

Question and Answers: Charter for Carers involved with ACT child protection



Why is a Charter for Carers being developed now?

The Charter for Carers is being developed now to ensure that carers receive the same level of recognition and support as parents, families, and children within the ACT child protection system. It aims to make the system fairer, more accountable, and more transparent for everyone involved.

By introducing the Charter for Carers, alongside the existing charters for parents, families, and children, the ACT Government is working to build trust and transparency across the child protection system.

In 2024, all three charters will be registered as notifiable instruments, publicly declaring the standards and expectations for all parties, and ensuring long-term public interest and accessibility.

How was the Charter for Carers developed?

The Charter for Carers was created by building on the existing Charter for Parents and Families but focusing specifically on the expectations and responsibilities unique to carers.

We used feedback from various sources, including the development of Next Steps, the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Co-Design Network, and the Carer Wellbeing Sub-Committee, to shape the Charter.

To respect carers' time and avoid repeating questions, we incorporated insights already shared in these forums. Additionally, we consulted with organisations like ACT Together and Carers ACT to ensure we captured your perspectives.

By presenting the Charter to you in draft form, we aim to give you a meaningful and time-efficient way to contribute.

Why is there only one Charter for Carers when the needs of kinship and foster carers are different?

While we recognise that the journeys and needs of kinship and foster carers can differ significantly, the Charter for Carers is designed to establish a unified framework for how all carers, child protection, and out-of-home care agencies can work together respectfully and effectively.

The Charter focuses on promoting respectful, relationship-based, culturally safe, and trauma-informed interactions. This unified approach aims to support collaborative work practices that benefit both carers and the children in their care.

Why do I have to be known as a kinship carer when I am family?

We understand that familial roles and relationships are deeply personal and meaningful.

The terms "kinship carer" and "foster carer" are labels used within child protection systems as communication tools to help us understand the diverse roles and relationships within the caregiving landscape.

Both the "Charter for Carers" and the "Charters for Parents and Families" provide guidance and support for navigating the child protection system, addressing issues such as communication with agencies, advocating for children's needs, and accessing necessary services.

You are welcome to utilise either tool that best aligns with your circumstances and preferences, ensuring that you receive the support and assistance you need as you navigate your caregiving journey.

Can I use the Charter for Carers if I'm not an authorised carer or receiving a subsidy?

Absolutely! While the Charter is primarily intended for authorised carers, you can still use it if you're involved with ACT child protection services for other reasons.

The Charter serves as a helpful guide to promote respectful and thoughtful interactions.

While some responsibilities listed in the Charter may align with how you care for the child, others specific to authorised carers may not be applicable to your situation. In such cases, the Charter for Parents and Families may also be suitable. Regardless of which charter you choose, it's essential to refer to it and remind your case manager of the importance of a positive working relationship.

What else is being done to support carers?

While the development and release of a Charter for Carers is a significant step forward, we recognise that it is only one part of the solution to the challenges faced by carers.

We've listened carefully to your feedback and understand that comprehensive support is needed to recognise your valuable contributions and address your diverse needs.

For more information on what else is being done to support carers, please have a look at the section titled "What else are we looking at?" on the consultation page for the Draft Charter for Carers involved with ACT Child Protection available on YourSay at <https://yoursayconversations.act.gov.au/>.

