](mailto:CSDCommissioning@act.gov.au)



**ACT**  
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youth  
coalition  
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Community Services Directorate  
in partnership with the  
Youth Coalition of the ACT

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