

Caseworker Support in Victoria

Strong, stable, and trusting relationships between children and young people in care and their caseworkers are protective, result in better outcomes for young people, and ensure that children and young people are heard and have their views acted upon.

CREATE asked 25 young people with a care experience aged 12 - 17 in Victoria about their relationship with their caseworker.

76%
of young people
(19 out of 25)
reported that they
currently had a
caseworker.

89%
were satisfied
with the amount of
contact they were
having with their
caseworker.

Only 7 (37%)
had been supported
by their current
caseworker for more
than 1 year.

71 out of 100
Rating of
Caseworkers
for being supportive

“

I don't talk to her much. I don't know, I sort of just sit there and listen in on the conversations and answer the questions when asked.
(Female, 13)

We have afternoon tea together and sit down and have a chat. They come to my home and have food. Food is good. (Male, 15)

Keep regular contact. Involve me in decisions that impact me. Listen to what I have to say. (Non-binary, 17)

”

Key Messages

Young people wanted to be supported by caseworkers who took time to build a relationship with them, had good listening and communication skills, provided culturally appropriate care, and provided timely, practical support.

“When you say you're going to get me things, do so quickly so I don't fall behind in school because it's late (e.g., books and stuff). (Non-binary, 17)

In terms of building relationships, young people wanted caseworkers to:

- Get to know the young person as an individual;
- Help the young person get to know them;
- Spend time with them regularly;
- Check in with them about things that are going on in their lives;
- Ask them what they need (be pro-active);
- Listen to what they say;
- Communicate to them about what is going on;
- Involve them in decisions being made that affect them; and
- Be available to contact.

“Being nice. Asking about me... like, the things I do... get to know me, you know. (Male, 15)

Like being there when I message or call them—sometimes they wouldn't answer for quite a while, like a day or two. (Female, 14)

Actions

- Employ appropriately qualified staff; ensure caseloads are realistic and caseworkers have time and space to develop good relationships with all young people.
- Ensure professional development, supervision, and reflective practice opportunities for caseworkers so they have skills and strategies to build relationships and communicate well with young people.
- Ensure clear procedures for incoming and outgoing caseworkers (e.g., making introductions; saying good-bye).
- Continue to monitor the quality and accessibility of caseworker-young person relationship to ensure young people are being supported in a way that meets their individual needs.

Consultation
completed in 2023

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