

Housing

in the Northern Territory

Safe, secure, appropriate, and affordable housing is essential for young people leaving care and transitioning to independent living.

CREATE asked 26 young people with a care experience aged 16-24 years in the Northern Territory about their experiences planning for and trying to find a safe and secure place to live when leaving care.

Most young people had talked to someone about what would happen to their placement once they turned 18.

However, only **38%** reported that their leaving care plans had details about where they would live after they left care.

61% of 18 to 24 year olds needed help to find housing once they left care. Of those who needed help, most found housing support helpful.

Barriers to housing included long wait-lists for public housing, not knowing where to start, and unsuitable housing options.

“ I knew how to do stuff, but it was still really hard to get a place. I had a job and money and applied for heaps of places, but I never got anything. (Female, 22)

Housing is not adequate for young people and a lot of the time there isn't much help for young people over 18. (Female, 18)

Would just have liked to have had a better understanding of housing options and the facilities provided. (Male, 24)

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Key Messages

- Young people in this consultation consistently commented about the importance of support and information.
- Some young people commented positively about the level of support and information they were receiving or had received (e.g., able to remain with foster carers; able to transition to semi-independent supported accommodation, parent support).

“ I know that I can move back to my carer or my boyfriend’s parents if I do need a place later, which is really good. (Female, 18)

- Some young people commented about needing more information and support, including:
 - increased understanding of housing options and entitlements;
 - detailed and holistic leaving care plans;
 - Indigenous-specific resources;
 - increased practical support (e.g., support filling in housing applications; more active case-management; post-care home visits);
 - increased emotional support; and
 - more money.

“ Having a caseworker or carer to help apply for housing and educate me more on independence. There needs to be more support and education for young people in care, so they are confident and successful in secure accommodation before/or at the time of leaving care. (Female, 24)

Actions

- Ensure all care leavers have access to safe, secure, appropriate, and affordable housing options (e.g., support to remain in current 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 controlled community organisations should be funded appropriately to support Indigenous care leavers develop and work through their plans.
- Ensure caseworkers are motivated to support young people and use high quality communication skills (e.g., respectful, empathic, culturally appropriate, trauma informed).
- Outcomes for care leavers to be monitored to ensure changes to policy and legislation result in improved outcomes.

Consultation
completed in 2021

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