

# Residential care homes

## About residential care homes

Residential care homes provide care, a safe home-like environment and case management for vulnerable children who have been removed from their family environment and are in the care of the Chief Executive Officer of Territory Families.

These homes are distributed across a range of locations, chosen based on the need for a safe and secure home-like environment that is close to amenities and support services.

Our residential care homes are placed broadly across a range of locations to integrate them within communities. Locations are selected based on need and ensuring that these vulnerable children and young people are kept close to family, sporting commitments, school and community.

The ideal situation is to provide a residential care home that is as home-like as possible.

## Who lives in a residential care home?

The vulnerable children and young people who live in residential care homes are unable, due to circumstances out of their control, to stay safely within their family environment.

These children have often experienced trauma and/or difficult life circumstances, leading to them entering residential care. As such they often have complex behaviours, linked to trauma and sometimes require specialised support for disabilities, mental health support, and social and life skills development.

Some have had interactions with the law and many others have not. Case management and support for these young people is tailored to their individual circumstances to address this and other needs.

## Who supervises operations within a residential care home?

There are professional staff members at each residential care home 24/7 and there is never a situation where there is no supervision. Efforts are made to create consistency within staff rosters to enable the children and young people to develop relationships for stronger case management.

## What happens in a residential care home?

Residential care homes are designed to be as homelike as possible, with children and young people participating in cooking and cleaning activities, attending school, doing homework, sporting activities and other commitments just like in any home environment.

The main difference within a residential care home is the professional support provided by residential care staff to care for the vulnerable children staying within them. This includes case management, behavioural support plans, therapeutic support, and activity plans focussed on pro-social activities.

Residential care homes operate with a trauma-informed approach, and provide personal case management for young people. This can include help with schooling, counselling and a range of other important service supports.

## What do residential care homes look like?

Effort is taken to ensure that residential homes are as home like as possible. They have regular bedrooms, living areas, kitchens, bathrooms and gardens just like any family home. The main difference is the inclusion of amenities for staff.

## Where are the residential care homes?

Residential care homes are located across the Northern Territory to support some of our most vulnerable children. Territory Families does not promote their locations to protect the privacy of the children and young people who live there.

Neighbours of residential care homes are consulted with through a range of tools including letterbox drops through to face to face meetings by request.

## How do residential care homes get established?

Most residential care homes in the Northern Territory are operated by non-government organisation specialist service providers with a small amount of Territory Families run homes as well.

It is important that when a need arises for children to be accommodated safely, that it can be met immediately and service providers consider this need as they establish or close homes.

Service providers consult with boundary neighbours semi-regularly and as required, if concerns are raised about a particular home or in the case of a new home being established.

There are times when a residential home must be quickly established, for example, if a sibling group comes into care, and there is no alternative placement to keep the children together. In this as in any example, every effort to source a Foster or Kinship care arrangement would be made also.

## How long do residential care homes operate in a community?

Just like any leased property, tenancy is considered periodically, with an emphasise on maintaining stability for children who consider a residential care home, their home, close to their school, friends and community.

Some homes can be used for emergency or short term care and accommodation and others are utilised for longer-term accommodation needs.

Territory Families prioritise stable and longer term solutions for children who are unable to reside with their immediate family. Frequent moving is also demonstrated to negatively impact on the young people in our care.

Foster and Kinship Care arrangements provide a connected and longer-term option for children and are always the first and best option to support them. Reunification with family, when safe and appropriate is our main goal.

Some children though will need to be supported in residential care homes for longer periods than others, which is where a homelike environmental, supported by restorative and therapeutic-care practices is most critical for a child's future development, social and life skills.

***You can contact Territory Families by calling toll free on 1800 990 900.***