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Lighthouse – Licensed Family Care Annual Program Report 2022-2023

About us

Lighthouse is a three-bed agency-supported family care residential resource for youth aged 15-18 (inclusive) who are in care of the Ministry of Children and Family Development (MCFD). Lighthouse is a licensed home through the Fraser Health region.

The program provides short to medium term placements, 6–24 months in duration (or longer with MCFD approval), on a planned basis. The resource has been operational since 2018.

Since 2020, Lighthouse has supported youth with moderate to complex needs which has opened the door to support more youth across the North Fraser region. The hybrid model with two beds for high-risk youth upstairs and one bed downstairs for transitional/life skills support youth has been successful.

Lighthouse continues to support youth who have experienced limited success in other residential programs and face significant challenges in their lives. The emphasis remains on promoting safety and security within the home. It provides opportunities for youth to learn life skills, make appropriate community and cultural connections, positively engage with peers, attend school or actively engage in employment programs. In addition, youth are supported in participating in their local community as well as to navigate and access adult services.

The aim is to ensure youth are supported in family re-unification or equipped to transition out of care. Several youth have transitioned back to their family homes, moved onto Youth Agreements or transitioned out of care onto independent living. In addition, Lighthouse works closely with the U-Link and U-Turn programs to transition youth based on their supervision and support needs. This allows youth to be supported in the most appropriate care setting possible while staying within the PLEA network of resources.

www.plea.ca

Who we served...

Profile	2022-2023	2021-2022	2020-2021	2019-20	2018-19
# of cases	7	8	5	7	11
# of youth	7	8	5	7	8
% young women	28.57	62.50	60	0	12.50
% young men	28.57	25	40	100	87.50
% self-identified as transgender	42.86	12.50	0	0	0
% self-identified as Indigenous	14.29	25	20	14	12.50
Average age when cases were opened	15.57	15.75	16	16	17
Average # of days in program by discharged cases (N= number of discharged cases)	121.50 N=4	237 N=5	263 N=2	151 N=5	142 N=5

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

- 1. Continue to support practicum placements and Summer Student Grants to promote strong relationships with post-secondary establishments and increase potential staff recruitment.**

Lighthouse hosted 3 practicum students. One was from the CYC Degree program from Douglas College, one was from the Youth Justice Diploma program at Douglas College and one was from the CYC Diploma program at Douglas College. Lighthouse supported a practicum student completing their degree in Criminology from UFV one day week while they also did practicum hours in the U-Turn program. Lighthouse employed a summer grant employee through the Canada Summer Grant program.

- 2. Lighthouse will align program purpose and services with the MCFD Pillared Care System. Lighthouse will focus on low-barrier short-term stabilization care that provides a safe environment for youth who are experiencing a crisis and/or breakdown of their living environment and work on preparation for transition back home or to a new living arrangement.**

Lighthouse supported several youth who required a low barrier resource to meet their immediate needs and provide safety and security. Lighthouse supported the U-Link and U-Turns programs to transition youth over to Lighthouse and from Lighthouse as their supervision needs changed to ensure continuity of care within PLEA programs. One youth was able to return home with their mom after 6 months of stabilization at Lighthouse.

- 3. Increase the casual on call list up to 10 people to ensure adequate coverage and support in the home.**

At the end of this fiscal year there were 7 casual on call employees with a potential of 3 more casual on call employees joining the team in April 2023.

- 4. Recruit new Respite Family Caregivers to support Lighthouse on weekends and holidays.**

Lighthouse recruited two new respite caregivers to support Lighthouse. One is a former PLEA employee, and one was recruited via the primary Family Caregiver at Lighthouse. Lighthouse has three respite caregivers that rotate weekends which has maintained appropriate weekend coverage and has ensured the primary Family Caregiver has breaks.

- 5. Have staff and Family Caregivers engage in specialized training to address specific needs of youth being placed at Lighthouse, specifically around Autism and Positive Behavioural Support.**

Lighthouse staff have been trained on an individualized positive behavioural support plan for a youth at Lighthouse where they worked in collaboration with a Behavioural Consultant. Additionally, support has been available within the PLEA network to ask specific questions regarding the plan and its implementation in practice at Lighthouse. As Lighthouse has supported two youth this year with Autism diagnoses, Lighthouse has become more familiar on how Autism funding works and was resources are available to young people.

- 6. Create a garden in the backyard space to promote teachable life skills and sustainable practices.**

Lighthouse staff supported a youth in assembling two garden boxes placed in the backyard. The youth planted herbs and pumpkin seeds and were supported in caring and maintaining the garden throughout the summer months. Youth were able to use the items they grew from the garden in the meals they cooked at Lighthouse.

- 7. Focus on specific life skills development such as cooking, grocery shopping, laundry, budgeting money, applying for employment and accessing adult services for youth working towards independent living or aging out of care as appropriate for their needs.**

Two Lighthouse youth have turned 17 while living at the resource this fiscal year. They have both been connected to Youth Transition Planning services and started the process with CLBC for post-19 funding and services. One youth attends Adulting 101, a program run by the PLEA Maple Ridge Youth Services team to teach young people about life skills, prepare for independent living and aging out of foster care. This program has supplemented this young person's leaving and development as they prepare for independence. Lighthouse has focused on cooking skills, booking appointments, taking public transportation, acquiring all required identification, managing personal care and hygiene, opening bank accounts and work/volunteer experience to develop independent living skills and ensure a smooth transition out of Lighthouse or aging out of care.

Proudest Moments of 2022–2023

1. One youth was able to connect and engage with their birth family and birth culture. This included reaching out to extended family overseas and developing relationships via social media. Additionally, this young person was supported to learn and engage in their culture through cooking, getting books from the library, learning the language and using their traditional birth last name.
2. The Family Caregiver at Lighthouse has celebrated five years working with PLEA and supporting young people at Lighthouse.
3. One youth attended Putting on the Glitz and was able to obtain a prom dress as well as graduation accessories for their upcoming graduation from high school in Spring 2023.
4. Lighthouse supported three youth who identified as transgender. This provided the opportunity for staff and caregivers to become more educated on gender identity, sexual orientation and gender affirming care. The Lighthouse team has become more comfortable using different pronouns and advocating for youth in community to ensure pronouns, chosen names and gender identity are respected, acknowledged and celebrated.
5. Bed utilization continued to increase. The bed utilization rate was 98% for this fiscal year.
6. Lighthouse supported a Canada Summer Jobs Grant Student from June 2022-August 2023. The summer student was hired as a Regular Full Time Youth Care Worker and shortly after a Regular Full Time Youth Support Worker in the U-Link program after the summer grant contracted ended.

7. Lighthouse hosted three practicum students (all three from Douglas College) who supported the program and service goals of individuals at the house. One Douglas student was interested in employment with Lighthouse but did not hold a driver's license and was not eligible for employment. The two Douglas practicums are currently ongoing at the time of this report but will be eligible to apply for employment upon completion of their practicums.

Madison's Story¹

Madison came to Lighthouse after breakdown with their family and suffering a traumatic brain injury from self-injurious behaviour. The initial plan was for Madison to return home to their family, but the relationship was not able to be repaired and they were brought into care under a Continuing Custody Order.

Upon Madison's arrival to Lighthouse, they required significant care from staff to maintain their personal hygiene due to their injuries. They were very quiet and struggled with changes in their daily routine. It took some time for them to open up, but Madison has since formed strong bonds with Lighthouse's Family Caregiver and staff. The Lighthouse team fostered Madison's growing independence by showing them how to make their own counselling, dental, and doctor's appointments, opening the right bank account for their needs, and taking public transit to and from outings in community. Madison regularly attended the Gen Out! program to engage with their local LGBTIA2S+ community and meet other youth that may have similar experiences. To broaden their interests, they were also connected with a KidStart Mentor and a Youth Development Worker. They were interested in reconnecting with their biological family but struggled with a fear of rejection. The Lighthouse staff and care team located extended family on social media and staff provided emotional support in crafting messages back and forth. Madison is set to graduate high school at the end of this year and will be looking for volunteer or work experience in the summer.

Overall, Lighthouse ensured that Madison received gender-affirming care and supported them in attending all their medical, dental, gender clinic, counselling, and neuropsychological appointments.

Challenges

1. There are two shift lines in the Lighthouse staffing module that are challenging to hire for and retain staff in. These shift lines tend to have high turnover as they are over the weekend and overnights/evening.
2. The needs of the youth continue to become more challenging and require additional wrap around services to implement behavioural support and safety plans appropriately and sustain placements. Youth increasingly being referred to Lighthouse have complex concurrent diagnoses and there aren't always appropriate community services available to support their needs. Specialized training for the Family Caregiver and Youth Care Workers continues to be a priority to ensure best practice and exceptional service.
3. As the house ages, maintenance and upkeep continue to be an ongoing issue and an increased cost.
4. At times, very little notice is given that a youth is transitioning out of Lighthouse. This has been challenging for some youth to adjust, allowing for enough time to appropriately wrap up service and adequately prepare for a move. Additionally, there are challenges in properly developing comprehensive transition plans that set the youth up for success in their next placement when the timeline of placement changes.

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

Our team and learning²

Our team has been involved in the following learning activities:

- MANDT De-Escalation
- Livingworks Suicide Prevention
- Naloxone
- The Village Workshop
- Positive Behavioural Support Training
- MCFD Privacy Training
- Caring About Food Safety
- Trauma-Informed Practice
- Gender Pronoun Training
- Preventing Communicable Diseases
- Cyber Security
- Respectful Workplace Module
- Medication Assistance Online
- Addictions Basics & Addiction Specialized Training
- University of Alberta Indigenous Course
- ICS Sanyas Course



Relationships

- No Frills Pharmacy
- Care Rx
- Fraser Health Authority
- Maple Ridge Foundry
- Greg Moore Youth Centre
- PLEA Yardworks
- Maple Ridge School District
- Central Addiction Intake Team
- Aler Landscaping – Employment Partner
- BC Federation of Youth in Care Network
- Representative for Children and Youth
- Ridge Meadows Association for Community Living

Next year's goals...

1. Continue to support practicum placements and Summer Student grants to promote strong relationships with post-secondary establishments and increase potential staff recruitment.
2. Lighthouse will begin to implement the MCFD Pillared Care System. Lighthouse will focus on stabilization and transition planning to assist youth in being able to move on from low-barrier short term care into longer term living arrangements.

² # of individuals as opposed to FTEs as per March 31st, 2018

3. Increase the casual on call list up to 12 people to ensure adequate coverage and support both at Lighthouse and in other staff resources across the agency.
4. Focus on comprehensive short-term transition and discharge planning for Lighthouse youth.
5. Support the development and training of new Youth Care Workers who will support other staffed resources in the agency.
6. Have staff and Family Caregivers engage in Positive Behavioural Support and Autism training to address specific needs of youth being placed at Lighthouse.
7. Identify volunteer or work opportunities (including work incentive) for youth with barriers to job readiness or employment to better equip the youth transitioning out of Lighthouse with financial support and independence.

For more information...

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