

fostering CHANGE

2016 YOUTH TRANSITIONS SURVEY
Early Results





KEY FINDINGS

INTRODUCTION

The 2016 Youth Transitions Survey measures public attitudes, values and perceptions related to young people in and from foster care in British Columbia. It provides an update on benchmarks established in Vancouver Foundation's 2013 Youth Transitions Survey, as well as some new insights. The 2016 survey explores three key areas: (1) BC residents' perceptions of why young adults live at home and their readiness to make a successful transition from parental home to living on their own; (2) public perceptions of young people living in government care; (3) the public will for investment in potential solutions to support the success of young adults from foster care.

This document highlights some of the early results of the 2016 Youth Transitions Survey. A full report will be published on our website – www.fosteringchange.ca – in the near future.

BRITISH COLUMBIANS SHOW STRONG SUPPORT FOR INVESTING IN YOUTH FROM CARE

Our results indicate strong public support for providing economic assistance to youth in and from care. This includes extending the threshold for cut-off beyond the age of 19, and providing support for living expenses until the age of 25.

- 76% of British Columbians think the cut-off for receiving assistance/support should be extended beyond the age of 19

71% of British Columbians favour the provincial government supporting young people who have aged out of foster care at age 19 with their living expenses (including housing, food, education and health care) through a stipend or living supplement until they turn 25

- 70% of British Columbians think both the government and the community are not doing enough to support youth 19 years of age or older and who have been in foster care

BC PARENTS PROVIDE EXCEPTIONAL SUPPORT FOR THEIR OWN CHILDREN AGED 19–28

Becoming independent is recognized as a gradual process, and BC parents provide exceptional support for their own children aged 19–28. This includes providing financial support, as well as important social and emotional support.

- 84% of BC parents provide emotional support
- 63% of BC parents offer job advice/referrals
- 60% of BC parents provide support with buying shopping/ groceries
- 55% of BC parents with children aged 19–28 have at least one child still living at home
- 51% of BC parents assist with post-secondary education costs
- 47% of BC parents help with housing / rent
- 43% of BC parents assist with transportation costs
- 42% of BC parents provide help with health/dental expenses
- 38% of BC parents provide help with clothing expenses



92%
OF BRITISH COLUMBIAN
parents of 19–28 year-old adult
children are providing them with
a range of financial, social
network and emotional supports.

THE PUBLIC BELIEVE IT'S GETTING TOUGHER FOR YOUNG PEOPLE TO SUCCEED

There is broad public empathy for the financial challenges young people face today. Parents are concerned about young adults finding work that provides financial stability. They are also concerned about the lack of affordable housing and opportunities.

- 95% of British Columbians agree the cost of living is rising for young adults
- 90% of British Columbians agree that young people in their 20's need the support of their family
- 87% of British Columbians do not believe that the majority of 19 year olds have the necessary skills and resources to live away from home and support themselves independently
- 66% of British Columbians believe young adults face tougher prospects than previous generations

BRITISH COLUMBIANS KNOW THAT STRONG SUPPORT IS ABOUT MORE THAN MONEY, IT'S ABOUT RELATIONSHIPS

Adults of all ages in British Columbia regularly spend time with their families for a wide range of activities that can help to build and maintain strong relationships. For most British Columbians, strong family relationships are nurtured throughout our lives.

- British Columbians ranked long-term relationships with dependable caring adults as the most important factor to support self sufficiency
- 79% of families in British Columbia get together for entertainment
- 73% of families in British Columbia celebrate milestones together
- 66% of families in British Columbia share a dinner together at least once a week



VISIBILITY OF YOUTH IN CARE ISSUES ARE INCREASING

Public awareness and understanding of the scale and significance of issues facing youth in foster care is increasing, stigma remains, and few believe targeted support exists.

Awareness and understanding of the scale and significance of issues facing youth in foster care is higher than it was in 2013.

Almost half of British Columbians (48%) underestimate the number of youth living in foster care, believing the number to be fewer than 6,000. When asked the same question in 2013, 71% underestimated the number of youth in care.

Correctly, 4 in 5 British Columbians (79%) think that young people in foster are at higher risk of homelessness relative to others in their peer group. Two thirds estimate the figure to be between 30-80%.

An increasing number of British Columbians (38%) do not think targeted government support is available to youth from foster care beyond their 19th birthday, compared to 28% in our 2013 findings.

Among people who believe targeted supported is available, 47% feel it is insufficient.

76%

OF BRITISH COLUMBIANS support extending the cut-off age for assistance/support beyond 19 years.

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ABOUT THE RESEARCH

Vancouver Foundation's Fostering Change Initiative commissioned InsightsWest to survey 1,922 British Columbian adults between January 13 and January 20, 2016 in order to gain a better understanding of public attitudes, values and perceptions about youth transitioning to adulthood and more specifically, for youth aging out of government care in the province. The data has been statistically weighted according to Canadian census figures for age, gender and region. The margin of error is +/- 2.2 percentage points.

The survey replicated questions asked in Vancouver Foundation's 2013 Youth Transitions survey, which provides a benchmark for measuring public attitudes, values and perceptions over time.

ABOUT FOSTERING CHANGE

Fostering Change is an initiative of Vancouver Foundation to improve policy, practice and community connections for young people transitioning from foster care to adulthood. We're working in collaboration with a growing set of partners to achieve our goal – that every young person leaving foster care has the opportunities and support needed to thrive as adults.

Fostering Change developed out of our long-standing interest in strategies to address youth homelessness. We figure the best way to end youth homelessness is to prevent it from happening in the first place. Given over 40% of homeless youth have been part of the child welfare system, Vancouver Foundation has committed to strengthening the support systems available to youth as they leave government care and transition into adulthood.

fosteringchange.ca

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