

# NEW SERVICE FOR 16 AND 17-YEAR-OLDS



Since January 1<sup>st</sup> 2018, the Ontario government increased the age of protection to include all children under the age of 18 years.

## What does it mean for you?

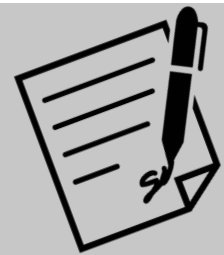
You could be eligible to a new Voluntary Youth Services Agreement (VYSA) if you meet the following criteria:



- you are 16 or 17 years old;
- you are not adequately protected at home or in your current living arrangement;
- you do not have any other safe place to live (family, friends, community members, etc.);
- you are in need of an out-of-home placement.

## What is a VYSA?

The VYSA is an agreement that certifies you have access to a safe and appropriate place. When you conclude a VYSA, a Voluntary Youth Services (VYS) plan is automatically established. This plan identifies your strengths, objectives and ensures your needs are met.



## What can you expect from Valoris' services?

Support and protection services to keep you safe, and support to your family.

Our work begins when we receive a request or a referral for services from you or someone who is concerned for your safety. Valoris will consider the information and may begin an investigation in order to hear from your experiences or concerns. We will then determine if you are in need of protection and if so, select the services that will really help you.

Since it concerns your well-being, you must expect to participate in all decisions that affect you. This includes:

- your safety plan;
- your living arrangement;
- your education or employment interests;
- your medical care;
- any programs that will support you during your transition to adulthood.

## Services available for the 16 to 17-year-olds

- **Referral to community services;**
  - Collaboration with you and your family to improve things at home.
- **Care by a relative (Kinship Service);**
  - If you are not safe at home or have left because you were not safe, there may be a family member who can help.
- **Customary Care;**
  - If you are an indigenous youth and needs a home outside your family, we can arrange a placement according to the custom of your band or community
- **Voluntary Youth Services Agreement (VYSA).**





Our services are designed to help you maintain your relationships within your family, your community and your culture. You will be consulted with your religious practices, your interests, your sexual identity as well as your cultural heritage. You will have access to services and support measures that respect your culture, as well as programs that will help you develop personally. Other services are also available to help you take decisions that affect you:

### The Office of the Children's Lawyer (OCL)

The Office represents children and youth before the courts in child protection cases. The mandate of the lawyer is to represent independently the views and interests of young people.

Tel.: 416 314-8000

Website: [www.ontario.ca/ccnw](http://www.ontario.ca/ccnw)



### The Office of the Ontario Child Advocate (OCA)

The Provincial Advocate represents independently the children and youth receiving services in Ontario's child welfare system. The OCA has the authority to receive and respond to complaints, to conduct reviews, to represent the views and preferences of children and youth, to produce reports and provide recommendations.

Tel.: 1 800 263-2841

Website: [www.provincialadvocate.on.ca](http://www.provincialadvocate.on.ca)

### Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR)

Valoris is required to inform you of all options available to resolve any problem related to your plan, including access to out-of-court ADR.

The ADR is an approach that encourages participation and support of the family, extended family (if any), and the community, in the planning and decision-making process for you. ADR focuses on bringing together the right people to find the best plan for you. If, for example, you disagree with Valoris on the type of plan that suits you best, the ADR can bring together the right people to explore options and develop a plan.

### If you have a complaint...

Valoris must provide you with information you can understand. This includes information on the complaints process and written documents on the complaints process.

If you want to make a complaint, you can:

- contact Valoris directly. Valoris must have a complaint review process.
- contact the Provincial Advocate for Children and Youth at 1 800 263-2841 or at 416 325-5669, or visit the website: <http://provincialadvocate.on.ca>;
- Contact the Child and Family Services Review Board. This independent board can review some complaints or society decisions. The board can be reached at 1 888 728-8823 or at 416 327-4673, or visit the website: [www.sjto.gov.on.ca/crsef/](http://www.sjto.gov.on.ca/crsef/).

Valoris will provide you with the written documents on the process of complaints available to you.