

Housing

in Western Australia

It is essential that young people transitioning to independent living have safe, secure, appropriate, and affordable housing.

CREATE asked 28 young people with a care experience aged 18-21 years in Western Australia about their experiences planning for and trying to find a safe and secure place to live after leaving care.

82%
of young people had talked to someone about what would happen to their placement after they turned 18.

Most frequently, young people talked to, and gained information from, caseworkers and post-care support services.

Only 39%
reported that their leaving care plan had details about where they would live after leaving care.

Almost all participants needed help to find housing once they left care. Of those who needed help, most found housing support helpful.



I didn't like being in crisis care and wanted something more stable. They [Department of Housing] gave me an offer of a house and I took it. I was on the waitlist for about 4 or 5 years.
(Non-binary, 19)

I stayed with my foster mum because it felt like home.
(Male, 19)

My placement was breaking down before I turned 18. Having a disability makes it really hard for changes. I didn't have support from my caseworker. (Female, 19)



Key Messages

Less than 40% could definitively say there was information about housing in their transition from care plan. Comments suggested that young people had little involvement in developing their plans and support felt rushed.

“There wasn't much planning around my leaving care plan. I think I might have been given the document (Male, 21)

I didn't choose, they planned it without asking. There were no options, I had to pick it. They were behind in the leaving care planning (Female, 20)

Caseworkers play a vital role in the planning phase. Young people highlighted the importance of having a consistent caseworker who had regular contact, was informed, and communicated well.

Young people stated that developing independent living skills were a vital part of the planning phase.

Barriers to finding housing included:

- difficulties applying for private dwellings (e.g., no rental history, too young),
- difficult application processes and long wait-lists for public housing,
- lack of appropriate housing (e.g., none available, poor conditions, not safe), and
- cost of rent, utilities, and outfitting a home.

“I knew nothing about how to run a household and pay bills. It was really stressful thinking how am I going to do this. (Female, 21)

Actions

Ensure all care leavers have access to safe, secure, appropriate, and affordable housing options (e.g., supported to remain in their placement, access to supported accommodation, increased support to live independently).

Ensure all young people have detailed, holistic, and culturally appropriate leaving-care plans. Young people should be involved in developing plans, be able to access a copy when needed, and be supported to carry out, review, and update plans over time.

Indigenous community controlled organisations should be funded appropriately to support Indigenous care leavers to develop and work through their plans.

Ensure caseworkers are motivated and skilled in supporting young people (e.g., actively contact young people and work with them to develop plans; use effective communication skills) and that caseloads allow for high quality practice.

Monitor outcomes for care leavers to ensure changes to policy and legislation result in improved outcomes.

Consultation
completed in 2022

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