



# Young people's experiences of leaving care and their support needs: Recent research and promising practices

24 July 2019 | Stewart Muir, Jade Purtell and Lou Limoges

## Questions

“ Thanks so much for the webinar. I'd be really interested to understand the logic behind the Uniting project bringing a new person into a young person's life, rather than building the skills of OoHC staff and carers to operate from an advantaged thinking perspective from the get-go and therefore strengthen the existing relationship/improve the quality of care generally.

*LaurenO | 24 July 2019*

“ We believe that workers within the OOHC system are currently hampered by the system itself and by offering a relationship outside that system to the young person there is an alternative for them that is not the 'system' that young people often come to resent and find problematic during adolescence. We have deliberately employed people with expertise in youth work, whereas OOHC case workers often have to be expert in all stages of development. This privileges this stage of development as unique and of critical importance. There is evidence to support the use of a mentor outside the OOHC caseworker relationship.

*Lou Limoges | 30 July 2019*

“ Could Lou please advise the locations of the Extended Care Pilot? I work in Western NSW and feel there would be great benefit for Uniting's young care leavers in the area.

*Michelle | 24 July 2019*

“ Dubbo, Coffs, Port and Western Sydney

*Lou Limoges | 30 July 2019*

“ I am would like to enquire considering the Foyer model is for single young people , in the event a young woman becomes pregnant whilst in the program does the young person have to leave the program ? be accommodated elsewhere ? have access to the program off site ? need to exit the program ? Thanks

*Donna | 24 July 2019*



“ The Foyer does not accommodate children so the young person will be supported to find alternative accommodation and support. Foyer staff would stay involved until that young person is connected with appropriate supports and housed somewhere else. This would be a transition from Foyer at a pace suitable for the young person.

Lou Limoges | 30 July 2019

“ **Did you ask the leavers about whether access to a case worker and Dept support would have been good and/or helped?**

David | 30 July 2019

“ We did ask young people what services would have helped them and they gave us a range of answers; often this was about specific help with services (e.g. mental health) but here were some general indications that many young people wanted the more general support that a worker could provide. Some young people in the study did have a leaving care worker, or in some cases another kind of community worker (e.g. one attached to youth services). Their opinions on such workers were mixed and often highly individual; some found them very helpful while others wanted more support (or for longer).

Stewart Muir | 30 July 2019

“ **Were there any examples of strong community connections that YP experienced that could be replicated?**

Catherine | 30 July 2019

“ It depends on what you mean by ‘community connections’. Some services – especially youth oriented services – were able to offer important supports to young people after their transition and these services could sometimes also facilitate other forms of social contact (because they offered a venue for socialising or accommodation). These supports were not accessed (or available) by everyone who might have needed them. But friends, former carers and biological kin were usually the most important connections. Case workers or leaving care workers could also be an important social connection too; offering advice and a sense of empathetic support beyond case-management. However, not all such connections are easily replicable; rather they depended on particular personal relationships and individual histories.

Stewart Muir | 30 July 2019

“ **Did any of the young people in the study share their own personal struggles with lack of engagement in their exiting care plan?**

Tayla | 30 July 2019

“ Relatively few young people were aware of whether or not they had a transition plan. As such, they had little to say about planning. The responses of those who did have a plan were mixed; some felt that they had adequate input into them but others felt that they had little input and/or that they were not helpful. Very few spoke of actively disengaging from planning but other life events – such as finishing school,



moving house, emotional upsets, fear about leaving care – could hinder young people's ability to plan or think about the future.

Stewart Muir | 30 July 2019

“ **Did the young persons' legal status play any part in their outcomes?**

*Eleonora | 30 July 2019*

“ The analysis did not find any association between legal status (in terms of official orders) and outcomes. There were also no strong associations between outcomes and placement types. However, it should be noted that the sample did not include many young people in permanent care arrangements.

Stewart Muir | 30 July 2019

“ **This is excellent research data, and reinforces some of what we have found in the past (Mendes and others). I'm wondering about the positive stories of stories where participants have managed to navigate the care system and difficult life challenges and system issues. What do we know about these experiences and what can we learn from these young people, their experiences, what supports helped them or could have better helped them?**

*Meaghan | 30 July 2019*

“ This topic is partially addressed in the Beyond 18 reports (especially Wave 2 and 3), when young people told us about what had helped them. Generally, young people told us that support from former carers after their order had officially ended was helpful - especially when this support included accommodation. Consistent and personal support from workers was also felt to be helpful. Longer-term accommodation – such as from carers but also youth foyers or other forms of longer term transitional housing – was also cited as offering important stability that could help them engage in employment or education or deal with personal challenges. More generally, many young people spoke of the importance of having someone who they felt cared about them and took a personal interest – not just carers or family but also their workers. The statistics were less clear about what improved outcomes.

Stewart Muir | 30 July 2019

“ **With the feedback captured by young people in the survey, did they indicate reason for leaving their carer? Was it their decision or other? Did the young people indicate they would have preferred the care beyond 18 years of age?**

*Natasha | 30 July 2019*

“ Young people rarely spoke about what age they would have preferred to leave care but there were a range of accounts of the actual transition. For young people in residential care or lead tenant agreements, there was no choice about leaving when their order



ended. In contrast, some young people in kinship care, foster care or permanent care had not 'left' at all and still lived with their carer. Yet other young people described bouncing between their carers and other forms of accommodation (and back again); moving back and forth due to a desire for independence, the formation, breakdown and repair of relationships, or financial need. We discuss some of this movement in the Beyond 18 reports.

Stewart Muir | 30 July 2019

**“ What is the relationship between Uniting's Extended Care Model and NSW government and any commitment to Home Stretch?**

*Catherine | 30 July 2019*

“ We discussed our evaluation approach with NSW Government and will share findings and outcomes. We expect this will feed into outcomes of other pilots being conducted in NSW aimed at improving lives of vulnerable young people and their families. We support the Home Stretch campaign.

Lou Limoges | 30 July 2019

**“ Not sure if we missed it - how many YP will be supported via Uniting's Extended Care pilot?**

*Catherine | 30 July 2019*

“ Around 60 young people

Lou Limoges | 30 July 2019

**“ Lou, do the Foster Carers who have been caring for them thus far, can they be involved and is this encouraged? As they are 'family' to them during their formative years. How does the attachment and bonding suddenly being severed at 18 years impact the young person?**

*Pari | 30 July 2019*


“ Yes carers are involved and yes this is encouraged. Wherever possible and agreed young people can stay with their carer beyond 18 and we will continue to pay the carers allowance until 21 years. We will also support carers to remain part of the young person's life and support network and nurture this relationship where appropriate beyond 18 whether they are living with their carer or not.

Lou Limoges | 30 July 2019

**“ What is the referral pathway for young people that become parents?**

*Cassandra | 30 July 2019*

“ No specific referral pathway, they will keep their youth development coach until 21 years regardless of becoming a parent. The focus of support would shift into enabling



that young person to become a confident parent linked into the right supports that they will need.

Lou Limoges | 30 July 2019

“ **How will Foyers determine whether young people are 'Foyer ready'? Guidelines for suitability could indeed exclude young people who need the services most. For example, very complex needs such as substance abuse problems, or young people with children of their own.**

*Marcus | 30 July 2019*

“ As stated in the presentation Foyers are not for everyone. They are for a targeted population of young people. We will not set young people up to fail who are not ready to engage in some type of education or employment. The eligibility process will exclude people at a point in time in their lives, if they are assessed as not ready, the answer will be “not now” rather than “not ever.” Foyers deliberately have a mixed community of ages and support needs. Keeping that balance has been proven to be an important factor for success within other Foyers so young people with complex needs will be living in our Foyer through to young people with lesser need. Our Foyer will be all young people with a care history which is a compelling enough reason for them to be eligible for extra support.

Lou Limoges | 30 July 2019

“ **What will the capacity - how many Young People will they take on?**

*Lisa | 30 July 2019*

“ 53 young people at any one time

Lou Limoges | 30 July 2019

“ **Will DCJ be involved in the process from a funding perspective?**

*Lisa | 30 July 2019*

“ NSW Government are involved in supporting the financial transaction which is a social benefit bond. Family and Community Services and Justice, Premier and Cabinet and Treasury are all involved in setting up the impact investment which uses private investment dollars to fund the program and a return to investors on the investment is made through projected savings by quantifying successful outcomes to govt. There is no block funding granted for this.

Lou Limoges | 30 July 2019

“ **Would be interested to know more about Uniting future horizon strategic initiative if possible!**

*Kate | 30 July 2019*



“At this stage we haven't released information about our other projects. It's early days for the strategic initiatives that have been funded.

Lou Limoges | 30 July 2019

“ **What disciplines are the coaches trained in?**

*Julie | 30 July 2019*

“Very diverse. We are interested in people with a strong passion for youth work, understanding of youth development, who are creative and proactive in their work. We have employed people who are experienced in working with young people, regardless of the discipline they are trained in. All our coaches have some tertiary education but this might be a Certificate or it might be a Degree. We are more interested in what the individual can bring to the program and offer young people.

Lou Limoges | 30 July 2019

“ **A difficult barrier for leaving care is obtaining driving licences. Is this being considered as part of the Foyer program?**

*Deborah | 30 July 2019*

“The support is tailored to the individual. If getting a drivers licence is identified as a goal that the young person wants to achieve then we will support them to do this.

Lou Limoges | 30 July 2019