

A Parent's Duty: Government Obligation to Youth Transitioning into Adulthood **RCY Annual Review Year 2**

The Representative's report *A Parent's Duty: government obligation to youth transitioning into adulthood* was released December 2020 and included seven recommendations. Tracking of recommendation implementation is normally undertaken on an annual basis; however, on occasion, circumstances can delay the assessment and/or posting. The *Parent's Duty* Year 2 Progress Report from the Ministry of Children and Family Development, the Office of Housing and Construction Standards, the Ministry of Mental Health and Addictions, the Ministry of Health, and the Ministry of Citizens Services was submitted to the RCY on February 15, 2023. During year two, the Representative's assessment found that there has been ongoing work to develop government's strategies and frameworks in response to *A Parent's Duty* recommendations, but little progress towards implementation.

The Representative was pleased to assess recommendation #4 as complete in the year 1 review for the extension of voluntary residential care for youth aging out of care - the only recommendation fully implemented of the seven made in the report. This rapid progress was pushed in response to MCFD's COVID-19 emergency housing measures which demonstrates the potential and ability of ministries to implement timely change when they are considered an urgent priority for children and youth. The Representative is encouraged to see that MCFD has completed an evaluation of the measures, that echoes her own concerns about accessibility for youth and the transactional service design of the current model, but is concerned the Improving Youth Transitions Project which is promised to address these barriers, is being rolled out incrementally with only 66 children ages 14-19 and zero youth ages 19-25 engaged during the 2022/23 year in just three Service Delivery Areas. To put this into context, the current Strengthening Abilities and Journeys of Empowerment program, SAJE, transition staff (formerly known as the Agreements with Young Adults program) are engaging approximately one out of every 29 eligible children for these services given that 1,266 youth were in care under a Continuing Custody Order and 635 youth were on Youth Agreements between the ages of 14-18 at the end of the 2022/2023 fiscal year (data extracted from MCFD's Corporate Data Warehouse on August 22, 2023). This limited implementation is deeply concerning given the decreasing numbers of individuals who received SAJE when they turned 19 falling to 129 out of 704 eligible youth (18%) in 2022/23 from 268 out of 815 eligible youth (33%) in 2019/20 when *A Parent's Duty* was released. Ministry data provided on the rent supplement program reports similar poor uptake with only 1,102 (14%) of the 7,851 eligible youth receiving support. It was noted that about 10% of the eligible youth served by an Indigenous Child and Family Service Agency received rent supplement funds while about 14% of eligible youth from SDAs received funds. Further, MCFD has informed the Representative they will not be pursuing auto-enrollment outlined in recommendation #3 for their new youth transition model.

RCY Assessment Definitions:

- **Complete** = All activities that directly support the implementation of the recommendation are complete
- **Substantial Progress** = Most of the activities that directly support the implementation of the recommendation are complete
- **Some Progress** = Some of the activities that directly support the implementation of the recommendation are complete
- **No Progress** = None of the activities that directly support the implementation of the recommendation are complete (pre-planning may be underway but there has been no progress in formal planning or implementation).

Date Published: Feb. 20, 2024

Recommendation	
<p>#1 Extend and improve transition planning:</p> <p>MCFD should fully implement and proactively support and monitor effective practice in planning for transition into adulthood, beginning at least by age 14 for youth in continuing care and extending beyond age 19. Principles of this transition planning process should include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Developmentally appropriate processes, aligned with the non-linear and complex process of transitioning to adulthood, and supporting the shift from dependence to interdependence, with relationships at the centre. b) Contextualization of the experience of Indigenous youth transitioning to adulthood within the experience of colonization and supporting the reclamation of culture and identity as critically important elements of the lives of emerging First Nations, Métis, Inuit and Urban Indigenous young adults. c) Reciprocal processes, where youth agency is prioritized and youth are responsible and empowered to design a case plan representative of their goals, interests and support networks. <p>MCFD is to have developed a comprehensive plan by April 1, 2022 that addresses policy and practice guidelines, staff training and processes and mechanisms for support and monitoring of practice, with full implementation of that plan in the ensuing 18 months.</p>	
Ministry's Response	RCY Assessment
Year 1 Evidence – Received July 2022	Year 1 Assessment
<p>MCFD is developing a new service delivery model for youth and young adults transitioning to adulthood from ministry care referred to as the Improving Youth Transitions Project. As part of this development work, MCFD has completed two prototypes of the Early Transition Readiness Planning (part of the Improving Youth Transitions Model).</p> <p>As part of this new model, MCFD will begin transition planning for youth potentially as early as 14 years of age and continue to serve young adults after their 19th birthday up to their 27th birthday.</p> <p>Under the implementation of the two prototypes, the Navigator (Transition Coordinator) has worked with the support team/circle to involve the youth directly in their planning whenever possible. This has occurred via informal and formal in-person meetings with the youth to build relationship and gather information to support their planning needs. Youth have also been engaging in ongoing discussions with the Navigator (Transition Coordinator) to elicit youth input and feedback. This feedback has been gathered via a youth questionnaire that is reviewed at each planning meeting to ensure the youth's voice is kept at the center of planning.</p>	<p>Substantial Progress</p> <p>The Representative acknowledges that MCFD is in the process of developing the Improving Youth Transitions Project which, when fully implemented, has the potential to address the intent of Recommendation#1.</p> <p>The Ministry has provided evidence of activities that directly support the implementation of the recommendation, including a review of organizational structure to better utilize existing internal resources, implementing two prototypes of the service delivery model, and is collecting youth feedback on the process.</p>

<p>To support the reclamation of culture and identity of First Nations, Métis, Inuit and Urban Indigenous youth transitioning to adulthood, at the onset of planning and continuously throughout the planning journey, the Navigator (Transition Coordinator) in collaboration with the Guardianship Worker and youth have intentionally focused on exploring and identifying existing relationships and cultural connections present in the youth’s life as well as any possible/future relationships and cultural connections. As part of the Early Transition Readiness Plan, the Navigator (Transition Coordinator) has helped to facilitate and connect youth to cultural support and services. Engagement with local Indigenous agencies and organizations has also occurred to increase staff knowledge about the available resources and supports in community.</p> <p>MCFD also reports that new features will be introduced from 2022-2025 including:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) a rent supplement program; 2) a no-limit earnings exemption for AYA; 3) transition workers; 4) extended medical benefits; 5) broader eligibility for young adults for improved supports; 6) unconditional income supplement. 	
<p>Year 2 Evidence – Received February 2023</p>	<p>Year 2 Assessment</p>
<p>MCFD is proceeding with the phase 4 provincial rollout aspect of the Improving Youth Transitions Project which will expand from the prototype service sites. Provincial rollout will be achieved in three phases – beginning with the expansion of the prototype sites on Vancouver Island; North Central/Peace and North Coast/ Buckley Nechako SDAs (phase 1). This phase began in November 2022 with hiring, orientation and training of the staff required in these three SDAs. Training for staff is underway, including for those who have been hired to support the scaling of the implementation.</p> <p>Interim draft Guidelines were developed to support the work of Transition workers and Guardianship workers with youth from the age of 14-25. Lessons learned during the roll out will be used to inform the revision of the policy and guidelines.</p>	<p>Substantial Progress</p> <p>The Representative cannot yet consider this recommendation to be complete given that only 3 of 4 development phases of the Improving Youth Transitions Project have been implemented, although continued progress since the year 1 assessment is evident. The provincial rollout of this program (phase 4) is scheduled to begin in 2023 with 3 prototype SDAs near fully operational at this time. The remaining service delivery areas (SDAs) will adopt the Youth Transition Program between Spring 2023 to Spring 2024. This last phase requires ministry staff to be in place as well as youth to engage in this program. It should also be noted that the recommendation’s timeline for full implementation by October 2023 will not be achieved given the current level of progress.</p>

<p>EDS and DOO briefings in the three SDAs were completed in the SDAs in January 2023. Team Leaders and frontline staff received orientation during the month of January and February 2023, prior to the referral of the youth to work with the Transition Navigator.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In 2022, 17 youth were added to the early transition readiness prototyping in the North Vancouver Island SDA. • In 2022, 11 youth between the ages of 14-16 were added to the early transition readiness prototyping in the North Central Peace region SDA. • Work in the North Central/ Peace and North Coast/ Buckley Nechako will expand during the remainder of FY 2022-23 to add youth and young adults to fully implement the model for transition planning. <p>The work to operationalize the unconditional income supplement and ongoing financial support for those involved in approved programming up to the age of 27 years is in the early stages of planning and development.</p>	<p>While there was substantial progress on this recommendation in its first year, the Representative is concerned about the limited number of youth who have accessed the prototype in 2022 and will be monitoring the ministry's evaluation of accessibility of the program and impact for youth.</p>
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Recommendation	
#2	<p>Provide ongoing adult guidance and support by implementing dedicated youth transition workers through community agencies.</p> <p>In partnership with community agencies, MCFD should develop and implement a plan to establish dedicated youth transition workers to assist and support youth transitioning from care into adulthood. This plan should result in the province-wide (including rural and remote communities) implementation of dedicated transition workers who engage with young people before they turn 19 and provide systems navigation support, case management and adult guidance up to the age of 27 years. These professionals should work alongside a young person's natural systems of support and assist in providing mentorship and developmentally appropriate support. Supports should include a focus on skills development with the goal of education and employment. Particular attention should be paid to engaging transitional support workers who are First Nations, Métis, Inuit and Urban Indigenous, as well as non-Indigenous workers who have received cultural safety and trauma awareness training to work respectfully with these young people.</p> <p>MCFD is to have completed policy and planning by April 1, 2022 and have completed full implementation of that plan in the ensuing 18 months.</p>
Ministry's Response	RCY Assessment
Year 1 Evidence – Received July 2022	Year 1 Assessment

To fulfill this recommendation, MCFD is working towards the implementation of the Improving Youth Transitions Project a new service delivery model for youth and young adults transitioning to adulthood from ministry care.

Budget 2022 announced that 80 new FTE transition workers will be hired to help youth and young adults navigate their transition from care successfully. Of these, 20% of the FTE funding will be allocated to Indigenous Child and Family Service agencies (ICFS).

Transition workers will connect with each young adult before the age of 19 – and as early as 14 years of age for those that are developmentally ready – to develop a transition plan for their transition into adulthood.

Once the young person turns 19 the intention is for the transition plan to be in place, and the relationship will continue with the transition worker up to age 25. Transition planning post-19 may include determining program eligibility, identifying housing supports, administering the rent supplement program, approving programming, connecting young adults to adult services, and relationship building.

The MCFD-CLBC Liaison Committee has formed a working group focusing on youths' transition from MCFD support and services to CLBC support and services, the Transition Working Group. STADD is leading the development of the service delivery model and has started a Roles and Responsibilities sub-working group to support the implementation of Transition Workers.

To support this work, a dedicated Youth Transitions Implementation and Service Delivery Team has been established.

The Youth Transitions Implementation and Service Delivery Team will hire SPO 24 Youth Transition Workers across the province to provide transition planning and service navigation to youth and young adults transitioning to adulthood.

Although the Youth Transition Workers will be MCFD staff, the new service delivery model will be significantly informed by the work of agencies in community who are currently providing best practice in transition planning to youth and young adults. To increase recruitment of

Substantial Progress

Progress towards implementation of the Improving Youth Transitions Project is underway by the ministry with policy and planning near completion and phototyping in two service delivery areas in progress. While provincial roll out awaits, MCFD has made the flexibility for the Agreements with Young Adults (AYA program) life-skills programming introduced during the COVID-19 pandemic permanent as well as extended Temporary Housing Agreements and Temporary Support Agreements until they can be made permanent through legislation.

The Representative notes that the materials provided by MCFD indicate that youth supports will be provided up to age 25 and is seeking clarification and rationale as her recommendation includes support up to age 27.

<p>Transition Support Workers who are First Nations, Métis, Inuit and Urban Indigenous, the Youth Transitions Implementation and Service Delivery Team also plans to hire SPO 21 Workers. The hiring of SPO 21 Workers will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Allow hiring outside of the SPO24 job profile which requires a degree • Increase recruitment of potential applicants across the province with different educational credentials • Create additional opportunities to hire from community and those with lived experience. 	
<p>Year 2 Evidence – Received February 2023</p>	<p>Year 2 Assessment</p>
<p>The first phase of hiring of Transition workers has been completed. Recruitments were held for new Team leaders, Transition Navigators (to support youth from 14 to 19.5 years) and Transition Support workers who join the youth’s support circle at 18.5 years and provide ongoing support for the connection and support with goals and needs identified in the transition plan up until the age of 25, if the young adult desires.</p> <p>A new job description with a SPO21 classification was created for the Transition Support worker which details are described in year 1 evidence.</p> <p>At the time information was submitted, 17 of the 80 FTEs were filled. Ten applicants either identified as Indigenous or had experience in government care, or both. This service will provide supports for the full age range 18.5-25 and will begin in 3 SDAs of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Vancouver Island • North-Central Peace region • North Coast/Bulkley/Nechako <p>At the time information was submitted there was no information indicating whether MCFD’s plan to allocate 20% of these positions to ICFSAs within these SDAs or if they will be allocated separately.</p> <p>Additionally, 3 new Team leaders, and 6 new SPO24 Navigators will also be added to the STADD team in these areas to support youth in care.</p>	<p>Substantial Progress</p> <p>The Representative notes some progress compared to year 1 evidence of implementing dedicated youth transition workers to provide ongoing guidance to young adults, with recruitment ongoing for the remaining 63 of 80 staff allocated.</p> <p>The Representative is closely monitoring the uptake of the new SAJE supports with only 3.4% of eligible youth currently enrolled with Transition navigators during the 2022/23 reporting period. It is unclear at this time why there has been limited uptake, but the Representative is concerned that the decision to locate supports for youth transition out of care in government, rather than within or through community agencies as called for in her recommendation may be impacting accessibility/acceptability for youth.</p> <p>Despite some progress since year 1 progress report, with the majority of staff yet to be recruited there is still much progress to be made, and so this recommendation continues to be assessed as <i>‘substantial progress’</i>.</p>

Recommendation	
#3	<p>Ensure continuing post-majority financial support.</p> <p>In order to support the same gradual and extended transition to adulthood that most young people enjoy, MCFD should implement universal and comprehensive financial support for young people aging out of all types of care and out of Youth Agreements by automatically enrolling them on their 19th birthday in Agreements with Young Adults, unless the young person chooses to opt out. Universal support should continue until the young person’s 27th birthday without restriction, subject to reasonable constraints such as consideration of other income.</p> <p>MCFD is to have developed a comprehensive plan by April 1, 2022 and fully implement that plan over the ensuing 18 months.</p>
Ministry’s Response	RCY Assessment
Year 1 Evidence – Received July 2022 YEAR	Year 1 Assessment
<p>MCFD, in partnership with Ministry of Advanced Education and Skills Training (AEST), is undertaking an extensive review of the major post-secondary funding sources, to uncover gaps, overlaps and opportunities for improvement.</p> <p>These funding sources include:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Learning Fund for Young Adults (LFYA) 2. Youth Education Assistance Fund (YEAFF) 3. Youth Futures Education Fund (YFEF) 4. Student Aid BC (SABC) funding supports 5. Agreements with Young Adults (AYA) 6. Provincial Tuition Waiver Program (PTWP) <p>Through Budget 2022, the temporary COVID-19 emergency measures – the AYA life-skills program flexibility – is now permanently maintained.</p> <p>WorkBC- Skills Training for Employment: Young Adults</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This training component of SDPR’s WorkBC program is run through Ministry of Advanced Education and Skills Training (AEST) through their skills enhancement grants. 	<p>Some Progress</p> <p>The Representative is encouraged to see inter-ministerial work underway to identify gaps for post-secondary fundings for children in care and the decision to make permanent the flexibility in the AYA life-skills program.</p> <p>The Representative will continue to work with the ministry to support action planning that will support the core intention of this recommendation, to ensure universal and comprehensive financial support for youth aging out of all types of care through their 27th birthday without restriction.</p>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The training helps young adults, who are vulnerable because of previous trauma and, who are not employment ready, obtain sustainable employment. This may include current or former youth in care. • The program provides skills training and employment supports that are based on the needs of the participant, to help overcome barriers to employment. • MCFD’s Strategic Initiatives Branch recently met with WorkBC staff to discuss the continuation of informational webinars for social workers in late May/early June 2021 to assist them in promoting WorkBC’s life-skills programming for youth and young adults from care. 	
<p>Year 2 Evidence – Received February 2023</p>	<p>Year 2 Assessment</p>
<p>An implementation note was included in the year 2 evidence that MCFD would not implement auto enrollment in the new suite of services based on the feedback from young adults. MCFD engaged with 2,500 British Columbians whose surveyed cohort indicated that youth wished to have autonomy at 19 years and to choose which agreements and supports they engaged in with MCFD.</p> <p>MCFD and the Ministry of Post Secondary and Future Skills (PSFS) continue to work in partnership to review, streamline, and enhance post-secondary supports for former youth in care with the intention to create alignments across eligibility.</p> <p>An additional cross-ministry working group (MCFD, PSFS, and MECC) was developed in October 2022 to plan for the implementation of the Learning Fund for Young Adults which is set to be operational for Fall 2023.</p> <p>Work is under way to develop the new Life-Skills, Training, and Cultural Connections and Learning Funding in Summer 2023 to address gaps in the AYA program. Up to \$5,500 can be accessed, up to two times during program enrollment. Planning is underway to determine how best to administer these funds. Additionally, work is currently underway to review the seven life-skills domains and determine if these domains capture the full scope of life-skills that young adults would like to achieve. A cross-ministry sub-working group has been convened to advise on any intersections and the overall direction of this work.</p>	<p>Some Progress</p> <p>The ministry has informed the RCY in their year 2 report that they will not be pursuing auto-enrollment for youth turning 19 into SAJE (formerly AYA) based on feedback from the MCFD Youth Advisory Council and results from a survey.</p> <p>The Representative has requested the engagement findings to determine how youth-voice and the findings of the <i>Parent’s Duty</i> report were considered to inform this decision and will be following up with youth groups and partners to determine the ongoing relevance of her recommendation.</p>

<p>An external engagement plan is being developed to gather input from various external partners, including young adults with care experience, First Nations, Métis Nation BC, and organizations who primarily serve non-Indigenous youth and young adults with diverse ethno-cultural backgrounds, among others. This engagement process will provide an opportunity to provide feedback about the life-skills domains, and processes for accessing and streamlining the funds.</p> <p>As part of the enhanced medical benefits being introduced in the summer of 2023 funding of up to \$1500 per annum between the ages of 19 and a young person’s 27th birthday is being made available to support counselling. Policy work is currently underway to refine this support.</p>	
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Recommendation	
#4	<p>Consider an extension of voluntary residential care.</p> <p>MCFD should evaluate the current emergency measures in place due to COVID-19 that allow young people to continue to stay in their foster home or staffed residential placements past their 19th birthday. Our Office anticipates that such an evaluation would reveal benefits and feasibility on an ongoing basis. If that is the case, the ministry should implement changes that would allow for continuing foster home or staffed residential care on a voluntary basis, with the length of extension based on the young person’s readiness to transition out of care. Priority consideration should be given to youth and young adults who have disabilities and other physical and mental health needs who are not ready for independence at 19, and not eligible for Community Living BC services.</p> <p>MCFD is to complete the evaluation by December 31, 2021 and develop and implement an approved plan of next steps by April 1, 2022.</p>
Ministry’s Response	RCY Assessment
Year 1 Evidence – Received July 2022	Year 1 Assessment
<p>MCFD’s COVID-19 Emergency Housing Measures - Temporary Housing/Support Agreements were put in place in March 2020. The ministry is offering Temporary Housing Agreements (THA) and Temporary Support Agreements (TSA) to support youth in care who are transitioning to independence during the COVID-19 pandemic, which allows them to stay in their living arrangement past their 19th birthday (until March 2022). Young adults who are ready to transition are being supported to do so.</p>	<p>Complete</p> <p>On April 1, 2022, MCFD extended Temporary Housing Agreements and Temporary Support Agreements until they can be made permanent through legislation in 2024/25.</p>

<p>The ministry is undertaking an evaluation of the emergency measures to inform future planning and supports available to youth transitioning to independence.</p> <p>As of April 1, 2022, the flexibility for the Agreements with Young Adults (AYA program) life-skills programming introduced during the COVID-19 pandemic has been permanently maintained. In addition, Temporary Housing Agreements and Temporary Support Agreements have been extended indefinitely, until they can be made permanent through legislation (planned for 2024/2025 implementation).</p>	
Year 2 Evidence – N/A	Year 2 Assessment
No year 2 evidence provided. Assessed as complete in year 1.	<p>Complete</p> <p>Assessed as complete in year 1.</p>

Recommendation	
#5	<p>Provide additional dedicated housing for youth aging out of care.</p> <p>There is perhaps no greater challenge currently facing young people in B.C. transitioning into adulthood than finding appropriate, affordable and safe housing. We echo the recommendation made in the late Katherine McParland’s report, From Marginalized to Magnified: Youth Homelessness Solutions from those with Lived Expertise – that the Ministry of Attorney General and Minister responsible for Housing should work with BC Housing to develop and implement an aggressive plan to work toward ending youth homelessness in B.C., with particular attention to young adults who have transitioned from care.</p> <p>As part of this plan, additional dedicated housing units should be provided for young people aging out of care. Units on a continuum of support – including with mental health and addictions supports where needed – should be available and eligibility requirements reduced.</p> <p>BC Housing is to develop a comprehensive plan by April 1, 2022 and begin full implementation of that plan thereafter.</p>
Ministry’s Response	RCY Assessment
Year 1 Evidence – Received July 2022	Year 1 Assessment

<p>In partnership with BC Housing, MCFD is leading the development of the BC Youth Housing Plan for youth/young adults housing plan to identify and prioritize opportunities to better meet the needs of youth transitioning to independence. This housing plan was informed by recommendations made to government, research and engagement carried out by MCFD.</p> <p>The Housing plan responds by promoting housing stability for youth transitioning to adulthood through transition planning and the provision of housing options. This plan is intended to change the trajectory towards insecure housing and homelessness that so many youth and young adults from care experience.</p> <p>Youth are noted as a distinct needs group in the Provincial Homelessness Strategy which incorporates intersectional needs and cultural safety through partnerships, research and actions.</p> <p>MCFD is supporting the Ministry of Attorney General in developing a provincial homelessness strategy. Budget 2022 announced \$633 Million over three years to address homelessness – at implementation and planning stages \$35 million for youth transitioning from care, including a new financial supplement, rent supplements, and improved supports and benefits until age 27.</p> <p>The Homelessness Strategy includes: housing, rent supplements, supports, encampment supports, programming, engagement and research inclusive and accessible to youth aging out of care.</p> <p>For the Youth Transitions, implementation and engagement is underway, including distinctions-based Indigenous Advisory circles.</p>	<p>Some Progress</p> <p>The Representative is encouraged to see the significant investment in and planning progress on the BC Youth Housing Plan and the Provincial Homelessness Strategy but is concerned that more than 18 months after the release of <i>Parent’s Duty</i> and more than 2 years after the release of Katherine McParland’s report <i>Marginalized to Magnified</i>, progress towards implementation is slow.</p>
<p>Year 2 Evidence – Received February 2023</p>	<p>Year 2 Assessment</p>
<p>BC Housing has identified youth and young adults as a priority cohort for youth housing with wrap around supports. Early steps have included canvassing their regions for potential youth focused projects, and as they move forward, they have identified a need to seek operational dollars in addition to capital funding and to expand their mandate to youth more formally.</p>	<p>Some Progress</p> <p>The Representative recognizes that there has been progress since year 1 evidence towards supporting housing needs of youth aging out of care, but physical housing units are still not available for youth.</p>

<p>In November 2022, the first intake of rent supplements was launched and 799 out of 800 supplements were provided to young adults, 46% of whom were Indigenous. The second rent supplement intake is set to open in Spring of 2023, and the third before end-of-year 2023.</p> <p>Flexibility to switch between Temporary Support Agreements (TSA) and Temporary Housing Agreements (THA) is set to be implemented in Spring 2023 and to become permanent (up to age 21) through legislation in Spring 2024. Additionally, a legacy process is being developed to help those young adults on TSAs or THAs who are past the age of 21 to keep their agreements and transition gradually into independence with a period of continued support.</p> <p>BC Housing has identified two supportive housing sites (Victoria and Katherine’s Place in Kamloops) which will be focused on youth. MCFD participated in the RFP process including the evaluation and selection. The Victoria operating model is still being finalized.</p> <p>BC Housing has also completed an expansive public engagement on the Integrated Support Framework. Government sought feedback from social sector service organizations on the development of the framework that identifies the right supports for someone at risk of or experiencing homelessness in order to improve wellness, stability and community integration. A session on populations with distinct needs included a specific focus on youth. Participants included the Child and Youth Care Association of BC, A Way Home Kamloops, and Alexandra Gardner Women & Children Safe Centre, as well as over 60 additional organizations who provide services and supports.</p>	<p>Although housing sites have been identified in two urban cities, new housing sites remain under construction and unavailable for current tenancy. The ministry has not provided any provincial data on the total number of new dedicated housing units.</p> <p>The Representative does note that the initiation of the rent supplement program in November 2022 is a welcomed and tangible step of progress for transitioning youth within the proposed Homelessness Strategy. However, as of June 2023, only 1,102 out of 1,562 applicants have received funding through this program. This is a small fraction of the 7,851 who are eligible and are waiting for future application sessions.</p> <p>More work is needed in implementation to impact the majority of young people in need of housing support and for this reason, the Representative continues to assess this recommendation at ‘<i>some progress</i>’.</p>
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Recommendation	
#6	<p>Provide an enhanced range of trauma-informed and culturally appropriate mental health and substance use services for young people transitioning from care into adulthood.</p> <p>The Ministry of Mental Health and Addictions, in partnership with the Ministry of Health and MCFD, should develop and implement a plan for mental health and substance use services for youth in care who are transitioning to adulthood. The plan should be developed in consultation with appropriate First Nations, Métis, Inuit and Urban Indigenous representatives as well as young people with lived experience.</p>

	<p>This plan should be integrated into A Pathway to Hope. It should specifically address the needs of the population of young people leaving care and the specialized services they need due to the inequities, adversities and trauma they have experienced in their lives before and while in care. The plan and all services should be trauma-informed and give particular attention and priority to First Nations, Métis, Inuit and Urban Indigenous young people transitioning to adulthood.</p> <p>The plan is to be developed by April 1, 2022, with full implementation being completed within the ensuing two years.</p>
Ministry's Response	RCY Assessment
Year 1 Evidence – Received July 2022	Year 1 Assessment
<p>Funding for 19 full time concurrent disorder clinician positions (CDC) is being rolled out from 2021/22-2023/24. As an initial investment in enhanced Mental Health and Substance Use (MHSU) services for young people 17-26 years old transitioning from government care into adulthood, implementation of this service will inform future service planning for this population.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CDCs will be based in communities of need, preferably within Foundry centres, and will connect youth with other Foundry services such as Foundry Works, primary care, and peer support. These positions are being implemented by regional health authorities. • CDCs will provide culturally safe, trauma informed care. • Implementation plans submitted to the ministries by the health authorities included how the service will support indigenous people, how indigenous representatives will be engaged, and how the services will link to other services. <p>MMHA, in partnership with MoH, are meeting regularly with regional health authorities to ensure that Indigenous partners are engaged on an ongoing basis to ensure that First Nations, Métis, Inuit, and Urban Indigenous young people are prioritized for this service, and that the clinicians provide culturally safe, appropriate, and accessible care for this population. Approaches to Indigenous engagement are specific and tailored to each health authority region.</p> <p>MMHA/MoH worked with the MCFD partners on data collection and analysis to identify communities of need. Supported through the MCFD In Care Network for CYIC Data Innovation Program and utilizing data from multiple ministries linked in PopData BC's secured research environment, this data was presented to and shared with each RHA, to support their decision-making.</p>	<p>Some Progress</p> <p>The Representative notes progress towards this recommendation through the allocation of fundings for concurrent disorder clinicians, and work towards enhancing mental health and substance use services for youth aging out of care into adulthood but does not see progress towards the range of trauma-informed and culturally appropriate mental health and substance use services for young people transitioning from care into adulthood that is called for in the recommendation. MMHA and MoH are currently in the preliminary stages of a current state analysis and is in the beginning stages of engagement planning.</p>

<p>MMHA intends to develop a plan to enhance mental health and substance use services for youth in care who are transitioning to adulthood.</p> <p>Intermediary steps include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A current state analysis of mental health and substance use services for youth in care. • Engagement with current and former youth in care, additional stakeholders and partner organizations. • A cross-jurisdictional analysis of mental health and substance use services for youth in care transitioning to adulthood. <p>The plan will include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An alignment with the four goals of <i>A Pathway to Hope</i>; Seamless and integrated care; Equitable access to culturally safe and effective care; and Indigenous health and wellness. • A consideration of services across the continuum of mental health and substance use care, from prevention to specialized supports. • An emphasis on culturally safe and trauma-informed care. • Integration of IGBA+ considerations. • A roadmap for leveraging existing programs and investments to better serve youth in care. 	
<p>Year 2 Evidence – Received February 2023</p>	<p>Year 2 Assessment</p>
<p>MCFD is currently in the process of implementing the Enhanced Medical Benefit project which will increase dental benefit coverage to \$1000/year (up from \$700/year) and introduce a new counselling benefit which will cover up to \$1500/year of mental health supports.</p> <p>Work is underway to determine which service providers will be covered through this counselling benefit and what service delivery model can best administer these funds. A cross-ministry sub-working group has been convened to advise on any intersections and the overall direction of this work.</p> <p>MCFD has consulted with MMHA, Ministry of Health, FNHA, and SDPR to determine what is available across the province, how other partners are administering their funding for mental health supports, and to ensure this is in alignment with <i>A Pathway to Hope</i>.</p>	<p>Some Progress</p> <p>The Representative notes the implementation of the Enhanced Medical Benefit project as a feature of year 2 progress for this recommendation of enhancing mental health and substance use services, particularly with the new \$1500/year counselling benefit of mental health supports. However, given the limited uptake of rehabilitative services in the SAJE program (>2.5%) and the limited number of accessible/appropriate services available, the Representative does not expect this to have a significant impact for the majority of youth in need.</p> <p>Although the compliment of 19 concurrent disorder clinicians reported through <i>Pathway To Hope</i> in year 1 evidence have now been allocated and will be dispersed to Regional Health Authorities, these clinicians are not specific to young people transitioning from care. In the evidence presented, it is unclear how MCFD and MMHA will support youth in care to connect to these services.</p>

<p>MCFD is also conducting a domestic and international jurisdictional scan to review other models of mental health supports and counselling benefits.</p> <p>Additional consultations will be conducted with young adults, Indigenous partners and other partners to further inform the direction of this work and ensure this new counselling benefit meets the needs of young adults.</p> <p>MMHA has determined the allocation of the remaining six of the 19 concurrent disorder clinicians FTEs and will be dispersed to the RHAs in the first funding letter of 2023/24.</p> <p>Many of the 19 CDC positions have been hired and a few have started seeing clients. Health authorities are still struggling to recruit into some communities. Health authorities are adapting positions to address hiring challenges, such as splitting FTEs in 0.5 and 0.75 positions in some urban centers.</p> <p>MMHA and MoH continue to meet regularly with the RHAs to support implementation. This includes monthly monitoring meetings with each RHA and joint quarterly meetings with all RHAs to support collaboration and shared learning between them and with the ministries, specific to these positions.</p> <p>MMHA has also met with MCFD to discuss monitoring, given that these are health authority positions but are expected to report on the number of youth in care they are serving.</p> <p>MMHA and MoH have started to plan for further engagement activities related to enhanced MHSU youth transition services and expect to finalize a plan by March 31, 2023. This includes discussion with partner ministries and organizations to discuss engagement opportunities, including Indigenous-specific engagement (e.g., McCreary).</p> <p>MMHA also met with the Stronger BC Youth Council (made up of youth 14-26) in November 2022 and learned about their experiences with the MHSU system of care.</p> <p>MMHA/MoH continue to collaborate with partner ministries on the Youth Transitions Tech Table being led by MCFD and several of its sub-working groups. These meetings continue to</p>	<p>No additional evidence has been shared on the current state analysis that was announced in Year 1. Although ministries continue to engage and consider how to better serve this population, the plan to provide an enhanced range of trauma-informed and culturally appropriate mental health and substance use services for young people transitioning from care into adulthood is now overdue.</p> <p>Although encouraged by some progress within this recommendation, it is clear to the Representative that there is still much more to be done to work towards completion.</p>
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support cross-ministry alignment of health and social services for transition-age youth across the system of care.	
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Recommendation

#7	<p>Collect longitudinal data and evaluate services.</p> <p>In order to ensure high quality and equitable services, there must be ongoing data collection and evaluation. MCFD should engage the Ministry of Citizen Services and relevant ministries and public bodies to develop and implement a plan that enables:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> longitudinal data collection about young people who have aged out of care in British Columbia evaluation of post-majority services and supports and the public sharing of the evaluation results standardized data across the province that is reported regularly, including (but not limited to) the following disaggregated data: identity factors such as ethnicity and gender identity as well as indigeneity – First Nations, Métis and Inuit identity. <p>A cross-ministry plan is to be developed by April 1, 2022 with full implementation of that plan to begin thereafter.</p>
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Ministry’s Response	RCY Assessment
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Year 1 Evidence – Received July 2022	Year 1 Assessment
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<p>MCFD has a project plan to develop longitudinal data linkages which include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Existing measures that can provide information on outcomes such as rate of high school completion and AYA uptake with 12 months of aging out. Collaborating with CITZ’s Data Innovation Program (DIP) to link former youth in care with data from other BC government programs and learn more about their exposure to health and other services. Explore the accessibility of other data sets. Data sharing from the newly developed youth transition programs with CITZ DIP. <p>This plan has been mapped out and includes the following research goals with regard to the AYA program.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> What is the interaction between the BC Employment and Assistance program and the AYA population? 	<p>No Progress</p> <p>The Representative acknowledges pre-planning activities including the development of a project plan but notes that engagement and a vision for longitudinal data and evaluative services is still pending.</p>
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<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What is the interaction between the educational system and the AYA population? • What is the interaction between the health care system and the AYA population? <p>MCFD will engage with youth in Summer 2022 on outcomes/metrics that are important to them with regard to recommendation 7's longitudinal data vision.</p> <p>MCFD also plans to load Indigeneity indicators as well as other disaggregated data into the DIP analysis to allow for analysis across sub-cohorts.</p>	
<p>Year 2 Evidence – Received February 2023</p>	<p>Year 2 Assessment</p>
<p>Analysis work has begun on the longitudinal data linkage project and preliminary results are tabulated for the following question:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What is the interaction between the BC Employment and Assistance program and the AYA population? <p>Specifically, the longitudinal analysis looked at:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the likelihood that an individual would receive Income Assistance across three sub-populations between 1) AYA eligible with AYA; 2) AYA eligible without AYA; and 3) general population of the same age. • differences across the three sub-populations receiving IA with “no fixed address” which proxies as an indicator for homelessness. • How participation length on the AYA program affects the likelihood of receiving IA. <p>MCFD is exploring other options through the Data Innovation Program (DIP) to further analyze homelessness in the three population groups over time, and the potential impact of AYA participation.</p> <p>MCFD held a 90-minute engagement with the Youth Advisory Committee which focused on housing and defining what a “good housing outcome” is. Additional consultations will be scheduled to cover other topics.</p>	<p>No Progress</p> <p>While the Ministry is making progress to review <i>existing</i> data related to the AYA population through the Data Innovation project, evidence is lacking to address the objective of ongoing data collection and evaluation called for in the Representative’s recommendation. Improving the quality of data related to this population is necessary to ensure high quality and equitable services, as well as the usefulness of data linking activities that are underway.</p> <p>While the ministry has reported that considerable early-stage work has been completed on the longitudinal data linkage project, no evidence directly concerning a cross-ministry plan to evaluate and report the quality and equability of post-majority services and supports was provided to the Representative in the year 2 update.</p>

<p>MCFD has initiated the mandatory review process through the DIP to allow for external reporting of the initial analysis work. Any external reporting will be aggregated to protect privacy as per the DIP reporting standards.</p>	
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