

CARER INFORMATION SHEET

1. Study Title: CREATE's National Out-of-Home Care Survey 2017

2. Investigator: Dr Joseph J. McDowall

Address: 1 / 3 Gregory Terrace, Spring Hill 4004

Contact: (Bus) (07) 3062 4860

Qualifications: BSc, PhD, MAPS, FQA

Position: Executive Director (Research), CREATE Foundation

Dr McDowall has a Bachelor of Science and Doctor of Philosophy (in Social Psychology) from the University Of Queensland. He is a Member of the Australian Psychological Society and a Fellow of the Queensland Academy of Arts and Sciences.

3. Introduction

The young person in your care has been selected to take part in this research study because s/he is a child or young person who has lived in out-of-home care for at least six months. CREATE, as the independent advocate for children and young people in out-of-home care, wants to know how children and young people feel about the care they have received, and any thoughts they may have about what might make the care system better for those who live in it. Although no government in Australia funds this research, they all have facilitated this contact so the invitation can be issued. The information we obtain will be passed on to people making decisions so that they can make changes to improve the system.

This Carer Information Sheet and Consent Form will tell you about the research project. It explains the purpose of the research, what the children and young people will be asked to do, and any risks involved. It also describes how their answers will be used, and with whom they might be shared. Knowing what is involved will help you decide if you are happy for the child or young person in your care to take part in the research. Please read this information carefully. You can contact CREATE on the numbers listed if you have any questions about the research. Participation in this research is voluntary. If you don't wish the young person in your care to take part, you can decide not to be involved. If you decide you want to take part in the research project, you will be asked to fill out the Third-party Consent Form.

Complete the forms by following the set instructions. When the required information has been provided, you will be asked for an email address or other point of contact to which we can send the survey.

By submitting the Consent Form, you are telling us that you;

- Understand what you have read;
- Agree to allow the young person in your care to take part in the research project;
- Agree to our use of any information provided, as described.

You may keep this Participant Information Sheet and print off a copy of the Consent Form if you wish.

4. Purpose of the Study

Children and young people in out-of-home care are being invited to participate in a research study, which is being conducted as a follow-up to the large benchmarking survey that many of those in care completed in 2013. That study was the first survey of children and young people in out-of-home care (OOHC) across Australia; all states and territories (except WA) were involved. This process allowed the voices of those living in the OOHC system, between the ages of eight and 17 years, to be heard regarding their day-to-day experiences in the important life domains of accommodation, health, education, identity, culture, and relationships, as well as employment and finances, and life skills (for the older age groups). For this survey, we also are including young people between the ages of 18 and 25 years who have left the care system.

Questions in the survey were structured to address areas covered by the National Standards in OOHC developed as part of the National Framework for Protecting Australia's Children 2009–2020. The overarching concern of the 2013 work was to set a point of reference, showing how the standards were being applied at the time, against which future reviews could be compared to show changes (hopefully improvements) to the system over time.

This proposed study is the follow-up survey to be conducted five years after the first, during which time changes to the systems would be expected to have occurred. On this occasion all states and territories have agreed to allow their children and young people to participate. The governments provided CREATE with ways to contact all individuals in the care population within the appropriate age ranges; the young person in your care has been selected and is invited to participate in the online survey. For those who participate, all personal, identifying information will be removed from the data once the survey is complete.

Data will be collected from July 2017 through to February 2018, and CREATE would like as many children and young people who have a care experience as possible to be involved in this great opportunity to have a say about what is important to them. The online survey will take between 30 and 45 minutes to complete, depending on how much a respondent wants to say. Many questions simply require “ticking a box” to answer, while a few will ask for thoughts or opinions.

5. Study Procedures

This study will involve participation in a survey that will require children or young people to answer a series of questions about different aspects of their life in care including health, education, identity, family and social relationships, social presentation, emotional and behavioural development, and self-care. The survey is available online, but if you prefer, you can contact CREATE (Free-Call 1800 655 105) to talk with a staff member to arrange for the young person in your care to answer the questions by telephone.

The young person in your care has been sent a letter inviting him/her to participate in this study that includes a link to the Consent documents. After you complete these forms, you will be asked for your email address to which we will send the survey.

If you don't have an email, you can provide a postal address; we will send a web link and your unique username by post to that address; you can use that information to access the survey.

Carers of younger potential participants, or those who may have a disability, are encouraged to help their children contact CREATE for a telephone interview. Carers and young people who wish to participate can contact CREATE, provide a telephone number, and CREATE staff will call them back to ask the survey questions at no cost to the carer. In all cases only the assigned username will be used to record

participation. Responses in the form of digital files will be stored on SurveyMonkey's secure server in the United States with no identifying information connected to that database.

If the young person in your care is accessing the survey from an email invitation, s/he will be able to pause and log back in later to complete the survey. If the invitation came in the post, use the web-link in your browser to access the survey. However, in this case, no pausing is possible; the survey must be completed in one session. If this is likely to be difficult, contact CREATE with your email address and we will send you an email invitation.

6. Risks and Discomforts

The major risk possible with this study could be some distress induced through the recall of unpleasant events experienced at some stage before or while children and young people were placed in the care system. Because participation in this study is voluntary, carers should make it clear to the children and young people that they can stop answering any time if they feel continuing may be unpleasant. In the in-person interviews, CREATE staff conducting the sessions are trained in providing appropriate debriefing for children and young people. Those young people responding online will have the option of contacting CREATE staff if they wish to discuss any aspect of the survey and how it has affected them (Free-Call 1800 655 105). Alternatively, other services are available that may be able to assist (e.g., Kid's Help Line: Free-Call 1800 551 800).

In certain circumstances, CREATE staff may be required to disclose personal information of participants. For example, if a CREATE staff member becomes aware that a participant or another young person is at risk of harm, CREATE staff may be obliged to report this to authorities under children's protection legislation.

SurveyMonkey allows data collection to be anonymous. For this project, the IP collection function has been turned off (a capacity available in the more expensive versions of the platform). Therefore, there will be no way of identifying the source of a response, apart from information provided in answering questions in the survey.

Participants should note that some data derived from their participation in this study will be sent overseas; the regulatory regimes governing data access and use in other countries may not be the same as those that are in place in Australia. Participants are advised that if they have any questions about this direct them to the Principal Investigator.

7. Possible Benefits

The immediate benefit to the children and young people responding is knowing that issues raised will be brought to the attention of governments and decision-makers so that they can learn what needs to be done to improve the care system for all those involved with OOHC in the future. From a broader perspective, these data will be useful as an indicator of how child protection is functioning in Australia as a whole, when measured against standards set by the Commonwealth.

8. Voluntary Participation/Right to Refuse or Withdraw

As indicated before, both the child or young person and the carer must accept CREATE's invitation or "opt in" to be involved in this survey. Participation is completely voluntary and if you begin answering questions but then find, for some reason, that you do not wish to continue, you are free to withdraw from the study at any time. Because they will be incomplete, any data you have provided up to that point will not be used in the final analysis.

CREATE would appreciate your assistance in helping the young person in your care understand what is required in completing the survey. If the young person would value your support, or that of any other person, while completing the survey, that assistance is welcome. All that is asked is that the responses given accurately reflect the opinions of the respondent.

9. Confidentiality

No identifiable data will be collected in this study. Client information will be used by the researcher to sample respondents. Children and young people (and consequently their carers) who have been selected will be sent a letter by CREATE inviting participation in the survey; following that, all personal information will be removed from stored survey data. Only the Chief Investigator will access the data file; information will not be shared with anyone else. In the final publication of results, if quotes from respondents are used to highlight certain points being made, the young person will be described simply, for example, as "Female, 16 years".

10. Results of Project

The results of this research project will be published in a major document that will be released early in 2018 at a national launch to which key decision-makers will be invited. A copy of the report will be made available online through CREATE's web site (see <http://create.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2014/12/2013-CRE065-F-CREATE-Report-Card-2013-Web-File-web.pdf> for a copy of the report summarizing the 2013 study). In addition, CREATE provides a specially prepared young person's version of the findings and recommendations sent to all participants who indicate they would like to be informed of the results.

Data will be collected in the form of frequencies and ratings, as well as open responses. These types of results are extremely important in influencing government policy development (given that comparable, accurate information often is unavailable). As well as forming the basis of the national survey report, the data collected may be analysed in different ways and presented in other output. For example, from the previous smaller study, further publications were produced. One paper looked at factors predicting young persons' participation in meetings where decisions were made about their future, while another analysed sibling placements in out-of-home care. In December 2016, a paper addressing connection to culture by indigenous children and young people was published. With more comprehensive data likely to be collected in this study, similar publications are expected to be forthcoming, dealing with the critical issues identified.

CREATE is providing prizes in each state and territory (\$100.00 gift vouchers) and an overall national prize of an iPad. If the young person in your care would like to enter the draw for these prizes, you can use the link provided at the conclusion of the survey to leave your details for the draw. These data will be stored separately from the survey responses.

11. Consent

The young person in your care was selected to receive an invitation to be part of this study. If you do not wish him or her to be involved, you need take no further action. However, if you would like the child or young persons' views to contribute to changing the system for the better, for current and future children and young people, then you need to indicate your willingness to be involved by completing the Consent Form, or through arrangements with the interviewer.

12. Advice and Information

If you have any further questions regarding this study, please do not hesitate to contact:

Chief Investigator:

Dr Joseph J. McDowall at joseph.mcdowall@create.org.au or

Manager, Policy and Advocacy, CREATE Foundation:

Ms Tanya Raineri at tanya.raineri@create.org.au (phone: 07 3062 4860)

The Bellberry Human Research Ethics Committee has reviewed and approved this study in accordance with the National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Human Research (2007) – incorporating all updates. This Statement has been developed to protect the interests of people who agree to participate in human research studies. Should you wish to discuss the study or view a copy of the Complaint procedure with someone not directly involved, particularly in relation to matters concerning policies, information or complaints about the conduct of the study or your rights as a participant, you may contact the Committee Chair, Bellberry Human Research Ethics Committee on 08 8361 3222.