

Support to 21 in Queensland

In June 2022, the Queensland Government announced their commitment to extending care to 21 for young people transitioning to adulthood. To help inform policy development, CREATE talked to young people with a care experience on behalf on the Queensland Government.

Young people had their say through:

- Think tank groups ("blue-sky" discussions);
- Consultations via structured interviews or an online survey; and
- Youth Advisory Groups or focus groups (reflecting on key findings).

Young people thought it was important that transition to adulthood considered:

Safe, stable, affordable housing
Support for looking after their mental and physical health
Support navigating family relationships
Support developing life skills
Support setting up a home
Learning to drive and/or having accessible transport
Support to connect with family, religion, and culture
Support with financial management and financial support
Support to achieve learning and employment goals

“ Support. The transition from care is scary. There’s this constant anxiety and fear of what’s going to happen next. (Male, 19)

They could have helped me navigate family conflict safely and helped me stay in touch with my siblings. (Non-binary, 20)

I think it is important coming out of residential care that they have a place to go into. If they are going to be living by themselves, they need to have the skills to look after themselves. (Female, 23)

”

Key Messages

- Safe and secure housing was described as critical; with young people acknowledging that inappropriate housing negatively affected many other life areas.
- Transition planning processes were described as poor. Young people wanted early engagement, meaningful involvement in planning and decision-making, and opportunities to update their goals and support needs post 18-years.

But no one has explained it enough for it to be understood. (Female, 18)

- Many thought that it would be valuable to have a dedicated support person, such as a mentor, during their transition to adulthood phase.
- Young people commented on fundamental principles that would strengthen the provision of any support to 21 framework. Young people thought:
 - support must be available to all (non-discriminatory)
 - support options must be communicated clearly to young people
 - support must be accessible
 - providers of support must be accountable
 - providers of support must be competent and trauma-informed
 - support must be individualised and involve the young person in decision-making.



CHOICES! Any support must be informed by what the young person needs. It must be flexible and creative. (Female, 25)

Make sure it is actually happening and not just people saying it should happen. (Male, 22)

Best Practice Extended Care Support

Based on the voices of young people, best practice transitioning to adulthood support includes:

- High quality in-care preparation, including placement stability and in care support (e.g., support to develop life skills, navigate family relationships, connect with culture, religion, and community, enjoy learning and education, be healthy and well)
- Comprehensive leaving care planning over time
- Safe, secure, and appropriate accommodation
- Ongoing financial and practical support post 18-years
- Mentor support (from competent workers who take time to build relationships)
- Accountability mechanisms and transparency of outcomes.

Consultation
conducted in 2022

create
FOUNDATION

create.org.au