



KIDS
HELPLINE

INSIGHTS 2016

STATISTICAL SUMMARY
AUSTRALIAN CAPITAL TERRITORY

Insights into young people in Australia

Introduction

What is Kids Helpline?

Kids Helpline has been operating for 26 years and is Australia's only 24/7 counselling and support service for children and young people aged between 5 and 25 years.

Tertiary qualified counsellors provide free, private and confidential support via telephone, web chat and email. Telephone and email counselling is offered 24/7 and web counselling is available from 8am to midnight (AEST) seven days a week.

The service operates a substantial website with a diverse range of resources for self-directed help-seeking by children, young people and adults. In addition, support from Optus enables Kids Helpline to deliver an early intervention and prevention program in primary schools called *Kids Helpline @ School*.

Kids Helpline is a service of **yourtown** and is 70% funded by the community through **yourtown** Art Union ticket sales, donations and corporate support. The remaining 30% is funded through State and Commonwealth Government grants.

What this report is about and who it is for

This report is an appendix to *Kids Helpline Insights 2016: National Statistical Overview*. It provides summary data on Kids Helpline service demand and client concerns and characteristics for the Australian Capital Territory in relation to the 2016 calendar year. It will be of value to people working in social policy and research roles, journalists and others in the community who need to understand the current and changing help-seeking needs of children and young people in Australia today.

The *Kids Helpline Insights 2016: National Statistical Overview* and other related reports can be accessed at www.kidshelpline.com.au/reports.

Notes on data collection, analysis and interpretation

Substantial missing data in relation to a number of data collection fields, most notably remoteness and cultural background, undermine the reliability of data presented in a number of tables and figures in this report. This is compounded by the small size of the Australian Capital Territory subpopulation and the greater distorting influence of repeat contacts on frequency data in this context.

Please consult the Appendix of the *National Statistical Overview* for more detailed information on data collection, analysis and interpretation.

Where to get more information

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Service demand

Attempted and answered contacts

- In 2016, 6,883 of the 356,595 attempts made to contact Kids Helpline counselling service (or 1.9%) came from the Australian Capital Territory (ACT).
- Most of these attempts were made by phone (4,841) but also by web chat (1,506) and email (536).
- 3,850 of these attempts were answered by counsellors, corresponding to a response rate of 56%. This compares with a response rate of 51% across Australia.
- Note that when phone attempts are adjusted to exclude callers who dropped out before the 21 second mandatory wait message, the response rate for ACT phone contacts in 2016 was 67%.

Trends over time

- From 2014 to 2016 there was an overall increase of 45% in attempted contacts from the ACT across all media. Phone attempts increased by 40%, web chat by 47% and email by 87%.
- Across all media, response rates for the ACT increased from 56% in 2014 to 61% in 2015, but decreased back to 56% in 2016.

Table 1. ACT attempted and answered contacts – by medium and year of contact, with comparison to all states¹

Medium of contact	2014			2015			2016			% change in attempts 2014-2016
	Attempts	Answered	Response rate	Attempts	Answered	Response rate	Attempts	Answered	Response rate	
Phone										
ACT	3,450	1,994	58%	4,108	2,441	59%	4,841	2,615	54%	40%
All States	300,200	173,752	58%	290,767	169,802	58%	276,960	135,719	49%	-8%
Web chat										
ACT	1,022	405	40%	1,077	608	56%	1,506	699	46%	47%
All States	49,429	21,082	43%	43,464	24,115	55%	65,954	31,765	48%	33%
Email										
ACT	286	286	100%	244	244	100%	536	536	100%	87%
All States	18,832	18,832 ²	100%	15,886 ³	15,886	100%	13,681 ⁴	13,681	100%	-27%
All media										
ACT	4,758	2,685	56%	5,429	3,293	61%	6,883	3,850	56%	45%
All States	368,461	213,666	58%	350,117	209,803	60%	356,595	181,165	51%	-3%

1. The data presented in this table are sourced from KHL phone, web chat and email systems databases.

2. In addition to 18,832 emails received and responded to in 2014, 544 outreach emails were sent.

3. In addition to 15,886 emails received and responded to in 2015, 535 outreach emails were sent.

4. In addition to 13,681 emails received and responded to in 2016, 413 outreach emails were sent.

Who contacted the service

Demographic characteristics

- Kids Helpline counsellors recorded data in relation to 177,591 contacts from children and young people across Australia who were aged 5-25 years. State or territory information was available for 163,323 of these contacts, and of this subset 3,334 (or 2%) were known to be from the ACT.
- Table 2 shows the demographic characteristics of these contacts from the ACT and compares them with the characteristics of contacts from the rest of Australia where the contact's state or territory was known.
- Consistent with contacts from the rest of Australia, approximately seven out of 10 (72%) ACT contacts were female and just over half (57%) were aged 13-18 years.

- Compared with the rest of Australia, contacts from the ACT were:
 - more likely to be from culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) backgrounds and less likely to be either Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander or from a Caucasian Australian background, and
 - more likely to be living in Major Cities.

Table 2. Characteristics of Kids Helpline contacts 2016 aged 5-25 years – ACT and rest of Australia¹

Contact characteristics		ACT (N = 3,334)		Rest of Australia (N = 159,989)	
		n	%	n	%
Gender					
	Female	1,617	72%	73,154	72%
	Male	628	28%	27,505	27%
	Intersex, Trans & Gender Diverse	12	1%	1,052	1%
	Total	2,257	100%	101,711	100%
	<i>Unknown</i>	<i>1,077</i>		<i>58,278</i>	
Age group					
	5-12 years	270	13%	11,902	13%
	13-18 years	1,167	57%	49,017	55%
	19-25 years	610	30%	28,475	32%
	Total	2,047	100%	89,394	100%
	<i><26 but age unknown</i>	<i>1,287</i>		<i>70,595</i>	
Cultural background²					
	Aboriginal &/or TSI	6	1%	1,610	4%
	CALD	381	51%	13,183	34%
	Neither ATSI nor CALD	358	48%	23,795	62%
	Total	745	100%	38,588	100%
	<i>Unknown</i>	<i>2,589</i>		<i>121,401</i>	
Remoteness³					
	Major Cities	1,268	98%	42,773	72%
	Inner Regional	21	2%	11,905	20%
	Outer Regional/Remote	4	0%	5,060	8%
	Total	1,293	100%	59,738	100%
	<i>Unknown</i>	<i>2,041</i>		<i>100,251</i>	
Medium					
	Phone	2,525	76%	127,840	80%
	Web chat	614	18%	27,289	17%
	Email	195	6%	4,860	3%
	Total	3,334	100%	159,989	100%
Type of help-seeking					
	Counselling contact	1,501	45%	57,164	36%
	Information/Referral/Other contact	1,833	55%	102,825	64%
	Total	3,334	100%	159,989	100%

1. Where column percentages sum to more or less than 100%, this is due to rounding.

2. TSI = Torres Strait Islander. CALD = Culturally and linguistically diverse. ATSI = Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander

3. Remoteness classifications are adapted from the Australian Statistical Geography Standard (ASGS) used by the Australian Bureau of Statistics. See *Kids Helpline Insights 2016: National Statistical Overview* for more information.

Types of help-seeking

The Kids Helpline counselling and support service responds to two broad categories of help-seeking: those children and young people seeking counsellor assistance for a particular concern or problem (*counselling contacts*), and those seeking information, referral to other services, or some other form of non-counselling support, like general conversation or playful engagement (*non-counselling contacts*, also called *information, referral and other contacts*).

As shown in Table 2, 45% of contacts from the ACT in 2016 were seeking counselling support while 55% were seeking information/referral or other forms of support. ACT contacts were more likely to be seeking counselling support than contacts from the rest of Australia (45% c.f. 36%).

Demographic trends over time

Table 3 presents the characteristics of ACT contacts over the last three years to consider whether there have been noteworthy variations in the client group over the short term. Key observations from the data in Table 3 include the following:

- There would appear to be moderate variation in the characteristics of ACT contacts over the last three years, including:
 - a decrease in the proportion of female contacts and a corresponding increase in the proportion of male contacts
 - a decrease in the proportion of contacts aged 13-18 years and a corresponding increase in 19-25 year-olds
 - a substantial increase in the proportion of contacts known to be from CALD backgrounds and a corresponding decrease in contacts from a Caucasian Australian background, and
 - a increase in the proportion of contacts seeking counselling support with a corresponding decrease in those seeking information, referral or other forms of non-counselling support.
- Substantial missing data, a very small subpopulation, and the greater likely influence of repeat contacts on percentage frequencies in this context, significantly undermine the reliability of these observed differences. Accordingly, observed differences may not correspond to actual differences in the characteristics of children and young people from the ACT contacting Kids Helpline over this period.

Table 3. Characteristics of ACT Kids Helpline contacts aged 5-25 years – by year¹

Contact characteristics	2014 (N= 2,397)		2015 (N= 2,501)		2016 (N= 3,334)	
	n	%	n	%	%	n
Gender²						
Female	1,068	79%	1,371	73%	1,617	72%
Male	291	21%	504	27%	628	28%
Intersex, Trans & Gender Diverse	-	-	10	1%	12	1%
Total	1,359	100%	1,885	100%	2,257	100%
Unknown	1,038		1,094		1,077	
Age group						
5-12 years	157	14%	274	17%	270	13%
13-18 years	730	65%	969	59%	1,167	57%
19-25 years	234	21%	396	24%	610	30%
Total	1,121	100%	1,639	100%	2,047	100%
<26 but age unknown	1,276		1,340		1,287	
Cultural background³						
Aboriginal &/or TSI	5	2%	6	1%	6	1%
CALD	86	26%	266	43%	381	51%
Neither ATSI nor CALD	235	72%	344	56%	358	48%
Total	326	100%	616	100%	745	100%
Unknown	2,071		2,363		2,589	
Remoteness⁴						
Major Cities	480	99%	841	98%	1,268	98%
Inner Regional	6	1%	5	1%	21	2%
Outer Regional/Remote	0	0%	8	1%	4	0%
Total	486	100%	854	100%	1,293	100%
Unknown	1,911		2,125		2,041	
Medium						
Phone	1,893	79%	2,343	79%	2,525	76%

Contact characteristics	2014 (N= 2,397)		2015 (N= 2,501)		2016 (N= 3,334)	
	n	%	n	%	%	n
Web chat	375	16%	560	19%	614	18%
Email	129	5%	76	3%	195	6%
Total	2,397	100%	2,979	100%	3,334	100%
Type of help-seeking						
Counselling contact	953	40%	1,300	44%	1,501	45%
Information/Referral/Other contact	1,444	60%	1,679	56%	1,833	55%
Total	2,397	100%	2,979	100%	3,334	100%

1. Where column percentages sum to more or less than 100%, this is due to rounding.

2. A new gender category was introduced into Kids Helpline data collection from January 2015.

3. TSI = Torres Strait Islander. CALD = Culturally and linguistically diverse. ATSI = Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander

4. Remoteness classifications are adapted from the Australian Statistical Geography Standard (ASGS) used by the Australian Bureau of Statistics. See *Kids Helpline Insights 2016: National Statistical Overview* for more information.

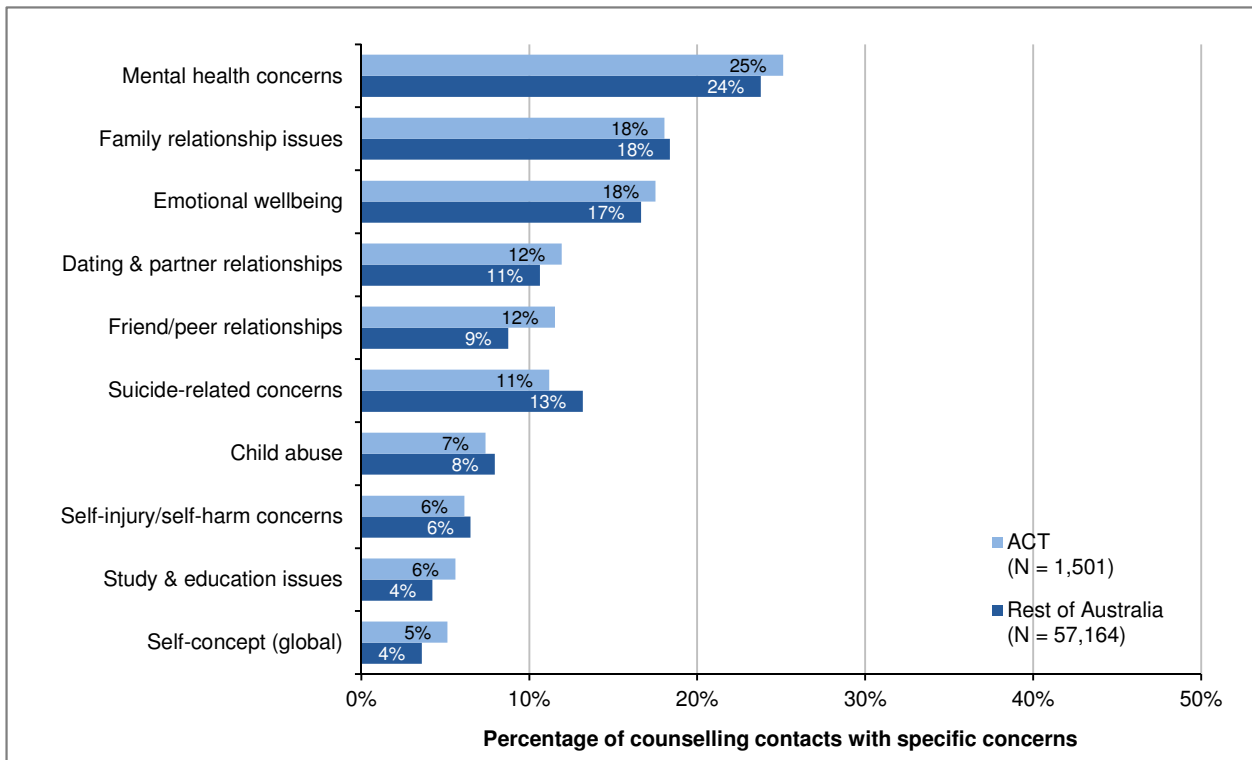
Most common concerns of children and young people who received counselling

During 2016, Kids Helpline counsellors responded to 66,963 contacts from children and young people who were seeking help about specific problems or concerns (i.e. counselling contacts). Analysis of the types of issues and concerns raised by children and young people in these sessions provide a valuable insight into the help-seeking concerns of young Australians.

ACT compared with rest of Australia

- State or territory information was available for 58,665 of these 66,963 counselling contacts and of this subset 1,501 (or 3%) were known to be from the ACT.
- Figure 1 shows the 10 most common concerns of ACT counselling contacts in 2016 and compares this with the frequency with which these concerns were raised by counselling contacts from the rest of Australia where state or territory information was known.
- The key observation to be noted from the data is that the frequency with which children and young people in the ACT sought help from Kids Helpline for all of these issues is consistent with the frequency with which children and young people elsewhere in Australia sought help for these issues.

Figure 1. Most frequently recorded concerns of Kids Helpline counselling contacts 2016 aged 5-25 years – ACT compared with the rest of Australia (sorted in descending frequency of ACT concerns)¹



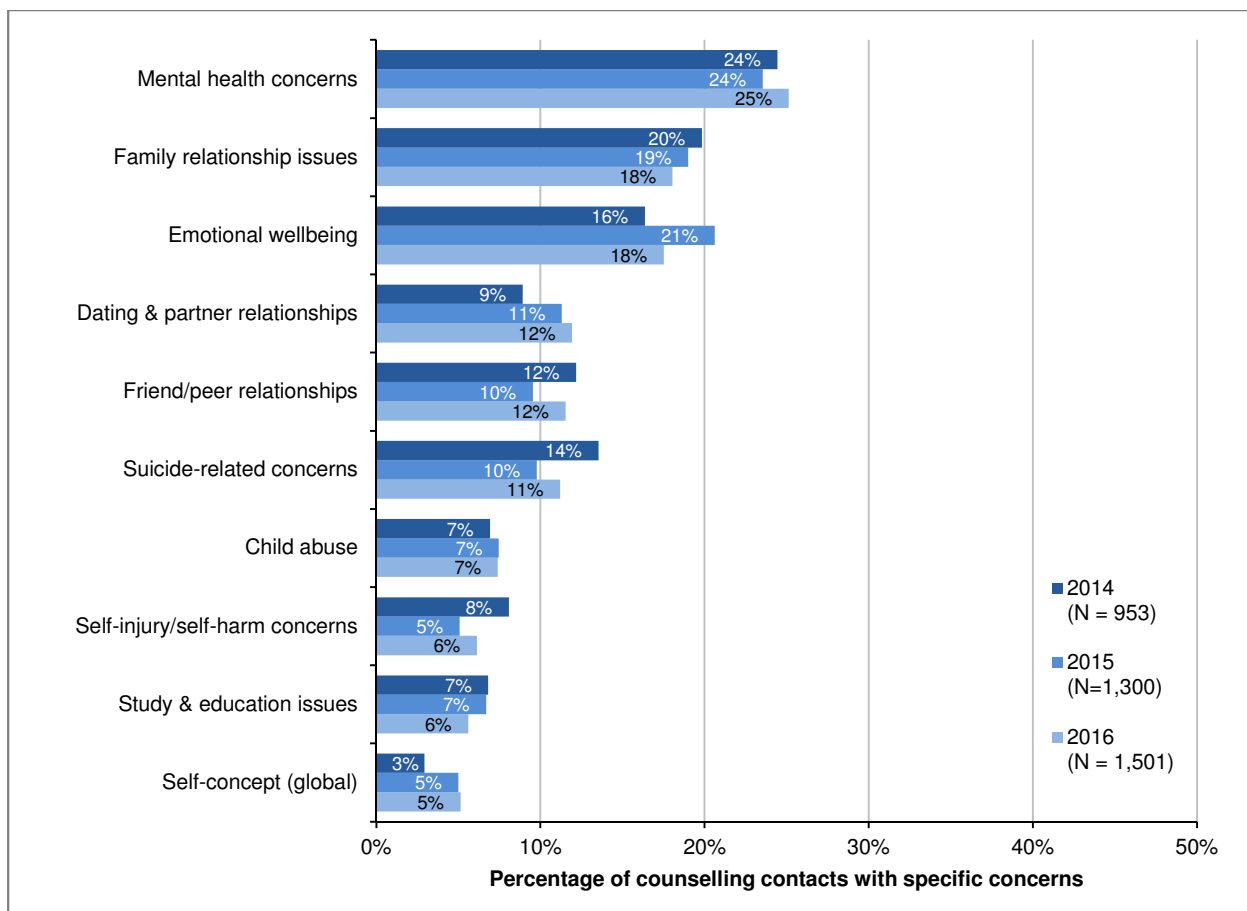
1. Up to four concerns per contact may be recorded. Accordingly, percentages may sum to more than 100%.

Trends over time

Figure 2 shows the 10 most common concerns of ACT counselling contacts in 2016 and compares this with the frequency with which these concerns were raised by ACT contacts in 2014 and 2015.

- The key observation to be noted from the data is that the frequency with which children and young people in the ACT sought help from Kids Helpline for all of these issues has remained relatively consistent over the short-term.

Figure 2. Most frequently recorded concerns of ACT Kids Helpline counselling contacts aged 5-25 years – by year (sorted in descending frequency of 2016 concerns)¹



1. Up to four concerns per contact may be recorded. Accordingly, percentages may sum to more than 100%.

All concerns of children and young people who received counselling

Children and young people contact Kids Helpline about a very wide range of concerns, and focusing on the 10 most common concerns can obscure that diversity and the emergence of trends in other areas of less common client concern.

To address this issue, Table 4 reports the frequency with which *every concern* in the Kids Helpline’s concern classification system was raised by counselling contacts from the ACT in 2016 and compares this with the frequency with which the concern was raised in 2014 and 2015. Table 4 groups individual concerns under eleven ‘concern classes’ which aggregate frequencies across conceptual clusters of client concern.

- The key observation to be noted from the data in Table 4 is that the frequency with which children and young people in the ACT are contacting Kids Helpline about all these different concerns and classes of concern is relatively consistent over the short-term.

Table 4. Number and proportion of Kids Helpline counselling contacts 5-25 years with particular concerns and classes of concern – ACT by year¹

Concern and concern class	2014 (N= 953)		2015 (N= 1,300)		2016 (N= 1,501)	
	n	%	n	%	n	%
Mental health & emotional wellbeing	516	54.1%	701	53.9%	810	54.0%
Mental health concerns	233	24.4%	306	23.5%	377	25.1%
Emotional wellbeing	156	16.4%	268	20.6%	263	17.5%
Suicide-related concerns	129	13.5%	127	9.8%	168	11.2%
Self-injury/self-harm concerns	77	8.1%	66	5.1%	92	6.1%
Loss and grief	26	2.7%	59	4.5%	42	2.8%
Friends, peers, partners & dating	194	20.4%	268	20.6%	343	22.9%
Dating and partner relationships	85	8.9%	147	11.3%	179	11.9%
Friends/peer relationships	116	12.2%	124	9.5%	173	11.5%
Family relationships	189	19.8%	247	19.0%	271	18.1%
Child-parent relationships	134	14.1%	184	14.2%	192	12.8%
Other family relationships	42	4.4%	37	2.8%	61	4.1%
Changing family structures	20	2.1%	30	2.3%	40	2.7%
Parenting own children	3	0.3%	4	0.3%	0	0.0%
Identity & self-concept	59	6.2%	115	8.8%	122	8.1%
Self-concept (global)	28	2.9%	65	5.0%	77	5.1%
Body image	15	1.6%	25	1.9%	13	0.9%
Sexual orientation	5	0.5%	17	1.3%	13	0.9%
Gender/sex identification	7	0.7%	7	0.5%	10	0.7%
Disability-related concerns	1	0.1%	4	0.3%	8	0.5%
Cultural identity	4	0.4%	3	0.2%	3	0.2%
Violence & abuse (non-family)	79	8.3%	98	7.5%	102	6.8%
Bullying - school related	51	5.4%	61	4.7%	58	3.9%
Bullying - other	3	0.3%	6	0.5%	3	0.2%
Sexual assault or abuse (non-family)	16	1.7%	15	1.2%	22	1.5%
Dating and partner violence	3	0.3%	10	0.8%	13	0.9%
Harassment and assault (non-sexual)	7	0.7%	7	0.5%	5	0.3%
Sexual harassment	0	0.0%	1	0.1%	4	0.3%
Child abuse & family violence	66	6.9%	97	7.5%	111	7.4%
Physical abuse	24	2.5%	44	3.4%	58	3.9%
Sexual abuse	19	2.0%	18	1.4%	22	1.5%
Emotional abuse	21	2.2%	31	2.4%	30	2.0%
Neglect of child	0	0.0%	6	0.5%	5	0.3%
Exploitation by family member	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
Exposure to family violence	4	0.4%	5	0.4%	10	0.7%
Living-in-care issues	5	0.5%	4	0.3%	0	0.0%
School, education & work	79	8.3%	112	8.6%	114	7.6%
Study and education issues	65	6.8%	87	6.7%	84	5.6%
Employment issues	11	1.2%	23	1.8%	26	1.7%
School authority issues	4	0.4%	6	0.5%	8	0.5%
Physical or sexual health & development	51	5.4%	58	4.5%	48	3.2%
Physical health concerns	26	2.7%	23	1.8%	27	1.8%
Pregnancy-related concerns	9	0.9%	13	1.0%	12	0.8%
Sexual activity	16	1.7%	14	1.1%	10	0.7%
Physical/sexual development	0	0.0%	5	0.4%	1	0.1%
Contraception/safe sex	0	0.0%	4	0.3%	1	0.1%
Homelessness & basic needs assistance	26	2.7%	25	1.9%	34	2.3%
Homelessness	14	1.5%	12	0.9%	16	1.1%
Practical/material assistance	8	0.8%	12	0.9%	14	0.9%

Concern and concern class	2014 (N= 953)		2015 (N= 1,300)		2016 (N= 1,501)	
	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%
Financial assistance/concerns	4	0.4%	2	0.2%	5	0.3%
Substance use, addictions & risk-taking	19	2.0%	20	1.5%	18	1.2%
Drug use	12	1.3%	11	0.8%	2	0.1%
Alcohol use	7	0.7%	9	0.7%	15	1.0%
Addictive behaviours (not drugs/alcohol)	1	0.1%	1	0.1%	1	0.1%
Physical risk-taking	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
Gang/cult involvement	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
Offending, abusive or violent actions	8	0.8%	6	0.5%	16	1.1%
Illegal/offending behaviour	1	0.1%	5	0.4%	9	0.6%
Abusive or violent actions	6	0.6%	1	0.1%	7	0.5%
Sexual violence/offending actions	1	0.1%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%

1. Up to four concerns per contact may be recorded. Totals provided for class of concern will be less than the sum of the individual concerns that make up that class due to the fact that multiple concerns within the class may have been identified in a single contact.



**24/7 HELP FOR CHILDREN AND
YOUNG PEOPLE AGED 5–25 YEARS**

**Kids Helpline
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kidshelpline.com.au**

This regional report is supported by the **Kids Helpline Insights 2016: National Statistical Overview**, which provides extensive data about the issues affecting children and young people across Australia, and the **Kids Helpline Insights 2016** summary report.

These can be accessed at
kidshelpline.com.au/reports

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