



REPORT

NON-APPROVED HOMES: HOW DO YOU KNOW WHO YOU ARE IF YOU DON'T KNOW WHERE YOU COME FROM?

A G-Force Forum, 21 March 2018

"The fact that there is a dedicated forum for this issue is an achievement in and of itself."

Background

The G-Force workplan for 2017-2018 identifies six priority areas that were determined at a workshop with CREATE Young Consultants in mid-2017. One of the priority areas is 'Non-approved homes'. The area leader is PeakCare Qld Inc. A work plan was developed to respond to the issue. It includes four main activities:

1. scoping the issue
2. releasing an issues paper
3. convening a forum
4. advocacy around system change to address the issues identified through scoping, research, barriers and enablers identified by young people and other stakeholders, and examples of good practice

The working group comprises of G-Force members Elloise Waite (CREATE Young Consultant), Chloe Warrell (BEROS) and Tracey Smith (PeakCare). A Team Leader from the After Hours Child Safety Service Centre worked with the group to organise the Forum.

A one-day forum, *Non-approved homes: how do you know who you are if you don't know where you come from?*, was held on Wednesday 21 March 2018 in the conference room, Brisbane Region, Department of Child Safety, Youth and Women (DCSYW). The Region made the room available free of charge, which meant registration was free. Catering costs were met from contributions by the Queensland Family and Child Commission, CREATE, Community Living Association, Office of the Public Guardian, and PeakCare.

The purposes of the Forum were to increase knowledge and understanding of the issue, promote networking across stakeholder groups, and strategise about systemic change.

This report is about the Forum and feedback, commitments and areas for action identified as part of the day's attention to this issue and the subsequent G-Force meeting held on 2 May 2018.

Pre-Forum activities

CREATE Qld's YAG discussed the issue of non-approved homes to provide ongoing input via Elloise Waite to the working group as well as contributing to G-Force discussions about their experiences and solutions.

The Working Group developed and circulated an issues paper that expanded on an issues brief prepared by a Young Consultant. The paper was circulated to G-Force members and registrants for the Forum. Although responses were invited, none were received.

Registrants were asked about their views on the top barriers and enablers to children and young people feeling happy and safe in their approved placement, and wanting to return to their approved placement. 36 registrants responded, reflecting what the research says about good policy and practice. Young Consultants were also asked for their views and these were consistent with workers' views. Everyone stressed young peoples' participation in decision making and listening to their views; the importance of identity and connection to family, community and culture; and professionals being less risk averse and blaming.

Forum registrants were sent copies of:

- *Safety and Support Networks and High Intensity Responses: Collaborative responses to high risk and high complexity* in working with children, young people and families – a practice resource to support DCSYW's Practice Framework
- A link to Mancini and Lindhorst's, 'Harm reduction in community mental health settings', published in the *Journal of Social Work and Disability Services*
- An article by Annette Jackson, 'From Where to Where – Running Away from Care', published in a 2015 issue of *Children Australia*

Format and attendees

The Forum was MC'd by Elloise Waite, who also gave the keynote address that provided the background to why Young Consultants identified non-approved homes as a priority area for G-Force and their views about what needs to be addressed, evidence and missing information, and what needs to happen.

Attendees were welcomed to the Forum by Julie Smith, A/Regional Executive Director, Brisbane Region, DCSYW.

Over the day, there was:

- 13 TED-like talks about policy and practice, different perspectives, component issues, and information about policy and practice developments
- small group discussion of a case study developed and facilitated by BEROS that reflected the experiences young people living in non-approved homes
- small group discussion about systemic changes, and
- opportunities for networking.

An objective was to have a good cross-section of non-government and government stakeholders at the Forum and at each table to promote cross-sector discussion. A Young Consultant and a BEROS and Child Safety worker were assigned to each table. A total of 56 people attended. Table 1 shows the break-down.

Table 1: Attendees by stakeholder group at the Forum

Stakeholder group	Number
Young Consultants	8
CREATE Foundation	5
BEROS	10
Child Safety	11
Other non-government organisations (eg. out-of-home care services, peak bodies, Family Wellbeing services)	11
Other Queensland government agencies (eg. Health, Housing, Education, Disability, Youth Justice, OPG, QFCC)	11
	56

Six people were unable to attend on the day (3 Young Consultants, 2 out of home care providers, and 1 from a government agency).

Findings from the discussion of the case study prepared by BEROS

Over the day, BEROS workers led and recorded discussion at each table about a case study, based on experiences of young people engaged with BEROS, to explore opportunities for improving practice across stakeholder groups working with different cohorts of young people living in non-approved homes. The key themes / observations across the discussions centred on:

- Shock at the case study:
 - o Is this a real example
 - o It must be fabricated
 - o This can't have actually happened
 - o It must have been a green CSO or worker
- All tables expressed frustration or concern that this could be occurring in practice
- BEROS workers noted most professionals at the table were able to articulate what would have worked best in each scenario:
 - o Including the young person in decision making
 - o Building relationship and increasing a sense of connection and belonging
 - o Centring practice around the young person
 - o Stepping away from punitive and blaming responses to a harm minimisation response
- But there is a disconnect between what is said is best practice and what is acted out in practice- why is this?

See Attachment 2 for a copy of the case study. See Attachment 3 for the notes from discussions about different parts of the case study.

Change in views over the day

The change in views over the day was measured through 2 'baseline' questions asked of attendees at each table at the beginning of the Forum and at the end. For both questions, there was a marked improvement. 75% also reported that they had learnt a lot over the day. Tables 2, 3 and 4 show the responses to the questions.

Table 2: How confident do you feel about your understanding of non-approved homes from a young person's perspective?

Response	At the beginning of the day	At the end of the day
Honestly I have no idea	0	0
Not confident at all	3 (30%)	0
Somewhat confident	5 (50%)	8 (66%)
Very confident	2 (20%)	4 (33%)
	10	12

Table 3: Do you know where to find policies, procedures and / or practice guidance for working with young people living in non-approved homes?

Response	At the beginning of the day	At the end of the day
I have no idea	2 (20%)	0
I have some idea but would like to know more	6 (60%)	3 (25%)
I know where to find these	2 (20%)	9 (75%)
	10	12

Table 4: What have you learnt from the Forum today?

Response	Number
I knew most of it already	0
I learnt a few things	3 (25%)
I learnt a lot	9 (75%)
	12

Where to from here? Messages from attendees about systemic changes to redress this issue

The final session was devoted to small group discussion about systemic change – what good outcomes look like, what needs to change in practice, what needs to change systemically, and short and longer term actions that can be taken.

Participants viewed good outcomes for children and young people broadly as when young people's capacities are developed, their agency respected, and when they are provided with support tailored to their situation and their wishes for the future. Employment, education, physical and emotional safety, feeling connected including to culture and a sense of belonging are some aspects of to be considered.

Suggestions to improve practice in the area centred on practice which is focused on individual needs and harm minimisation instead of a punitive/risk management approach. Practice and policy should align. It was also acknowledged good practice cannot occur without sufficient resourcing and/or without enough placement options available. Integration, collaboration, innovation, participation, flexibility and creativity featured heavily as desired characteristics.

In relation to systemic changes in legislation, policy, programs, funding arrangements, key themes were:

- a) *Accountability, monitoring and transparency* across agencies about the number of young people in this cohort - this includes the establishment of clear organisational policies across the sector that detail how young people in this cohort are to be supported in principle and practice
- b) There needs to be a *change in culture* amongst the sector regarding this cohort – need to have an open discussion and adopt a more positive, hopeful and constructive approach to supporting these young people have good outcomes
- c) Need for *service models and funding arrangements* for non-government service providers and young people (eg. brokerage, residential care services supporting young people while they are living in non-approved homes, access to TILA and YHARS) that help to facilitate the good practice as outlined above. This should include model flexible funding arrangements and trialling of services like BEROS in other areas
- d) *Sharing information and learnings* about different models utilised by CSSCs and Regions to case manage young people in this cohort
- e) *Cultural capacity* – clearly there needs to be a strong focus on culture and community in understanding and supporting young people in this cohort
- f) *Knowledge and skills development* - working with this cohort requires knowledge and skills across different stakeholders – these need to be recognised and developed, for example, through the implementation of mandatory qualifications for residential care workers; skills and knowledge development activities supporting the Hope and Healing Framework; and other activities being undertaken by the Queensland Family and Child Commission (eg. workforce development), Health and Community Services Workforce Council, DCSYW etc

Feedback from Young Consultants about the Forum

After the close of the Forum, Young Consultants were asked for feedback. It included that young people felt that there could have been more opportunities for their direct input at the tables. They said:

It was excellent

Five Stars

Food was good

Lucas' questions [about systemic change] were great

Hearing was a challenge for certain parts of the room. Consider a microphone for future forums

There was discussion about decision making regarding health but it didn't appear that there was anyone from health department in the room.

Kate the CSO was great – possibly include more frontline staff presenting [Young people felt that some speakers weren't as relevant]

Feedback from a survey of attendees

On 9 April 2018, Forum registrants were emailed copies of most presentations to the Forum. The email flagged that attendees would be contacted for feedback about their reflections on the day and actions and thinking since the Forum about the issue. The link to the survey was sent to the 56 attendees on 10 April by Kelly Lotz and a reminder was sent on 24 April 2018.

22 attendees completed the survey by the due date of 27 April, a response rate of 39.3%. Representative of the planned cross-section of attendees, survey respondents were a mix of Young Consultants, policy makers, program developers, frontline practitioners, those in advocacy roles, and practice developers.

50% of 22 respondents rated the Forum as 'excellent', 10 (45.5%) as 'good', 1 as 'ok'. Comments were made about the Forum being well planned and coordinated; the value of Young Consultants' involvement; relevance of presentations though sometimes rushed; and the discussion stimulated by the case study. Some stated that more time could have been devoted to developing practical solutions.

Responses to other questions and survey findings are included at Attachment 4.

TOPIC	PRESENTER
What's the issue? What's the problem? Family Matters Campaign	Elloise Waite, CREATE Young Consultant Jess Mcardle Queensland Family Matters Campaign Coordinator
Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Child Placement Principle <i>Safety and Support Networks and High Intensity Responses: Collaborative responses to high risk and high complexity in working with children, young people and families</i>	Jess Mcardle Queensland Family Matters Campaign Coordinator Toni Cash Manager, Practice Advice and Support Practice Connect, Service Delivery and Practice, DCSYW
Brisbane Emergency Response Outreach Service (BEROS)	Michelle Scott Principal Contract Officer (Investment Project), Child Family and Community Services Contract Management, Brisbane Region, DCSYW and DCDSS
Promoting and protecting the rights of children and young people in care	Melissa Wilson Principal Legal Officer – Child Advocate, Office of the Public Guardian
Enough listening... some more fun	Andrew Foley Community Facilitator, CREATE
Conceptualisations of 'home', Youth CONNECT	Samantha Patterson Children Youth and Families Program and Practice Development Consultant, Churches of Christ Care
Decision making with young people	Susan Goodrich Manager, Operational Policy, DCSYW
Focusing on needs not deeds - highlights from the Missing children report and the joint agency protocol for reducing unnecessary police callouts to residential care services	Deputy Commissioner Cheryl Leavy and Elizabeth Rowe Queensland Family and Child Commission
Incident management and reporting for residential care services	Sarah MacNaught A/Principal Program Officer, Children in Care, Commissioning, Child, Family and Community Services, DCSYW
Callouts and reports about missing children to the Qld Police Service	Debbie Jones Program Manager, Child Abuse & Sexual Crime Group, Queensland Police Service
Maintaining connections with young people transitioning to independence	Kate Smith Transition to Independence CSO, Forest Lake CSSC, DCSYW
Keeping this cohort of young people engaged with Child Safety	Kristopher White CSO, Stones Corner CSSC, DCSYW

**G-Force Non-approved Homes Forum
Case Study**

Part 1:

Ally has been absent from placement for 3 days- Ally is known to leave placement during the day but usually returns each evening after spending time with friends from school. Ally has made contact with the care team twice (once with her CYMHS worker and once with placement) during her absence but refuses to let them know where she is or return to placement- stating, "I am fine. I'll be back in a couple of days. Stop calling me".

Placement reports Ally as missing.

Part 2:

Ally returns to placement after 6 days away- during this time Ally was listed as a missing person but was not located. Ally made contact with her Child Safety office, residential placement and CYMHS worker 3 times during her absence and then made her own way back to the placement. When Ally returns- she returns in the evening at 9pm. Staff notice Ally appears under the influence and immediately call an ambulance and won't allow the Ally to enter the property. At her previous placement they would allow Ally in, give her water, food and put her to bed safely. She didn't understand this new response.

Ally escalates as she can't understand why she isn't allowed in the property – they've been asking her to "come home for a week". Police are called and this triggers Ally further- Ally's previous experience with the police has been negative and reminds her of the domestic violence call outs at home. Ally is charged with resisting arrest and possession (a small packet of marijuana is found on her person)- she is taken to hospital for physical assessment and assessed as fine to return to placement. Requiring sleep and food.

Part 3:

Ally has been back at placement 2 days since she returned under the influence in the evening. Since returning staff have informed Ally if she doesn't return to placement by 8pm each day she will automatically be reported as missing- a direction handed down by Child Safety. Ally also isn't allowed access to the internet for a month (this also means the all of the other young people can't access the internet).

The restriction around the internet cause the other young women in the property to become agitated with Ally- "why should they be punished because Ally did something stupid" one young woman argues with staff. The young woman start to ostracise Ally and she feels unwelcome- at one stage Ally and one young woman get into a physical altercation because Ally is sick of hearing them say "just because Ally is an idiot" or "it's all Ally's f***ing fault".

Ally leaves after 4 days of being back at placement.

Part 4:

Marcus is staying with a cousin and has decided he has had enough of being "a resi kid" and tells his CSO he will not return to the placement and "f***ing hates it there". Marcus refuses to let his CSO know where he is staying but informs the CSO he is safe.

Marcus likes staying with his cousin- there is no curfew, his cousin lets him smoke, he gets to see his family and friends without seeking permission. Sometimes Marcus feels like he is expected to choose between being in care or being with his family and he hates that- sometimes he wishes he could just have both.

Marcus gets a call from his CSO 2 weeks after he left placement stating “your placement has been closed”. Marcus reminds his CSO he “doesn’t f***ing care and hangs up”.

Part 5:

Marcus has started couch surfing and occasionally sleeping rough- he was unable to stay at his cousin’s for longer than a week- “it was messing with their housing and rent”. Marcus decides he needs to go to his CSO and ask for help- Marcus waits in the service centre for 3 hours before his CSO meets with him. Marcus explains he can no longer stay where he was and has spent the past 3 nights couch surfing and ended up sleeping in a park last night. Marcus explains he really wants to stay in school (there is a youth worker there he really enjoys talking with) but finds it hard to get there when he is couch surfing and doesn’t know where he will be from night to night. The CSO’s response is “you made your bed kid- sleep in it. You had a perfectly good placement and decided to leave. There are no placements available”. Marcus is so upset this response he calls his CSO a “stupid c**t” and tips the chair in reception upside down before hearing an alarm be triggered. Marcus decides to leave. Marcus decides to head to school and see if the youth worker is available to chat.

Marcus spends the night in the city walking around. He attends Red Cross night café and afterwards meets a group of young people in King George Square and they invite him to the Gold Coast with them for the evening. They say “we’re going to get on- want to come? You can stay with us”. Marcus decides he would prefer to be around them then alone in a park.

Part 6:

5 days later and Zee hasn’t slept for 3 days straight or had anything to eat- Zee tried ice for the first time. His new friends are making him feel so welcome- and most nights they find somewhere to stay. This usually means taking a lot of drugs and doing a deal for someone in return- but Zee doesn’t mind because he has no one else and he feels close to these people. Zee’s CSO has tried calling a couple of times but before Zee could return the call- his phone got stolen. He suspects it could have been traded for drugs by one of his friends but oh well he needs to pay his way some way (at least this is what he tells himself).

Zee’s group is picked up by the police at a train station one evening – they get spilt up. Some are taken into custody (as they have warrants) and others are transported to their respective homes or placements. A few of the others escape before police can catch them- Zee gets caught and held in the watch house for a few hours. It soon becomes clear that the police are talking to Child Safety but there are no placement options. Zee is kept in overnight until her CSO can pick him up in the morning.

Part 7:

Sammie has been couch surfing for 6 months- she met this guy (Trent) a couple of weeks ago and he seems nice and said Sammie could stay with him. Sammie took Trent up on his offer because she is sick of moving every couple of days- he has a DOH unit and he is 19 and has a care experience too. Trent talks a lot about growing up in foster care and is still connected to his foster family. Sammie and Trent begin living together and enter into a sexual relationship. Sammie really likes him- she feels safe. Finally she belongs. Trent calls her beautiful and unlike some of the others doesn’t tease her for having a disability.

Sammie has had very little contact with her CSO. Sammie has been sexually assaulted a couple of times in the last 6 months- one night she had nowhere to stay and met a stranger who offered her a couch. She didn't realise he wanted sexual favours in return- she tried to leave but he had locked her inside. And the second time she had been drinking with friends and one of their dad's had been around and provided everyone with alcohol and weed. Later in the night Sammie woke up to him on top of her and couldn't do anything to stop him.

Sammie is glad she has met Trent- no one has made her feel more safe and loved in a long time.

Part 8:

Sammie is now 15 and has been self-placing for over a year- She has been living with Trent for most of this time. Sammie contacted Child Safety about 2 months after moving in with Trent and let them know she was living somewhere stable and wondered if they could help with Centrelink as she wanted to contribute financially and Sammie was also thinking going back to school might be a good idea- and felt it was time to grow up. Sammie told them where she was living but that she and Trent were just friends- she was worried he might get in trouble because he was older.

Sammie was told she had a new CSO and arranged to meet them later that week- Sammie asked that they meet at the shops as she had decided she didn't want Child Safety at her home. Child Safety refused to meet Sammie anywhere but at her house- as they stated they needed to do a risk assessment about where she living and were unable to provide any support accessing finances or services until this completed because they couldn't be seen to condone Sammie living away from placement.

Part 9:

Sammie has been sporadically engaging with Child safety while living with Trent and has reconnected with her family. For the first time in a long time she doesn't feel like she needs to choose between being a "kid in care" and having her family in her life. She doesn't need to ask permission to see them- she just goes when she feels like it.

Sammie received a phone call from Child Safety informing her she had a new CSO and they would like to meet her and discuss a transitions plan- and finalise the plan they had completed. Sammie had no idea what they were talking about and had never heard of a plan being written. She agreed to meet with her new CSO who brought along this pile of papers with stuff about goals, transitioning from care, etc.

Sammie asks her CSO for support around accessing Indigenous health services and notices her transitions plan has nothing written in the cultural awareness section except the name of someone Sammie has never met. Sammie asks who they are and her CSO explains it is the RE for the service centre- Sammie has no idea what that means and the CSO offers no further explanation.

Part 10:

Sammie receives a phone call from her CSO informing her Child Safety will not be providing access to transitions supports because she is already independent and receiving Centrelink so the transitions money isn't needed or can be allocated to a course only.

During the conversation the CSO uses self-placing to explain Sammie's situation and this agitates Sammie. Sammie feels she is independent and managing her own life and has been for some time. She feels self-placing undermines this and also makes her feel like she made the choice not to have a placement when she once asked them for help. How could her CSO say she was self-placing?

G-Force Non-Approved Homes Forum

Case Study notes/discussion

Parts 1, 2 & 3

- Most agreed the young person was NOT a missing person and had taken steps to maintain contact with her safety and support network
- Lack of consistency across residential around responses causes confusion for YP (e.g. how to respond to intoxication, policies are individualised)
- Criminalising normal adolescent behaviour- what would a parent do in this scenario?
- Is there communication lacking between the safety and support network- are we utilising this network effectively?
- Inflexible approach- punitive and no need to call the police/unneeded police call out
- No knowledge (or care to know) the young person's triggers or trauma history (e.g. the police are triggering due to previous DV history in the home)
- There appears to be no what if plan: e.g. what if this happens how do we maintain contact with you, how do we best respond to your needs, how do we support you, how do you stay in contact. Plan these scenarios before they occur in a gentle and caring manner
- Punitive measures increase YP isolation and increase chances of conflict in the residential
- Should be celebrating YP return not punishing YP/supporting YP to reconnect to residential
- Where is the relational practice?
- Where is the YP voice being heard and put into practice

Part 4

- Acknowledgement of YP need to engage with family and reconnect with sense of family and belonging (had sibling and family contact been regular prior to this- would this have prevented this from occurring or reduced the likelihood)
- YP clearly attempting to ditch the "resi kid" label and increase their power, control and decision making capacity in a system which hasn't had their hopes and wishes kept at the forefront
- How could CSO deliver the news of placement closure differently (or attempt to): e.g. ask to meet up and go out for lunch and talk over food and offer support to look at other options. Did the message need to be delivered over the phone- was there any attempt at engaging in person?

Part 5

- Timeliness is an essential part of practice with this cohort: YP is clearly seeking support and waiting 3 hours to even see the CSO is not appropriate
- If CSO isn't available who is? CSSO, team leader, can the service centre give the YP a time to return?
- Window of opportunity around engagement when YP is seeking support and this was lost with CSOs response and the time it took to get a response
- unhelpful punitive response from CSO "made your bed kid sleep in it": had an opportunity for re-engagement but took a punitive line of engagement and immediately offended the YP who was feeling vulnerable and in need of support

- Some comments from participants included: the CSO must have been a green or very new CSO to say that (in actual fact it was a very Senior CSO whose comments were supported by their team leader)

Part 6

- Need to adopt a harm minimisation model
- Allow YP to make choice but support to have multiple back up plans: what are the back up plans in this system?
- Placement model hasn't worked (can be rigid and inflexible, other models are expensive to fund, youth sector need to be 16)
- Lack of emergency placements- is increasing this really going to make a difference?
- A lot of the responses were how do WE make it safe for him?
- Reframe: how can we support Zee to build safety, to increase his safety, to make have all the information necessary to make informed choices. And how do we catch him when/if he makes a mistake?
- Responses kept coming back to housing- and lack of housing and flexible models: reminder bricks and mortar is not always the answer

Parts 7 & 8

- Automatic assumption from the group that Sammie was unable to make an assessment between safe and unsafe sexual relationships given her disability
- Automatic assumption from the group they would need to report the information to police given Sammie's age and Trent's age- Police officer informed group Police would not want to hear about this if Sammie was consenting and had no plans of charging Trent as it would fall over in court. And this would be detrimental to what could otherwise be a healthy and settled option for Sammie (consistent across tables). Referred to as "butt covering"
- Some jumped to contraception- can't work on this without a relationship
- Once the top 2 barriers were broken down the group were able to assess Sammie appeared to be able to assess safe and unsafe relationships given the explanation of the sexual assault and then the differing explanation of Trent.
- They began talking about how to build a safety plan with Sammie (a what if plan) and work on building a relationship with her as her new CSO
- Shifted away from reactive and risk averse to young person centred and relational once some myths were worked through- how do we get people to start here?
- Unsure why the CSO couldn't initially meet Sammie away from the home and work towards building a relationship over time which may lead to home visits- meet the YP where they are at

Parts 9 & 10

- Shifting away from the language of self-placing: suggestion was self-identified placement
- No acknowledgment of how well YP has done to cope independently for so long
- Cultural awareness hasn't been mentioned at all and is lacking throughout the CSOs entire work
- No rapport building- straight to tick and flick, red tape
- Should work at YP level of readiness
- Using simplified or common language- maybe Sammie has heard T2I referred to as another name
- Go back to basics- relational work, young person centred, harm minimisation
- Clearly the young person is settled and doing well so let's build on that and work alongside her

Findings from the survey of attendees at the Forum

A total of 22 attendees completed the survey, a response rate of 39.3%. Representative of the planned cross-section of attendees, survey respondents were a mix of Young Consultants, policy makers, program developers, frontline practitioners, those in an advocacy role, and practice developers.

50% of 22 respondents rated the Forum as 'excellent', 10 (45.5%) as 'good', 1 as 'ok'. Comments referred to the Forum being well planned and coordinated; the value of Young Consultants' involvement; relevant presentations though sometimes rushed; and the discussion stimulated by the case study. Some stated that more time could have been devoted to developing practical solutions.

As to the extent to which respondents were 'surprised' by the content in the case study about young peoples' experiences, 50% of the 22 respondents said they were 'slightly surprised' and 50% said they were 'not at all surprised'. Most comments referred to seeing the practice often or sometimes. Another stated:

I think intellectually I knew the content in the case studies, but hearing the stories of Young Consultants added that emotional, real world element that affected me surprisingly

When asked about how useful the case was as a way to promote discussion, 11 (50%) of the 22 respondents reported 'quite useful'; and 8 (36.4%) reported 'very useful'. Comments stressed the value of the discussion promoted around the tables, particularly through different professional perspectives at each table. Again, the contribution of Young Consultants to discussion was commended.

Table 1 shows the extent to which thinking / practice / approaches were reported as challenged or shifted by the Forum. Almost 55% reported this only occurred to a small extent.

Table 1: On a scale of 'not at all' to a 'very large extent', did the Forum challenge or shift your thinking, your practice, your approaches about this issue? (n=22)

	Not at all	To a small extent	To a medium extent	To a large extent	To a very large extent
Number of respondents	0	12	3	6	1
Percent	0%	54.6%	13.7%	27.2%	4.5%

Comments about the ratings given reflected a lack of 'new' ideas being generated, and content perceived as a reminder of what was already known. Others stated:

I took away a lot to think about in terms of individual and systemic advocacy
I think it cemented my commitment to supporting and advocating for children and young people in care
The scenarios were good but I don't think really explored the complexities of behaviours that are so often exhibited by young people who are in non-approved placements and the real risks posed by some of the people they spend time with
It would have been good to explore some of the young people's experiences of staying connected with schooling / education programs
There were some key players in the room who have roles which can be influential or make a difference to policy and decision making so I would like to see where it goes from here

The survey queried whether respondents had taken or identified actions they could take around this issue. Over 77% (17) reported 'yes', 3 reported 'no' and 2 said they were 'not sure, still thinking about it'. 12 respondents gave concrete examples of actions they have taken, such as changing their language around this issue, sharing information and messages from the Forum, challenging responses from services, seeking and including the voices of young people, utilising connections made at the Forum, and developing the case study into an educational tool.

A question in the survey focused on whether respondents agreed their knowledge was increased about certain topics from the Forum. Table 2 shows the topics and responses.

Table 2: Thinking about the Issues Paper and supporting articles, the presentations, and group discussions, please indicate your agreement with the following statements by finishing the sentence:

I know more than I did before the Forum about...

	YES	NO	NOT SURE	NOT APPLICABLE	TOTAL
young people's perspectives on living in non-approved homes	86.36% 19	13.64% 3	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	22
how / why an individual young person's circumstances or characteristics should impact professionals' responses	90.91% 20	9.09% 2	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	22
harm minimisation approaches	68.18% 15	22.73% 5	9.09% 2	0.00% 0	22
when I should contact police, other emergency services, and / or Child Safety	68.18% 15	27.27% 6	0.00% 0	4.55% 1	22
ways Child Safety staff do and can work better with this cohort	90.91% 20	9.09% 2	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	22

Responses to each of the statements indicated improved knowledge, in particular about young people's perspectives, different approaches with different young people, and ways that Child Safety do and can work better with this cohort.

Knowledge is still needed about harm minimisation and when to report to police, other emergency services and / or Child Safety.

A question in the survey focused on whether respondents agreed their behaviours / actions had changed or were changing in relation to a range of aspects addressed at the Forum. Table 3 shows the behaviours / actions and responses. Again, responses indicated positive reflections and change, in relation to most statements. The lowest response was in response to the question about increased confidence about advocating for a young person in this cohort.

Table 3: Thinking about your role in this space, please indicate your agreement with the following statements by finishing the sentence:

I am.....

	YES	NO	NOT SURE	NOT APPLICABLE	(NO LABEL)	TOTAL
even more conscious about listening to and involving young people in decision making, including in policy and procedures	90.91% 20	0.00% 0	4.55% 1	0.00% 0	4.55% 1	22
more willing to consider harm minimisation approaches	86.36% 19	0.00% 0	4.55% 1	4.55% 1	4.55% 1	22
trying to use non-blaming language when I talk with or about the issues for this cohort	100.00% 22	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	22
more confident about advocating for a young person in this cohort	86.36% 19	4.55% 1	0.00% 0	4.55% 1	4.55% 1	22
more confident about working with a young person in this cohort	72.73% 16	9.09% 2	0.00% 0	13.64% 3	4.55% 1	22
trying hard to ensure policies, procedures, practice guidance etc are relevant to working with this cohort	95.45% 21	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	4.55% 1	0.00% 0	22
using new and / or refreshed connections with people I met at the Forum	77.27% 17	18.18% 4	0.00% 0	4.55% 1	0.00% 0	22
hoping to present at a future forum about my / my organisation's good practice with this cohort	54.55% 12	22.73% 5	9.09% 2	4.55% 1	9.09% 2	22

The survey asked if there were other topics that could have been covered. Comments referred to how to more actively involve young people living in non-approved homes, meeting post care needs of young people who are living in non-approved homes when they transition from 'care', links with education and health, and working with particular cohorts of young people. A number of comments related to deeper discussion about supporting NGOs with risk management expectations when managing complex cases and severe risk, safety planning, and utilising harm minimisation.

When asked about 'next steps' that G-Force could take to drive systemic change included broadening the people involved in the conversation, more forums to bring together the range of stakeholders, a paper identifying key policy advocacy issues, advocating for changes in 'Child Safety practice' and the Child Safety Practice Manual, practice resources, and consideration of an 'end to end' process involving all stakeholder groups to identify gaps and opportunities for improvement.

Most focused on how good the Forum was, the value of involving young people, and that discussion occurred in a 'safe' space.