Appendix 1

Who I visited:

Organisation:	People:	Focus of work:
CREATE Foundation Brisbane www.create.org.au	Sofia Guglieri, Lauren Shephard, Rox MacDonald and Samantha Brigden	Advocacy Organisation that focuses on Youth Advisory Groups to gather systemic voices to feed into systems change. They also have paid Young Consultant roles that a number of young people have moved on from into permanent staff members.
Brisbane Youth Service Get Involved - Donate and Change lives | Brisbane Youth Service	Jenny Penton	Support young people on the brink of homelessness. Have a range of paid opportunities that are flexible to fit the client group.
Gemma Vennebals and colleagues including Laura Simpson Reeves and Social Work Team and memorably Karina Maxwell.	Social Work Studies department, The University of Queensland,	Shared research questions and discussed their research, had some fascinating insights from an Aboriginal researcher about the wider context and a reading list that set me up for the rest of the trip.
Youth Advocacy Centre www.yac.net.au	Anna Gambiroza and Hayley Frew	Strong and established model of paid Youth Consultants
CREATE Foundation Sydney www.create.org.au	Christopher Braddock, Tasha Reynolds, Rachel Metz, Monia Maamer,	Advocacy organisation with clear pathways from Speak Up Training to being paid Young consultants and staff now in paid permanent roles that have come through that route.

Appendix 1

Who I visited: Australia

Organisation:	People:	Focus of work:
Centre for relational care www.centreforrelationalcare.org.au Sydney	Sophi Bruce CEO	A growing community of individuals and organisations who are committed to the fundamental reform of child protection and out-of-home care
Stepping Stone House, Sydney Stepping Stone House	Jason Juretic CEO and Rebekah Modernel	Provides accommodation and personal development to help homeless and at-risk youth. They have a paid Youth Advocates programme.
Anglicare Victoria www.anglicarevic.org.au Melbourne	Jonathon Cummings Andrea Dwyer Irina Stojcevska and Jasmin Malham	Anglicare Victoria works with children, young people and families. We prevent harm and empower people to overcome challenges and achieve their full potential. Strong model for progression and creating bespoke care experienced voice roles in the core staff team.
Monash University Social Work Studies Researchers Melbourne. Social Work home - Department of Social Work	Phillip Mendes, Jacinta Waugh and Jade Purcell.	Array of research around care experience and outcomes. Jade Purtell has a strong background and knowledge in employment models and voice roles.
Bridge It! Housing provider Bridge It – We support young people to find their way home Melbourne	Kate Mackenzie	Housing project for young women. Opportunities for residents to build up paid employment opportunities around voice and also have a lived experience mentor.
Transitions from Care Team, Children and Families Division www.dffh.vic.gov.au	Crystal Cartwright and Catherine Gibson and team	Ground breaking work at creating partnership working and co-designing and delivering transition support for care leavers across Victoria.

Appendix 1

Who I visited: Australia

Organisation:	People:	Focus of work:
OPEN Outcomes, Practice and Evidence Network (OPEN) Outcomes, Practice and Evidence Network - OPEN	Dr Mandy Charman, Sarah Ryan, Karalyn Davie and Maddy Dowling.	OPEN fosters the sharing of practice experience, research and evaluation to achieve better outcomes with children, young people and families.
Y-Change Berry Street	Shakira Branch, Emilie Cuinn and Kirra Horley	Y-Change is a social and systemic change platform for young people aged 18 to 30 with lived experiences of socioeconomic disadvantage. As lived experience Consultants, the team works to challenge the thinking and practices of social systems through advocacy and leadership.
Brothers of St Lawrence Home | Brotherhood of St. Laurence	Joe Howie and team	A social justice organisation working to prevent and alleviate poverty across Australia. Their youth and adult transitions work is grounded in an advantaged thinking approach and they have a range of paid opportunities for care experienced young adults.
UC Change, New South Wales Youth Consult for Change | Communities and Justice	Elicia Dotty	A lived experience paid consultative group for the Department of Communities and Justice New South Wales
Children and Young People's Commission Victoria, Melbourne CCYP | Recognising, respecting and defending the rights of children and young people	Nikki Simmons and Jason Manning	Interesting model across all demographics of young people to have a term in a part time paid role after being a young consultant and an internship model for those that are ready for more stable employment.

Appendix 1

Who I visited: Australia

Organisation:	People:	Focus of work:
Centre for Relational Care	Emily Hikaiti Emily Hikaiti | LinkedIn	Works freelance and hands a range of roles as a lived experience speaker. Began her career as a Young Consultant at CREATE
Churchill Fellow researching kinship care links.	Damon Martin Damon Martin | LinkedIn	A Churchill Fellow from Australia looking at kinship links for children in care. A fluent Maori speaker with a real interest in how children can be supported in the most culturally relevant way once in care.

Appendix 1

Who I visited: Autroea, New Zealand

Organisation:	People:	Focus of work:
VOYCE Auckland Home - VOYCE - WHAKARONGO MAI	Gabriella Guy Head of insights and impact and wider team	VOYCE – Whakarongo Mai believes every young person is a taonga. They help tamariki and rangatahi in care to live with the aroha, safety and respect they deserve. They support young people to have their voices heard, their needs met, and their rights upheld.
NZ Researcher Oranga Tamariki, Wellington, New Zealand	Dr Iain Matheson	Researcher in care experienced young people in New Zealand
Oranga Tamariki – Ministry for Children	Rhiannon Newcombe	Experience in setting up and supporting young influencer style roles.
Pillars New Zealand Children of Prisoners | Pillars Ka Pou Whakahou	Tuhi Lead	Organisation that supports families and children of those that are incarcerated.

Appendix 1

Who I visited: Vancouver, British Columbia, Canada

Organisation:	People:	Focus of work:
McCreary Centre Society, Vancouver	Dr Annie Smith and Evelyn McGowan	McCreary Centre Society is a non-government not-for-profit committed to improving the health of BC youth through research, evaluation and community-based projects.
Home | McCreary Centre Society Society for Children and Youth of British Columbia About Us - Society for Children and Youth of BC	Stephanie Howell	Their aim is to improve the well-being and resilience of children and youth in BC through the advancement of their civic, political, economic, social, cultural and legal rights.
The Vancouver and area network of drug users VANDU – The Vancouver Area Network of Drug Users	Site visit (asked for names to not be shared)	A grassroots democratic organization of drug users with over 3,000 members; the Vancouver Area Network of Drug Users has had and continues to have considerable impact on public policy and practice related to the use of illicit drugs.

Appendix 2

The organisations I visited and their models:

Australia:
Youth Advocacy Centre, Brisbane, Queensland: Youth Ambassador Program Over the last 18 months, they have developed 15 roles for youth ambassadors. When they launched this program, over 70 young people applied. They took care in the recruitment process to make sure that successful applicants were in a position to take on the roles, while offering other opportunities to those who were unsuccessful. There is a strong relational element to the roles and the framework through which the young people are supported and engaged: they meet monthly for a two-hour session and complete work in between. They have received training on safe storytelling, leadership, politics, and advocacy, as well as attending a cultural day. When selecting candidates, they ensured representation across a wide range of experiences and cultural backgrounds. Within the group of 15, there are representatives with lived experience of youth justice, the mental health system, the housing system, identity and culture, domestic violence, and exclusion from education. There is a rich breadth of living, lived, and intersecting experiences within the group. Young people receive vouchers or gift cards for their time, and clear ethical guidelines govern all the work they undertake internally and externally.
CREATE's Youth Advisory Group, Queensland This is an unpaid monthly group, not dissimilar to Children in Care Councils in the UK. The sessions are held online—given it is a 14-hour drive to the state border—to make them as accessible as possible to as many young people as possible. Attendees receive vouchers for their time, and if they complete all three levels of the SpeakUp training alongside the group, they become eligible to apply for paid Young Consultant opportunities. At the beginning of each session, an acknowledgement of lived experience is held alongside the Acknowledgement of Country (a standard practice in Australia to acknowledge the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples as the traditional custodians of the land). They then review their Team Charter, which was co-written by the young people. The YAG minutes are taken by an advocate who records direct quotes, and there is a clear pathway for these minutes to be forwarded to relevant departments.

Appendix 2

The organisations I visited and their models:

Australia:

UC Change Paid Consultants for the New South Wales Government:
These roles are available to 16- to 21-year-olds transitioning out of home care who have care experience. Successful candidates serve a two-year term, and members can submit an Expression of Interest to extend for an additional six months to mentor the incoming cohort. There are two paid posts available. The UC Change consultants meet 11 times a year to facilitate internal and external consultations, completing 54 consultations last year. They are placed on the payroll and invoice the New South Wales Government for their time. Strict ethical frameworks govern the role to maintain confidentiality, ensuring no names appear in published reports. They have worked on various campaigns and programs, including foster care recruitment, residential programs, and speaking at conferences. Over the two-year period, the group also selects and delivers a self-directed project to drive change. The group co-authored a powerful collective commitment with their team leader, Alice, whose role includes guiding them back to these principles to maintain safety, boundaries, and systemic impact. The collective commitment emphasizes honesty, transparency, and clarity. Meeting the UC Change consultants made it clear that they fully understood their role and were immensely proud of their accomplishments over the preceding 20 months. Many reflected on how the experience built their confidence alongside transferable workplace skills for the future.

CREATE Model in Sydney, NSW:
They run Speak Up Training and employ a range of paid Young Consultants who have completed all three levels. They also piloted a ring-fenced internship program that the current team inherited mid-way through. Following key learnings from the pilot evaluation, future iterations will offer 1–3 young people flexible hours led by their own capacity over a 3–6 month period, with dedicated cultural support and training. These placements will specifically target Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people.

11 YAGs per year.
Speak Up Training
6 connection events.
Specific projects for Young Consultants are paid, and candidates submit Expression of Interest forms for work.

Appendix 2

The organisations I visited and their models:

Australia:
CREATE NSW Australia is also leading an internal project for and with care-experienced permanent staff members, some of whom progressed from the Young Consultant route. The organization wanted to gather insights from staff on how to foster a culture where employees feel valued, heard, and included, and how to improve as an employer. They are undertaking a four-stage process of learning and reflection. I was honored to attend the Stage 1 meeting with lived-experience staff from across Australia. Stage 1: Empathise and build foundations – group reflections, optional individual interviews, and wider staff surveys. Stage 2: Analyse key challenges and needs. Stage 3: Out-of-the-box solution generatin (“blue-sky thinking”). Stage 4: Define operational parameters and refine concepts into tangible solutions. Present recommendations and solutions to the executive team. It is important to note that lived experience is represented at every level of the organization, and the CEO is open about her own care background.
Raising Expectations Mentoring Programme: Piloted in Victoria and now being rolled out across New South Wales, this program pairs young people in care with trained, supported, and paid mentors who also have care experience. Participants spoke positively about their experiences on the program. (Check email from Crystal and add more detail if needed)
Stepping Stone House, Sydney: Stepping Stone House is a residential home providing wraparound support and mentoring. They place a strong emphasis on outdoor education, running several camps a year to build relationships, confidence, and life skills. They offer four 4-day/3-night camps annually, alongside an aftercare camp for 24- to 30-year-olds. They take great pride in offering paid positions for young people to work as Young Advocates at $25 per hour. This is one of several pathway options available to young people. Key features include:

Appendix 2

The organisations I visited and their models:

Australia:
Stepping Stone House, Sydney (continued): · A youth-friendly information booklet explaining the role (including consent and media consent forms). · 1-on-1 check-ins with Emma, the Psychologist, to reflect on boundaries regarding what they feel comfortable sharing in the role. · An onboarding process that evaluates current readiness; if the role feels too demanding, alternative opportunities are offered. · "It's vital that young people give informed consent and do not feel pressured or manipulated, as the role involves public speaking and sharing personal stories." · Testimonies are presented in NSW Parliament to advocate for policy and legislative reform—a process that successfully helped extend care to age 21. · A strong relational model offering support that tapers up to age 25, alongside light-touch engagement up to age 30 (e.g., check-ins, event invites, and birthday cards). · A graduation ceremony celebrating completion of the program. 52% of care leavers are in employment 6 months after completing the program.
UC Change, New South Wales, Australia: Youth Consult for Change (UC Change) was established in 2016 as a consultancy group composed of young people with experience in out-of-home care (OOHC). The purpose of UC Change is to advise and support the Department of Communities and Justice (DCJ) in continuously improving practice across NSW. Consultants draw on their lived experiences and knowledge to provide strategic advice and constructive feedback to the Department, ensuring DCJ's services remain responsive to young people's needs and actively promote their wellbeing. The panel consists of 7 members serving a two-year term. Up to 2 members can reapply to serve as mentors for the next cohort. Applicants must be aged 18–23. A robust, co-produced ethical commitment governs the group's work and is shared with visiting stakeholders; guidelines such as maintaining member anonymity in published reports have been added over time. The group meets for one paid session per month. Internal and external teams submit formal applications to consult with the panel. Each cohort also designs and executes an independent systemic project; recent outputs include a Placement Change Toolkit for young people, which has surpassed 1,000 downloads.

Appendix 2

The organisations I visited and their models:

Australia:
UC Change, New South Wales, Australia (continued): Members reflected on gaining workplace skills, self-assurance, and a proactive mindset: “If I can advocate for others, I can definitely navigate a job interview.” “We grew through our roles. Understanding out-of-home care from this perspective has been eye-opening, and I am excited to see younger voices come through in future generations.” “It inspired me to pursue a role like the coordinator’s and to see similar groups established across Australia and internationally.”
Anglicare, Melbourne, Victoria: Anglicare created a dedicated lived-experience role crafted in close collaboration with the employee. The program manager emphasized that establishing such positions requires complete buy-in across all organizational levels. Jas Malham served as a Young Consultant at CREATE for two years before “aging out.” Reflecting on the transition, she noted: “At the time, it was difficult—it felt like leaving family behind.” She subsequently progressed into a Traineeship at Anglicare, completing a Diploma of Community Services. Supported by career development coaching and mentor supervision, Jas now works as a Development Coach and Advisor. Her mentor helped her navigate boundary-setting, deciding which aspects of her personal story to share when acting in different professional capacities. “I went through significant adversity, but I am now here serving as a youth coach.” Jas’s manager recognized that her lived experience brought unique demands alongside her core duties, such as requests to speak on national panels and in the media. To accommodate these requests while maintaining her primary casework, Anglicare restructured her post into a hybrid role (3 days youth voice advocacy, 2 days direct casework). Her manager underscored the importance of recognizing this emotional load, noting that lived-experience staff are often asked to perform high-visibility tasks rarely expected of senior personnel. “I highlight issues at a strategic level higher than typical for my grade, but I remain conscious of that balance. When working directly with young people, I ensure I am fully present in their space.”

Appendix 2

The organisations I visited and their models:

Australia:
Anglicare, Melbourne, Victoria (continued): A dedicated division within Anglicare focuses on creating paid employment pathways for care-experienced youth (linked to the Home Stretch initiative). They maintain an ambitious vision, securing paid internships at major events like the Australian Open and Formula One. The initiative focuses on raising aspirations and building professional networks, recognizing the structural barriers faced by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people. They have also established a Leadership Academy to enhance vocational skills. Key takeaways from Anglicare highlight their commitment to relational practice embedded from executive leadership down. By maintaining a clear purpose, care-experienced staff are employed at all organizational levels. They have established structured career pathways tied to formal qualifications alongside community-based employment opportunities.
Bridge It, Melbourne: Visit to "The Cocoon" The Cocoon is an innovative semi-supported housing model for 16- to 21-year-olds offering an 18-month lease. Each resident receives a studio apartment in a high-quality facility with wraparound support, providing 18 months of formal tenancy history to assist future housing transitions. The physical space is thoughtfully designed with communal lounges, kitchens, and artwork emphasizing care, trust, and respect. Amenities include a residents-only lounge, open access to wellness items, and a wardrobe of brand-new donated clothing. The ethos is rooted in person-centered, strengths-based working and "Housing First" principles (originally developed in Ireland), which assert that safe, stable housing is a prerequisite for addressing trauma, relationships, or employment. Staff operate as "Care Coordinators" rather than "Case Managers," maintaining a relational "no wrong door" approach. Independence skills are built collaboratively ("with, not for" young people). A paid lived-experience Mentor provides 1-on-1 and group support anchored in trauma-informed relational practice. Additionally, Bridge It runs The Butterfly Programme, comprising three progressive modules that unlock paid opportunities. For example, completing Module 1 enables residents to earn income by guiding visitor tours of communal areas (excluding private studios). Module 2 qualifies residents to facilitate paid peer groups, while Module 3 opens opportunities in fundraising and media representation. Residents also have access to wellness coaching sessions led by a qualified therapist. A paid Lived Insight Advisory Group meets fortnightly, offering young residents compensated opportunities to inform organizational strategy.

Appendix 2

The organisations I visited and their models:

Australia:
Bridge It, Melbourne: Visit to "The Cocoon" (continued) As an early-stage initiative (having supported two cohorts), Bridge It prioritizes working at the young person's pace. Unlike traditional models like Foyer (which mandate immediate engagement in education or employment), Bridge It allows young women time to establish safety first. Despite this flexible approach, 80% (28 of 35) of residents have voluntarily engaged in education or employment during their tenancy.
Transitions from Care Team, Children and Families Division, Melbourne: Operating at a strategic policy level, this team commissions providers, monitors implementation, and reviews funding outcomes. Strong relational practice and mutual respect define their voluntary sector partnerships, ensuring care-experienced youth voices are embedded at the core of strategic operations. They established a Ministerial Youth Advisory Group to guide the departmental extension of out-of-home care beyond age 18. Operating under formal board governance guidelines, the group has a defined Terms of Reference and a Co-Chair supporting the Minister to maintain balanced power dynamics. The 10 members are compensated as sessional board employees. Recruitment evaluates candidate readiness, with comprehensive pre-, mid-, and post-session support provided by the Co-Chair. Members serve two-year terms (up to a maximum of four years), representing diverse care settings (kinship, foster, residential), LGBTQ+ identities, regional locations, and cultural backgrounds. The structure includes four annual ministerial meetings preceded by four pre-briefing sessions (eight total), currently scheduled during school holidays. Each meeting is followed by a confidential group debrief, with optional 1-on-1 debriefs available upon request. Peer mentorship naturally occurs, with experienced members supporting newer participants. An unexpected positive outcome of the onboarding process is that members receive support in securing official identification documents—a frequent structural barrier for care leavers. For example, one member completed their citizenship application through the role, enabling them to progress to university education. In partnership with CREATE, the department also established a Youth Expert Advisory Group (YEAG) for the Home Stretch initiative. Composed of care leavers aged 18–25, the YEAG provides policy recommendations. Departmentally funded, the group is facilitated by CREATE, while the Brotherhood of St Laurence delivers workforce development training anchored in their Advantaged Thinking framework.

Appendix 2

The organisations I visited and their models:

Australia:

Transitions from Care Team, Children and Families Division, Melbourne (continued):

Guided by a Terms of Reference and Team Charter, members co-design policy and practice guidelines while building professional skills.

The co-designed services demonstrate the impact of embedding care leavers at the heart of strategic planning:

Better Futures: Employs Development Coaches to support pathway planning grounded in Advantaged Thinking. Flexible Home Stretch funding assists young people across five core developmental pillars. Originally piloted in April 2019 with 250 participants, the model became universal up to age 21 in April 2021, supporting over 5,500 young people last year following workforce-wide training in Advantaged Thinking.

Home Stretch: Provides flexible funding tailored to individual goals or residential care needs. The department encourages providers to apply creative funding solutions aligned with young people's expressed aspirations (e.g., funding driving lessons or vehicle purchases).

The YEAG produced accessible animations explaining care options, contributed to staff training, and supported a community of practice.

Many YEAG alumni have successfully transitioned into paid professional roles, including lived-experience positions, coaching roles, and board memberships.

The tripartite partnership between the Government, CREATE, and the Brotherhood of St Laurence offers clear role delineation, driving systemic momentum, social capital, and expanded networks for young participants.

New YEAG members complete a joint induction with all three partner organizations before receiving formal Advantaged Thinking training and ongoing mentorship.

An annual joint evaluation allows members and partner organizations to review and refine the delivery model.

Members serve a two-year tenure with an optional one-year extension (up to three years total). Extending the tenure preserves built trust, skills, and group rapport. The Brotherhood of St Laurence subsequently created a permanent, full-time Lived Experience Officer post to establish a long-term career progression route for YEAG alumni.

Key operational learnings emphasize the need for adequate funding and careful support to assist lived-experience professionals in balancing bold advocacy with professional boundaries.

Appendix 2

The organisations I visited and their models:

Australia:

Y-Change, Berry Street, Melbourne:

Established 10 years ago, Y-Change employs care-experienced young people as Young Consultants. The current team comprises six consultants supported by two full-time Lived Experience Engagement Workers and a Project Manager. The recruitment process begins with introductory training workshops open to any care-experienced young person to assess fit before committing. Consultants are employed via part-time or sessional contracts based on individual circumstances and project needs.

Piloted in 2006 with a focus on systemic advocacy, early evaluations highlighted the emotional toll on consultants and the need for structured exit pathways. In contrast to the initial unpaid training model, consultants are now fully paid for all induction and training activities (including media training, self-care, ethical storytelling, team retreats, and relationship-building). Compensation models are structured competitively: casual employees receive a higher hourly rate without leave benefits, while part-time employees hold a contracted 7.6 hours per week, with flexibility to adjust contract types as personal needs evolve.

Insights from a care-experienced Youth Engagement Worker at Berry Street emphasized psychological safety:

“Organizational culture and genuine relationships are foundational.”

“Participants are processing live experiences; conflict and repair will occur, often offering young people their first experience of constructive resolution. We must support them through discomfort and create a safe environment where processing can be complex. Progress moves at the speed of trust.”

“We acknowledge our power as permanent staff and actively seek opportunities to share that power.”

“We recognize diverse forms of participation, valuing creative expression alongside verbal contribution.”

“Training covers public speaking, facilitation, media engagement, and systemic advocacy frameworks.”

“We validate anger while teaching strategic advocacy. We help channel raw emotion into targeted, effective systemic influence.”

“Having shared lived experience builds credibility. Systemic change requires intentional, structured effort.”

“We regularly review our practice against core principles, adapting approaches that require improvement.”

Ethical concerns regarding public story-sharing led staff to rethink narrative exposure. Projects are now designed to convey key insights and calls for systemic reform without requiring young consultants to disclose personal identities.

Appendix 2

The organisations I visited and their models:

Australia:
Y-Change, Berry Street, Melbourne: - In Our Own Right: Co-designed by lived-experience staff alongside survivors of sexual violence, this resource focuses on practical guidance for service improvement rather than personal disclosures. - Incorporates multi-modal, creative engagement techniques (e.g., visual art and resource drafting) alongside conversational methods. - Established a reciprocal mentoring program across Berry Street, pairing senior executive leadership with lived-experience consultants.
Brotherhood of St Laurence, Melbourne: The organization embeds the Advantaged Thinking approach across all youth services, internal operations, staff appraisals, and strategic planning. This framework shifts organizational culture away from deficit/risk-focused paradigms toward strengths-based practice anchored in the 7 Tests of Advantaged Thinking: Focusing on constructive language, understanding individual strengths, using coaching methodologies, and supporting positive risk-taking. Advantaged Thinking is also applied to drive sector-wide reform, supported by a dedicated practice team that establishes shared terminology across staff and service users. A care-experienced staff member noted: “Having someone believe in my potential enabled me to believe in myself, unlocking a career pathway.” Staff also reflected on the limited number of progression roles and the complexity of managing professional boundaries (“wearing multiple hats”). BSL employs four Youth Advisors (sessional/casual) and one Senior Advisor (who serves a second year mentoring incoming cohorts). Advisors engage in project and event planning over a 12-month tenure, starting with an intensive onboarding phase before moving to a flexible 3-hour weekly commitment. Anchored in the Advantaged Thinking concept of “The Deal,” the role transparently balances organizational investment with clear expectations, focusing on candidate goals and networks. HR processes were streamlined to reduce barriers, replacing formal applications with telephone check-ins, video submissions, and supported interviews. A 3-month offboarding phase assists members in wrapping up projects and planning future career steps.

Appendix 2

The organisations I visited and their models:

Australia:

Commission for Children and Young People, Melbourne:

An independent statutory body funded by the government to safeguard children and young people and promote systemic youth participation. They achieve this through a combination of paid opportunities for children and young people:

Youth Council: Open recruitment via their website for 20 positions serving a 12-month contract (renewable for a maximum of 2 years). The group includes diverse background experiences beyond out-of-home care. Members attend weekly drop-in sessions alongside six-weekly in-person meetings, invoicing monthly hours via board honorarium stipends.

1. Youth council with an open recruitment through the website. 20 places. They are on a 12 month contract for a maximum of 2 years so it gives a chance to review it after 12 months. They are not all care experienced as want a mixture of lived experience. They have a weekly drop in they can attend and every 6 weeks it's in person. They invoice monthly for their hours as a honorarium as a board member would.
2. Ring-fenced Roles: Three dedicated positions operating on 18-month contracts (0.5 or 0.6 FTE) structured to support external study and work readiness.

Work centers on structured scrutiny: gathering broad youth perspectives, questioning decision-makers, and issuing formal recommendations.

"The 18-month internship model acts as a catalyst for growth. To support progression beyond the contract, we actively partner with universities and employers to secure follow-on opportunities."

Appendix 2

The organisations I visited and their models:

New Zealand:
Oranga Tamariki, New Zealand: 1. Youth Advisory Group: Targeted at young people aged 18–25 and established in partnership with VOYCE Whakarongo Mai. - Meets monthly. - Drives an independent work program. - Guided by clear strategic priorities. - Members receive external professional supervision. - Composed equally of sector professionals and care-experienced young people. - External stakeholders can apply to present topics via a formal consultation request process. - Commitment includes 1 day per month plus a 2-day quarterly workshop. Delivered in person, workshops focus on co-designing advocacy toolkits, engagement strategies, and self-care practices. Full-Time Lived Experience Roles: Designed as a career progression pathway for alumni of the Youth Advisory Group.

Appendix 2

The organisations I visited and their models:

Canada:
McCreary Centre Society, British Columbia, Canada: 1. Provincial Youth Advisory Group: Advises the Ministries of Health and Education. Paid participation model, with full coverage for auxiliary barriers (e.g., travel and transport expenses). Hosted on university campuses to offer members early exposure to higher education environments. Features a monthly meeting schedule with a strong focus on inclusive onboarding for a diverse cohort. Key deliverables include co-producing the "A–Z of Vaping" public health campaign following survey research into youth nicotine use. Sessions balance core project deliverables with structured social activities. 2. Youth Health Ambassador Programme: Operates province-wide to gather diverse youth perspectives on public health topics. A network of approximately 40 ambassadors opt into 4- to 6-month projects based on interest and availability. Offers paid commitments ranging from 4 to 16 hours per month based on capacity. 3. Youth Research Academy: Operating for 30 years, the Academy recruits a cohort of 10 care-experienced young people on 10-month contracts (two 4-hour shifts weekly). Members receive training in qualitative and quantitative research methodologies, statistics, and survey design, contributing to commissioned projects and a longitudinal study on care leavers. The longitudinal study tracks over 400 care-experienced individuals across the province over a 7-year period (starting at age 18), utilizing bi-annual compensated surveys to produce an annual research report. To address barriers faced by Indigenous researchers transitioning out of the Academy, long-term ring-fenced research posts were established to offer sustained, flexible employment.

Appendix 2

The organisations I visited and their models:

Canada:
McCreary Centre Society, British Columbia, Canada (continued): Alumni interviews conducted 6 months post-program inform continuous adjustments to working hours, skill-building components, and career planning support. Research findings directly inform innovative community solutions. For instance, identifying pet ownership as a major barrier to attending distant medical appointments led to the creation of “Paws for Hope”—a co-located veterinary and human medical practice. Similarly, data highlighting low swimming proficiency among care leavers prompted the creation of the “Swim to Survive” summer program, providing free accessible swimming instruction.
Vancouver Area Network of Drug Users (VANDU): VANDU is dedicated to improving the lives of people who use drugs, their families, and the broader community. It is a democratically governed organization with an annually elected board. Community members can join upon completing a membership form and two orientation shifts. Members attend weekly Monday morning meetings to register for paid stipend shifts, which include board participation, project planning, and administrative duties under a structured punctuality policy.

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