

Young people in child protection and under youth justice supervision 1 July 2014 to 30 June 2018

The Australian Institute of Health and Welfare, October 2019

Research shows that children and young people who have been abused and neglected are at greater risk of engaging in criminal activity and of entering the youth justice system. This report aims to provide a better understanding of the characteristics and pathways for young people interacting with these systems.

This report uses data from the measurement period 1 July 2014 to 30 June 2018. The data, which links the Child Protection and Juvenile Justice National Minimum Data Sets from all Australian jurisdictions except NSW, relates to young people 10-14 at the start of the measurement period. During this time, 54,116 young people received child protection services and 8,112 young people received youth justice supervision.

The report finds the overlap between youth justice supervision and child protection services varied between jurisdictions, presumably due to differences in demographics as well as policies, procedures and practice. However, the rate ratios show that regardless of these variables, once a young person has contact with one of these systems they are more likely to have contact with the other. This may be because contact with one prompts contact with the other or because the needs of the populations are closely related. It might be both.

Key findings:

- 7.5% of young people who received child protection services also had some type of youth justice supervision.
- 50% of young people under youth justice supervision had received child protection services.
- 27% of Indigenous young people had contact with either child protection or youth justice supervision compared to 4.5% on non-Indigenous young people.
- Of the 14,802 Indigenous young people who received child protection services or were under youth justice supervision, 14% had contact with both systems compared with 4.9% of non-Indigenous young people.
- Overall young Indigenous people aged 10-17 are 17 times more likely to have received both youth justice supervision and child protection services than non-Indigenous young people.
- Of the 4,035 young people involved with both youth justice supervision and child protection services, 81% had received a child protection service before entering youth justice supervision.
- For those who had received child protection services across all jurisdictions, Indigenous young people were more likely than non-Indigenous young people and males more likely than females, to have also been under youth justice supervision.
- For those who were under youth justice supervision across all jurisdictions, Indigenous young people were more likely than non-Indigenous young people and females more likely than males, to have received a child protection service.
- 71% of females in youth detention had received child protection services compared with 50% of males. This pattern was similar for Indigenous and non-Indigenous young people.
- Those who were younger at their first youth justice supervision were more likely to have also received child protection services. 62% of 10 year olds at their first youth justice supervision has received child protection services; 11 year olds were most likely at 69% of first contact with youth justice supervision; and those aged 17 were least likely (27%).

The report can be found at <https://www.aihw.gov.au/reports/child-protection/young-people-in-youth-justice-supervision-2014-18/contents/table-of-contents>

