

Home Stretch WA

YOUTH PARTICIPATION PLAN RECOMMENDATIONS

Written by:

Home Stretch WA Lived Experience Consultants with allied executive support from the Home Stretch WA Community of Practice backbone team.

The *Youth Participation Plan Recommendations* is a list of youth participation expectations by young people in Home Stretch WA, outlining key action areas and responsibilities of the Home Stretch Community of Practice, Service Providers and the Department of Communities. This is part of the continuous improvement plan or *Youth Engagement Plan*, which is obligated for reviewal by young people and Department of Communities every 12 months to meet the needs of young people in Home Stretch WA, and ensure they have a permanent role in the system as a group of supported, independent and diversely represented voices.

Acknowledgement of Country

Acknowledging the Traditional Owners of the land on which we meet and work. Paying our respects to Elders past, present and emerging.

A further appreciation for the young people in and work with the Home Stretch WA program that bring their wisdom, resilience and strength to the work Home Stretch WA and Lived Experience Consultants do, reminding us how important the work is.

A Commitment to Aboriginal Young People and their Families

Aboriginal people have a fundamental right to self-determination. Wherever possible, Aboriginal led organisations should deliver the Home Stretch WA program for Aboriginal young people and their families.

Every Aboriginal community and their circumstances are unique in WA. Local Aboriginal young people, families and community leaders are best placed to determine the right approach to delivering the program in their community.

Communities and Home Stretch WA commits to ensuring the voices of Aboriginal young people, families, community leaders and elders are elevated into everything we do in the Youth Engagement Plan. We also commit to the vision that young Aboriginal leaders should be nurtured and invested in.



Creating safe spaces for Lived Experience



Home Stretch gives young people spaces to be involved and speak about choices that impact them. While the values help workers create these spaces, these guidelines help inform practice. It also helps young people understand what safe lived experience work looks like. It is also important to acknowledge and value the impact of OOHLC Lived Experience, which continues to drive the work of Home Stretch.



Safety & Wellbeing

- Respect the rights of people to own their own story.
- Only share what you are given permission to share.
- Avoid referencing names but be transparent with relevant and appropriate information.



Personal & Community Boundaries

- Mindful of Lived Experience's personal, professional and community boundaries.
- Avoid tokenistic behaviours (e.g, using young people purely for their hardships or media).
- Do not bring up personal connections if the lived experience has not given permission to discuss.
- Do not make assumptions about lived experience and their insights.



Sharing Lived Experience

- Actively listen & create meaningful dialogue.
- No disempowering or invalidating lived experiences.
- Acknowledge diversity and omission of experiences within group (no tokenism).
- Understand ways which trauma and experiences can impact lived experience staff.
- Ensure practices are trauma informed (e.g, the appropriate training and skills).



Flexible Ways of Working

- Understand that lived experience have social factors which impact them, so flexibility is important in ways of working. This supports them to achieve their goals and work effectively which is important.
- There's no "one way" of working with lived experience, offering multiple supports and resources is respectful, helpful and creates impactful work.
- Breaks are okay! They help with the mental and physical costs of lived experience.

Introducing Home Stretch WA Community of Practice's Lived Experience



The Home Stretch WA Community of Practice employs paid Lived Experience Consultants to support the establishment and continuous development of the program. The consultants support in many key areas of the program such as monitoring and evaluation, governance and decision making, communications and, community and advocacy opportunities. Lived Experience Consultants are independent agents of social change, drawing on their OOHLC lived experience and sometimes learned experience. Below are the current team of consultants.



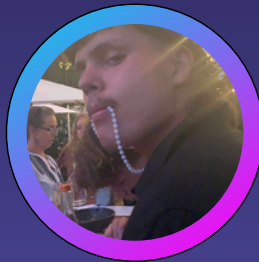
Tyler

Multiple projects, HSWA Trial, YAGs, Planning, Meetings and Resources



Bailey

Advocacy, YAGs, Training Videos and Meetings.



Jett

Videos, YAGs, Meetings and Advocacy



Brayden

Justice Projects, Advocacy, Meetings, Resources, YAGs



Kat

Resources, Training, Advocacy, Data, Framework, Meetings and M&E.



Darcy

HSWA Trial, Meetings and Advocacy, Evaluation Framework



Averil

Marketing /Communication, Meetings and Videos



Bree

Recruitment Project, YAGs, Meetings, and Advocacy



Shelley

HSWA Rollout, Training, Monitoring and Evaluation, Resources, and YAGs



Chris

HSWA Trial, Program Design, Advocacy and YAGs

Introducing Home Stretch WA Lived Experience Consultant's Working Partners



The Youth Engagement Plan will be shared between the Department of Communities, service providers, young people working in the Community of Practice, and young people being supported by Home Stretch WA providers.

The current and future youth participation in Home Stretch WA, works in partnership with the Anglicare and Department of Communities as part of Community of Practice.



Andy



Vanessa



Colleen



Robyn



Michelle



Anthea

Community of Practice Backbone Team:

- Providing Lived Experience with allied executive support.
- Informing young people of opportunities within Home Stretch.
- Giving Lived Experience support (trusted persons).
- Supporting voices of Lived Experience within both Home Stretch WA and OOHC system.
- Following the Youth Engagement Plan.

Department of Communities:

- Providing Lived Experience with information to inform decision making and review progress.
- Informing young people of opportunities within Home Stretch WA.
- Giving Lived Experience safe spaces for dialogue, decision making and advocacy.
- Supporting voices of Lived Experience within both Home Stretch WA and OOHC system.

Lived Experience Consultants

Walking & Working Together Meetings

The Lived Experience Consultants have had ongoing meetings with Department of Communities called “Walking and Working Together” to establish transparent, accountable and empowering dialogue between young people and the department.

The main focus has been: the Youth Engagement Plan Review and the next steps. This is to ensure that lived experience voices in Home Stretch WA are maintained once the Community of Practice backbone team is no longer there. Other issues have been raised to the department by the consultants such as, Waitlists & Demand, Training and Advocacy.

Walking and Working Meetings Focus Areas

Ongoing Dialogue with Department

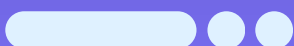
- Walking and Working Together expectations; being EQUAL Partners, department having transparent dialogue with young people, accountability to the current YEP and empowering young people to participate in Home Stretch WA and its continuous improvement.
- Department and consultants to follow up on any actions and where they sit.

Youth Engagement Plan

- Lived Experience Consultants have reviewed youth engagement since beginning of year. The collated feedback of the Home Stretch lived experience young people, including consultants, has been supported by the allied executive support of the Community of Practice backbone team.
- As a team, the consultants have created a draft recommendations and will have ongoing conversations with department on how the future of youth participation and engagement might look.

Next Steps

- Discussion of next steps for the Youth Engagement Plan (Youth Participation Plan), and any ongoing actions or feedback.



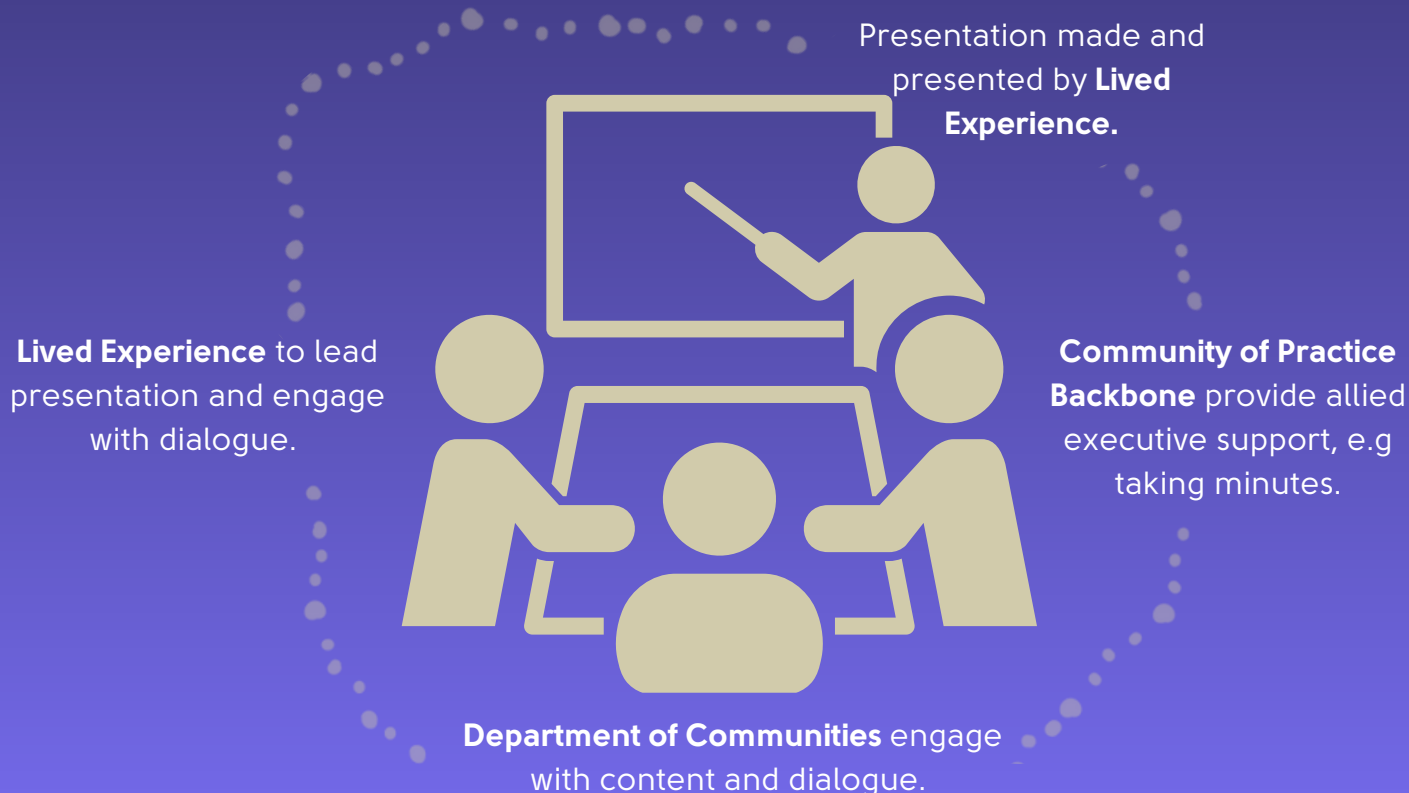
Lived Experience Consultants

Walking & Working Together Meetings

Consultants chair and lead the discussion, while being mindful of the agreed agenda and giving fair speaking opportunities by all.

The general structure of meetings have been to discuss the following:

- How to work with Lived Experience.
- Purpose of Youth Engagement Plan and its' Review.
- Updates and actions by Lived Experience Consultants and Department of Communities.
- Youth Participation Plan Recommendations.
- Next Steps.



Youth Engagement Plan

What is it? What does it do?



The Youth Engagement Plan is co-authored by Lived Experience Consultants/service users from the Home Stretch WA program and the Community of Practice. Below is the purpose of the Youth Engagement Plan and what it is supposed to do.

HSWA Model Integrity

1 Young People Voices

Provide a platform for young people to remain at the centre of planning and implementation of Home Stretch in Western Australia (WA).

2 Youth Engagement

Ensure all stakeholders understand how young people will be involved in the Home Stretch WA rollout.

Details how young people will contribute to and shape the program as it rolls out across the state.

3 Accountability & Ownership

Ownership of the plan is supposed to be held by young people and lived experience consultants, to hold the system accountable as an equal partner in Home Stretch WA.

Lived Experience EQUAL PARTNERS

Plan Review

What is it? Why is it important?



This is part of the continuous improvement plan or *Youth Engagement Plan*, which is obligated for review by young people and Department of Communities every 12 months to meet the needs of young people in Home Stretch WA and ensure they have a permanent role in the system including having support, remaining independent and being diversely represented. The review holds everyone accountable to young people in Home Stretch WA's expectations.

The Review Purpose

- Review, rewrite, and hold stakeholders accountable to their responsibilities - to support young people in the Home Stretch WA program through an established lived experience voice.
- The program is designed by, with and for OOHC young people - most of its effectiveness is due to. Hence why its' permanency is needed.
- Young people and lived experience must continue as an integral part of the program - without it there is no Home Stretch WA, it becomes another program far from its model integrity and important ethos.
- The Youth Engagement Plan was written in conjunction with the communication strategy as Home Stretch WA was just being rolled out across the state. This was well over a year ago, much has changed as the program has started to become well established across the state.
- The plan needs to be in best interest of OOHC youth in and leaving the system.
- Ensuring that "trust happens when actions meet words".

Next Steps for the Review

- The Review has been completed by the Lived Experience Consultants, Department of Communities, Service Providers and Community of Practice backbone team. This recommendation document will speak to only the Lived Experience and feedback from young people in the program collated for the walking and working together with the department for youth participation current and ongoing.
- Department to read over the recommendations collated from the Lived Experience review.
- Department to share their recommendations.
- Recommendations to be presented to Home Stretch WA deciding body and any future funding considerations in partnership with lived experience consultants.



Youth Engagement Youth Participation

Home Stretch WA uses both youth engagements and youth participation to actively include young people in continuous improvement of the program. The program was created from and by the voices of young people with OOHC lived experience. Youth engagement and participation is important to understand, as both look different and have different purposes. To effectively incorporate both into Home Stretch WA, a part of the model integrity, below are some explanations and suggestions for Youth Engagement and Youth Participation.



Youth Engagement

Youth engagement refers to a wider scope of activities, which empower young people by involving them in their communities. These engagements are consultative or passive in nature and have a dynamic where workers are organising the activity and young people merely attend and have no decision making power on the activity chosen. When the activity has a consultative nature it is usually a set mechanism for feedback and the feedback is not instantly or ever fed back to the young people. Youth engagements are usually there for recreation or relaxation or connection for young people, rather than collecting the voices of young people. They are surface level youth involvement, usually to meet set key performance indicators rather than assess and collect information on the outcomes of the program or improve service design.

Examples include:

- Camps
- Events
- Consult groups



Youth Participation

Youth participation empowers young people by giving them opportunities to meet community needs through decision-making and informing delivery of services to the community. Young people can see that their actions have positive outcomes and learn skills to support their own and the wider community's development. Participation is a fundamental right. It is one of the guiding principles of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights that has been reiterated in many other Conventions and Declarations. To participate effectively, young people must be given the proper tools, such as information, opportunities, education about and access to their civil rights!

Examples of Youth Participation

- Governance groups
- Paid and employed roles
- Leadership, planning and facilitation of event and activities
- Creating youth-friendly resources
- Developing, delivering and contributing to training



A useful tool for measuring and understanding youth participation is the Hart's Ladder of Youth Participation (page 25).

What's the difference?

Youth engagement refers to a wider scope of activities, which empower young people by involving them in their communities.

While youth participation is focused on action taken by young people themselves, youth engagement also incorporates activities provided to young people in community settings.

Youth engagement can also lead to empowerment of young people, and may be a good stepping stone for getting young people into youth participation activities.

YOUTH PARTICIPATION RECOMMENDATIONS



Youth Participation Plan Recommendations

After the review of the Youth Engagement Plan, the Lived Experience Consultants gathered the key themes and drafted them into a set of recommendations. The review of the Youth Engagement Plan which formed these recommendations, is made up of the consultation from the following from January - August 2024:

Lived Experience and Home Stretch Participants

- Identified priority action areas & responsibilities.



Session with CCYP & Lived Experience Consultants

- Recommendations for the OOHC system.



Feedback from Home Stretch WA Providers

- Practice hour on youth participation and individual consultations.



Key Changes & Insights

Plan Name Change - Youth Engagement Plan to Youth Participation

Change to "Youth Participation Plan" as engagement felt too tokenistic or consultative. Young people to not be ad hoc consulted but genuinely, meaningfully, participate in Home Stretch and be empowered.

Lived Experience Roles

Required to complete activities, to be equal partners, and needed for a supported and ongoing function in Home Stretch.

Values & Commitment by Department

The importance of the department following the agreed values and commitment by them, as it is essential for making sure young people have an ongoing voice and the way youth engagement is practiced at Communities, Home Stretch and providers.

Clarification of Roles & Responsibilities

In addition to "Ownership of the Plan" and accountability, clarifying the roles and responsibilities is needed for when CoP backbone ends.



Youth Participation Plan Recommendations

From the review, a revised version of the values was suggested so that young people could understand their rights, as well as expectations of how the department and service providers should treat them.

Home Stretch WA

Commitment to Young People Values

Home Stretch gives young people spaces to be involved and speak about choices that impact them. The values help workers create these spaces. It also helps young people understand what they can do.

Empowerment

Young people are equal partners and have a meaningful voice in anything Home Stretch.



Transparency

Young people know what they can get in the program and get information about Home Stretch.

Accountability

Home Stretch WA is what it says it is. When young people feel it isn't what they were told, they are empowered to give feedback or complain to a trusted person or advocate.



Acknowledgment of Lived Experience
Voices of young people with OOHC lived experience continue to drive the work of Home Stretch.

The "Values" have been rebranded as the "*Commitment to Young People*" to build trust and action behind the values.

The use of youth-friendly language as the previous Youth Engagement Plan did not explain the values in a way the young people could understand.

Using simple images to convey meaning and won't make the document dated.

An acknowledgment of lived experience is important as it makes the document powerful and meaningful.



Youth Participation Plan Recommendations

The review also saw the importance of forming a general partnership responsibilities.

GENERAL PARTNERSHIP RESPONSIBILITIES

● **Lived Experience Consultants**

There is a permanent role in the system for a group of young people to be supported and paid as employed Lived Experience Consultants who are independent and diversely represented.

● **Department of Communities**

The Department has made a commitment to Home Stretch WA to deliver on its promise and continuously involve the voice of young people.

● **Home Stretch WA Service Providers**

Home Stretch Providers deliver the model with integrity and continue to involve the ongoing voice of young people.





Youth Participation Plan Recommendations

Following the general partnership responsibilities was the development of action areas, with further detailed outlines of what each partner's responsibilities are.



Governance & Decision Making Recommendations



Meaningful Lived Experience representation on governance groups for decision making for Home Stretch.

Objective: Young People Equal Partners

Young People

- Young people are sitting in governance groups.
- Representing multiple lived experience voices.
- Act in best interest of Home Stretch WA and the young people in it.
- Are an independent agents of social change.
- Being updated and reading HSWA information or data.

Department of Communities

- Department have pathways for meaningful youth participation in governance and decision making groups.
- Employing lived experience consultants.
- Adequate training and support for lived experience (staff and young people).
- Department keeps young people up to date with information and data regarding HSWA and Leaving Care space.

Service Providers

- Providers to encourage HSWA young people to engage and participate in opportunities for governance and decision making.
- Providers to work in partnership with lived experience.

Monitoring & Evaluation Recommendations



Lived Experience to participate in Model Health Checks, Success stories & outcomes, Home Stretch WA progress data and Feedbacks & Complaints.

Objectives: Model Health Check Participation, Young People Outcomes, Home Stretch Data and Feedback & Complaints.

Young People

- Lived Experience are sitting in Model Health Checks with providers.
- Young people have their success and outcome stories collected through youth engagement.
- Lived Experience are reviewing data on Home Stretch progress and reports.
- Feedback and complaints from young people are tracked.

Department of Communities

- Department fund Lived Experience so they can continue to model health checks.
- Department fund and support Lived Experience and Service Providers to engage with young people and collect data.
- Department will support engagements to be trauma informed and in community.
- Lived Experience and young people will have access to Home Stretch data they are entitled to. Department must practice this.
- Any feedback or complaints made by young people are taken seriously by the department and in collaboration with stakeholders.

Service Providers

- Providers will undertake model health checks with the Lived Experience Consultants.
- Providers collect important young person centred data.
- Providers provide young people with accessible feedback and complaints pathways and resources.

Community & Advocacy Recommendations



Young people having the opportunities and support to do advocacy and work in community, with an expressed need for peer mentor roles.

Objectives: Lived Experience leadership, Peer Mentor Roles, OOHCA Advocacy, Partnerships and Youth Engagement

Young People

- Lived Experience Consultants to actively participate in community and Home Stretch WA independently (with ally executive support where requested). This means leading events, meetings, advocacy, projects, media and sector partnerships.
- Lived experience will have multiple safe platforms, opportunities, and projects to work and inform.
- Young people and lived experience are Equal Partners throughout Home Stretch WA, with ongoing and open lines of communication.
- Young people will be engaged in activities and opportunities through Home Stretch WA, and have their experiences heard and validated.
- Lived experience will lead opportunities to connect in community.
- Lived experience will have multiple platforms to do OOHCA advocacy. These opportunities will be shared between many diverse lived experience, be trauma informed, meaningful and support collective lived experiences - rather than one, to avoid tokenism.
- Working in partnership with organisations but remaining an independent voice for young people.
- Young people to have adequate preparation, training and support to do advocacy.
- Lived experience to be employed in consultant and peer mentor roles to support Home Stretch WA and Leaving Care.
- Diverse representation of lived experience in peer mentor roles for partnerships to access to help inform policy and practice.
- Lived experience to lead peer mentor role development and roll out.

Community & Advocacy Recommendations Cont.

Department of Communities

- Department to fund lived experience to lead in community and Home Stretch WA as independent agents for social change.
- Department to be supportive of lived experience requests for ally executive support. Where this ally support to be provided is unknown at this point in time but will be the choosing of lived experience.
- Department to promote wherever possible and appropriate, lived experience leadership.
- Department to fund and be supportive of peer mentors and what it looks like from the lived experience and provider perspectives.
- Department to work collaboratively with peer mentors and invite them to relevant working groups to provide lived and learned experience to inform policy and practice in Home Stretch WA and Leaving Care.
- Department to fund and provide meaningful and trauma informed, well represented opportunities for young people to advocate lived experiences.
- Opportunities for advocacy will be clear pathways and not tokenistic.
- Department will work collaboratively with Home Stretch WA young people and lived experience staff.
- When advocating with department they will provide transparent information and process.
- Department will partner with independent lived experience consultants as a collective, to capture multiple voices of young people in Home Stretch WA.
- Department to fund lived experience to lead youth engagements with executive support from an ally.



Community & Advocacy Recommendations Cont.

Service Providers

- Providers will encourage, advocate and engage lived experience leadership by young people in Home Stretch WA.
- Providers to work collaboratively with lived experience and young people in community.
- Providers will have access to peer mentor roles to support Home Stretch WA workers and practice.
- Currently unsure if the roles will sit in providers or an independent agency of its own that they can work in partnership with.
- Providers will encourage, advocate, partner and empower Home Stretch WA young people to have their lived experience and successes acknowledged and heard.



Communications Recommendations



Young people will play an important role in communicating Service offer (e.g social media, youth friendly resources, infosessions), support training/workshops and develop useful resources for staff on employing and supporting lived experience.

Objectives: Communicating Service offer, Training/Workshops and Developing useful resources for staff on employing and supporting lived experience.

Young People

- Lived Experience Consultants to collectively help design, promote and facilitate useful resources for Home Stretch WA staff and Lived Experience on how to work in and with the lived experience space.
- Lived experience will have access to lived experience training and skills to support their voice in Home Stretch WA and OOHHC advocacy.
- Lived Experience Consultants and young people to help promote and facilitate youth-friendly resources, social media and other information for young people in Home Stretch WA so they understand what it offers.
- Lived Experience Consultants to be trained in Home Stretch WA information and run and attend workshops to help improve the program.



Communications Recommendations



Department of Communities

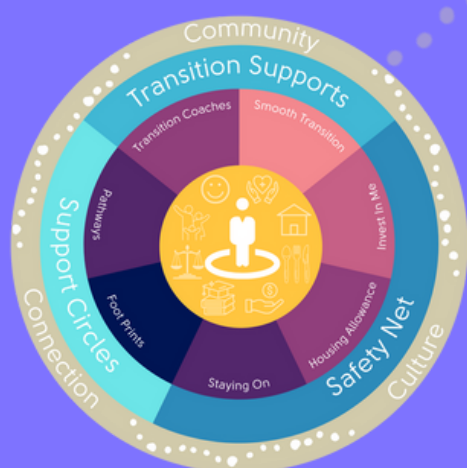
- Department will fund lived experience to lead, create and deliver resources.
- Department need to be trauma-informed and make lived experience resources accessible for young people doing lived experience work and advocacy.
- Department will work with lived experience as equal partners in communicating and presenting Home Stretch WA.
- Department will make sure Home Stretch WA is communicated in youth-friendly language to young people.
- Department will keep an open line of communication on Home Stretch and how its progressing with both young people in the program and lived experience.
- Department will fund lived experience to facilitate training and workshops to other lived experience, department and service providers.
- Department will support lived experience to develop and design projects for Home Stretch WA and Leaving Care.

Service Providers

- Providers can access and give feedback or information on how to work with lived experience.
- Providers to have access on lived experience resources for their young people in Home Stretch WA.
- Providers will use resources developed by young people and lived experience to inform themselves and young people on Home Stretch WA.
- Providers will have the opportunity to attend and comment on lived experience led training and workshops.

Youth Participation Plan Importance & Consideration

Home Stretch WA is designed to be young person centred and to include lived experiences to inform continuous improvement. The journey of young people can be often very different person to person, generation to generation. Leaving care is a difficult and different journey in its own right, mixed feelings about continuing to talk and work to all these workers, so we need to be setting up safe spaces for young people to express themselves and have confidence to do so within a community.



1

Commitment to Young People Values

The values give young people the right and powers to participate in Home Stretch and access information. This supports healthy program and community function.

2

Young People Advocacy Rights

There are a range of conventions, laws and standards that states young people have a right to share opinion with decision makers, be heard from them, and also get information from them.



Youth Participation Plan Advocacy Rights

Since Home Stretch WA's inception, young people have been respected and valued for their right to advocate and speak up on choices which impact them. Outside of this service design, there are a range of conventions, laws and standards that states young people have a right to share opinion with decision makers, be heard from them, and also get information from them.

RIGHT FOR YOUNG PEOPLE TO ADVOCATE:

National Principles of Child Safe Organisations

Principle 2: Children and young people are informed about their rights, participate in decisions affecting them and are taken seriously.

State & Territory-based Child Safe Standards

Dependent on kind of advocacy, your right to express your view and be heard may also be protected. It can be found in documents like the Charter of Rights for Children in Care.

United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child

Article 12(1): States parties shall assure to the child who is capable of forming his or her own views the right to express those views freely in all matters affecting the child, the views of the child being given due weight in accordance with the age and maturity of the child.

Article 12(2): For this purpose, the child shall in particular be provided the opportunity to be heard in any judicial and administrative proceedings affecting the child, either directly, or through a representative or an appropriate body, in a manner consistent with the procedural rules of national law.





Youth Participation Plan

Hart's Ladder of Participation

Hart's Ladder of Youth Participation is a Ladder where each ascending rung represents increasing levels of youth agency, control (adult agency) or power, needed for youth participation.

"The ladder was simply offered as a schema to help bring a critical perspective to a subject.. The most beneficial quality of the model has probably been its utility for helping different professional groups and institutions to rethink how they work with young people...Its simplicity of form and clarity of goals enable them to find a language to look at their current ways of working systemically, and in so doing, come up with something more complex and useful to their particular context."

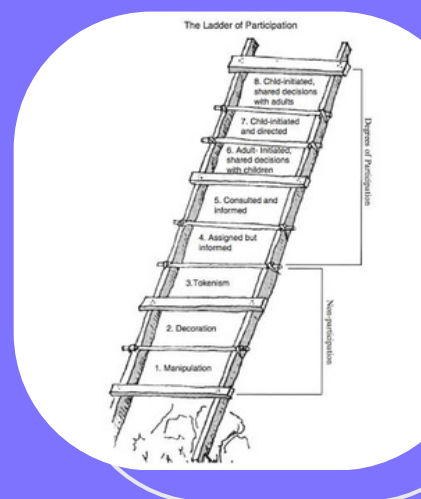
Roger Hart

Hart's Ladder of Participation in Home Stretch WA

Why use the Ladder? - to consider the way we are working together as youth and adults which is meaningful and impactful and to contribute to the outcomes and success of:

- Home Stretch WA Program.
- Young People's Rights & Community
- OOHC Youth (Leaving care and Post Care).

The ladder is used as an anchoring point in the work Home Stretch Community of Practice and Lived Experience Consultants do, reflecting before, during and after lived experience projects and events, to ensure that the work being done is meaningful and allows young people to participate genuinely.



Lived Experience Consultants are developing a resource relevant to the Home Stretch work to support this.

Glossary & Key Terms

Term	Description
Ally	An ally is a learned experience persons, group or organisation that supports the goals and objectives set by lived experience young people.
Allied Executive Support	Allied Executive Support is when an ally supports lived experience with requested executive and administration support.
In Community	Being in community means, having relevant current and ongoing knowledge on community and it's people through relationship building and lived experience.
Lived Experience Consultant	Lived Experience Consultants are independent agents of social change, drawing on their lived experience of the OOHC and sometimes learned experience to advocate and inform OOHC systems and services.
Peer Roles	Peer roles are those who draw on lived experience and learned peer skills to provide advice and support on navigating life and personal challenges for workers and peers.
Trusted Persons	A trusted person is an ally that a lived experience person chooses to support them while voicing their lived experience.
Values	They are a set of agreed values that all working partners should follow to ensure that young people in Home Stretch are empowered, able to hold people and systems accountable, and receive transparent information on the program.
Youth Engagement	Youth engagement refers to a wider scope of activities, which empower young people by involving them in their communities.
Youth Participation	Youth participation is focused on action taken by young people themselves as equal partners. It also incorporates activities provided to young people in community settings.

Lived Experience to lead presentation and engage with dialogue.

Presentation made and presented by **Lived Experience**.

Community of Practice Backbone provide allied executive support, e.g taking minutes.

Department of Communities engage with content and dialogue.

