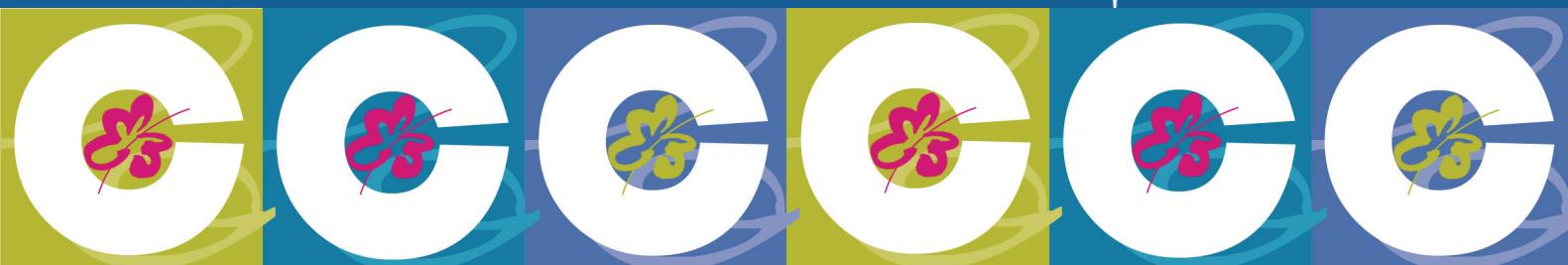


# A Victorian charter supporting people in care relationships



## Fact sheet for out-of-home care organisations

### What is the charter?

A *Victorian charter supporting people in care relationships* recognises and respects the vital role carers play in the community. The charter includes **foster carers**, **kinship carers** and **permanent carers**, carers of people with a mental illness, carers of people with a disability and carers of frail older people and people with dementia.

It is estimated there are more than 700,000 carers in Victoria, over 5,000 of whom care for children and young people through foster care, kinship care and permanent care.

This fact sheet explains how organisations can support the charter's implementation and use it to assist foster carers, kinship carers and permanent carers. The charter supports home based carers and is a reminder of the valuable role of carers in the lives of vulnerable children and young people.

The charter aims to empower carers and the children and young people for whom they care to take part in care planning, and to use available services. Carers and children and young people are the most affected by out-of-home care services, so their ideas are valuable to help shape those services. The charter makes this clear.

*'[The charter] is a guideline to lead Victoria in the right direction regarding relationships between those in care, those caring, organisations and government'*  
(John, foster carer).

A *Victorian charter supporting people in care relationships* and the *Charter for children in out-of-home care* are the cornerstones for greater recognition, respect and support to home based carers and children and young people in out-of-home care.

### How can organisations use the charter?

Organisations can use the charter's principles and standards in interactions with home based carers. If care relationships are supported, carers and children and young people will feel more able to actively participate in planning and managing care.

The charter seeks to protect the rights of carers and those they care for by ensuring all care relationships are recognised, respected and supported by organisations.

### Who should know about the charter?

Anyone involved in the care and placement of children and young people in out-of-home care should know about the charter.

## **What do organisations need to do to implement the charter?**

**Review policies, procedures and practices** and consider how they can be realigned in accordance with the charter.

**Ensure staff awareness and understanding** of the charter and what it means for their work. Develop a staff awareness strategy and include information about the charter in staff induction processes.

**Develop strategies** to monitor the implementation of the charter. Consider the use of surveys to gain feedback about the charter, update complaints procedures to reflect the charter's existence, and partner and collaborate with other organisations and Victorian Government program areas in charter monitoring and evaluation activities.

Organisations should **think** charter and take the expectations of people in care relationships into account when making decisions, providing advice and delivering services. Implementing the charter is a great opportunity to strengthen existing services, seek out new opportunities to improve support and responsiveness to people in care relationships, and build upon staff knowledge.

## **How can organisations promote the charter?**

**Distribute information about the charter** to carers to assist their understanding of the charter and what it means for them and the children and young people for whom they care:

- include the charter in mail outs of newsletters, or add to existing information kits
- include the charter in training and orientation material for carers
- put the charter poster on notice boards and information in reception areas
- put information on the organisation internet site, or web links to the charter
- use networks, like organisational or carer support groups and programs, to promote the charter
- include the charter or make presentations on it at forums and other events such as local community events.

## **How are Victorian Government programs helping organisations put the charter into action?**

To help awareness and implementation of the charter, an information kit has been developed for all organisations supporting care relationships. The kit has:

- copies of the charter
- posters
- fact sheets for people in care relationships
- fact sheets for organisations.

## **What happens next?**

Organisations should use the charter to support relationships with carers and other services involved in the care of children and young people. Keep the charter on display and easily available as a reminder to everyone of their role in supporting and recognising care relationships.

## **Where can organisations get a copy of the charter?**

The charter and other information are available from the web at: [www.cyf.vic.gov.au](http://www.cyf.vic.gov.au)

### **Other fact sheets supporting the charter:**

- Fact sheet for foster, kinship and permanent carers and children and young people in out-of-home care.