



COMMUNITY
SERVICES

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U-Turn – Specialized Residential Services (MCFD & NWT) Annual Program Report 2022-2023

About us

PLEA has a long history of providing residential care services to young people within family settings in the community. The success of these services is due to our strong commitment to providing care that is based on the unique strengths, abilities, needs, and circumstances of each youth that is placed with us.

Our U-Turn program provides family care placements, supported by our staff teams for youth who have experienced limited success in other residential programs and face significant challenges in their lives. Although the reasons for youth requiring placements vary widely, every youth is provided with a safe, nurturing, and healthy family environment, and with the specific services they require.

U-Turn placements are typically planned and are long-term (i.e., more than 12 months in duration). Young people are referred to U-Turn by the Ministry of Children and Family Development (MCFD), the Department of Health and Social Services of the Government of the Northwest Territories (GNWT), and Aboriginal Delegated Authorities. We have families across Metro Vancouver and the Fraser Valley regions. We have been providing this service since 2003.

In collaboration with the referring authority and other service providers who are involved in supporting the young person and their families, we ensure that our services are consistently youth-centred, effective, and inclusive. For both programs we develop and implement comprehensive service plans with each young person that include their strengths, ideas, and interests, and are sensitive to their culture and life experiences. We work closely with the Family Caregivers we contract with, and value the significant time and energy they devote to providing for the day-to-day needs of the youth living with them. We have three teams who operate on an outreach model that maximizes direct engagement with the youth we serve, and ongoing support to our Family Caregivers. Our teams are based in Vancouver, the Tri-Cities and Surrey.

Charitable Registration
10781 0467 RR0001
bcgeu

Who we served...

(Inclusive of NWT and MCFD. See Appendix for a breakdown by funder).

PROFILE: NWT and MCFD	2022-23	2021-22	2020-21	2019-20	2018-19
# OF CASES	48	51	52	52	55
# OF YOUTH	48	51	52	51	55
% YOUNG WOMEN	40	31	35	35	35
% YOUNG MEN	52	57	63	61	63
% SELF IDENTIFIED AS TRANSGENDER	8	12	2	4	2
% SELF IDENTIFIED AS INDIGENOUS	60	61	65	65	60
AVERAGE AGE WHEN CASES WERE OPENED	13	13	13	15	14
AVERAGE # OF DAYS IN PROGRAM BY DISCHARGED CASES (N = NUMBER OF DISCHARGED CASES)	898 N=13	770 N=22	706 N=19	628 N=17	538 N=22

How we did...against last year's goals

- 1. Continue to provide opportunities for participants transitioning to adulthood ensuring that the aging out checklist is being completed and supporting to locate appropriate housing.**

The aging out checklist continues to be completed to help prepare youth transitioning to adulthood. This allows the care teams to identify the areas of focus to ensure that the participants have everything they require to be successful as adults. Two participants successfully transitioned out of care into independent living this past year.

- 2. To maintain the MCFD global contract at an average of thirty occupied beds for 2022-23.**

While the MCFD global contract had another successful year, the average number of occupied beds was just below thirty at 29 occupied beds for 2022-23. The capacity of the contract remained at 35

3. *Expand the photography program and skillset of staff and participants in completing new projects for 2022-23. Specifically creating new ideas for new projects.*

The photography program had another successful year as the cameras continued to be regularly utilized by participants throughout the past year. This was the fourth successful photography contest with increased participant engagement and the winner's photos being displayed at the Waypoint/U-Turn/U-Link office in Surrey. Other projects completed this past year included participant photos being used to complete holiday and appreciation cards as well as annual calendars that are distributed in December. While it was another successful year at maintaining projects that are already established, the program was not successful in developing new ideas. A focus going forward will be to create new ideas and contests for the photography program to continue to grow.

4. *To provide specific autism training to all staff and recruit at least one caregiver who can provide a specialized placement for youth with autism.*

Positive Behavioral Support training was provided to all the Service Coordinators to support them to establish strategies for a wider range of goals that the Youth Support Workers would work on. Goals for the upcoming year will include specific autism-related training for Youth Support Workers. There were many conversations with caregivers about providing a specialized placement for youth with autism, but one was not recruited this past year. Caregivers who had a youth placed in their home with an autism diagnosis continued to receive individualized training and support from Behavioral Consultants.

5. *To secure increased annual funding for the U-Learn program by applying for community grants.*

The U-Learn program was able to secure independent funding from a parent for their youth after the youth was discharged from their PLEA program. The program was also invited to participate in a research grant which would provide additional post-secondary supports to youth leaving care. Unfortunately, the grant was pulled by the funder due to changes in their administration.

6. *Expand the use of Knowledge Keepers and Elders specific to the Dene Culture to support the cultural and learning needs of NWT participants.*

The role of the PLEA Knowledge Keeper has been an integral part of all new NWT placements in the NWT programs to ensure that cultural plans are in place as part of preplacement. In addition, Charles Lafferty (PLEA Knowledge Keeper) has met specifically with all Service Coordinators to review the service plans for all youth and young adults to prioritize cultural service plan goals and assisting the care team with pragmatic goals and strategies. Charles has brought in other Elders and Knowledge Keepers to meet other specific needs within the programs.

7. *Continue to support annual events through the Multicultural Group to enhance understanding and inclusivity of all cultures.*

The Multicultural Group has shifted the priority to an educational focus and have shared various learning opportunities to the teams including Black History month, Diwali, and Chinese New Year celebrations. Some of the events have included educational performances (live theater production), online events such as *Okinum* which is an ode to reclaiming language and reconnecting to one's ancestors.

Selected accomplishments...

Proudest Moments of 2022-23

1. Working with a local sound studio (Paranoyd Sound Studio), the U-Turn Program (NWT and MCFD) have created their own music. The team has created opportunities for participants to write lyrics, download beats, and develop their own creative outlet through music. We hosted a Music Release Party where the song and music videos were showcased and debuted. This year it included a live performance by one of the participants.
2. Family visits have always been a part of our programming and goals. This priority and service goal has been greatly impacted by COVID as the travel and quarantine restrictions made it difficult to facilitate visits for our NWT participants. However, planning has commenced for many, and we recently facilitated two family visits back to the NWT.
3. Two NWT participants moved into independent suites within a caregiver home. The move to greater independence has been met with great pride in their new space and a tremendous sense of accomplishment.
4. We facilitated and supported regular local visits with biological families for several of the youth in our programs.
5. We celebrated 3 NWT youth graduations. Both proudly graduated with the support of their caregivers and care team.
6. Four youth successfully transitioned from the U-Turn program back to their biological families.
7. Two siblings remained placed together throughout the whole year after living apart in different programs for several years.
8. Two participants successfully transitioned to adulthood and moved into their own places to live this past year. Both are continuing to do well and reach out to the program when support is required.
9. Our MCFD global contract was maintained at 29 beds for 2022-23. 28 referral calls took place this year as the U-Turn MCFD global contract continued to be a program of preference for funders.
10. The U-Turn program continued to provide U-Learn Instructors for individual's needing academic support and planning. This is a valuable support to the program as many youth are very close to or are on schedule to graduate. 48 youth have been served including 18 from other programs (ONYX, Lighthouse, U-Link, Next Step and Genesis). While graduation is the goal of attending school, not all youth are eligible to graduate while in the program. The support of the U-Learn Instructors allows many youth to be on track and have the opportunity to graduate after transitioning from the U-Turn program. While in the U-Turn program the

U-Learn Instructors are available to work with the schools and ensure a suitable education plan is developed that will allow the youth the best opportunity to be academically successful. The U-Learn instructors work closely with the youth's care team to engage in comprehensive planning and support for the students.

11. Continued use of the cameras through the photography program as many youth are finding their passion for photography and developing a skillset for taking photos.
12. Continued to utilize community supports such as Behavioural Interventionists and Occupational Therapists for expertise on Behavioural strategies that can best support clients with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) that assist in more successful service planning and specific support to the care team.
13. Working directly with the Complex Care and Intervention Program, supporting all caregivers and staff connected to the youth in one of the homes.
14. Being able to provide in-person training events and celebrations again for our caregivers. In August, former youth in care Bryant Doradea aka Higher Knowledge came and spoke with our caregivers about his experiences being in care and aging out of MCFD. We celebrated our caregivers with our annual appreciation event in October and holiday event in December.

Selected stories¹...

1. This winter, a caregiver from our NWT program escorted her participants to Yellowknife for their annual family reunion. This event has now become a well-established tradition, enabling siblings to reunite with their immediate family members residing in different regions of the NWT. The youth eagerly anticipate sharing this occasion with their caregiver, fostering closer connections with siblings, aunts, uncles, and, on this trip, the opportunity to meet new cousins. We acknowledge our family caregiver's indispensable support in making this event possible each year.
2. When Peter came to U-Turn he was involved in the justice system and was spending a lot of his time with negative peer groups in his community. Once placed at his Caregiver's home his involvement with those peer groups decreased. Over time, Peter became very attached to his Family Caregiver and often confided in her for guidance. Over the next 4 years, Peter worked hard with his U-Learn Instructor and completed his high school education. During this time, he also completed his first year in a metal fabrication trades program. While in the program, Peter was employed several times, working in HVAC and metal fabrication. Peter was also chosen for a temporary employment position with the Museum of Anthropology, at the University of British Columbia, just prior to aging out. This position saw him living independently in the UBC residences and working in the museum with the artifacts. Once his time was complete there, Peter spent an additional two weeks in the field working for the museum, cataloging artifacts. On his 19th birthday, Peter's transition plan saw him move to government subsidized housing for youth transitioning out of care, where he continues to reside. Peter's caregiver took him on a holiday to Mexico, upon his 19th birthday, to celebrate all of his successes. Peter's plans include, continuing to work toward finishing his metal work certification at the British Columbia Institute of Technology, as well as, beginning his training to be certified in welding.

¹ Names have been changed to protect client privacy and confidentiality.

Feedback from Participants and Stakeholders...¹

From Youth:

1. "Education and understanding of life skills."
2. "I finally feel comfortable with talking to my caregiver(s) and team and I have found it easier to advocate and ask for what I need because of this".
3. "Learning new possibilities and ways of life. Got a lot of help during my time with PLEA".
4. "I finally am happy".

From Caregivers:

1. "After 5 years I think we found our sweet spot. We work well as a team!"
2. "The support from the SC and YSW"

From External Stakeholders:

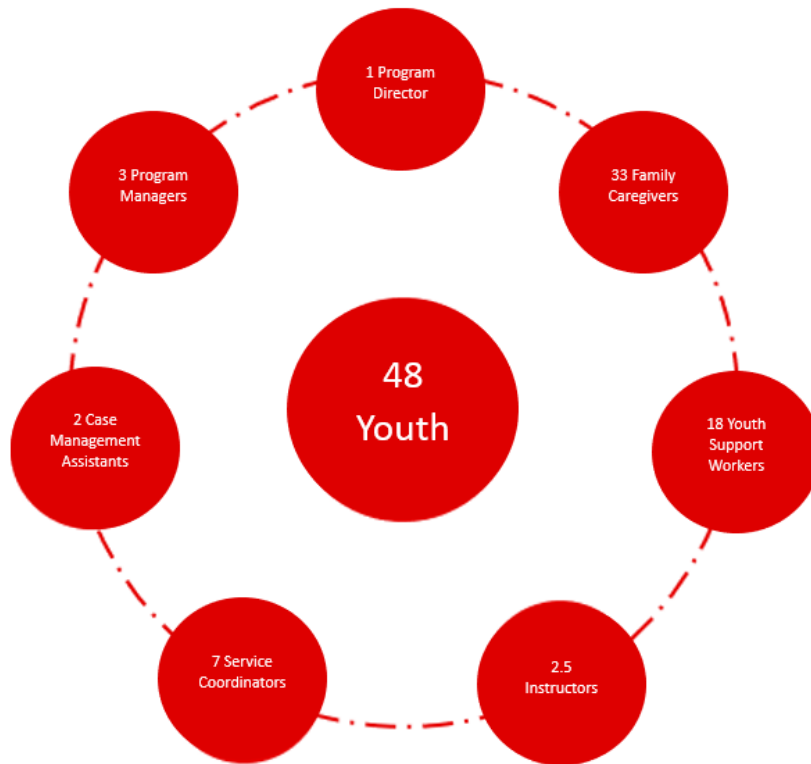
1. "92% would refer participants to PLEA again and want to continue working with PLEA".
2. "100% report that the U-Turn Program helps participants".

Biggest challenges...

1. Being able to offer the right caregiver and home for very complex youth coming from the Northwest Territories. Some of the referrals that we have received from the NWT are often beyond the scope and capacity of the U-Turn program.
2. Finding and approving new caregivers.
3. Providing qualified respite options for caregivers to help avoid burnout.
4. Limited available homes that can provide successful placements for youth with autism.
5. Limited available housing for youth transitioning to adulthood.
6. Lack of suitable staffed resource options available when a youth is no longer the right fit for a family caregiver model.

¹ Data was gathered from the 2022/23 Participant, Stakeholder, and Caregiver Survey.

Our team...staffing²



Our team...learning undertaken

- LivingWorks Suicide Prevention Training
- Trauma Informed Practice
- Vicarious Trauma Training - Strategies for Resilience
- Train the Trainer – Naloxone Training
- Attachment Training for the YSW team
- San'yas Indigenous Cultural Safety Training
- Indigenous Canada online training through the University of Alberta
- FASD Staff Training
- Mandt De-escalation
- Caring about Food Safety
- First Aid
- Privacy and Information Sharing
- Human Trafficking Awareness
- Medical Assistance Training

² # of individuals as opposed to FTEs as per March 31st, 2023

- CTRI Depression Practical Intervention Strategies
 - CTRI Trauma Strategies
 - Communicable Diseases
 - Cyber Strategies
 - Respectful workplace
 - Thinking about Children & Attachment
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- Building a Resilient Brain in the Face of Adverse Childhood Experiences with Dr. Chuck Geddes
 - Renting it Right (Parts 1 & 2)
 - Road Safety at work
 - ADHD The Real Deal Seminar
 - Alex Howard's Three Core Emotional Needs
 - Hilary Jacob, Emotional Education
 - Dr. Arielle Schwarts, Becoming Free From Dissociation
 - Dr. Nzinga Harrison, Comprehensive, compassionate approach to treating addiction
 - Dr. Gabor Mate, The Five Levels of compassion
 - Fentanyl Awareness
 - Naloxone Training

PLEA supported educational development:

- Bachelor's degree in social work
- 2 staff working towards their Masters Degree – Counselling
- 1 staff who completed their Bachelor of Arts in CYCC
- UBC Continuing Studies
- Provided practicums to BSW, BACYC, BA Criminology and Youth Justice students.

Our team...new and ongoing relationships

- Peter Jong – Aboriginal Elder and Carver
- Duncan Sangris - Dene Knowledge Keeper
- Asante Centre – Assessment Centre
- Little Buddies Occupational Therapy
- Happy Herd Animal Rescue
- Paranoyd Music Studios
- Friendly Landlord Network – Aunt Leah's
- Spirit of the Children – Support Programs
- WorkBC
- Triangle Employment Programs
- Elizabeth McWilliams- Hewitt – Behavioural Consultant
- Partnership training – PLEA and Foster Family Coalition of the NWT
- Ears Forward Coaching- Equine Therapy
- Complex Trauma Resources- Complex Care and Intervention Program

Next year's goals...

1. To increase the MCFD global contract average of occupied bed days from 29 to 30 for 2023-24.
2. To recruit at least two new full-time caregivers into the MCFD global contract.
3. To provide specific autism related training to the Youth Support Workers and recruit or develop at least one caregiver who can provide a specialized placement for youth with autism.
4. To include culturally relevant services and goals to every service plan for participants in U-Turn. This initiative will be supported by Knowledge Keeper – Charles Lafferty.
5. To continue seeking opportunities for additional funding for U-Learn through our current funder and grant applications.
6. For the U-Learn Instructors to utilize the Eden Autism Services curriculum to assess and support students with Autism diagnoses.

For more information...

Contact Tina Tomyk, Program Director at 604-616-1057 or email ttomyk@plea.bc.ca

Appendix – U-Turn By Funder

PROFILE: MCFD	2022-23	2021-22	2020-21	2019-20	2018-19
# OF CASES	40	43	42	40	40
# OF YOUTH	40	43	42	40	40
% YOUNG WOMEN	42	30	31	35	33
% YOUNG MEN	50	58	62	60	65
% SELF IDENTIFIED AS TRANSGENDER	8	12	7	5	2
% SELF IDENTIFIED AS INDIGENOUS	55	53	57	55	43
AVERAGE AGE WHEN CASES WERE OPENED	13	13	13	15	15
AVERAGE # OF DAYS IN PROGRAM BY DISCHARGED CASES (N = NUMBER OF DISCHARGED CASES)	832 N=11	731 N=18	486 N=15	501 N=14	614 N=16

PROFILE: NWT	2022-23	2021-22	2020-21	2019-20	2018-19
# OF CASES	8	8	9	15	14
# OF YOUTH	8	8	9	11	14
% YOUNG WOMEN	25	38	33	36	50
% YOUNG MEN	63	50	56	64	50
% SELF IDENTIFIED AS TRANSGENDER	12	12	11	0	0
% SELF IDENTIFIED AS INDIGENOUS	88	100	100	100	100
AVERAGE AGE WHEN CASES WERE OPENED	12	11	11	11	15
AVERAGE # OF DAYS IN PROGRAM BY DISCHARGED CASES (N = NUMBER OF DISCHARGED CASES)	1258 N=2	947 N=4	1305 N=3	1222 N=3	1113 N=4

PROFILE: U-LEARN	2022-23	2021-22	2020-21	2019-20	2018-19
# OF CASES	70	81	71	70	68
# OF YOUTH	68	79	69	64	62
% YOUNG WOMEN	30	33	29	30	31
% YOUNG MEN	63	61	65	67	69
% SELF IDENTIFIED AS TRANSGENDER	7	6	6	3	0
% SELF IDENTIFIED AS INDIGENOUS	69	6	70	67	71
AVERAGE AGE WHEN CASES WERE OPENED	18	18	17	17	17
AVERAGE # OF DAYS IN PROGRAM BY DISCHARGED CASES (N = NUMBER OF DISCHARGED CASES)	711 N=27	931 N=34	428 N=13	293 N=22	512 N=23