



KIDS  
HELPLINE

# INSIGHTS 2016

STATISTICAL SUMMARY  
NEW SOUTH WALES

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 is it 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 New South Wales 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](http://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. Please consult the Appendix of the *National Statistical Overview* for more detailed information on data collection, analysis and interpretation.

## Where to get more information

This report has been compiled by **yourtown** Strategy and Research. For further information, please contact

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## Service demand

### Attempted and answered contacts

- In 2016, 124,960 of the 356,595 attempts made to contact Kids Helpline counselling service (or 35%) came from New South Wales (NSW).
- Most of these attempts were made by phone (99,894) but also by web chat (21,412) and email (3,655).
- 63,012 of these attempts were answered by counsellors, corresponding to a response rate of 50%. 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 NSW phone contacts in 2016 was 66%.

### Trends over time

- From 2014 to 2016 there was an overall decrease of 8% in attempted contacts from NSW across all media. Phone attempts decreased by 11% and email by 31%, while web chat attempts increased by 21%.
- Across all media, response rates for NSW have decreased from 57% in 2014 to 50% in 2016.

**Table 1. NSW attempted and answered contacts – by medium and year of contact, with comparison to all states<sup>1</sup>**

Medium of contact	2014			2015			2016			% change in attempts 2014-2016
	Attempts	Answered	Response rate	Attempts	Answered	Response rate	Attempts	Answered	Response rate	
<b>Phone</b>										
NSW	112,118	63,796	57%	113,447	65,281	58%	99,894	49,003	49%	-11%
All States	300,200	173,752	58%	290,767	169,802	58%	276,960	135,719	49%	-8%
<b>Web chat</b>										
NSW	17,748	7,735	44%	15,078	8,363	55%	21,412	10,355	48%	21%
All States	49,429	21,082	43%	43,464	24,115	55%	65,954	31,765	48%	33%
<b>Email</b>										
NSW	5,306	5,306	100%	4,500	4,500	100%	3,655	3,655	100%	-31%
All States	18,832	18,832 <sup>2</sup>	100%	15,886 <sup>3</sup>	15,886	100%	13,681 <sup>4</sup>	13,681	100%	-27%
<b>All media</b>										
NSW	135,172	76,837	57%	133,026	78,145	59%	124,960	63,012	50%	-8%
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 56,905 (or 35%) were known to be from NSW.
- Table 2 shows the demographic characteristics of these contacts from NSW and compares them with the characteristics of contacts from the rest of Australia where the contact's state or territory was known.
- Seven out of 10 (69%) contacts from NSW were female and three out of five (59%) were aged 13-18 years. Two out of five (39%) were known to be from culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) backgrounds.

- Compared with contacts from the rest of Australia, NSW contacts were:
  - slightly more likely to be male and slightly less likely to be female
  - more likely to be aged 13-18 years, and
  - more likely to be from CALD backgrounds and less likely to be from a Caucasian Australian background.
- Other characteristics of Kids Helpline contacts in NSW are similar to those of contacts from the rest of Australia.

**Table 2. Characteristics of Kids Helpline contacts 2016 aged 5-25 years – NSW and rest of Australia<sup>1</sup>**

Contact characteristics	NSW (N= 56,905)		Rest of Australia (N= 106,418)	
	n	%	n	%
<b>Gender</b>				
Female	23,646	69%	51,125	74%
Male	10,461	30%	17,672	25%
Intersex, Trans & Gender Diverse	346	1%	718	1%
<b>Total</b>	<b>34,453</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>69,515</b>	<b>100%</b>
<i>Unknown</i>	<i>22,452</i>		<i>36,903</i>	
<b>Age group</b>				
5-12 years	3,543	12%	8,629	14%
13-18 years	17,465	59%	32,719	53%
19-25 years	8,539	29%	20,546	33%
<b>Total</b>	<b>29,547</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>61,894</b>	<b>100%</b>
<i>&lt;26 but age unknown</i>	<i>27,358</i>		<i>44,524</i>	
<b>Cultural background<sup>2</sup></b>				
Aboriginal &/or TSI	651	5%	965	4%
CALD	5,179	39%	8,385	32%
Neither ATSI nor CALD	7,595	57%	16,558	64%
<b>Total</b>	<b>13,425</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>25,908</b>	<b>100%</b>
<i>Unknown</i>	<i>43,480</i>		<i>80,510</i>	
<b>Remoteness<sup>3</sup></b>				
Major Cities	14,645	75%	29,396	71%
Inner Regional	3,841	20%	8,085	20%
Outer Regional/Remote	1,167	6%	3,897	9%
<b>Total</b>	<b>19,653</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>41,378</b>	<b>100%</b>
<i>Unknown</i>	<i>37,252</i>		<i>65,040</i>	
<b>Medium</b>				
Phone	46,476	82%	83,889	79%
Web chat	9,083	16%	18,820	18%
Email	1,346	2%	3,709	3%
<b>Total</b>	<b>56,905</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>106,418</b>	<b>100%</b>
<b>Type of help-seeking</b>				
Counselling contact	18,407	32%	40,258	38%
Information/Referral/Other contact	38,498	68%	66,160	62%
<b>Total</b>	<b>56,905</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>106,418</b>	<b>100%</b>

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, 32% of contacts from NSW in 2016 were seeking counselling support while 68% were seeking information/referral or other forms of non-counselling support. NSW contacts were more likely to be seeking non-counselling support than contacts from the rest of Australia (68% c.f. 62%).

## Demographic trends over time

Table 3 presents the characteristics of NSW 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 little change in the demographic profile of NSW contacts over the last three years.
- The one exception is an increase in the proportion of contacts engaging with the service by web chat and a corresponding decrease in those engaging by phone.

**Table 3. Characteristics of NSW Kids Helpline contacts aged 5-25 years – by year<sup>1</sup>**

Contact characteristics	2014 (N = 68,674)		2015 (N = 70,977)		2016 (N = 56,905)	
	n	%	n	%	%	n
<b>Gender<sup>2</sup></b>						
Female	27,024	67%	26,198	66%	23,646	69%
Male	13,336	33%	13,324	34%	10,461	30%
Intersex, Trans & Gender Diverse	-	-	153	0%	346	1%
<b>Total</b>	<b>40,360</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>39,675</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>34,453</b>	<b>100%</b>
Unknown	28,314		31,302		22,452	
<b>Age group</b>						
5-12 years	3,122	10%	3,826	12%	3,543	12%
13-18 years	18,045	57%	18,110	57%	17,465	59%
19-25 years	10,333	33%	10,039	31%	8,539	29%
<b>Total</b>	<b>31,500</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>31,975</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>29,547</b>	<b>100%</b>
<26 but age unknown	37,174		39,002		27,358	
<b>Cultural background<sup>3</sup></b>						
Aboriginal &/or TSI	528	3%	496	3%	651	5%
CALD	5,745	37%	6,561	43%	5,179	39%
Neither ATSI nor CALD	9,293	60%	8,052	53%	7,595	57%
<b>Total</b>	<b>15,566</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>15,109</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>13,425</b>	<b>100%</b>
Unknown	53,108		55,868		43,480	
<b>Remoteness<sup>4</sup></b>						
Major Cities	13,403	72%	13,424	69%	14,645	75%
Inner Regional	4,522	24%	4,871	25%	3,841	20%
Outer Regional/Remote	817	4%	1,050	5%	1,167	6%
<b>Total</b>	<b>18,742</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>19,345</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>19,653</b>	<b>100%</b>
Unknown	49,932		51,632		37,252	
<b>Medium</b>						
Phone	59,896	87%	61,498	87%	46,476	82%
Web chat	6,391	9%	7,319	10%	9,083	16%
Email	2,387	3%	2,160	3%	1,346	2%
<b>Total</b>	<b>68,674</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>70,977</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>56,905</b>	<b>100%</b>
<b>Type of help-seeking</b>						
Counselling contact	19,574	29%	20,269	29%	18,407	32%

Contact characteristics	2014 (N = 68,674)		2015 (N = 70,977)		2016 (N = 56,905)	
	n	%	n	%	%	n
Information/Referral/Other contact	49,100	71%	50,708	71%	38,498	68%
<b>Total</b>	<b>68,674</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>70,977</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>56,905</b>	<b>100%</b>

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.

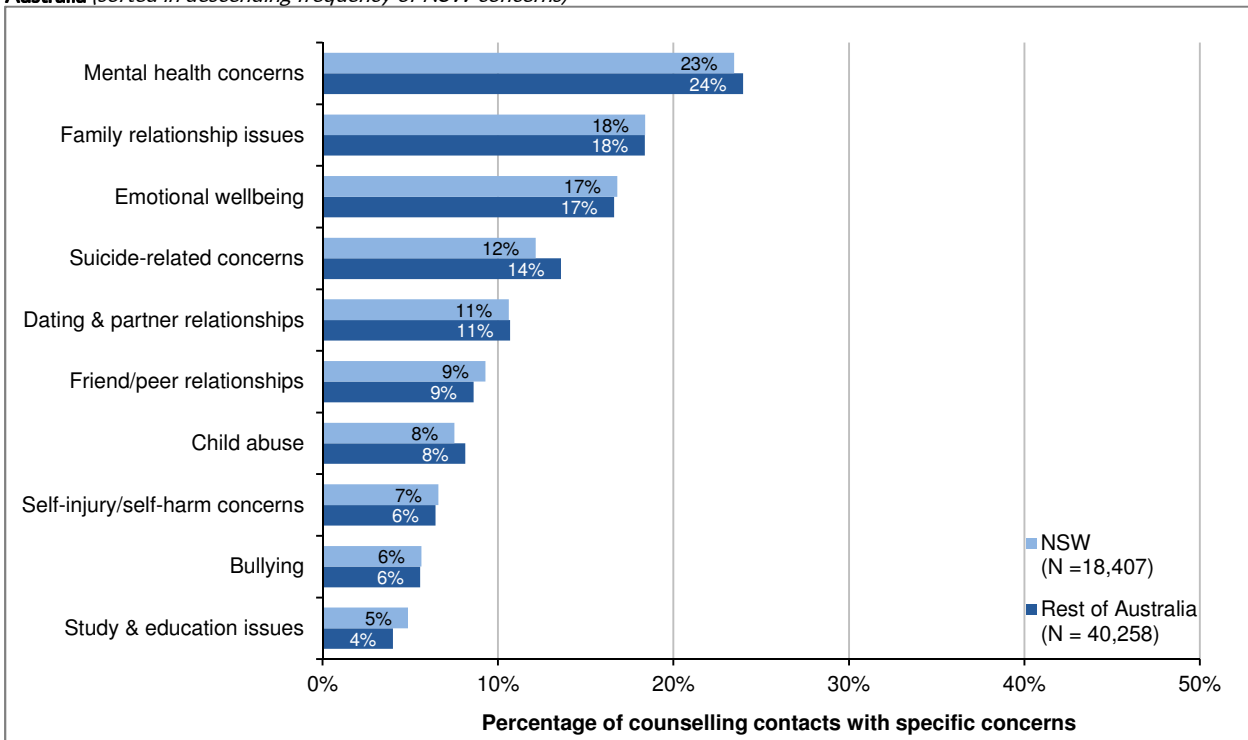
## Most common concerns of children and young people who received counselling

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 today.

### NSW compared with rest of Australia

- State or territory information was available for 58,665 of these 66,963 counselling contacts and of this subset 18,407 (or 31%) were known to be from NSW.
- Figure 1 shows the 10 most common concerns of NSW 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 NSW 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 – NSW compared with the rest of Australia (sorted in descending frequency of NSW concerns)<sup>1</sup>**



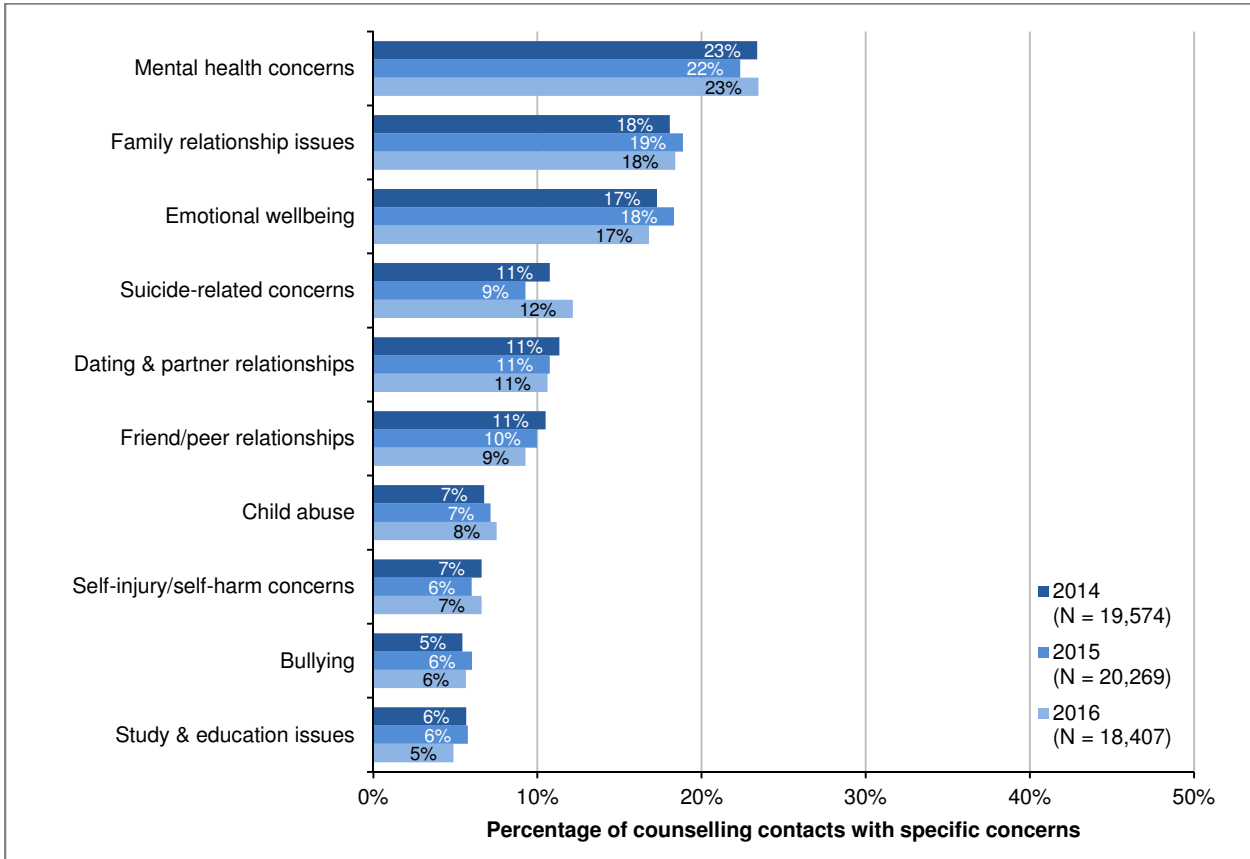
1. Up to four concerns per contact may be recorded. Accordingly, percentages may sum to more than 100%.

### Trends over time

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

- The key observation to note from the data is that the frequency with which children and young people in NSW are contacting Kids Helpline about these various concerns has remained very consistent over the short-term.

**Figure 2. Most frequently recorded concerns of NSW Kids Helpline counselling contacts aged 5-25 years – by year (sorted in descending frequency of 2016 concerns)<sup>†</sup>**



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 NSW 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 NSW are contacting Kids Helpline about all these different concerns and classes of concern is quite 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 – NSW by year<sup>1</sup>**

Concern and concern class	2014 (N = 19,574)		2015 (N = 20,269)		2016 (N = 18,407)	
	n	%	n	%	n	%
<b>Mental health &amp; emotional wellbeing</b>	<b>10,224</b>	<b>52.2%</b>	<b>10,362</b>	<b>51.1%</b>	<b>9,703</b>	<b>52.7%</b>
Mental health concerns	4,580	23.4%	4,532	22.4%	4,319	23.5%
Emotional wellbeing	3,382	17.3%	3,711	18.3%	3,092	16.8%
Suicide-related concerns	2,106	10.8%	1,877	9.3%	2,237	12.2%
Self-injury/self-harm concerns	1,290	6.6%	1,213	6.0%	1,215	6.6%
Loss and grief	781	4.0%	723	3.6%	574	3.1%
<b>Friends, peers, partners &amp; dating</b>	<b>4,162</b>	<b>21.3%</b>	<b>4,096</b>	<b>20.2%</b>	<b>3,580</b>	<b>19.4%</b>
Dating and partner relationships	2,219	11.3%	2,180	10.8%	1,953	10.6%
Friends/peer relationships	2,056	10.5%	2,023	10.0%	1,708	9.3%
<b>Family relationships</b>	<b>3,536</b>	<b>18.1%</b>	<b>3,825</b>	<b>18.9%</b>	<b>3,386</b>	<b>18.4%</b>
Child-parent relationships	2,516	12.9%	2,699	13.3%	2,400	13.0%
Other family relationships	767	3.9%	834	4.1%	726	3.9%
Changing family structures	396	2.0%	448	2.2%	421	2.3%
Parenting own children	72	0.4%	75	0.4%	51	0.3%
<b>Identity &amp; self-concept</b>	<b>1,675</b>	<b>8.6%</b>	<b>1,498</b>	<b>7.4%</b>	<b>1,401</b>	<b>7.6%</b>
Self-concept (global)	991	5.1%	806	4.0%	739	4.0%
Body image	313	1.6%	250	1.2%	182	1.0%
Sexual orientation	255	1.3%	236	1.2%	230	1.2%
Gender/sex identification	62	0.3%	107	0.5%	184	1.0%
Disability-related concerns	65	0.3%	95	0.5%	75	0.4%
Cultural identity	52	0.3%	54	0.3%	50	0.3%
<b>Violence &amp; abuse (non-family)</b>	<b>1,619</b>	<b>8.3%</b>	<b>1,730</b>	<b>8.5%</b>	<b>1,646</b>	<b>8.9%</b>
Bullying - school related	904	4.6%	1,051	5.2%	882	4.8%
Bullying - other	170	0.9%	175	0.9%	162	0.9%
Sexual assault or abuse (non-family)	280	1.4%	242	1.2%	329	1.8%
Dating and partner violence	138	0.7%	146	0.7%	138	0.7%
Harassment and assault (non-sexual)	82	0.4%	79	0.4%	93	0.5%
Sexual harassment	76	0.4%	65	0.3%	72	0.4%
<b>Child abuse &amp; family violence</b>	<b>1,322</b>	<b>6.8%</b>	<b>1,449</b>	<b>7.1%</b>	<b>1,384</b>	<b>7.5%</b>
Physical abuse	611	3.1%	735	3.6%	720	3.9%
Sexual abuse	315	1.6%	274	1.4%	243	1.3%
Emotional abuse	304	1.6%	330	1.6%	355	1.9%
Neglect of child	64	0.3%	81	0.4%	73	0.4%
Exploitation by family member	0	0.0%	1	0.0%	3	0.0%
Exposure to family violence	141	0.7%	152	0.7%	153	0.8%
Living-in-care issues	86	0.4%	92	0.5%	59	0.3%
<b>School, education &amp; work</b>	<b>1,419</b>	<b>7.2%</b>	<b>1,588</b>	<b>7.8%</b>	<b>1,283</b>	<b>7.0%</b>
Study and education issues	1,108	5.7%	1,166	5.8%	897	4.9%
Employment issues	210	1.1%	266	1.3%	306	1.7%
School authority issues	127	0.6%	179	0.9%	105	0.6%
<b>Physical or sexual health &amp; development</b>	<b>1,137</b>	<b>5.8%</b>	<b>1,063</b>	<b>5.2%</b>	<b>914</b>	<b>5.0%</b>
Physical health concerns	585	3.0%	469	2.3%	433	2.4%
Pregnancy-related concerns	254	1.3%	242	1.2%	228	1.2%
Sexual activity	232	1.2%	282	1.4%	213	1.2%
Physical/sexual development	43	0.2%	49	0.2%	28	0.2%
Contraception/safe sex	46	0.2%	48	0.2%	35	0.2%
<b>Homelessness &amp; basic needs assistance</b>	<b>458</b>	<b>2.3%</b>	<b>530</b>	<b>2.6%</b>	<b>530</b>	<b>2.9%</b>
Homelessness	245	1.3%	309	1.5%	286	1.6%
Practical/material assistance	164	0.8%	182	0.9%	203	1.1%



Concern and concern class	2014 (N= 19,574)		2015 (N= 20,269)		2016 (N= 18,407)	
	n	%	n	%	n	%
Financial assistance/concerns	61	0.3%	54	0.3%	57	0.3%
<b>Substance use, addictions &amp; risk-taking</b>	<b>471</b>	<b>2.4%</b>	<b>422</b>	<b>2.1%</b>	<b>426</b>	<b>2.3%</b>
Drug use	321	1.6%	262	1.3%	242	1.3%
Alcohol use	122	0.6%	101	0.5%	116	0.6%
Addictive behaviours (not drugs/alcohol)	43	0.2%	51	0.3%	65	0.4%
Physical risk-taking	9	0.0%	10	0.0%	5	0.0%
Gang/cult involvement	6	0.0%	13	0.1%	14	0.1%
<b>Offending, abusive or violent actions</b>	<b>179</b>	<b>0.9%</b>	<b>243</b>	<b>1.2%</b>	<b>177</b>	<b>1.0%</b>
Illegal/offending behaviour	101	0.5%	128	0.6%	93	0.5%
Abusive or violent actions	59	0.3%	102	0.5%	77	0.4%
Sexual violence/offending actions	21	0.1%	18	0.1%	12	0.1%

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  
1800 55 1800  
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](http://kidshelpline.com.au/reports)**

**Contact us:**

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