

finding a place to live after leaving care in the Australian Capital Territory

Safe, secure, and affordable housing is necessary for wellbeing, sense of security, good physical and mental health, engagement in education and employment, and social and community connectedness.

CREATE asked 25 young people with a care experience aged 17 - 21 in the ACT about their thoughts and experiences finding housing after leaving care

58%

didn't know where to start when finding a place to live.

89%

thought it helpful to some degree to be able to return to a supported place

47%

experienced homelessness at some point after leaving care

32%

concerned about inadequate caseworker support

“

I was sort of keen to be independent but also terrified.
(Female, 21 years)

Affordability is one big thing (Female, 21 years)

I was alone. Doing everything by myself. I didn't know anything or that anyone could help really. (Female, 18 years)

”

Key Messages

32% of those transitioning were concerned about becoming independent because of inadequate caseworker support. Why?

- Caseworkers lacked sufficient time
- couldn't effectively help
- didn't maintain regular contact
- weren't always assigned to a young person

“ If I had access to support workers earlier on in my life it would have been a bit better. (Female, 21 years)

11% had plans detailing where they would live

63% had no transition plan.

Are young people ready to become independent?

- Those transitioning lack familial, social, financial support
- Many don't know about tenancy, budgeting, life skills
- Many are anxious about becoming independent

73% said preparations to becoming independent should occur at 16 years

Why would young people like the idea of returning to a supported place?

- sense of belonging and attachment
- learn life skills
- escape loneliness
- can't afford rent

“ It would be good to have a second option if you can't succeed at being independent straight away. (Female, 20 years)

47% of care leavers had experienced homelessness
44% of whom were homeless over a year

Actions

More support from caseworkers or mentors in terms of time and resources, both before and after leaving care

Develop leaving care plans conjointly with young people, before they leave care. Plans should be continuously monitored, evaluated and improved upon.

Link young people who become homeless to support services immediately

Create a sense of belonging and social connectedness amongst care leavers

Establish more government housing and reduce their waiting times

Contact CREATE to get a copy of the full report.
create@create.org.au

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