



# Connecting with Youth:

## U-Count Summary Report

December 2014



Ministry of  
Children and Family  
Development



Adoptive Families  
Association of BC

## Executive Summary

There is a number of significant milestones on the path to adulthood. Moving away from home is often the final big step in becoming an independent adult. These accomplishments are usually achieved through support and preparation from parents; support that is likely to continue well beyond the point at which the young person has moved away from the family home. In fact, "80% of parents with 19-28 year olds" continue to provide their children with support after leaving home (Vancouver Foundation, 2013, p.6). For young people in government care, however, independence happens at 19 with or without the necessary preparation and support to be successful; an experience that left some who participated in this project feeling nervous, isolated, and vulnerable.

A request was made by the Ministry of Child and Family Development (MCFD) to learn about the experiences of young adults after leaving government care and, at the same time, share information on programs and services offered by MCFD. According to Rutman, youth from care experience increased challenges in such areas as homelessness, substance use and education (as cited in Rutman, Hubberstey, & Hume, 2014, p. 2). From the front lines of providing services to the policies that allocate resources it is important to understand the individual journeys, complexities, and barriers to support.

Some important and telling information emerged from both the in-person and online conversations with youth. Post-care, these youth faced multi-systemic issues that made the transition to independence a challenge for some and an absolute struggle for others. Limited access to housing and education, barriers to employment, dependence on income assistance and disability benefits, mental health issues, loneliness, and an overwhelming sense that life was "hard and unfair", sum up the post care experiences of many of the youth who shared their story for the U-Count project. For others, access to information and support, AYA funding, connections to programs and services, working with someone to prepare for independence before aging out and a strong support system have made the transition a more positive experience.

Based on what was learned from youth who connected with the project, recommendations are made that may inform, guide, and support MCFD in their delivery of services to youth, 19-24, from care.

Due largely to time constraints, a number of factors in the areas of engagement, partnerships and connecting with the most vulnerable youth impacted the ways in which U-Count was able to connect with youth and organizations in the community.

Youth from care face a number of barriers and challenges as they move towards healthy independence. Lack of planning and preparation, housing barriers, inadequate education funding, minimal supports, food insecurity, and so many other factors have impacted these youth since aging out of care. Many youth who shared their stories with U-Count outreach workers felt much more needed to be done in order for them to make this transition a successful one. For many, it boiled down to needing a combination of resources and relationships – “a bus pass and TLC”, (participant).

Overwhelmingly, youth talked about needing more supports after leaving care, supports often considered the norm by mainstream youth and their families. The consequence of severed relationships with foster parents and social workers, lack of adequate permanency and transition planning, strained relationships with birth family and, generally poor support systems is young people who feel abandoned by those they had relationships with and who, as a result, struggle to be independent.

## Acknowledgements

### Event hosting

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## Introduction

### **"A bus pass and TLC."**

There is a number of significant milestones on the path to adulthood. Moving away from home is often the final big step in becoming an independent adult. These accomplishments are usually achieved through support and preparation from parents; support that is likely to continue well beyond the point at which the young person has left the family home. In fact, "80% of parents with 19-28 year olds" continue to provide their children with support after leaving home (Vancouver Foundation, 2013, p.6). For young people in government care, however, independence happens at 19 with or without the necessary preparation and support to be successful - an experience that left some who participated in this project feeling nervous, isolated, and vulnerable.

Many dedicated foster parents, social workers, youth workers, and other community professionals work hard to prepare youth for the challenges and realities of living on their own. But is it enough? Will they be ready for this sudden shift to independence and what will their experiences be like after leaving care and embarking on this new journey? The Vancouver Foundation's *Youth Vital Signs Report* which examined the experiences of Lower Mainland youth found 397 homeless youth under the age of 25, and pointed to the withdrawal of youth services at 19 as a contributing factor (2013).

To address these questions and learn how best to meet their needs the U-Count project, a youth engagement component of a three-year initiative by the Ministry of Children and Family Development (MCFD) explored the post-care experiences of youth 19-24. Additionally, these consultations were designed to share information on community resources and MCFD programs and services.

Youth revealed their four most pressing issues -- housing, education, relationships, and health care -- while shining light on key areas of achievement and success during difficult times. As one youth participant succinctly summarizes this, all they need is "a bus pass [services] and TLC (relationships)." The resounding need for "more" was echoed throughout this work as youth shared their challenges to find support, employment, access to education, and stable housing; highlighting the critical need for action. This report examines what was learned from the U-Count consultations with youth and community service provider surveys. Recommendations are made on how to respond to the needs of youth during the challenging post-care transition to adulthood.

## Project Plan and Engagement Strategy

A request was made by the Ministry of Child and Family Development (MCFD) to learn about the post-care experiences of the young adults who have left care. According to Rutman, Hubberstey & Hume (2014, p.2) youth from care experience increased challenges in such areas as homelessness, substance use, and education. From the front lines of providing services to the policies that allocate resources it is important to understand the individual journeys, complexities, and barriers to support.

The project's intention was twofold: first to connect with approximately 100 young people, age 19-24, from care and engage them in conversation about what life has been like since aging out – aiming to learn what they found most challenging as well as what resources were working for them and second, to provide youth with information on MCFD resources and programs they may be eligible for. These conversations provided a richer context and foundation for what will later develop into a plan and service delivery model.

Seeking to learn about how life has been for youth from care and focussing on: what would have been helpful prior to aging out, their current barriers, areas of success, access to supports, and ways in which they stay connected – 101 stories were captured in a database using interviewers and an online survey. This report will share by themes and, where possible, percentages for who these youth are and what these youth have experienced. This is not a scientific survey in that you cannot generalize these experiences for the 4000 plus youth who aged out of care in British Columbia. The conversations do, however, build a deeper understanding of the youths' journeys.

Each interview was held in confidence and was recorded anonymously. This is a vulnerable population and how we ask questions and manage their feedback is important to protect their dignity and not trigger negative emotional experiences.

Trained Peer Outreach Workers connected with youth at 6 events hosted by community service providers: Atira Women's Resource Society, Aunt Leah's Place, Broadway Youth Resource Centre, Covenant House, Surrey Youth Resource Centre, and Vancouver Aboriginal Friendship Centre. The project hosted an additional event at the Gathering Our Voices Conference however youth who participated were either not from care or outside the age range and as such did not yield youth who met the project's criteria. The Peer Outreach Workers connected with youth through street outreach in Vancouver and Surrey.

With the consent of the youth, outreach worker took notes using a form to ensure a reasonable degree of consistency and recorded each conversation. For participating, each youth received a care package valued at approximately \$100 filled with personal care items and an Indigenous medicine kit. As well, youth received an informational brochure with links to the U-Count website and the MCFD produced, "Useful Tips" manual. A central person was then tasked with entering the forms into a database.

Youth were clearly informed about the project and the intended use of their information. Part of the conversation gathered ideas from these young adults about what would work best in serving their needs and those of their peers.

Further context was added with a service provider survey. These professionals interact daily with young adults and can give a unique and valuable perspective on what is effective and what barriers exist to becoming more effective.

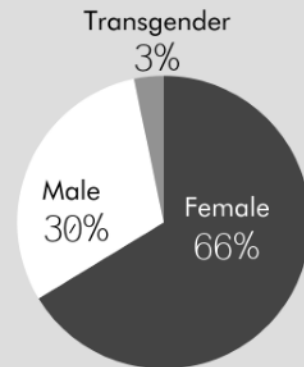
The U-Count website received 198 unique visits from users who could then download the brochure and "Useful Tips" manual. The online survey was administered from Friday, February 28<sup>th</sup> – Sunday March 23, 2014. The interview period was concurrent with the survey administration. Collectively there were 109 participants/ respondents. The online survey achieved 53 unique responses and the interviews accumulated 56 unique responses. After removing 8 surveys for being outside the 19-24 age criteria, 101 unique responses were used to generate this report.

# SNAPSHOT

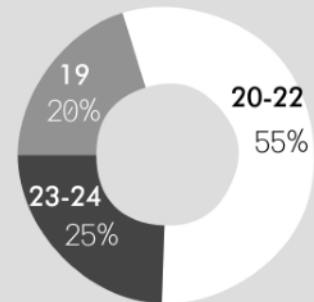
## 101 Youth From Care



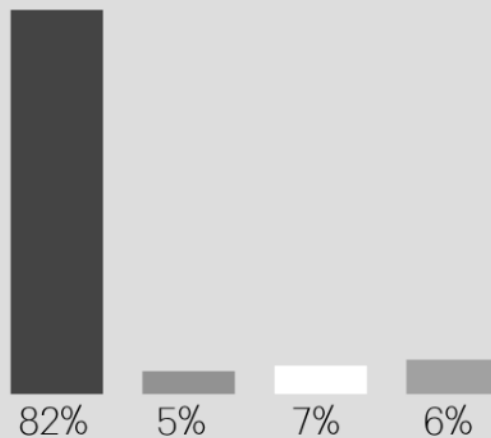
Gender



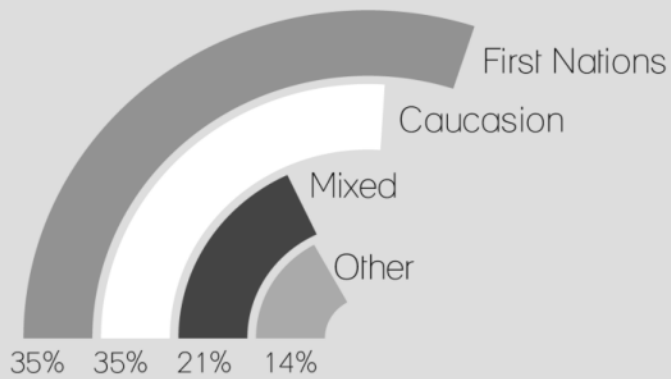
Age range



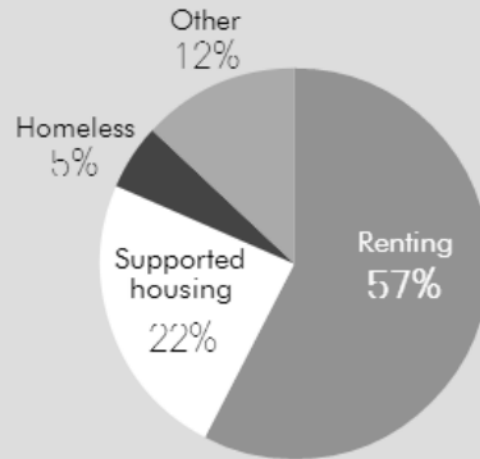
Regions  
represented



## Ethnic identity



## Housing situation



## Primary source of income



32% Employed



28% Disability assistance

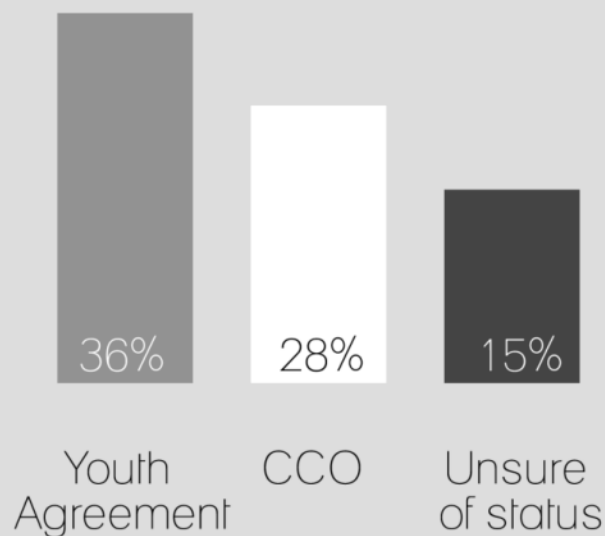


25% Income assistance



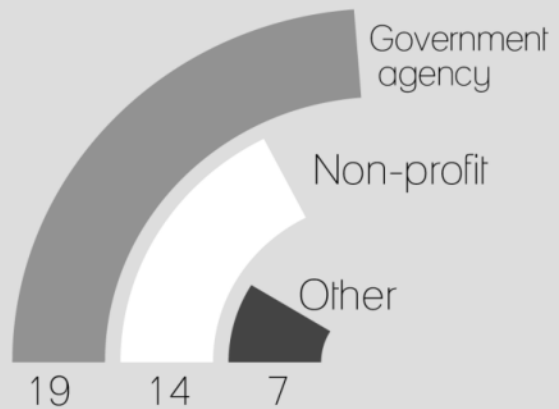
5% Illegal activities

## Status at the age of 19

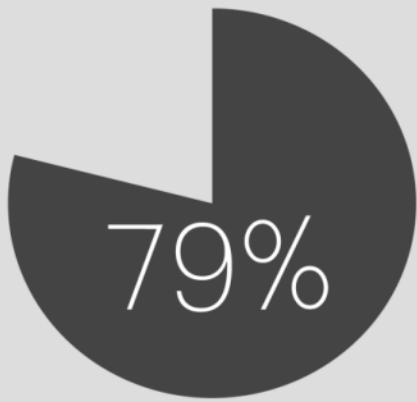




# 40 Service Providers



In the past five days



Had worked with former youth in care

Primary services



1-1 support and counselling  
54%



Education  
49%



Housing  
44%

74%  
Of service providers felt well informed about available resources

3 most recognized resources



Agreements With Young Adults



Youth Education Assistance



CLBC Integrated Support Services Team

# Top Issues

Identified by youth from care



Housing

51%



Education

44%



Relationships

28%



Health care

29%

Identified by service providers



Relationships

63%



Housing

53%



Support

45%

## Discussion of Issues

The above snapshot highlights the top issues identified by youth from care and perceived top issues by their service providers. Both the in person and online conversations revealed insights into these and many other issues faced by youth from care. Post-care, these youth faced multi-systemic issues that made the transition to independence a challenge for some and an absolute struggle for others. Limited access to housing and education, barriers to employment, dependence on income assistance and disability benefits, mental health issues, loneliness, and an overwhelming sense that life was “hard and unfair”, sum up the post care experience of many of the

youth who shared their stories for the U-Count project. Fortunately for others, access to information and support, AYA funding, connections to programs and services, working with someone to prepare for independence before aging out and a strong support system have made the transition a more positive experience.

To gain a richer understanding of what youth are facing after leaving care, community service providers were engaged and asked to complete a survey. This combination of information provides a more complete picture of what these youth are dealing with and, in conjunction with what was learned from youth, will provide the basis for recommendations and next steps.

### Housing

Youth reported housing to be the most difficult obstacle to overcome, with unaffordability and limited access to subsidised housing as their top barriers. Similarly, access to low-income housing was seen as a top barrier (see Appendix 2, table 12) for youth from care by service providers. The security of having a home is gone once you turn 19. As one youth put it, “one day I have a bed and the next I don’t”. While a majority of youth who participated report renting/ living on their own (57%, see table 6), a wide diversity of living arrangements make up the remaining situations including living on the street, with friends, and in supportive or subsidized housing. Not having a permanent, stable place to call home may force youth to live in unsafe conditions or enter into housing agreements with people they would otherwise not choose to live with. Stigma, discrimination, minimal life skills, mental health conditions and substance misuse may also put youth at increased risk of housing instability; all of which were reported by these youth.

When youth shared stories of strength they often involved a connection to a supportive person or community service. Supportive and subsidised housing was something youth wanted to see more of and believed would be beneficial during that critical period after aging out. Supportive housing was reported to have helped youth learn vital life skills like cooking, cleaning, budgeting, and interpersonal skills. One participant described Covenant House’s Rights of Passage program as having “cheap rent, having dinners every evening and staff guidance”. Having healthy positive, knowledgeable adults to talk to can go a long way in building capacity and helping youth to develop the strengths and skills they need to be independent.

## Education

**"I cannot stress enough the importance of the programs around post-secondary education.... I would not be where I am today without this."**

Youth reported education related challenges as being a significant barrier to successful independence. Only 29% of youth reported completing or being in the process of completing college/ university and 19% reported not even completing high school (see table 8). Limited funding, minimal access to information about

available programs and bursaries, tight timeframes for MCFD programs, and restrictions to receiving those funds made pursuing an education difficult. One youth talked about not being able to access Agreements with Young Adults (AYA) funds despite not having used the full two years of funding available to them. Waitlists, reductions on funding amounts, and funding uncertainty cause additional problems around planning and budgeting; and staying within registration and fee deadlines, which could result in removal from the course or program. One youth shared her challenges with budgeting over the summer stating that, "every year there was a funding cut so [living expenses] went down every year".

Overwhelmingly, participants wanted more education funding, more information on MCFD programs available after 19, and more time to prepare before aging out. "If you want to go to post-secondary school as someone coming out of care, you better be more capable than the average student to be able to fund [your education] with scholarships" and once again, the need for supportive people to actively assist with the transition to successful independence was heard, "it's a really tough transition from youth agreements to AYA; there was no emotional psychological support." The experience of pursuing postsecondary education as a youth from care was not smooth and seemed to leave youth feeling at a disadvantage from their mainstream peers.

For youth who were currently in school, they talked about how much the AYA program was doing for them. As one youth expressed, "Agreements with Young Adults changed my life by providing consistency and stability [both] financially and emotionally" Another shared how much they appreciated being told about the programs and funding sources available to them, speaking to the importance of having access to the right information in order to make successful plans. With proper support and guidance, it appeared youth were more successful in their educational pursuits and felt better equipped to deal with challenges when they came up.

## Relationships

Access to supportive people and a reliable support system were identified as necessary for success. Having someone to turn to when they needed help or guidance, access to a mentor or social worker, and connections to family were all seen as important.

Twenty-eight percent (see table 12) of youth identified not having supportive people in their lives as an issue – a sentiment shared by service providers who saw not having one-to-one support (45%, see table 21) as an issue for youth. Not surprisingly, service providers reported one to one support workers as one of the top (38%, see table 22) things working for youth from care. This difference may point to youth needing a type of support not available to them by workers.

Many youth shared their experience of suddenly having no supports once they turned 19 and that being on their own left many feeling rejected and lonely. As one youth shared, “once [I] became dependent on workers they booted me out of care. It would be nice to have someone to go home to”.

When youth had supportive people to turn to, they reported being more successful. The need for committed, permanent people was heard throughout the conversations had with youth and identified by service providers as being in the top 3 barriers faced by youth from care. As one youth stated, “what you really need is a constant in your life” and another who shared, “I didn’t need a lot of help from the Ministry because I had a family. They weren’t my biological family and they didn’t adopt me, but they are my family”. Some youth indicated that their social worker and/or foster parent still provide support. One young person stated, “[my] social worker is still being a friend and offering support [when I’m] in crisis”. Others talked about the importance of permanency planning as something that would have helped with the transition out of care and wanted “more focus on permanency solutions” when asked about what MCFD could do to improve the lives of youth in care.

Even when youth shared having a positive experience in care, they struggled with the loss of relationships after aging out:

**“During my time in care I have to say [I’m] very thankful for the people that have entered my life and supported me. After I aged out it was hard to stay in contact. Maybe during my time in care it might have been helpful for some type of preparation or some information about continuing care.”**

Another form of relationship building that several youth discussed was volunteering or being active in an organization. Many said that being active is a way to meet other

people who have similar experiences and interests; it is a way to create a sense of community.

### Medical and Dental

Twenty-nine percent of youth identified financial barriers to health and dental care as one of their top issues (see Appendix 2, table 12) once they were no longer in care. After 19, unless dental coverage is provided by an employer or student plan, seeing a dentist becomes something of a luxury. One youth shared their experience of having to take out a loan to pay for “much needed” dental work. Repeatedly, youth identified extending medical/dental coverage past 19 as something that would help alleviate the stress associated with accessing dental services. Limited awareness and lack of knowledge about medical premiums and Pharmacare was identified as an issue pointing to a need for more information and better preparation prior to leaving care. This lack of information may lead youth to avoid seeking medical care and/or filling prescriptions.

Second to the considerable financial barrier to dental care, were barriers to mental health services (23%, see table 12). A number of youth discussed this as being a challenge they have faced since leaving care. Youth participating in this project reported being diagnosed with at least one mental health issue. This could pose considerable challenges for these and other youth struggling with mental health issues.

### Income

**“[I] would be would have been on the streets without welfare”**

Connections to the work force were somewhat troubling. Only a third (32%, see table 7) reported being employed and others identified drug dealing and involvement in sex work as a means of

supporting themselves. An additional 9% reported having no source of income at all which may leave these youth vulnerable to exploitation and criminal activity as they seek out a means of making a living. Many youth reported transitioning out of care and on to income assistance or disability supports. This was seen by some youth as a life saver. Other youth, however, saw the transition on to welfare as being “a waste of time” (participant).

### Food Security

Although food was identified as being something of an issue for youth, many discussed being able to access food banks and community resources as a means of ensuring their nutritional needs were met. Some service providers also saw this as a resource that was working for youth (30%, see table 22). Despite this, youth, felt embarrassed and

talked about the stigma associated with accessing these supports. Organizations that hosted events for this project offered free food. Whether it was free meals, snacks or groceries there was something available for youth. Participants indicated that having access to free meals is important, and they were extremely grateful.

### Life Skills

**“[I] wanted independent living at 17. [I] should have stayed home!”**

Many youth indicated that they were not equipped with enough life skills before aging out of care. Some did not know the basics of cooking or cleaning while others needed help with resumes. When life skills are taught in a participatory manner young people

indicated that they felt prepared.

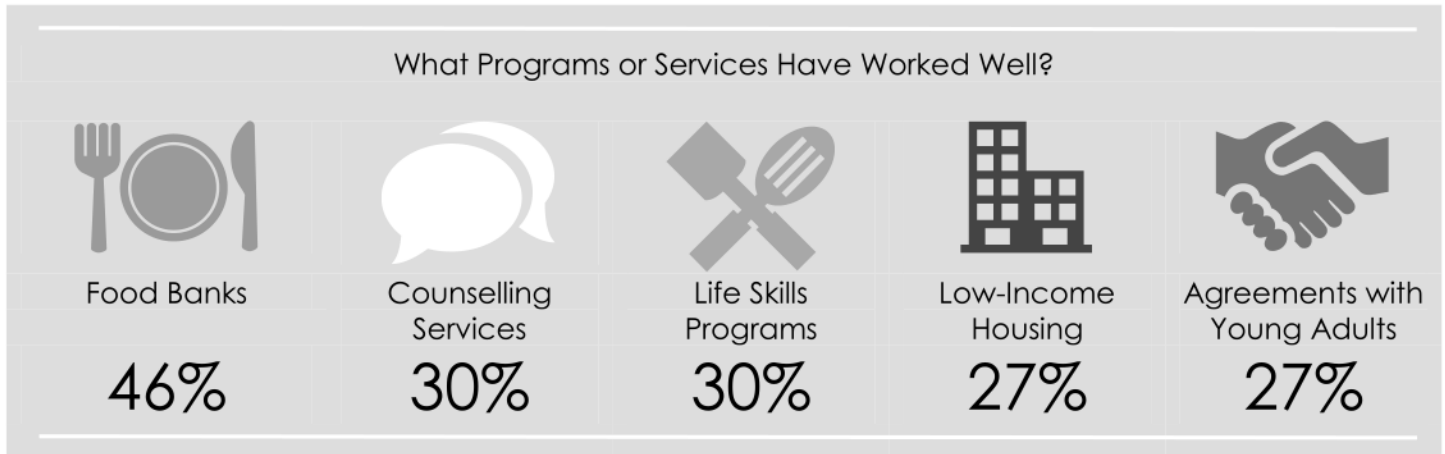
One model that participants indicated was successful is Aunt Leah's Independent Life Skills program. Participants said that it helps to have a supportive person teach them the skills and to be available when youth have questions. Other supportive training programs were also successful resources for youth and having a support system in place often meant the difference between attending and dropping out.

### Readiness

On their 19th birthday many participants felt abandoned and helpless; one described it as “the hardest and scariest times of my life”. The majority of youth felt services for youth in care should extend past the age of 19 and that much more preparation was necessary to really be successful on their own. Some young people indicated that, at a minimum, services such as medical and dental care coverage, transit costs, free counselling services, extending AY to four years to cover the cost of a degree program, and having a life skills worker should be extended.

## Community Resources

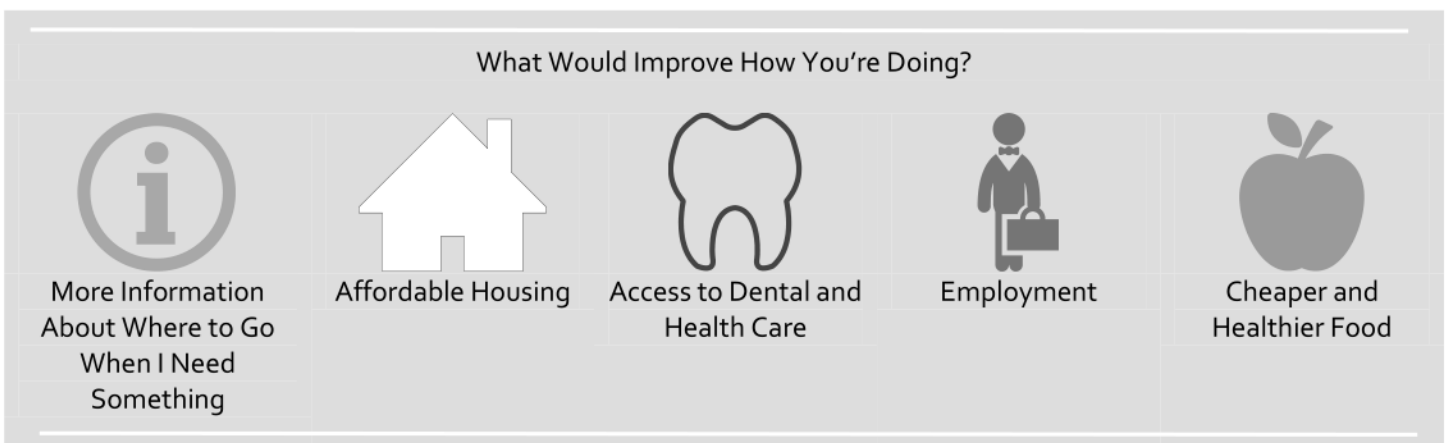
One of the important goals of this project was to find out what has been working for young people post care. Here's what they shared:



(see table 13 for the complete data)

Youth spoke candidly about their positive experiences with community service providers and believed that without the connections to staff at these resources their circumstances would have been considerably worse. Many youth talked about Aunt Leah's, Covenant House and Broadway Youth Resource Centre (BYRC)

When asked what would improve their experience, youth indicated the following:



(see table 14 for the complete data)



The experience of life after care varied for youth who participated in the project. While some felt ready and prepared for independence others were definitely not. Financial barriers to housing and education along with the sudden reality of life without the support of foster parents and social workers left many youth feeling alone and abandoned. For youth who received support and were able to maintain healthy connections the transition was smoother and barriers were perceived to be something they could overcome. The involvement of community organizations such as Covenant House, Aunt Leah's Place, FBCYICN and UNYA played a crucial role in giving youth the type of supports and services necessary to be successful. One youth described receiving great support from Aunt Leah's Place stating that through their programs the youth "found resilience in life's ups and downs".

Youth described the type of supports and nature of the programs they accessed. Housing programs, life skills, parenting, and empowerment based programs were some of the most frequently accessed. The ability to connect with people who they could relate to and who they felt supported by was critical for many of the youth. A sentiment repeated consistently throughout the U-Count interactions with youth. Youth accessed a variety of community supports such as homeless shelters and community clinics. Youth who participated seemed quite resourceful in their use of multiple services. Youth described utilizing more than one organization in order to meet their needs, "BYRC, LOVE, Gathering our Voices, POH, and AFABC was what one youth shared when asked what has worked for them since aging out.

Below is a list of the community service providers/programs youth talked about:

• Aunt Leah's Place	• BYRC	• FBCYICN
• St. Helen's	• Directions	• GAB
• Youth Services (Qmunity)	• Options	• AFABC
• Food banks	• IRAYL	• Friendship Centres
• Guildford Park Daycare	• UNYA	• Quest
• Watari	• Arise	• AA
• Odyssey	• Sophie's Place	• Elizabeth Fry Society
• COR		• Covenant House

Much like the youth who participated, service providers saw inadequate funding for programs, long waitlists and eligibility restrictions on programs youth needed as some of their top barriers in providing services to youth. Such issues could leave youth struggling to find resources and may force youth to access services that don't quite meet their needs but that present as a better option than not accessing any resource; a situation that could result in youth not being able to access a resource they need.

### Staying Informed

Providing a great service is only part of the solution. It's important that youth know what programs and supports will be available to them after 19. Youth who connected with outreach workers shared the various ways in which they stay connected and prefer to receive their information. Here is what they shared:



(see table 17 for the complete data)

### Interviewers' Reflections

The U-Count interviewers, the majority of themselves once in care, reflected on their experiences as well as the experiences shared by the youth. These insights shed greater light on what it is like to leave care from the perspective of those who have already done it. Interviewers described the youth as being resilient and having a great deal of perseverance. They also described them as strong, self-motivated and intelligent.

From their personal experiences with transitions to some remarkable achievements in education, volunteering, and employment the youth left a variety of impressions on the interviewers. For those youth who are still experiencing great challenges, interviewers felt they were less likely to open up and less likely to want or request help.

The transition from care creating housing challenges was a consistent issue. The result for many was to turn back to biological family relationships and risk new issues of abandonment. Many thought early support for transition plans and specific education like financial literacy would be beneficial.

An inspiring aspect of the interviewee experience was the pride that came with accomplishment. A unique but powerful expression of that pride was the young adults that have volunteered back with supporting organizations. This characteristic was also shared by the majority of the interviewees when they shared their experiences. Most were open and seem happy to share what they learned.

A last observation was the continued challenge of the diverse young adults that age out of care. Some desire direct support, others look to peers, some just want information. One solution will not capture their needs; some have high ideals and need a little support while others are in complex challenges.

## Recommendations

### Three Things MCFD Could Do to Improve the Lives of Youth in Care



More Funding for Youth Services



Extend the Age of Care Past the 19th Birthday



More 1-1 Support for People Aged 19-24

Based on what was learned from youth who connected with the project, the following recommendations are meant to inform, guide, and support MCFD in their delivery of services to youth, 19-24, formerly from care.

### Permanency/Transition Planning

Many youth who connected with outreach workers talked about not being prepared for the realities of life on their own and believed that both permanence and transition planning should have happened much earlier than it did. Permanent connection to a

loving family is something all youth should have in their lives and given the often difficult circumstances that bring youth in contact with the Ministry, it is doubly important that everything is done to ensure permanent relationships for youth exist following their 19<sup>th</sup> birthday.

Whether it is through connections with healthy birth family or by way of legal and/or moral adoption, a greater emphasis on permanence for youth in care ought to be explored and focussed on as early as possible. For youth whose trajectory is towards independence at 19, greater emphasis on comprehensive transition planning is seen as an approach that could give them a solid chance at successful independence. Plans should be youth-centered, skills-development focussed, and would ensure youth have supportive permanent relationships with non-paid healthy adults once they leave care. Where connections with non-paid adults are unsuccessful, a dedicated MCFD worker could be explored as an alternative.

### Housing

Youth identified housing as a top issue – with affordability and availability as the primary reasons why. Developing partnerships with BC Housing and other subsidized housing organizations could result in programs that provide youth from care an opportunity to transition into subsidised units. For youth who require additional supports, partnerships with community organizations could be established to provide key workers and/or other support people to help youth gain the additional skills necessary to be successful.

Youth told U-Count outreach workers that the housing support worker through various organizations has been helpful in finding affordable and safe housing. They were also helpful in keeping them informed of their tenant rights of which many youth had been previously unaware.

### Education

Education is a critical component of successful independence. Barriers to current programs meant many youth had been unable to pursue postsecondary training and as a result have been unable to move beyond welfare and/or low paying jobs. Increased funding for current MCFD programs, fewer restrictions on the type of program funds can be applied to, extended time frames for accessing funds, and expanded eligibility for young people on youth agreements the like could make education/skills training goals more attainable. In order to facilitate this process and assist youth in navigating the system youth believed a caring adult would also be helpful.

It is recommended that MCFD work with the Ministry of Advanced Education to develop strategies and programs to connect youth from care with postsecondary opportunities. Further it is recommended that MCFD find ways to partner with community organizations and support initiatives that help youth from care access postsecondary education.

#### Health

Extended health and dental coverage was something many youth wished they had access to and a lack of coverage has been a significant barrier in their lives. Extending coverage past the age of 19 to youth from care would remove this obstacle and give youth an opportunity to address their medical, dental, and mental health challenges. Persistent health concerns, untreated mental health challenges and poor dental health can negatively impact the ability of young people to move towards successful independence. With coverage provided up to age 24, youth would have the time necessary to repair and/or correct dental issues as well as access counsellors and other mental health professionals. It is recommended that social workers and foster parents do their best to ensure youth leaving care are made aware of and enrolled in BC's current medical services plan. Further it is recommended that MCFD work with its partners to build a coverage plan that meets the needs of youth from care and that social workers and foster parents make youth aware of any steps necessary to access coverage prior to leaving care.

A navigator role within MCFD could be developed to assist post-care youth with this aspect of the transition process. Navigators would be available to youth during their transition out of care and remain available for a period of time afterwards. They would serve as a primary contact and resource when youth find themselves needing assistance.

Based on what young people shared, it is believed the above recommendations may improve the outcomes for youth from care and give these youth a better chance at becoming successful adults.

## Challenges

A number of factors impacted the ways in which U-Count was able to connect with youth and organizations in the community; much of which were due to time constraints.

### Engagement

Time constraints meant some of the suggested engagement strategies could not be implemented to their full potential. One such strategy was the youth bus, a mobile service that connects with youth in various communities. The four-week time frame restricted U-Count to hosting only two events on the bus and another youth event happening at the same time may also have played a part in the lower than anticipated turnout. The impact was fewer opportunities to connect with youth who access the bus and a reduced ability to accommodate for events that were less successful. More time would have allowed for additional opportunities to utilize this resource, provincial expansion and other strategies to connect with young people.

### Partnerships

Although some agency relationships had been previously established, more time was needed to connect and build relationships with additional organizations and partners, particularly those in the Aboriginal community. As such, it limited the project's ability to engage Aboriginal youth-serving organizations for the service provider survey as well as its ability to locate and connect with those youth not strongly connected to services. Establishing relationships with the Aboriginal community is seen as critical given the overrepresentation of Aboriginal youth from care.

### Youth at Greatest Risk

Time constraints also impacted the project's ability to strategize with community partners on how best to locate youth considered most at risk. Connecting with young people who avoid connecting with services presents a unique challenge both in terms of locating these youth and engaging them.

## Conclusion

Youth from care face a number of barriers and challenges as they move towards healthy independence. Lack of planning and preparation, housing barriers, inadequate education funding, minimal supports, food insecurity, and so many other factors have impacted these youth since aging out of care. Youth who shared their stories with the U-Count outreach workers felt much more needed to be done in order for them to make this transition a successful one. Overwhelmingly, youth talked about needing more supports after leaving care, supports often considered the norm by mainstream youth and their families. The consequences of severed relationships with foster parents and social workers, lack of adequate permanency and transition planning, strained relationships with birth family and, generally poor support systems are young people who feel abandoned by people they had relationships with and who, as a result, struggle to be independent.

Many youth found support from groups like Aunt Leah's and Covenant House, however, service providers also struggled to meet the needs of youth and face limitations and barriers of their own. Thankfully, youth who connected with resources felt better about themselves and about their ability to deal with the challenges they faced. Much more is needed in order to best serve youth from care and bring them closer to the experiences of their mainstream peers.

The experiences of these youth highlight the highs and lows of life after government care. Housing insecurity, educational unaffordability, limited supportive relationships, and poor access to health services all act to build stress and anxiety for many of the youth engaged during the U-Count project.

For some, a solid support system and access to both government and community resources have allowed these youth to find success in times of adversity. Community agencies do their best to meet the needs of youth by providing more than just resources and programming; they provide relationships. Something everyone needs and something no one should have to live without. Through the development of and continuation of partnerships with community organizations, MCFD can facilitate connections that help make the transition to successful independence a reality.

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# **APPENDIX 1**

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## Survey Questions

## Survey Questions for Participants

1. What age range do you belong to?
2. What is your ethnic background?
3. What gender do you identify with?
4. What is your sexual orientation?
5. What area do you live in?
6. What is your current housing situation? (check all that apply)
7. How are you financially supporting yourself now? (check all that apply)
8. Please check off the education you've received? (check all that apply)
9. Do you have any mental health issues that have been diagnosed by a doctor or psychologist? (check all that apply)
10. What type of care were you in when you aged out/ reached 19 years old?
11. Since you've aged out of care what are the issues you've faced? (check all that apply)
12. Based on your answer from the last question, what are or have been your top 3 issues since you've aged out?
13. Since you've aged out what are the programs, services or practices that have worked well for you? (check all that apply)
14. Currently, what are 3 things that would improve how you are doing?
15. What are 3 things MCFD could do to improve the lives of youth in or from care?
16. Any comments you would like to make?
17. If you would like to stay up to date about the U-Count project, please indicate below.
18. How do you prefer to stay informed of important service changes and news? (select all that apply)

### **Survey Questions for Service Providers**

1. What type of agency do you represent?
2. What kind of work do you/ how do support young people from government care? (select all that apply)
3. In the last 5 days of work which of the following young people did you work with? (select all that apply)
4. Based on your experience, what top 3 barriers do young people from care face?
5. Based on your knowledge what is currently working well to meet the needs of young people from care? (select up to 3)
6. Based on your experience, what are the top 3 ways you believe young people from care are having their needs met?
7. As a service provider what barriers do you face in providing service to young people from care? (select up to 3)
8. Do you feel well informed about the various services available?
9. Which of these government programs are you aware of ? (select all that apply)
10. What are the top 3 ways to keep young people informed about programs, services and events?
11. How do you prefer to stay informed of changes and news around services for these youth? (select all that apply)
12. Any comments you would like to make?

# **APPENDIX 2**

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## Youth Survey Data

Overall 101 youth from care took part in either the survey or in-person interview. However, the response rate varies by question because respondents skipped or failed to provide responses. The response rate varies from 83% - 93% for the main survey questions.

Table 1 - What age range do you belong to?

Age of Respondents	Frequency	Percentage
19	19	20.2%
20 - 22	52	55.3%
23 - 24	23	24.5%
<b>Response Rate</b>	<b>94</b>	<b>93%</b>

Table 2 - What is your ethnic background?

Response	Frequency	Percent
Black, Afro-Caribbean, or Afro- Canadian	1	1.1%
East Asian or Asian-Canadian, Asian-Caribbean	3	3.3%
First Nations	30	33.0%
Indigenous South American	0	0.0%
Inuit	0	0.0%
Latino or Hispanic Canadian	1	1.1%
Metis	4	4.4%
Middle Eastern or Arab American	1	1.1%
Mixed Heritage	18	19.8%
South Asian or Indo-Caribbean	0	0.0%
South East Asian	1	1.1%
White, Hispanic White or Euro-Canadian	26	28.6%
I don't know	4	4.4%
I don't want to answer	1	1.1%
Other	1	1.1%
<b>Response Rate</b>	<b>91</b>	<b>90%</b>

Table 3 - What gender do you identify with?

Response	Frequency	Percent
Female	61	66%
Male	28	30%
Transgender	s.22	
<b>Response Rate</b>		

Table 4 - What is your sexual orientation?

Response	Frequency	Percent
Bisexual	13	14%
Lesbian	s.22	
Gay		
Straight	71	76%
Questioning	s.22	
Other	5	5%
<b>Response Rate</b>	s.22	

Table 5 - What area do you live in?

Response	Frequency	Percent
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East Fraser (Abbotsford to Hope)	1	1.1%
Coast/ North Shore (Squamish to North Vancouver, Sunshine coast and Bella Coola area)	1	1.1%
Kootneys (Golden to Creston and Grand Forks to Fernie)	0	0.0%
North Central (Mackenzie to Quesnel and Burns Lake to McBride)	3	3.3%
Northeast (Fort Nelson to Dawson Creek)	0	0.0%
North Fraser (Burnaby, New Westminster, Tri-cities, Maple Ridge)	13	14.3%
Northwest (HaidaGwaii to Hazelton and Dease Lake to Kitimat)	1	1.1%
North Vancouver Island (Port Hardy to Ladysmith)	3	3.3%
Okanagan (Osoyoos to Enderby and Princeton to Penticton)	4	4.4%
South Vancouver Island (Chemainus to Victoria)	2	2.2%
South Fraser (Langley, Surrey and Delta)	13	14.3%
Thompson Cariboo Shuswap (Revelstoke to Williams Lake and Williams Lake to Merritt)	1	1.1%
Vancouver/Richmond	41	45.1%
I don't know	0	0.0%
I don't want to answer	2	2.2%
Other	6	6.6%
<b>Response Rate</b>	<b>91</b>	<b>90%</b>

Table 6 - What is your current housing situation? (check all that apply)

Response	Frequency	Percent
Birth/ Adoptive parents	4	4.0%
Boyfriend/ Girlfriend	18	19.0%
Co-op housing	3	3.0%

Couch Surfing	6	7.0%
Extended Family	0	1.0%
Foster Family	3	3.0%
Friends	9	10.0%
Group Home	0	0.0%
Halfway House	0	0.0%
Living on the streets	5	5.0%
Live on own	27	31.0%
Hospital	0	0.0%
Husband/ Wife	0	1.0%
Renting - market value (meaning it is not subsidized)	26	26.0%
Student Housing	0	0.0%
Subsidized Housing	7	8.0%
Supportive Housing	13	14.0%
Treatment Centre	1	1.0%
I don't know	0	0.0%
I don't want to answer	0	0.0%
Other	5	7.0%
<b>Response Rate</b>	<b>92</b>	<b>91%</b>

Table 7 - How are you financially supporting yourself now? (check all that apply)

Response	Frequency	Percent
Agreements with Young Adults	8	9.0%
Bursaries	8	9.0%
Disability Assistance	28	30.0%
Drug Dealing	5	5.0%
Employed	29	32.0%



Employment Assistance	2	2.0%
Income Assistance	23	25.0%
No income source	8	9.0%
Organizations	1	1.0%
Sex trade involved	s.22	
Scholarships	3	3.0%
Supported by parents/ family	2	2.0%
Trust Fund	0	0.0%
Under Employed	2	2.0%
I don't know	0	0.0%
I don't want to answer	0	0.0%
Other	3	3.0%
<b>Response Rate</b>	s.22	

Table 8 - Please check off the education you've received? (check all that apply)

Response	Frequency	Percent
Elementary - completed	49	52.1%
Elementary - did not complete	2	2.1%
Elementary - in progress	0	0.0%
High school - completed	51	54.3%
High school - did not complete	19	20.2%
High school - in process	12	12.8%
Middle/ Junior High School - completed	14	14.9%

Middle/ Junior High School - did not complete	3	3.2%
Middle/ Junior High School - in process	1	1.1%
Trades - did not complete	3	3.2%
Trades -in progress	2	2.1%
Trades - graduated	5	5.3%
University/ College - graduated	8	8.5%
University/ College - in process	18	19.1%
University/ College - some courses	7	7.4%
Waiting/ willing to start - high school	1	1.1%
Waiting/ willing to start - post-secondary school	8	8.5%
I don't know	0	0.0%
I don't want to answer	0	0.0%
Other	1	1.1%
<b>Response Rate</b>	<b>94</b>	<b>93%</b>

Table 9 - Do you have any mental health issues that have been diagnosed by a doctor or psychologist? (check all that apply)

Response	Frequency	Percent
Addictions/ Substance abuse	22	26.2%
Attention Deficit Disorder/ Attention Deficit Hyperactive	17	20.2%
Anxiety Disorder	30	35.7%
Autism Spectrum	s.22	
Bipolar	8	9.5%
Depression	35	41.7%
Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder	19	22.6%
Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder	25	29.8%
Schizophrenia	s.22	

Self-Harm	12	14.3%
Suicidal	12	14.3%
I don't know	8	9.5%
I don't want to answer	4	4.8%
Other	10	11.9%
<b>Response Rate</b>	<b>s.22</b>	

Table 10 - What type of care were you in when you aged out/ reached 19 years old?

Response	Frequency	Percent
Continuing Custody Order (Permanent Ward)	25	27.5%
Voluntary Care Agreement	4	4.4%
Temporary Custody Order	2	2.2%
Youth Agreements	33	36.3%
Kith and Kin/ Extended Family Plan	1	1.1%
Special Needs Agreement	0	0.0%
I didn't age out of care	4	4.4%
I don't know	14	15.4%
I don't want to answer	2	2.2%
Other	6	6.6%
<b>Response Rate</b>	<b>91</b>	<b>90%</b>

Table 11 - Since you've aged out of care what are the issues you've faced? (check all that apply)

Response	Frequency	Percent
Access to low-income or affordable housing	58	63.7%
Permanent and healthy relationships	37	40.7%
One-to-one support	38	41.8%
Employment	42	46.2%
Information about programs and services available to them	35	38.5%
Accessible mental health services	30	33.0%
Accessible Addiction services	7	7.7%
Treatment facilities	13	14.3%
Access to parenting programs	6	6.6%

Information about the education system	27	29.7%
Funding for education	55	60.4%
Funding for physical health	48	52.7%
Identity (connection to your community, sexuality, gender)	20	22.0%
Access to leisure activities (i.e. sports, arts etc)	39	42.9%
Waitlists for Agreements with Young Adults	11	12.1%
Waitlists for Youth Housing	15	16.5%
I don't know	5	5.5%
I don't want to answer	3	3.3%
Other	2	2.2%
<b>Response Rate</b>	<b>91</b>	<b>90%</b>

Table 12

Based on your answer from the last question, what are or have been your top 3 issues since you've aged out?

Response	Frequency	Percent
Access to low-income or affordable housing	46	51.1%
Permanent and healthy relationships	25	27.8%
One-to-one support	11	12.2%
Employment	21	23.3%
Information about programs and services available to them	10	11.1%
Accessible mental health services	21	23.3%
Accessible Addiction services	5	5.6%
Treatment facilities	0	0.0%
Access to parenting programs	2	2.2%
Information about the education system	5	25.6%
Funding for education	40	44.4%
Funding for physical health	26	28.9%

Identity (connection to your community, sexuality, gender)	9	10.0%
Access to leisure activities	9	10.0%
Waitlists for Agreements with Young Adults	1	1.1%
Waitlists for Youth Housing	3	3.3%
I don't know	4	4.4%
I don't want to answer	4	4.4%
Other	4	4.4%
Response Rate	90	89%

TABLE 13 -Since you've aged out what are the programs, services or practices that have worked well for you? (check all that apply)

Response	Frequency	Percent
Resource Fairs/ forums	8	9.1%
Low-income/ affordable housing	24	27.3%
One-to-One support workers	20	22.7%
Counselling services	26	29.5%
Food banks/ Free meals	40	45.5%
Agreements with Young Adults program	24	27.3%
Free/ low cost treatment centres	8	9.1%
Employment centres	22	25.0%
Leisure programs	11	12.5%
Parenting programs	8	9.1%
Mentoring programs	13	14.8%
Life Skills programs	26	29.5%
Cultural programs	12	13.6%
Spiritual practices	18	20.5%
I don't know	3	3.4%

I don't want to answer	2	2.3%
Other	7	8.0%
<b>Response Rate</b>	<b>88</b>	<b>87%</b>

Table 14 - Currently, what are 3 things that would improve how you are doing?

Response	Frequency	Percent
More information about where to go when I need something	23	25.8%
Low-income/ affordable housing	28	31.5%
One-to-One support workers	2	22.5%
Life Skills training	19	21.3%
Free or low-cost counseling	19	21.3%
Cheaper and healthier food	39	43.8%
Access to Agreement with Young Adults	8	9.0%
Money for post-secondary school	28	31.5%
Access to Treatment Centres	4	4.5%
Employment	31	34.8%
Leisure Activities	18	20.2%
Parenting programs	2	2.2%
Mentoring programs	4	4.5%
I don't know	5	5.6%
I don't want to answer	0	0.0%
Other	2	2.2%
<b>Response Rate</b>	<b>89</b>	<b>88%</b>

Table 15 - What are 3 things MCFD could do to improve the lives of youth in or from care?

Response	Frequency	Percent
Resource Fairs/ forums	39	42.9%
Low-income/ affordable housing	11	12.1%
One-to-One support workers	27	29.7%
Counselling services	18	19.8%
Food banks/ Free meals	19	20.9%
Agreements with Young Adults program	23	25.3%
Free/ low cost treatment centres	31	34.1%
Employment centres	25	27.5%
Leisure programs	16	17.6%
Parenting programs	24	26.4%
Mentoring programs	6	6.6%
Life Skills programs	9	9.9%
Cultural programs	1	1.1%
Spiritual practices	4	4.4%
I don't know	2	2.2%
I don't want to answer	1	1.1%
Other	2	2.2%
<b>Response Rate</b>	<b>91</b>	<b>90%</b>

Table 16– Do You Want to Stay Up to Date on U-Count?

Response	Frequency	Percent
Yes	39	42.9%
No	11	12.1%
<b>Response Rate</b>	<b>57</b>	<b>56%</b>

Table 17–How Would You Like to Be Contacted?

Response	Frequency	Percent
Cold calling	10	15.2%
Email	53	80.3%
Facebook	26	39.4%
Twitter	3	4.5%
Face-to-face	14	21.2%
Text message	13	19.7%
Other	2	3.0%
<b>Response Rate</b>	<b>66</b>	<b>65%</b>



# **APPENDIX 3**

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## Service Provider Survey Data

40 Service providers participated in this survey. Response rate varies by questions.

Table 18 - What type of agency do you represent?

Response	Frequency	Percent
Non-profit	14	35.0%
Charity	2	5.0%
Government Agency	19	47.5%
Other	0	0.0%
Employed	4	10%
No Response	1	2.5

Table 19 - What kind of work do you do?

Response	Frequency	Percent
Cultural support	15	37.5%
Counselling/ peer support/ one-to-one support	21	52.5%
Education	19	47.5%
Employment	14	35.0%
Housing (support, transition housing)	17	42.5%
Justice/ Probation	7	17.5%
Financial Assistance	10	25.0%
Youth Leadership	13	32.5%
Addictions	14	35.0%
Mental Health	13	32.5%
Food/ Nutrition	12	30.0%
Art-based projects	9	22.5%
Volunteerism	10	25.0%
Other	13	32.5%
No Response	1	2.5%

Table 20 - In the last 5 days of work which of the following young people did you work with?  
(select all that apply)

Response	Frequency	Percent
Aboriginal (Includes First Nations, Metis, Inuit)	29	72.5%
GLBT	12	30.0%
Homeless/ street entrenched	19	47.5%
Young parent	13	30.0%
Has or is incarcerated	8	32.5%
Has or is in a treatment facility	12	20.0%
Was in government care	30	30.0%
Was on Youth Agreement	24	75.0%
Receiving Income Assistance	16	60.0%
Receiving Disability Assistance	15	40.0%
Living with a relative	15	37.5%
Employed full-time	8	37.5%
Employed part-time	20	20.0%
Student	27	50.0%
Visible disability	8	67.5%
Invisible disability	20	20.0%
Other	2	50.0%
No Response	2	5.0%

Table 21 - Based on your experience, what top 3 barriers do young people from care face?

Response	Frequency	Percent
Access to low-income housing	21	52.5%
Permanent and healthy relationships	25	62.5%
One-to-one support	18	45.0%
Employment	8	20.0%
Information about programs and services available to them	9	22.5%
Accessible mental health services	9	22.5%
Accessible Addiction services (i.e. counsellors and step programs)	0	0.0%
Access to parenting programs	2	5.0%
Information about the education system	1	2.5%
Funding for education	5	12.5%
Funding for physical health	5	12.5%
Identity issues	8	20.0%
Access to leisure activities (i.e. sports, arts etc)	1	2.5%
Other	3	7.5%
No Response	1	7.5%

Table 22 - Based on your knowledge what is currently working well to meet the needs of young people from care? (select up to 3)

Response	Frequency	Percent
Low income housing	7	17.5%
One-to-One support workers	15	37.5%
Free counselling services	11	27.5%
Food banks/ Free meals	12	30.0%
Agreements with Young Adults program	16	40.0%
Free/ low cost treatment centres	5	12.5%
Employment centres	10	25.0%
Leisure programs	4	10.0%
Parenting programs	5	12.5%
Mentoring programs	8	20.0%
Other	3	7.5%
No Response	3	7.5%

Table 23 - Based on your experience, what are the top 3 ways you believe young people from care are having their needs met?

Response	Frequency	Percent
Resource presentations/ workshops	7	17.5%
One-to-One support workers for 19-24's	15	37.5%
Programs that fund post-secondary school	23	57.5%
Job skills programs	23	57.5%
Youth transition housing	6	15.0%
Food programs	11	27.5%
Online repository of programs and services	1	2.5%
Awareness activities (promotion of services)	4	10.0%
Other	7	17.5%
No Response	4	10.0%

Table 24 - As a service provider what barriers do you face in providing service to young people from care? (select up to 3)

Response	Frequency	Percent
Lack of understanding what resources are available	7	17.5%
Too many clients for the amount of time I have	11	27.5%
Not enough funding for programs that client needs	28	70.0%
Clients are not eligible for programs that they need	17	42.5%
Young people don't follow through	9	22.5%
There is no program to meet the needs of my client	14	35.0%
The waitlists for programs are too long	19	47.5%
Other	3	7.5%
No Response	2	5.0%

Table 25 - Do you feel well informed about the various services available?

Response	Frequency	Percent
Yes	29	72.5%
No	10	25.0%
No Response	1	2.5%

Table 26 - Which of these government programs are you aware of ? (select all that apply)

Response	Frequency	Percent
Agreements with Young Adults	35	87.5%
Youth Education Assistance Program	28	70.0%
Employment Program of BC - Employment Support Services	23	57.5%
Employment Program of BC - Self-Serve Services	16	40.0%
Employment Program of BC - Training program	17	42.5%
Employment Program of BC - Financial Support	15	37.5%
Child and Youth with Special Needs Navigator	18	45.0%
CLBC's Integrated Support Services Team	24	60.0%
Community Living BC's - Personalized Support Initiative	21	52.5%
No Response	3	7.5%

Table 26 - What are the top 3 ways to keep young people informed about programs, services and events?

Response	Frequency	Percent
Cold Calling	6	15.0%
Email	9	22.5%
Facebook	27	67.5%
Twitter	3	7.5%
Face-to-face	33	82.5%
Text Message	30	75.0%
Other	2	5.0%
No Response	1	2.5%

# APPENDIX 4

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## Youth Interview Themes & Summary

Young Adult Interview Themes and Exerts  
*"Just trying to grow up"*

Their stories post care:

- Work in service industry or hard time finding work
- Have contact with social workers and rely on other supports
- Youth groups or centres have provided access and awareness of services
- Relationship issues related to abandonment.
- Struggling financially
- Don't know a lot about programs.
- Secure housing an issue.
- Struggling with alcohol
- Needed to get ID to get onto welfare
- Lives with abusive boyfriend because there are no options.
- Has a child in care.
- Multiple foster homes and no connections with foster parents, social workers, youth workers or CLBC workers.
- Wait list for Young Adults was about 6 months.  
Trouble with housing, transportation and paperwork, but found help
- Transition worker was inspiring and helpful. Introduced her to activities and opportunities.
- Covenant house has people who keep an eye on you.
- AYA and Youth Education Assistance Fund helps with school.
- Friends connected him to Covenant House.
- BC Youth in Care Networks is a great place to go – this place has been so uplifting personally, professionally, emotionally, and motivating.
- Agreement with Young Adults for 2 years was able to achieve a Bachelor of Science and is applying for medical school.
- Broadway Youth Centre provides food; clothing and you can talk with staff.
- Living in a shelter and have a coach counsellor.

What would have made your transition out of care easier?

*“Having a solid mentor in my life”*

- Slower transition and more preparation
- Outreach worker, life skills training and resources
- Personal and financial support
- Places like Aunt Leah's
- Awareness of youth supports like the Federation of BC Youth in Care Networks
- A transition plan
- Someone to be there through the process, not expulsion
- Need the skills of independence
- Extensions as an option
- Learning about options
- Having a consistent person
- Money for text books

*“Wanted independent living at 17, should have stayed home”*



What has worked for you since you've aged out?

- Personal drive
- Learn to love yourself
- Being positive
- Being resourceful
- Going to college and have a part time job
- Worker who goes above and beyond
- Drug and alcohol counsellor
- Pacific Community Resource Society
- Covenant House
- Aunt Leah's
- MCFD support
- Continued relationship with foster Mom
- Moved away from the downtown east side
- Being able to speak to other youth
- Volunteering
- Friends and family support
- Knowing about services (addiction, treatment)
- Bursary information and a stable place to live
- Food bank lists

If your friend recently aged out, what are a couple of programs and services you would tell them about?

- Shelters
- Food
- Employment
- Education
- Grants
- AYA
- Treatment centres
- Parenting programs
- Mentoring programs
- Leisure activities
- Housing
- Counselling
- Lifeskills
- Dental care

What are some ways that you get informed about different programs and services?

- Internet (websites, Facebook and google)

- Youth workers
- Friends
- Staff (AFABC, shelter, programs)
- Library
- Poster boards
- Workshops
- Pamphlets/ flyers

**1. Tell me a little bit about your experiences since you've left care.**

- It's been a struggle financially. Lots of anxiety. Has less support because she doesn't have a social worker anymore. <sup>s.22</sup>  
`got a job right after aging out. Super lucky`. Had a therapist, but it ended at 19. It's not easy finding support after 19. She volunteers at <sup>s.22</sup>  
<sup>s.22</sup> Has a hard time with roommates.
- Started working at <sup>s.22</sup> at 19, likes to connect with friends, uses resource centres for field trips and resources. Needed his care card and was able to get help at the <sup>s.22</sup> youth resource centre for it.
- <sup>s.2</sup> year old woman, was a ward of the court. When aged out, worked and has been a part time student. Goes to <sup>s.22</sup> college part time.
- She was living in supportive housing through <sup>s.22</sup> resource centre. She does most of her communication with workers on Facebook. She's having a hard time finding a job. Needs better skills. She has been on welfare. The welfare process is hard to understand and `cheques can be held for nothing`. Has a hard time with getting around because bus fare is expensive. She has just got off welfare. She lives with her boyfriend of <sup>s.</sup> years.
- She is looking for work. Went from youth agreement to welfare. She gets a bus pass paid for. `If you don't know about (youth) groups or centres then you'd be screwed` She has had very interactive workers. She has put together resources with networking with workers.
- <sup>s.</sup> months after aging out went on income assistance. Struggling with addiction which has made money an issue. Has had unstable housing because of addictions issues. After <sup>s.</sup> months of aging out she ran out of money and her roommate bailed. She has been clean for a while, but still struggles financially. She has had a lot of social difficulties: losing friends and relationships.
- Struggles with drug use. Uses drugs to numb pain. She suffers from depression.
- Youth interview <sup>s.22</sup> year old female who is responsible for herself. She has trouble finding a home. She is staying with a friend on their couch. She has trouble finding transportation and filling out paper work. <sup>s.22</sup>

s.22

- On Agreements with Youth Adults (AYA), lived in s.22 shelter (for homeless youth). s.22 s.22
- Aged out of care on a youth agreement. He was on one for less than a year. s.22
- Had a difficult time finding housing. Went on welfare. Lived with a friend for two years, but continued to look for affordable housing. Found s.22 residence. Looking for retail position. Was volunteering, but had difficulty because of s.22
- Currently homeless. Has problems with having enough food. Has been alone a lot. Help from friends and society. When in case you were taken away from a level of self-sufficiency. When you leave it increases through practice and trial and error.
- Feels lucky compared to some. Signed up for welfare/ disability. Needs money for food and support. s.22 helped her get into contact with Community Living BC. Was in foster care before s.22. Went to s.22 Feels lucky for help from them. helped her with knowledge test to qualify for s.22
- s.22

- I didn't need a lot of help from the Ministry because I had a family. s.22  
s.22  
I did need help from the Ministry when I decided to go to school. I got connected with the Federation of BC Youth in Care Networks and they helped me get money for school. At s.22 I contacted an Agreements with Young adults (AYA) worker. He was really supportive. He was a reference form. He even allowed AYA to cover the expense for an s.22 which I had paid for myself and it put me in debt. I didn't have a wait list for AYA. The social worker for AYA told him most people don't get accepted because they don't have a plan.
- Getting on Agreements with Young Adults was a struggle (wait list). The wait list was about 6 months. Now is in post-secondary school taking s.22 Has moved 3 times since leaving care. It's hard to find housing. Has struggled finding resources like counselling.
- The first few months were hectic. Being unsure about Agreements with Young Adults (AYA), or getting a job. Also had to move because rent was upped. s.22  
Used money from Public Guardian and Trustee throughout the summer. At s.22 College now using AYA and Youth Education Assistance Fund. She is taking s.22  
s.22 AYA has been good and s.22 helps. Evening classes have been difficult because it's hard to find childcare. Attends s.22 - a parent support group. Uses Fresh Food program for healthy eating and crafts.
- Had troubles getting medical care because of no coverage. Was in recovery for a month. Went to a recovery house on his own. Has troubles building sustainable relationships because of abandonment issues. Wants to get a job and is in school.
- Had to get her shit together. Lived in shelter and single occupancy rooms. Has relied on medical staff from s.22 - ok experience, didn't feel like the doctors listed. now is on person's with disability
- It's been up and down; all over the place. Extended care maintenance program. Showed promise no was \$700/month was going to last. Got funding but no housing. Wish he was taught better skills. Found his was to s.22  
s.22 through friends. Has his own place now. Mental health wasn't addressed while in foster care. Was labelled a lot.

- Involved in youth work and youth advocacy. Had semi-independent living extended past 19. Found supportive housing after 19. He has a great advocate. Was working part-time and now does volunteer for different organizations. It was a time of growth and creating new relationships. Mentoring from former youth in care, even small things. Important to learn about his culture and connecting to his community.
- Was excited to live on own, but also felt isolated and depressed. Tried to attend programs but was hard because of s.22  
s.22 Felt more motivated with workers support. s.22 Housing was fine, income assistance. Found the Federation of BC Youth in Care Networks as a great place to go – this place has been so uplifting personally, professionally, emotionally, and motivating.
- Adoption broke down. Has had odd jobs s.22  
s.22. Wants to be a legal secretary assistant. Has a disability.
- Lives at s.22  
s.22 Health problem. Withdrew her education. Had to take minimum wage job due to her qualifications.
- s.22  
s.22 They are a big support.
- Left care s.22 moved in with father. Was a voluntary care status.  
s.22
- Was on a youth agreement. Started renting a room from family. Friend had a work offer. Working just enough to make rent. Doesn't want to be on welfare. Mental health issues have decreased since coming off agreement. `Just me trying to grow up under these circumstances`
- Was living in foster care s.22 They gave her a place. Worker at s.22  
s.22 helped find her a place to live. Having enough money has been really hard. Having enough for food is a big issue. Had issues with school. Now on Persons with Disability (PWD)

- Aged out in <sup>s.22</sup>  
s.22 This person has no support, nothing to fall back on. Was
- Survey <sup>s.22</sup> - It's been different living on his own. Had multiple foster homes in lower mainland. Currently has no connection with fosterparents or with any previous social workers, youth workers, CLBC workers.
- Honestly not much. Was quitting drugs. Visit family and friends. Planning to go back to school. Did school for <sup>s.22</sup>
- s.22

- At 19 was able to get on agreements with young adults (AYA)- had several belts of homelessness after AYA. <sup>s.22</sup> finding secure housing has been troublesome. Being homeless has taught home to tough. Mom kicked him out when he was young. Moved to <sup>s.22</sup> to try and start fresh. Cam back to <sup>s.22</sup>  
<sup>s.22</sup> Couldn't get into school to keep AYA going.
- s.22

-didn't doesn't know alot about what's out there for programs. Needs housing now and a job.

- Was put on income assistance before she aged out. Income assistance isn't enough to get by. Exemption isn't enough. Navigating the adult system is tough. Have had help from housing worker. Income assistance health care is messed up compared to care. Example: process of getting glasses is complicated, lots of verification needed. 'I would burn out of agreements with young adults so quickly –too many demands on education and jobs at the same time'.
- Left care last s.22 Was on a youth agreement, aged out, living on own, now working. Was in care for one year, on semi-independent living. Graduated high school in s.22 using money from employment to pay rent. s.22
- Aged out on a youth agreement, then was on Agreements with Young adults for the 2 years. Started university s.22  
s.22 The only real support received was financial, but 'every year there was a funding cut, so it went down every year'. Not much of a relationship with AYAWorker, just 10 min updates. AYAMedical insurance had conflicting information about claims and ended up paying out of pocket, highly ineffective.
- Hard stressful. Different environment. No one to dish out food, no one to take care of you. Not enough money. All my friends left. Has been renting from his sister since aged out. Enough money for food. Only \$200 a month for food. Too many things to manage. Hard when you have a disability and need extra help and there is no one to help you.
- Aged out on independent living -then on youth agreement. Had a good worker who helped look for place and assisted with damage deposit. After s.22 On welfare after 19, working a s.22 while on welfare and temp agency. s.22  
s.22 Don't do drugs, still struggling with alcohol because everyone drinks. Attending s.22 had her first meeting last week! Has gone to programs like s.22  
s.22



- It's been good, got a home, eating regularly. School part time. Been clean and sober. Got a partner who is supportive.<sup>s.22</sup> works in the building and has been nice and supportive.<sup>s.22</sup>  
s.22 Got clean on her own. Housing is good.

- s.22

- Was in foster care then was living with grandparents s.22  
s.22

- Lives/ lived in homeless shelter, has had many jobs. Did some college level school. Lived in foster homes and then put on youth agreements. Has a lack of food and clothing. She got depressed and quit school and job. Last fostermom was great.

- Already living on her own before aging out. It's ok living on her own. Excited to be on own. Nervous because s.22  
s.22

- s.22

- Has a disability, doesn't have status.
- Was staying at a girlfriend's house. Did not get employment for 3 years. Foster homes were good. Finding employment has been difficult and lack of moral support.
- Clean off hard drugs s.22  
bank but it doesn't help. Disability doesn't pay much. Is getting tired and has low energy. Does not have anyone to lean on. And is frustrated. Is not sure about care status. He has mental health issues and needs to return to see doctor and mental health worker.
- Went into agreements with young adults program at 19. Used it to go to treatment (welfare wouldn't accept her so she had to request to use funding to go to treatment). Then went to recovery house. Social worker would check in. now lives on her own and supports herself through her own s.22 business. She was able to get identification and went onto welfare.
- Day after she turned 19 she was homeless. Was on independent living, then on welfare. s.22  
Living on her own was hard - didn't have the skills for independent living. Social worker told her what to do, but never showed her how and she only started to be told life skills stuff at 18.
- Life's easier since left care. Is s.22 years old now and has her own place. No more parole officer. Didn't get along with any of her workers. Not sure of her care status. Was on welfare at 18. Now lives in a s.22
- Left care 3 years ago before that went in and out of care s.22  
s.22
- Harder, more dependent. It was good when there was more staff to care for her. Now she's really lonely. It was more helpful to remind you to do stuff. Her

living situation is good, just harder. Not good at budgeting so money situation isn't so good.

## **2. What would have made your transition out of care easier?**

- Slower transition. More preparation. More therapist support. Connection to resources - it's not easy with places that have a referral process. Agreements with Young Adults can be difficult.
- It was pretty easy because he has been taking care of himself since he was 15. He did need support around getting a care card and getting premium assistance.
- Outreach worker, peer worker, mentorship, counselling, life skills training, covering bills, and food resources.
- Having more programs for 19-20 something's. Having financial help. Having health coverage support.
- Having a permanency plan. It was hard because she was just transitioning into a teenager, then had to become an adult. It would have been helpful to be able to have her voice heard after transitioning. Having emotional and financial support, getting connected and give people chances. Taking addiction and homelessness seriously.
- An active after care plan and outreach that followed through. Has a biological sister who lives in s.22 She has a need for a mentor and outreach. Needs help finding a place to live, was on semi-independent living, however she was not comfortable with where she was living. Would like to find her own place and would like resources.
- She didn't know who to turn to ask for help. Felt like biomom was only choice - that was a huge mistake. Felt still like a child with too many expectations. she envied other families because they `don't know what they have`
- Coming to covenant house instead of youth agreement or combined them for extra support and guidance. Getting into college was a big concern: should have had someone to coach and walk me through the process. Youth agreement worker, PLEA, helped to check in. AYA just covered rent and support - no one checked in.

- Support person, positive reinforcement, paid training programs, employment programs, more legal aid advocacy, more support for former youth in care who were refugees, finding affordable housing, having assistance and working with city (to make more housing units) - this is her recommendation.
- It took time to adjust. Think and find people to help him and it took time to adjust. Felt like he had changed personal favourites due to people giving him help. Perception change would have like a physical place to be. Direction. Felt abandoned/ left behind.
- To have classes that are more accessible (she had to travel a long way to get to school). More places like Aunt Leah's. Have the ministry offer the same services that aunt Leah's provides, so that all youth receive the same services. Having access to information more readily available.
- More one to one help. Preparation for life skills. How to cook, clean, job security, good support system. After what you have in care to continue to help people and not create a break down in services. Yearly or some sort of check in or get together.
- Money. My social worker gave me money to buy household stuff when I turned 19, but I was able to stay with my foster family until I was 20. I got \$500 to buy all my household items. My social worker gave me a list of bursaries - this was awesome. I wasn't aware of any youth supports out there like the Federation of BC Youth in Care Networks. I wish I would have known about it.
- If you had help. There wasn't a lot of planning. Social worker didn't go over things until she had to leave foster placement. Started planning for aging out around a year before having to leave care.
- Staying in care until graduating. Having to reimburse childcare while graduating and aging out at the same time has been difficult. An outreach worker should be an option. Affordable housing for young mothers was difficult. Finding sustainable, well maintained, place with a child and being so young is hard.
- Worked at s.22 flea market and saved up \$3000. Was always working. Has role models at Aunt Leah's. More resource or availability of resources. A fund of an extra \$200-\$300 extra per month for a year.

- Less support with welfare, waste of time. `Tell them to get a job`. No need for welfare, I don't feel sorry.
- More support. More one to one time. Sees aging out as an expulsion. Someone to be there during the process. Once he became dependent on workers they booted him out of care. It would be nice to have someone to go home to. being taught to be alone when you're bounced from home to home and group home
- Money! And education around money, like banking, saving accounts, budgeting, taxes etc. more support around education. Experts around employment, education, advisers (19-24). More youth housing is needed, maybe social workers can provide reference for housing. A person to talk to about transitioning would be helpful, supports after 19 are helpful for educational goals and building self.
- Having a good social worker who understood needs. More visits from outreach worker, check ins, something so she didn't feel so alone. Help with transportation with kids, having money for recreational activities.
- Having accessible support services. Having life coaches, having her needs met. Having more BC housing youth program, aboriginal services and funding. Having the knowledge about programs and services.
- Having a better relationship with caregivers so they could have worked with him instead of kicking him out without a plan in place. More support during that transition period.
- Was separated from younger brother, this made things more difficult. Has a counsellor through MCFD, it's a good relationship.
- More support from workers. Meetings every few months for 2 years. It's `a year or two after agreement is [over] that it gets the messiest` more opportunities and options then welfare and disabilities - other programs. Not every kid wants to be on welfare, it's embarrassing. `Don't want to grow up to be like my family of origin`. `If I didn't have Aunt Leah's I wouldn't be here today`.
- Wishes that she would have been taught more skills of independence. If she was pushed harder to have goals to meet them. when she turned 19 and had to move from Aunt Leah's so if places like Aunt Leah's could continue with

residence until 25 years old (more time to gain skills). More money for food and phone bill.

- If the social worker was available to help. If they had a phone. If people didn't label them and thought positively about their outcomes.
- Everything is good now.
- Hard getting a job on your own. A 121 worker to help find a place, helping get a job, life skills.
- Wishes they didn't cut him off at 20. An extension would have been good. Hard to get on welfare and jump through hoops. In touch with social workers after care. No family connections. tax help...kind of
- Having basic needs met - then wouldn't have dealt drugs, needed more info, more guidance. future planning with the workers, one to one workers, group home staff, foster parents, MCFD - they all knew my background - where I came from - they could have done more sooner `like at 14` they were as I was, all focused on my present time. No future planning for was next. `Right now, not my future`, understands, recognizes `may not have been ready or wanted to know at the time` - was important that I did. I heard and saw a guy who lived behind my group home on `independent living` didn't know I could have done that (independent living), that it was even an option, or how long something like that takes to make happen.
- Lives at the <sup>s.22</sup> has a housing support worker who is very helpful aids with goals and resources, funded her to get her L. <sup>s.22</sup>  
<sup>s.22</sup>  
<sup>s.22</sup> It would have been easier having `start-up money`. <sup>s.22</sup> gave start up kits - has house wares basics. A laptop would have helped me get started. `I think care should be extended to 21 because problems don't really happy until you age out like hydro bills, taxes, and cooking your own meals. Had a transition worker and that really helped with income assistance application, multi-step, multi-week process. Worker was really experienced and that made a difference. Had a transition worker for only 6 months.

- More educations. Hands on skills. More support didn't want to live alone. Feeling lonely is bad for mental health. Someone to check in, more personal development, not so much social isolation. Learning skills to live on continuous basis - not just workshops and group work. Positive support.
- 'I didn't have any expectations of MCFD'. Financial help was insufficient for academic needs, and 'I was aggressive enough to pursue'. 'I had to go into my own savings, but I'm grateful for what I got'. 'Life is unfair. I dealt with it and didn't complain. That's why I got along with Social Workers'. 'If you want to go to post-secondary school as someone coming out of care, you better be more capable than the average student to be able to fund [your education] with scholarships' really tough transition from youth agreements to AYA. There was no emotional psychological support. I didn't want to reveal anything to social workers. I wanted to put my best foot forward in order to benefit the most from the situation. Had a bad experience with revealing emotional needs, so I learned from my mistake. 'I had no expectations, so they [MCFD] never disappointed me'. They'll never replace and can't replace family'. 'I felt like I had nothing to fall back on. that was probably my drive in school - to survive'
- I don't know.
- Was so stubborn, so a transition worker wouldn't be helpful. Groups like Warriors Against Violence and AA. Having more money for stuff that is needed. Having supportive friends and not just a party crowd. Tackling drinking, going to treatment.
- Found aging out easy. It was quiet...too quiet. Recreation could have helped.
- I was so eager to be me. I've always had a boyfriend; I've always been dependent on guys. 'I acted like I was grown up when I really had my struggles' I didn't have a childhood, I grew up fast. 'What could have helped was extending care. This girl has a friend who is still in care at 24 and has FASD like her.
- Her mother not being in her life. 'Was born hated' - stated her mother causes problems. Hated curfew and authority - have more freedom with group home (allowed guests and spur of the moment decisions). Learning about budgeting.<sup>s.22</sup> was kicked out of housing, lost possession and damage deposit.

- Wanted independent living at 17, should have stayed home. Social worker didn't support her well. Life skills training would have been helpful. Didn't know how to look. College was funded.
- It wasn't difficult.
- Keeping in touch with people. I did everything on my own. Having a mentor would have been helpful.
- Having a consistent person. Kind of wished he stayed in care. His transition: his foster parents packed his stuff and notified him that he was going to move.
- Having solid mentor in my life. When I was bounced from school to school it was hard to concentrate. I have an alcohol problem. I have a lack of purpose and direction
- Mental health worker, employment counselling, mentor, education.
- Having a social workers office in Vancouver - having more contacts in the city since she is from s.22 More help learning about being independent. Took months of paperwork to have them allow her to use funding from agreements with young adults program for treatment so they should have funding for that because it stalled her going to treatment. Being able to contact social workers for information about programs because she's 19 they won't help. Now at s.22  
s.22 Hard finding employment. More resources for addiction. Professionals that are knowledgeable. She felt that it took too much convincing to use agreements with young adults money for treatment -she felt like the social workers didn't understand that she really did need the money.
- Start teaching life skills at a younger age (didn't start until she was 18). Didn't know how to get around the city - need to be taught that at a younger age. Addition starts at a young age so the teaching about it should too. 'I relied 100% on the ministry'. when you're young and in care you can rely on services -example when you are partying you can call after hours and they legally have to send a cab - then at 19 you don't have that anymore'. She learned to take advantage of the system and use it to her benefit, but in the long run she feels it ended up hurting her. She wishes she had learned about how to do taxes and what GST cheques are about.



- Pretty easy and smooth transition.
- Help with transitioning and help until older. Making sure school is completed before expecting youth to support themselves and closing file. More time to be living alone before 19 with someone to show youth what they need to do. More world awareness, what it is like, what to expect.
- Doesn't know.

### 3. What has worked for you since you've aged out?

- Not much. Support from Pacific Community Resource Society.
- Life has worked. Plays football, just finished last season.
- Going to college, has a part time job, has great support in her life with her sister and roommate - they have lived together for s.22  
s.22
- Having strong relationships with her boyfriend and former foster mom. Her good relationships with people led to her having a good paying job at the s.22  
s.22
- Workers who go above and beyond to provide support. Who will work on their own time to support. Youth Advisory Council with the Vancouver Foundation. Youth Leadership opportunities. Workers who can hear ideas and help her make them happen.
- Inner city youth mental health peer support program. Drug and alcohol counsellor. s.22  
s.22
- She had a really great transition worker, but she eventually got fired because she went above and beyond for kids.
- Looking for work and has been living on money s.22 She has a life skills coach that she meets with a couple times a week. She received disability. She needs help finding part-time employment.
- Didn't use services at 19 because she didn't know about them. Knew about the FBCYICN - it was good to be with people who understood. She attempted

at the Dream Fund and attended their SCM's. Want to be a carpenter: transition to trades course. Working on mind/ body awareness to work with disassociation tendencies. Somatic therapy has been good.

- At first the desire to prove to myself I could have a decent job and education even though my parents didn't. The rent and support money and having a home. Health insurance through AYA. Covenant house cheap rent, having dinners every evening, staff guidance, having good adults to talk to, mature me - is very important.
- Having close group of friends, and relative (mom, dad, best friend). Finding housing - having \$375 a month helped a lot. He would have been on the streets without welfare. Covenant house, eating every day. Trying to be healthy, working. Covenant house programs, people driving him to get groceries.
- Covenant house people. Support consistently, gives direction, but other people and their behaviours don't help. Social acceptability. Survival instinct. Common sense becomes uncommon sense, trial and error. Analyzing how to make things better and try to make specific changes.
- Having knowledge around how to be independent and having life skills which she gained from Aunt Leah's.
- Being able to still contact her foster mom and have a relationship with her. Contact with the ministry because of her child.
- Having a lot of bursary information. Finding a stable place to live. I haven't moved in 4 years. Having the same roommate for a while. Not living with friends. Having family (non-bio) support. Having a job and being able to maintain it. `after a job is secure and housing is settled you can deal with the rest of the stuff`
- Hasn't been connected to a lot. Having someone there is really helpful - a permanent person.
- Social worker is still keeping in touch. Had the same social worker since 14. She has been a huge support and still gives her Red Robbins coupons. Getting AYA and child tax. Kid in daycare <sup>s.22</sup>

s.22

- Having structure and routine.
- Good attitude at shelter. Figuring out your shit - everything good will go away. People cry when they turn 25 and can't go upstairs (to the shelter). Working - roofer, trades, cooking. I like roofing - you can see what you've done.
- Find something you like to do and let that take up most of your time. Learn to love yourself through finding what you love to do. Stuff has been getting better but still have ups and downs.
- BYRC, LOVE, Gathering our Voices, REEL Youth, POH, AFABC, being able to speak to other youth, doing presentations about the importance of permanency, being involved in youth engagement teams, the Representative for Children and youth, Knowledgeable Aboriginal Youth Association, wanted to start speaking and these organizations provide outlets.
- Fresh food program at Aunt Leah's, fighting against stigma, SCM's at the FBCYICN, 'I'm allowed to say what's on my mind, that's ok's.<sup>s.22</sup>
- Covenant house's rights of passage (ROP) program, 7th and commercial (service for transportation and support - bus tickets), keyworkers - check in once a week, life skills worker - budgeting skills. Former foster parent supportive.
- Covenant house - good success and opportunities. Was hired to work in <sup>s.22</sup> Support from covenant house.
- Has had great support from Aunt Leah's and MCFD. Is utilizing support available. Has found resilience in life's ups and downs.
- Aunt Leah's - they care, they still think of use after 9-5. Social workers fake it; you're just another file. Aunt Leah's - They see your needs as you... no a generalization. Mental health support while in care. Social workers compared her to other clients who were failures. 'What can we do to help you be where you want to be' - Aunt Leah's are positive. They work with my mental health issue.

- Having friends and family as support. Use of resources (clinic, Aunt Leah's)
- Being independent - not having a social worker that dictates. Having dental and medical coverage.
- St. Helen's s.22  
Health issues are a priority.
- family and friends, programs
- Applying to BYRC housing. Housing is so unrealistic and this has been working. Going to school, but screwed on textbooks (has no money for textbooks). Listening to electronic music and playing games.
- Resourceful and able to find other programs. Directions youth services, covenant house shelter, Broadway youth resource centre (BYRC) at aunt Leahs.
- Addiction services, knowing about them, what they are called, where they are. Treatment centres - advice from those that have been there. Staying busy and active. Being healthy with those my age.
- Having affordable rent. Having a strong network of support: `built by being resourceful, asking questions, asking for help`. Connected to the Vancouver Foundation has helped. s.22  
s.22
- Having someone at BYRC, s.22 Hard where she is living though because everything gets stolen. s.22 Having a sense of freedom. Having own schedule. Going to s.22 on her own. Therapy group. No constant nagging of foster parents.
- Had a team of workers, counsellors, but it fell through. One of my workers was difficult, insensitive, s.22 -very big. Agreements with Young Adults had limited resource options. Dream Fund bursary recipient. `This support financially helped with school but also made me feel as though they cared a bit. It gave me room to breathe. `It may not have been enough for some, but it was enough for me` Scholarships.

- s.22 Selling weed helps with paying rent. Having a good relationship with his sister has really helped. Having an outreach worker through CLBC.
- Had to move away from Vancouver to Richmond that helped staying away from the party crowd. When less people came around her place was cleaner.
- Got out of the downtown eastside. Stopped hanging with people who use and drink. It was moving that helped. Looked forward to finishing school and doing what if want to do, baking.
- covenant house: you get a lot of help, support, connections to resources, counsellors and youth,
- Covenant house, directions, outreach workers, availability of food and showers, having somewhere to go like covenant house that's supportive and doesn't set rules. `workers here don't bug you`
- Moved to Vancouver at 18. Has an introverted personality and lived in shared living rooms. She gained confidence and increased self-esteem from getting to know herself. Previous foster mom is great help - she will restock my fridge and restock groceries.
- Was referred to Aunt Leah's. Social worker helped getting back into school. Daycare for school.
- Not giving up. Focusing on the positives. Don't doubt myself and have fun and enjoy life. s.22
- s.22 different programs that are open late, have meal programs, life skills programs
- Being resourceful. I feel close to my friends and family. I am articulate with my words. I am involved in learning how to set up sweat lodges. I am involved with some of my family. I have been working on having positive attitude about life and I work part-time for a temp agency.
- Being able to survive. I am struggling trying to eat.

- Once she was able to use the funding for treatment, then treatment really worked. Financial support from agreements with young adults. Watari programs
- Social worker still being a friend and offering support when in crisis. Have more social workers that go above and beyond. Teach social workers more about compassion and addiction. Complaints against social workers should be taken seriously.
- I aged out
- Being able to go back to MCFD and ask for advice. Food bank lists. Programs like BYRC - help by giving emergency food bank where you get bread, work with them until they are 25. They have good programs and services and many different staff to help.
- Not having rules - I can be more independent. I have more responsibility. Support workers at Aunt Leah's are really helpful. Make some money from babysitting.

**4. If your friend recently aged out, what are a couple of programs and services you would tell them about?**

- AYA YCILL (with Options - helped with transitioning) PCRS
- Ask about goals. It would all depend on what the friend was looking for.
- Federation of BC Youth in Care Networks, GAB youth services (through Qmunity)
- Options (in Surrey)
- Federation of BC Youth in Care Networks (FBCYICN), Adoptive Families of BC
- Don't stop communication with workers. Directions youth centre. Tell them, have confidence. Tap into your innate survival instinct. Hardest part is asking for help. I wasn't too proud, I didn't want to bother anyone, but it's good to let people in.
- This individual has helps his peers. Covenant house, don't work just go to school, heavy academic focus, education is good to build on rather than

getting and losing dead end jobs. Kaleidoscope paid job training program. 4 months found job through work BC career zone department referral.

- city of Vancouver affordable housing buildings, skills link program, finding work, one to one worker from directions,
- Arise - a drop in centre/ study that does a 1.5 hour interview that talks about drug use and there is an honorarium. Directions youth drop in centre for food. Gathering place - showers, revamping it and upgrading it.
- Doesn't know any places besides aunt Leah's so she'd tell them to go there. Food bank, clothing donation places.
- the Federation of BC Youth in Care Networks, Adoptive Families Association, food bank and Community living BC
- Dream Fund, Transition Kit - At FBCYICN get in contact with social worker to find out about bursaries AYA Adoptive Families Association
- AYA, Youth Education Assistance Fund, Aunt Leahs, Federation of BC Youth in Care Networks.
- Get on AYA.
- Aunt Leah's and Odyssey in Vancouver.
- Covenant house.
- Employment agency and get job info. Covenant house.
- all organizations listed above, UNYA - drum making workshops, YMCA, McCreary society, Indigenous Research Centre
- The FBCYICN - their SCM's, volunteering, bursaries UBC tuition waiver Aunt Leah's - fresh food program, parenting tips Friendship centre- drum making, beading The Roots program Sophie's place
- ROP, and finding case workers.
- Covenant house and directions youth services.

- Aunt Leah's because the place is great and is staffed mostly by former youth in care. UNYA - found many supportive relationships there
- Aunt Leah's, Broadway Youth Resource Centre, IRAYL - outreach on sky train. Any youth clinics - free and confidential.
- Aunt Leah's (they care). Show them how to look into disability.
- Aunt Leah's housing - support link. 2 youth workers. An aunt who wanted to adopt her.
- Covenant House, Directions - they have dinner service and outreach services. Broadway Youth Resource Centre (BYRC)
- Food at Broadway youth resource centre (BYRC), Agreements with Young Adults program, 121 worker, covenant house, directions.
- Apply for a grant. Apply to housing programs or BC housing.
- BYRC, Covenant house crisis shelter, Aunt Leahs
- What I could have used was `youth shelter`. Didn't know till now that there are ones. Getting youth help, so don't have to be with `gross old people`. Some place to feel safe.
- Ministry should have a driving program for foster kits because foster parents can't legally teach us and it's too expensive. BYRC – the staff are really nice and open. `They work with you instead of telling you what to do` `if they can't help you, they find someone who can` s.22
- BYRC is amazing! Free food. Community. Kaleidoscope (program), creative writing, The FBCYICN, Covenant house, hot meals - especially at Christmas time. BYRC especially Christmas dinner. Leave Out Violence Everywhere program.
- Social workers don't spend much time with you. `What you really need is a constant in your life`. `I relied on the kids help line, I called them every day nearly trying to talk to someone; it really helped` - maybe a line more specific to youth in care needs



- About this project and MCFD.
- BYRC has housing for youth up to 24. Friendship Centre, AA meetings if the person is drinking. Recovery house - welfare will pay. Try and get certificates - work, first aid, and food safe, upgrade school.
- Covenant house, directions, gathering place.
- covenant house `I wouldn't suggest anything else`
- Covenant house and directions.
- Agreement with young adults.
- Tell them about school.<sup>s.22</sup> daycare and Aunt Leahs
- Covenant house, UNYA, directions.
- Caring hall, have homemade cheap meals, grants and bursaries, practicum's, blade runners, go to school, trade programs
- Agreements with young adults, blade runners program
- Being in touch with workers, community and family,
- Agreements with young adults, tips through Watari (transitioning) they provide food bank, financial support, bus tickets. Quest, Robert and Lily - her mental health and addictions services. Detox places and treatment places that are subsidized.
- Food bank, UNYA, Quest, you have to Main and Hastings and that's not the best spot for vulnerable youth to go. Forced to socialize with risky people in downtown eastside. Community kitchen.
- `Need more services` need a hangout - dusk to dawn program works well. Options in Surrey - next step helps prepare with life skills, budgeting skills. Nice workers at Options. `They're just there for the youth, social workers don't care about clients' opinion.

- BYRC - the parenting program. Elizabeth Fry society - place for homeless girls or a place for girls to eat, shower, do laundry. AuntLeah's.
- Aunt Leah's link program and their parenting program.

## **5. What are some ways that you get informed about different programs and services?**

- Most of the time through PCRS, she looks up stuff online.
- Internet/ library youth workers and coaches had great planning before he was 19.
- Word of mouth from friends, MCFD, internet, people from connections (her volunteer work), classmates and instructors.
- AFABC, FBCYICN, the Core group
- Word of mouth, people already in the system. One friend showed her covenant house.
- Staff at shelter, covenant house, social workers from youth agreement and AYA, Kaleidoscope program, personal research, learned so much from every place.
- Internet, multiple websites, covenant house, resource worker from options.
- Friends, library, poster boards, walking around, word of mouth, staff from different programs and organizations he goes to.
- from workers at resource centre (aunt leahs), Facebook
- Facebook, word of mouth, media, newspapers, other staff members, suggestions
- FBCYICN e-newsletter Social worker Facebook friends
- Supportive adults in her life, the Federation of BC Youth in Care Networks, Adoptive Families Association.
- Aunt Leah's, Social worker email things, daughters godmother.

- word of mouth, aunt Leah's resource
- Word of mouth, covenant house.
- Doesn't use a lot of programs because he doesn't hear about them.
- Learning from other people who have had good experiences or opportunities. Checking out workshops, talking to older people with experience, social media makes an impact and is important. `MCFD needs to step up its game for promotion`
- the FBCYICN Aunt Leah's different Facebook groups Sophie's place has tons of brochures friends
- care manager - meets every 2 weeks,
- Internet, that's how he found out about covenant house. Word of mouth - that's how he found out about directions.
- Through youth peer leaders. His father. Aunt Leah's
- Through friends, other programs, referrals, IRAYL - outreach helps, committees, Newwest youth advisory committee, New West youthcentre committee.
- Aunt Leah's, Over the internet, Posters
- Aunt Leah's support.
- Through Directions outreach worker.
- Odyssey, BYRC, covenant house, directions
- BYRC, Covenant house, directions, asking staff.
- Resources - word of mouth, people in similar situations. Friends.
- At current treatment centre, through counsellors.

- `my goal is to get off income assistance by my 21st birthday` `other people tell me about programs and services` s.22
- bulletin boards, word of mouth, online at vancouveryouth.ca,
- Google, would ask social worker, FBCYICN website.
- Internet sites, Facebook, people walking around.
- UNYA - used to go there, the employment program gives updates, job listings. BYRC - asking staff. Son's grandpa, gets good advice through the Friendship Centre.
- Gathering place, covenant house, directions, s.22 who works in her building.
- Friends - friend who went through rights of passage program at covenant house and is now really successful, employed, happy owner own vehicle.
- Through word of mouth on street. Covenant house.
- Social work practice is by the book. `Cookie cutter services` we are all individual and we need different forms of care and help.
- Worker refers.
- I heard about directions through Insight. Word of mouth
- prevention program, school information session, workers should remain consistent, r
- I read pamphlets, word of mouth from friends, google.
- Word of mouth, anybody that is willing to lend a hand.
- Just have to look. Through other programs. When you are in the middle of it you hear about more.

- Being in the downtown eastside people pass information along - word of mouth. UNYA, and former social worker.
- Pretty independent.
- Program calendars, flyers, staff help refer you to other programs.
- Newspapers, posters, Facebook.

## **APPENDIX 5**

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### U-Count Brochure

# **APPENDIX 6**

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## Sample U-Count Flier