

From: [REDACTED]
 To: [CYAA Review](#)
 Subject: Child and Youth Advocate
 Date: Tuesday, October 4, 2016 1:20:56 PM

To Whom it May Concern:

I was employed in the field of working with high risk youth for over 20 years and have had many occasions been in contact with the Child Advocate Office.

The **caseloads** they carry makes their ability to minister to the youth impractical. Often youth leave messages and they are not contacted for days. With street youth in particular this makes it hard to serve their needs as they often are no longer there when the call is returned. A crisis line in

the advocates office with an advocate to deal with emergent situations needs to be implemented .

Currently they only cover youth in care to the age of 18. If a youth under the age of 18, has left home they cannot get assistance with getting on social assistance, so they live on the streets and commit crimes to feed themselves,

Currently many social agencies count young persons to the age of **28 or 29 as "Youth" and child welfare provides services to youth until the age of 22**. Originally, this was initiated to help those who were attended post secondary education only, however, now it includes all youth even if

they choose to live on the streets. This creates many problems for the caseworkers in dealing with some of these youth, who have violent tendencies and demand support. I would recommend only food vouchers in small amounts (\$25) or better yet supplying them with restaurant food

vouchers to support them. **I believe a definition of youth needs to be clarified.** 16 year olds want the vote but we need to support them until they are 22. **I believe the original intent of support while attending school or working low paying jobs until they turn 22 was the correct**

one.

By providing youth as young as 16 with apartments paid for by the government, without having **successfully attended a semi independent living** program prior, we are setting many of them up. They are not ready to live independently and their apartments become a party zone, the youth

are then targeted by drug dealers, who move in and take over the apartment. Often costs for damages caused are covered by the apartment owners as the regional authorities take no responsibilities. This creates a large number of buildings who will not rent to youth adding to the

homelessness of the youth.

If a youth **refuses** to live in any form of group home/foster home setting then they should not receive support. They should be referred to the shelter system. **The number of shelter beds for youth needs to be increased and the number of staff on hand in the shelters** needs to be

increased. There should be **shelter beds available for those under the age of 18**, with only those under 18 allowed to attend. This would need to be verified by the crisis unit. Specific advocate caseworkers should be attached to these shelters.

Should you like to contact me:

[REDACTED]