

Finding a place to live after leaving care in the Australia 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.

32%

concerned about inadequate caseworker support.

47%

experienced homelessness at some point after leaving care.

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

Affordability is one big thing.
(Young person, 21 years)

I was alone. Doing everything by myself. I didn't know anything or that anyone could help really.

(Young person, 18 years)

”

Key Messages

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

- Caseworkers lacked sufficient time
- Didn't maintain regular contact
- Couldn't effectively help
- 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. (Young person, 21 years)”

Are young people ready to become independent?

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

73% said preparations towards 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

47% of care leavers had experienced homelessness

44% of whom were homeless over a year.

11% had plans detailing where they would live.

63% had no transition plan.

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

Actions

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

Develop leaving care plans jointly 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 wait times.

Consultation
completed in 2022

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