

LIVING INDEPENDENTLY

Leaving Home

Before leaving home you should consider where you can live, who you can live with, and how you will be able to financially support yourself. Be very careful not to get into credit card or consumer debt. If you are having money troubles you can speak to a financial counsellor for free - call the National Debt Helpline on 1800 007 007 to find support or visit www.ndh.org.au.

When am I allowed to move out of home?

There is no law about what age you can leave home, although your parents generally have a responsibility to look after you until you're 18. Generally speaking, this means you can leave home at any age providing you have a safe place to live. If you are under 18 years old and there are any Family Court Orders about you and where you must live, or if you are under the guardianship of the Minister, then the law may be different for you. Call the Free Legal Help Line on 1300 366 424 for advice.

What if my parents don't want me to go?

If your parents do not want you to go they may file a missing person's report to police if you leave and do not let them know where you are. If there is violence or abuse in your home, it is unlikely that police will force you back home. If you leave home and are considered to be in danger then police or the Department for Child Protection may become involved. It's unlikely that they will become involved if you have a safe place to go, there is nothing illegal happening at the place you move to, and you can support yourself financially.

Centrelink

If you are between 15 and 24 years of age you may be eligible for payments and services from Centrelink to support you while you are studying or looking for work. This will depend on your situation. Sometimes Centrelink can provide social workers or financial officers to help you. Ask about their services. Go to your local Centrelink centre, check out www.humanservices.gov.au (follow the link to Centrelink) or call 132 490.

CHECK YOUR RIGHTS!!

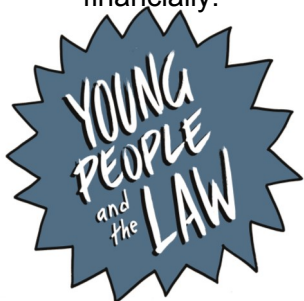
Finding Accommodation

What if I need emergency accommodation?

Sometimes a young person has to leave home in a hurry and staying with friends or family is not an option. There are services that you can contact to help you find accommodation, especially if you are at risk of experiencing homelessness.

Trace-A-Place is a service hub for young people who are experiencing homelessness or at risk of experiencing homelessness. This includes young parents with children. They can help you find accommodation options and housing, as well as support and guidance. You can call them for free during the day on 1800 807 364. For after hours accommodation support call the Homelessness Gateway Service on 1800 033 308. Keep in mind that Streetlink Youth Health Service is a medical, drug and alcohol, and mental health service for young people aged 12-25 who are homeless or at risk of experiencing homelessness. To speak to someone at Streetlink call 8202 5950. You can find more options by searching 'homelessness' at www.sa.gov.au

Disclaimer: The material in this factsheet is a general guide only. It is not legal advice. The legal information was correct at the time of publishing, however may change without notice.



**Legal Services
Commission**
OF SOUTH AUSTRALIA

We help people understand the law and how it can affect them.

For free legal help,
call the Legal Help Line:

1300 366 424

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How old do I need to be to rent a house?

There is no law that says how old you must be to rent a flat or house. Generally you can sign a lease agreement before you're 18. The lease agreement will be binding (that means you have to follow what it says) if it is shown that it benefits you and that you knew it was legally binding when you agreed to it.

You may be able to get help from Housing SA to pay bond and rent in advance, or rent that you owe already. Search for 'help paying bond and rent' on the website www.sa.gov.au

If you do rent a house, remember to only sign a condition report if you agree with what it says - if you don't agree, then mention it on the condition report and take photos. If you don't complete the condition report at the start of the tenancy you may be blamed for damage that you didn't do and you might have money withheld from your bond/security deposit at the end of the tenancy.

If you are not sure whether your landlord is keeping within the law, or you're not sure what your rights or responsibilities are, call the free Legal Help Line on 1300 366 424.

Getting approved to rent a house can be difficult. There are services that may be able to help you. Search 'renting' on the website www.sa.gov.au. Another option is to look for community housing or a cheaper alternative than going straight into the private rental market. There are other organisations that offer more affordable housing options for young people. Have a look at the 'homelessness' service provider directory for young people to connect with alternative accommodation at www.sa.gov.au.



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Looking for work

People have rights at work. It's important that you know if you're getting paid the correct amount, what your employer is allowed or not allowed to ask you to do, and that you are treated properly. The Fair Work Ombudsman website has really useful information for young people looking for work or working www.fairwork.gov.au If you're unsure about your rights at work, get legal advice - call the free Legal Help Line on 1300 366 424.

When can I start working?

There is no law that say what age you are allowed to start working. However, it's against the law for an employer to have work in a job that would interfere with your school work. Some employers have policies about when they hire young people.

For information on accessing health and medical services independently, see our fact sheet 'Health Stuff'.

Contact us!

Got a legal problem?
Call our free Legal Help Line:
1300 366 424

Would you like more information, resources, or a free visit?

Email: cle@lsc.sa.gov.au

To apply for legal aid online,
visit: www.lsc.sa.gov.au



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