

Community Refugee Integration & Settlement Pilot (CRISP)

Exit Planning Kit

Introduction

This **CRISP Exit Planning Toolkit** is designed to assist community supporter groups (CSGs) to enable a smooth transition for the refugee household they're supporting into the mainstream service sector and independent life as the 12-month period of CRISP support comes to an end.

It includes:

- **CRISP Exit FAQs**
Frequently asked questions by CSGs preparing to end their formal CRISP support.
- **CSG Exit Planning Tool**
For CSGs to complete as a group before commencing exit plans with the refugee household.
- **CRISP Exit Planning Checklist**
For CSGs to complete with the refugee household they're supporting.

We encourage CSGs to engage with this Toolkit from as early as nine months post-arrival, as it can assist groups to identify how best to focus their support of the refugee household over the final months of support, and to identify and address any needs the refugee household may have that will extend beyond the formal period of support is completed.

It is important to note that references to refugee household 'independence' are not intended to suggest that they will have no support once they exit the CRISP. Indeed, the public healthcare, education and other mainstream service/support systems are generally well-equipped to meet the needs of refugees from approximately 12 months post-arrival. The intention of the CRISP isn't that all the refugee participants' needs are met by 12 months post-arrival, but that the CSG works with them for their first year in Australia to bridge them with supports and services that can meet their needs beyond their first year in Australia.

In some cases, CSGs and the refugee household/s they support may have formed connections through their involvement in the CRISP that will endure beyond the formal period of support, and some may not intend for much to change when the formal period of support ends. Still, a process of 'exit planning' is recommended to support all parties to transition from a supporter/participant relationship to an informal relationship between friends, neighbours or community members.

We recommend that CSGs discuss each settlement outcome, using the attached checklists, with the refugee household they're supporting, to encourage a shared understanding of where to focus the last few months of support, and of which service/s will become the refugee household's primary source/s of support for any remaining needs (eg. GP for health needs, real estate agent for housing needs, etc).

We encourage CSGs to also use the 'exit planning' process as an opportunity to reflect and celebrate the milestones and achievements of the previous 12 months and to mark the refugee household's 'graduation' from service recipients into friends, neighbours or community members.

CRISP Exit FAQs

1. What are the primary considerations CSGs should have as they commence exit planning?

The primary consideration for CSGs as they approach the end of the 12-month period of support is to ensure the refugee household does not experience a sharp decrease in support as they exit the CRISP. For each outstanding need identified, CSGs should work with the refugee household to identify which individual or organisation will become their primary point of contact once the CSG ceases to act as the single primary source of support.

CSGs are also encouraged to use this exit planning process to reflect on their experience of the CRISP – successes, challenges and lessons learned – and to consider whether they might be ready to welcome and support another refugee household to find their home in Australia.

2. When should we start discussing the end of the support period with the refugee household we're supporting?

CSGs are encouraged to begin preparing the refugee household for the end of the support period, and the transition to post-CRISP life, as early as nine months post-arrival. However, because discussions about the end of the CSG's support may cause alarm for some refugee households, CSGs are encouraged to complete the CSG Exit Planning Tool as a group before engaging in exit discussions with the refugee household, to ensure the CSG members are each relaying consistent messages to the refugee household, and that any areas of ongoing need have been considered and discussed as a group.

3. How will the refugee household's needs be met once we're no longer supporting them?

It is important for CSGs not to feel disheartened or discouraged if the refugee household still requires regular assistance towards the end of the period of support. Settlement and integration is not a linear process and does not usually resolve within a year. It can take many years and in some cases can be experienced across generations. CSGs are a critical part of the very first step of the integration process, and the years ahead will involve myriad and varied steps and other supports. The CRISP is not intended to represent a settlement process that is completed within 12 months, but to provide a 'soft landing' for refugees arriving in Australia, and a 'bridge' to the broader community members and organisations that will remain in the refugee household's lives into the future.

In addition to looking to mainstream services for outstanding needs, CSGs are encouraged to connect the refugee household to their local Settlement Engagement and Transition Support (SETS) provider if they haven't done so already. The SETS program is available nationally and

provides support to refugees throughout their first five years in Australia. SETS program offerings will vary across regions, but may include community activities, social support groups, employment assistance, English language support and casework support.

4. What kind of relationship would be appropriate for us to have with the refugee household once they exit the CRISP?

While some CSGs may choose to continue providing support to the refugee household beyond their first year in Australia, their formal obligations cease at the 12-month mark, and no further support is expected.

Even where a CSG may wish to keep in contact with the refugee participant(s) they have supported, they should respect the refugee participant(s)' rights to self-determination in the post-sponsorship period, as they did during the sponsorship period. Just as no support is expected from CSGs after Month 12, refugee participants of the CRISP also should not be expected to maintain a relationship with the CSG if they don't want to (though of course in any cases, deep relationships do endure).

If CSGs do decide to provide settlement support after Month 12, they should be clear with the refugee household that the support is being outside of the CRISP program.

If they decide to provide financial support beyond Month 12 (which is not recommended), they should research how this support may affect any income support that refugee participant(s) may be receiving from the government, as it may result in them not being eligible for social assistance, or having their payments reduced.

5. What does refugee independence look like?

Independence or self-sufficiency should be continually assessed throughout the sponsorship period by CSGs. Some benchmarks of independence or self-sufficiency include (but are not limited to) refugee participants covering their living costs and living within their financial means; conducting day-to-day tasks independently (eg. Making appointments independently, engaging in social and recreational activities, paying rent and bills, budgeting, accessing services, etc). CSGs are encouraged to consider all aspects of support being provided throughout the sponsorship period and when each aspect of support (eg. Health, education, transport) should be wound back.

6. What information should we ensure the refugee household has before they exit the CRISP?

CSGs are encouraged to communicate to the refugee household as soon as possible after arrival that the sponsorship period is 12 months, and that the group is not obligated to provide settlement support beyond Month 12.

They are encouraged to start preparing refugee participant(s) for the end of the sponsorship period at around nine months post-arrival. Before the end of Month 12, CSGs are encouraged to use this Exit Planning Kit to ensure the refugee participant(s) have the information they require, as well as necessary skills, knowledge and services for the post-sponsorship period. Examples include, but are not limited to:

- Access to affordable housing;
- Knowledge of how to access healthcare;
- Ability to pay rent and other household bills;
- Ability to budget and transfer money electronically if they want to do so;
- Knowledge of how to search for and apply for jobs;
- Knowledge of how to contact emergency services;
- Ability to contact and engage with schools if there are school-aged children.

CSG Exit Planning Tool

1. How often (daily, weekly, monthly, etc) are we as a group connecting with the household?

2. How often is the household reaching out to the group for support?

3. Over the last 3 months what has support looked like on a day-to-day basis?

4. What is likely to change once the period of formal support ends?

5. What, if any, support does the group feel the household might require beyond the CRISP?

6. As a group, what have we done well?

7. As a group, what would we do differently if we were to welcome another refugee household?

CRISP Exit Planning Checklist

| 1. Health | | | |
|---|------------|---------------|-------------|
| Is the refugee household registered with a local General Practitioner (GP)? | | | |
| Can the refugee household make a GP appointment independently? | | | |
| Do the refugee participants have any remaining medical needs that need to be addressed? If so, have you made a referral or provided them with the relevant information on how to access the necessary services? | | | |
| Do the refugee participants need counselling or any other mental health support? If so, have you made the appropriate referrals or provided them with the relevant information on how to access these services? | | | |
| If there are children in the household under the age of 4 years, have they been connected with their local maternal child health nurse / service? | | | |
| Do the refugee participants know how to contact emergency services in case of emergency? | | | |
| Do the refugee participants know what Medicare is? Do the refugee participants know how to claim Medicare rebates? | | | |
| Do the refugee participants have all appropriate medical cards? | | | |
| Are the refugee participants registered with a dental practice? | | | |
| Overall level of need: | Low | Medium | High |
| Ongoing Support Required: | | | |

| 2. Housing | |
|---|--|
| Do the refugee participants need/want to relocate to another house or apartment, or another town or city? | |
| If the refugee participants need to relocate, have you assisted them to find suitable accommodation? | |
| Are the refugee participants aware of their rights as tenants? | |

| | | | | |
|---|------------|---------------|-------------|--|
| Are the refugee participant(s) able to contact the real estate agent or landlord independently for repairs/maintenance or other issues? | | | | |
| Do the refugee participants know when and how to pay their rent, and any other household bills (eg, utilities, internet)? | | | | |
| Do the refugee participants know how to search and apply for rental properties? | | | | |
| Do the refugee participants understand and agree with the terms of their lease? | | | | |
| Have you discussed with the refugee participants what will happen at the end of their current lease? | | | | |
| Overall level of need: | Low | Medium | High | |
| Ongoing Support Required: | | | | |

| 3. English Language | | | | |
|---|------------|---------------|-------------|--|
| Do the refugee participants wish to continue with English language classes? | | | | |
| Do the refugee participants know how to access English classes if they need them at a later date? | | | | |
| Do the refugee participants know how to access interpreters or translation support if needed? | | | | |
| Overall level of need: | Low | Medium | High | |
| Ongoing Support Required: | | | | |

| 4. Education | |
|--|--|
| Are all school-aged children enrolled in school? | |

| | | | | |
|--|------------|---------------|-------------|--|
| Can the refugee participant(s) contact the school independently to report absences, and as otherwise needed? | | | | |
| If the refugee participants have moved or will move, have you assisted them to enrol their children in school in the new location? | | | | |
| Do the refugee participants wish to pursue further studies? If so, have you provided them with relevant information on courses and institutions? | | | | |
| Are there any specific educational needs that need to be addressed before the end of the sponsorship period? | | | | |
| Overall level of need: | Low | Medium | High | |
| Ongoing Support Required: | | | | |

| 5. Employment | | | | |
|---|------------|---------------|-------------|--|
| Are the refugee participants employed? | | | | |
| If the refugee participants are not employed, have you assisted them with finding employment or provided information on how to look for jobs? | | | | |
| Are the refugee participants aware of any relevant bridging courses or vocational training opportunities? | | | | |
| Are refugee participants aware of Australian Professional licensing requirements for their profession or vocation? | | | | |
| Are the refugee participants aware of their rights as an employee, or their responsibilities as an employer (eg. Fair Work Australia)? | | | | |
| Do the refugee participants need your support to find volunteer opportunities in their field? | | | | |
| Overall level of need: | Low | Medium | High | |
| Ongoing Support Required: | | | | |

| 6. Services Australia (Centrelink / Medicare) | | | |
|---|------------|---------------|-------------|
| Are the refugee participants aware of the income support they are entitled to? | | | |
| Do the refugee participants know how and when to contact Services Australia, including asking for an interpreter if needed? | | | |
| Do the refugee participants understand how and when to report income to Services Australia? | | | |
| Have any members of the CSG listed themselves as a nominated representative with Services Australia? If so, have they removed themselves to ensure Services Australia contacts the refugee participants directly in future? | | | |
| Overall level of need: | Low | Medium | High |
| Ongoing Support Required: | | | |

| 7. Finances & Banking | | | |
|--|------------|---------------|-------------|
| Do the refugee participants need any further assistance with budgeting or banking? | | | |
| Are the refugee participants comfortable taking care of their finances on their own? | | | |
| Do the refugee participants know how to transfer money electronically if needed? | | | |
| Are the refugee participants familiar with the Australian taxation system (ie. The requirement to pay taxes and to lodge a tax return annual)? | | | |
| Overall level of need: | Low | Medium | High |
| Ongoing Support Required: | | | |

| 8. Transportation | | | |
|--|------------|---------------|-------------|
| Do the refugee participants know how to travel within their local area? | | | |
| Are the refugee participants comfortable taking public transport on their own? | | | |
| Do the refugee participant(s) know how to buy tickets or top up transport cards? | | | |
| Do you need to provide further explanations or accompany them? | | | |
| If the refugee participants plan to relocate, do they need support in learning new transportation routes? | | | |
| Have the refugee participants been supported in obtaining an Australian driver's license or are they aware of how to apply for an Australian driver's license? | | | |
| If they drive or plan to drive, are the refugee participants familiar with Australian road rules? | | | |
| Do the refugee participants know how to access driving lessons if needed? | | | |
| Overall level of need: | Low | Medium | High |
| Ongoing Support Required: | | | |
| | | | |

| 9. Community Support & Orientation | | | |
|---|------------|---------------|-------------|
| Do the refugee participants require more support to find and connect with community, social or recreational activities? | | | |
| Do the refugee participants want your help to connect with specific programs or groups in your community related to their interests? | | | |
| If the refugee participants plan to move, do they need your support to orient them to the new community? For example, the nearest grocery store, cultural/faith groups etc. | | | |
| Do the refugee participants require ongoing settlement support? If yes, have you made a referral to your local SETS provider? | | | |
| Overall level of need: | Low | Medium | High |

Ongoing Support Required:

10. Documentation

| | |
|---|--|
| Do the refugee participants have all the documents that they require? (eg. Bank card, Medicare card, health care card). | |
|---|--|

| | |
|---|--|
| Do the refugee participants require your assistance with the application process for any remaining documents? | |
|---|--|

| | |
|--|--|
| Do the refugee participants require assistance in translating any documents? If so, have you advised them of the appropriate services? | |
|--|--|

| | |
|--|--|
| If the refugee participants have moved, do they need your help to change their address with government agencies, on their cards and documents? | |
|--|--|

| | | | |
|-------------------------------|------------|---------------|-------------|
| Overall level of need: | Low | Medium | High |
|-------------------------------|------------|---------------|-------------|

Ongoing Support Required: