



## Welcome to the new and improved GForce newsletter

G-Force aims to share knowledge, practice, linkages and advice to practitioners and policy makers. Participation of children, young people and workers in the child protection system is vital to ensuring that children and young people have a say in the decisions that affect their life.

The newsletter will be providing GForce updates, news from the sector and interesting bits and pieces from [CREATE](#) young consultants.

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**Timely mental health assessment for young people  
Supported Independent Living Resource  
Priority access for care leavers  
Next Step After care**

**[Find out more >>](#)**



### **OPG video**

The video is aimed at supporting young people in care to better understand how the OPG can help.

**[Watch the video](#)**



### **New QFCC Commissioner**

**[The Queensland Family and Child Commission](#)** welcomed new Principal Commissioner Cheryl Vardon last month.

**[Find out more >>](#)**



### **My View**

Everyone knows one of the things that most teenagers hate is being made to feel different from everyone else; however this was exactly my experience of being a young person in care at school.

**[Read more >>](#)**

## **My View**

**Don't single us out at school because we are in**

## care!

G-Force is fortunate to have CREATE Young Consultants (young people with a care experience who share their experiences and advocate for their peers) as active members of the group to help discuss issues and drive the agenda. CREATE Young Consultant and G-Force member Ben Pearce recently picked up on this issue of young people in care being singled out at a school, sharing his experiences. **G-Force is committed to working with stakeholders across sectors to improve the educational experiences of children and young people in care and the group welcomes feedback on the issues highlight in Ben's story.**

### Ben's experience

Everyone knows one of the things that most teenagers hate is being made to feel different from everyone else; however this was exactly my experience of being a young person in care at school.

I remember going to a meeting at a new school at the start of the year with my new principal, deputy principal, year coordinator and the school guidance officer – this meeting was intended to welcome me to the school and discuss expectations of behaviour etc...

At the meeting I stressed that I did not want 'special treatment' because I was in care and I also didn't want other teachers and students at the school to know about my personal situation. The principal even stressed to me: "What's said in this room stays in this room". I walked out of the meeting thinking we had an agreement but I was wrong because within two days everyone at the school knew my situation. For me it wasn't so much the students knowing that I was in care, it was the teachers – always bringing it up, mothering me, always over my shoulder...

Sometimes the 'special treatment' had its advantages; extensions to assignments came in handy even when not needed! But at the end of the day, my trust with the school was broken and I didn't really have what you would call a 'positive' relationship with the school from then on. I graduated, but looking back, perhaps I could have got more out of the situation ...

This isn't just my issue. I have heard other young people raise it and I think it's something the education system and the child safety system needs to be more sensitive to.

**For more information please contact:**

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**GForce news**

## **TIMELY MENTAL HEALTH ASSESSMENTS FOR YOUNG PEOPLE**

Young consultant Catlin wants to see some changes to the mental health system and is currently working on a letter outlining some of her experience. GForce is interested in supporting the distribution of the information with additional information and resources linked to Catlin's experiences.



## **SUPPORTED INDEPENDENT LIVING (SILS) RESOURCE**

GForce is working on a 'SILS Works Well When...' resource that is currently being sent out for sector wide consultation.

## **PRIORITY ACCESS FOR CARE LEAVERS**

CREATE have been presenting to Regional Committees in an aim to raise awareness of Carmody Recommendation 9.1 (priority access for young people leaving care to government services in the areas of education, health, disability services, housing and employment services). CREATE is currently awaiting feedback from the Department of Housing and Public Works (DHPW) about an official statement regarding changes to their policies/processes with regard to young people maintaining housing and blacklisting.

## **NEXT STEP AFTERCARE**

The Next Step Aftercare Service is a collaborative project supported by [Life Without Barriers](#), [Uniting Care Community](#), [CREATE](#), [Integrated Family and Youth Support \(IFYS\)](#) and [Youth Empowered Towards Independence \(YETI\)](#) and funded by [The Department of Communities, Child Safety and Disability Services \(DCCSDS\)](#).

The concept of the service is identified below:

*With Next Step After Care you can get in touch with people who will try and help you sort out the things you're having trouble with, no matter how big or small.*

*How involved we get is totally up to you. So, if you've left care and you're under 21 don't be shy, give us a call or text 24/7, and we'll see what we can work out together.*

*And if you know someone who you think could do with some extra support you can call us to talk about how to help them too.*

Representatives from Next Step After Care recently presented at the QCOSS conference. Some highlights from the presentation include:

- currently just under 270 active Next Step clients
- rolling out an engagement strategy for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders and have hired a community facilitator
- receiving about 1-2 referrals per day.

## **BEROS - Service highlight**

The Brisbane Emergency Response Outreach Service (BEROS) is a collaboration between [Community Living Association](#), [Micah Projects Inc](#) and [Kyabra Community Association Inc](#) to provide service to young people 12 - 18 years who are in the care of [Department Child Safety](#), and who are identified as 'self-placing' or sleeping rough in the Brisbane region.



[Find out more >>](#)

Development of the GForce newsletter is a partnership between QFCC and CREATE as part of the G-Force working group  
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