

Support for young adults leaving foster care system

Patrycja Chrzanowska
PhD Candidate
Department of Applied Sociology
and Social Work
Faculty of Economics and
Sociology
University of Lodz, Poland

Timeline: transition from care system to independent life

- Age 16: choosing personal advisor, creating an IPP,
- Age 18 (19 if young adult study in high school or technical school): leaving care system,
- Age 21-22: Leaving system of sheltered housing (most dwellings are public),
- Age 25: official end of state support.

Process of self-empowerment - process of leaving child care institution

- Choosing a personal advisor (social worker, psychologist, educator, rarely a relative person);
- Creating the Individual Pathway Plan with personal advisor (scope of cooperation, pupil commitment to gain some qualifications, getting apartment and employment);
- Material, psychological and legal help.

Material, psychological and legal help for young adults:

1. Financial aid (different amounts dependent on period of living in the institution, assistance in the form of cash),
2. Equipment for apartment (financial or material help),
3. Provision for continuing education (in 2016 it is 516,6 PLN per month),
4. Above mentioned forms of help are supporting young adult in obtaining adequate housing, living and employment conditions.

Effective support is very important

Young people who leave foster care system are threatened by:

- Social exclusion,
- Poverty,
- Unemployment,
- Homelessness,
- Low level of education and professional qualifications,
- Helplessness in everyday life.

Informal support networks

- Other young people who left care system,
- Family members,
- Befriended families,
- Classmates,
- Volunteers,
- Founders,
- NGO's members.

Formal support networks

- Personal advisors,
- Social workers,
- Psychologists and educators of the care system,
- Municipal Social Welfare Center,
- Center of Social Benefits,
- Housing Departments of the municipal office,
- Career counselors,

Thank you for your attention.