

PREPARING OUR REPORT BACK

All of the notes and feedback from the meeting should become part of the report back, including the top three ideas or solutions.

PARTICIPANTS

- # of participants: 9
- Organizations represented: 6
- Participant background (age, background, experiences)

INTRODUCTION

Date	March 20 th , 2018
Community	TRUUST Collective Impact
# Participants	9
Organizations	McCreary Youth Research Academy, TRUUST Collective Young Leaders, Spirit of the Children, Directions Youth Advisory, MCFD Youth Advisory, Covenant House Youth Advisory

About the participants

Participants were nine youth currently in government care or who had aged out of government care. Three identified as male and six as female. Age range 17-24.

About the findings

Insights and feedback received to these questions

1. What are the issues facing young people aging out of government care in Vancouver when it comes to poverty?
2. What would address these issues and help young people to thrive?

Issues:

Results of your discussion of the issues (transcribed from flip chart notes)

- Housing
 - There is a lack of affordable housing available for youth, and especially for youth ageing out of care
 - No one rents to young people
 - There is a lot of discrimination from landlords because of how youth look and because of their age
 - Waitlists are often long. Also sometimes there is a lack of consistency and transparency as to who gets into youth housing and who doesn't
- Lack of support to age out of care
 - There are barriers at every step (eg money for education, rent, groceries; graduation; knowing where to get information; knowing which services can help)

- It is very stressful (financially and emotionally)
 - Lack of resources/knowledge of resources
 - Don't know what questions to ask or where to ask them
- Access to extended medical
 - Most youth aging out of care can't afford health care for things like glasses/dental
 - PWD benefits are insufficient and are unchanged since 2004
- PWD Assistance
 - Applicants have only 3 weeks to get the paperwork done to qualify including medical examinations, otherwise have to wait a further 2 months to try again
 - Even when on PWD still live way below the poverty line
 - "sucks that we are always trying to get on PWD" - PWD should not be the goal for youth aging out of care!
- Programs/Services
 - Need a network of support but don't know where to look - some are helpful and some are not
- Lacking in life skills
 - It is challenging to prioritize learning life skills when there are so many other things going on like school and work
- Financial literacy
 - A lot of youth in care age out with lots of credit card debt because no one told them of the consequences
- Transportation
 - Translink fare evasions fines lead to youth not being able to get a driver's license because they cannot afford to pay the fines off, and accumulated them in the first place because of having no money.
 - Bus passes are hard to come by if your foster parent/guardian doesn't give it to you
 - PWD letter says you can get a compass card but not how to get one
- Jobs
 - There is a lack of jobs!
 - Credentials are hard to get and it's hard to get a job without them
 - If you're in care sometimes you can't get those "starter jobs" like most youth do because you aren't allowed to work for your foster parent or guardian, whereas some youth start out working for their parent's businesses
 - Foster parents would rather have you focus on school so won't let you get a job
- Addictions
 - It's hard to get off substances with no money and no support
 - Having family that struggle with addiction can affect your life (financially and in other ways), even if you're not the one actively using
 - More housing issues! if it's obvious you're struggling with addiction people won't want to rent to you and then you feel bad and it's a cycle that you get stuck in

- It is hard to go into a program to get clean because you still have to pay rent and resume life when you get out; hard to do if it's a 3 month program!
- Age cap on tuition waivers
 - There is an age cap on tuition waivers and AYA maximum is 48 months
 - Criteria for tuition waivers is too strict re Care status/length
 - Graduation rates are poor for youth aging out of care which effects ability to get a well-paid job or get into post-secondary education
- Value "artists" humanity
 - There are less opportunity for creative youth to make a living
- Youth need to be integrated/connected to community sooner so that they can connect to opportunities
- Vancouver is so expensive and youth workers are poorly paid so there is high turnover and new staff don't have the networks to help you or know what is available
- Community centres
 - Are for middle income families, youth from care don't feel welcome and many classes they offer you have to pay for

Possible solutions:

Results of your discussion of possible solutions (transcribed from flip chart notes)

- Need more grants and funding for youth to pursue artistic and creative opportunities
- Tuition waivers
 - Remove the age cap and reduce the 2 years in care eligibility criteria
 - Simplify the appeal process when application is denied
- Raise PWD & IA to reflect market rates and cost of living
- BC Housing programs exist for seniors to help them with rent. There should be a similar program for youth from care
- Subsidized housing is needed specifically for youth & youth in care. Also more programs like Bladerunners which help with employment AND housing
- Need an easy to navigate Website which documents all currently available programs, benefits and services for all youth
- Incorporate life skills more into school programs; update Planning 10 to reflect the needs of youth eg teach youth about taxes, credit card debt, cell phone plan costs, etc
- Jobs
 - Need flexible, low barrier & supported employment opportunities (eg like the Youth Research Academy)
 - Having a job with a contract gives stability but they are hard to get

- Need to educate employers about youth in care and how to support them in employment, what challenges they are dealing with, how employers can be trauma informed, etc
- Expand employment programs like Strive to other areas of the Lower Mainland (Surrey, Abbotsford, Mission)
 - Have staff at programs like Strive that are knowledgeable of the system to help youth effectively
- Teach members of the community about the issues youth aging out of care are facing
- Dialogue is important, how do we continue conversations like this one?
- Ensure youth workers make a living wage to reduce turnover and increase service networks
- Ensure Youth Resource Centres are well funded
 - Have more Youth Resource Centres
 - Need more of them (like BYRC) and more funding for those that work there
- Transportation
 - Compass card should come with PWD acceptance letters

Solutions and actions that can make a difference:

What types of solutions were identified as most important? (Include any of the solutions that received a dot, from those that received the most dots to those receiving only one dot)

- Tuition waivers- remove the age cap
- Teach Life skills in schools starting in Grade 8; update Planning 10
- Teach community-based wisdom and continue the conversation
- Jobs- more supportive employment programs for youth in care
- Senior supplement program mirrored for youth in care through BC Housing
- Transportation- compass cards should come with PWD acceptance letters
- Raise PWD & IA to reflect market rates and cost of living
- More subsidized housing needed for youth and youth in care
- Website with resources for youth (programs and services available and when)
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What emerged as the top three solutions or ideas based on the conversations and the individual priority setting?

1. Website of resources
2. Subsidized housing specifically for youth and youth in care
3. Raising PWD & IA to reflect market rates and cost of living

Reports due: March 30th, 2018 at 4:00PM to SPARC BC at povertyreduction@sparc.bc.ca

Dear Minister Simpson,

Improve income assistance
~~Just~~ by overhauling the program
entirely

Dear Minister Simpson,

I think a website with all different
types of resources for youth, in case that is
regularly updated to make it easier for youth
to know what kinds of programs/resources
available near them and for their situations
Thank you.

Dear Minister Simpson,

- PROVIDE SUPPORT/MENTOR TO YOUTH 16-18 YEAR OLD TO TEACH LIFE SKILLS + READINESS TO BE READY TO ARE OUT.
- SUPPORT WEB PAGE OF ALL YOUTH SERVICES IN LOWER MAINLAND, EASY ACCESS FOR SELF CARE + WORKSHOPS FOR LIFE SKILLS.

THANK YOU, *BS*

Dear Minister Simpson,

the prosett to get PWD
is too difficult. The people
applying for this asstant have
it hard enough to do anything
this prosett should be asre

Dear Minister Simpson,

Youth in care are the unsung heroes of the community. Being the light in the dark that just needs a helping hand. Please consider that your decisions will affect former and current youth in care.

Dear Minister Simpson,

Replacing high school education with Life skills. Do not pile on Life skills on the already overloaded stress. Even if you have resources, without free transportation, they can't access.

Dear Minister Simpson,

PLEASE MAKE MORE AFFORDABLE HOUSING
AVAILABLE FOR YOUTH AGING OUT OF
CARE.

Dear Minister Simpson,

im Exhausted, trying to jump through
HOOPS for PWD, dont get me started
on ageing out of care and its scary.
Where is the info?