



KIDS  
HELPLINE

**INSIGHTS  
2016**

STATISTICAL SUMMARY  
VICTORIA

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 Victoria 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, 88,874 of the 356,595 attempts made to contact Kids Helpline counselling service (or 25%) came from Victoria.
- Most of these attempts were made by phone (65,232) but also by web chat (19,555) and email (4,087).
- 46,299 of these attempts were answered by counsellors, corresponding to a response rate of 52%. 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 Victorian phone contacts in 2016 was 66%.

### Trends over time

- From 2014 to 2016 there was an overall decrease of 5% in attempted contacts from Victoria across all media. Phone attempts decreased by 13% and email by 18%, while web chat attempts increased by 40%.
- Across all media, response rates for Victoria have decreased from 58% in 2014 to 52% in 2016.

**Table 1. Victorian 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>										
Victoria	74,657	43,812	59%	67,894	40,247	59%	65,232	32,820	50%	-13%
All States	300,200	173,752	58%	290,767	169,802	58%	276,960	135,719	49%	-8%
<b>Web chat</b>										
Victoria	14,009	5,873	42%	12,472	6,848	55%	19,555	9,392	48%	40%
All States	49,429	21,082	43%	43,464	24,115	55%	65,954	31,765	48%	33%
<b>Email</b>										
Victoria	4,998	4,998	100%	4,225	4,225	100%	4,087	4,087	100%	-18%
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>										
Victoria	93,664	54,683	58%	84,591	51,320	61%	88,874	46,299	52%	-5%
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 41,221 (or 25%) were known to be from Victoria.
- Table 2 shows the demographic characteristics of these contacts from Victoria and compares them with the characteristics of contacts from the rest of Australia where the contact's state or territory was known.
- As with contacts from the rest of Australia, more than seven out of 10 (74%) contacts from Victoria were female and just over half (51%) were aged 13-18 years.

- Compared with contacts from the rest of Australia, Victorian contacts were:
  - more likely to be aged over 18 years
  - more likely to be from culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) backgrounds and less likely to be from a Caucasian Australian background
  - less likely to be living in in Outer Regional/Remote areas, and
  - slightly less likely to contact by phone and more likely to contact by web chat.

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

Contact characteristics	Victoria (N= 41,221)		Rest of Australia (N= 122,102)	
	n	%	n	%
<b>Gender</b>				
Female	20,512	74%	54,259	71%
Male	6,728	24%	21,405	28%
Intersex, Trans & Gender Diverse	333	1%	731	1%
<b>Total</b>	<b>27,573</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>76,395</b>	<b>100%</b>
<i>Unknown</i>	<i>13,648</i>		<i>45,707</i>	
<b>Age group</b>				
5-12 years	2,836	11%	9,336	14%
13-18 years	12,557	51%	37,627	56%
19-25 years	9,335	38%	19,750	30%
<b>Total</b>	<b>24,728</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>66,713</b>	<b>100%</b>
<i>&lt;26 but age unknown</i>	<i>16,493</i>		<i>55,389</i>	
<b>Cultural background<sup>2</sup></b>				
Aboriginal &/or TSI	389	4%	1,227	4%
CALD	4,429	41%	9,135	32%
Neither ATSI nor CALD	5,871	55%	18,282	64%
<b>Total</b>	<b>10,689</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>28,644</b>	<b>100%</b>
<i>Unknown</i>	<i>30,532</i>		<i>93,458</i>	
<b>Remoteness<sup>3</sup></b>				
Major Cities	12,829	75%	31,212	71%
Inner Regional	3,568	21%	8,358	19%
Outer Regional/Remote	639	4%	4,425	10%
<b>Total</b>	<b>17,036</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>43,995</b>	<b>100%</b>
<i>Unknown</i>	<i>24,185</i>		<i>78,107</i>	
<b>Medium</b>				
Phone	31,467	76%	98,898	81%
Web chat	8,247	20%	19,656	16%
Email	1,507	4%	3,548	3%
<b>Total</b>	<b>41,221</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>122,102</b>	<b>100%</b>
<b>Type of help-seeking</b>				
Counselling contact	16,267	39%	42,398	35%
Information/Referral/Other contact	24,954	61%	79,704	65%
<b>Total</b>	<b>41,221</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>122,102</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, 39% of contacts from Victoria in 2016 were seeking counselling support while 61% were seeking information/referral or other forms of non-counselling support.

## Demographic trends over time

Table 3 presents the characteristics of Victorian 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:

- Over the last three years, there would appear to be:
  - a decrease in the proportion of Victorian contacts engaging by phone and an increase the proportion engaging by web chat, and
  - an increase in the proportion seeking counselling support and a corresponding decrease in the proportion seeking non-counselling support.
- All other characteristics of Victorian contacts have remained consistent over the short-term.

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

Contact characteristics	2014 (N = 48,950)		2015 (N = 46,711)		2016 (N = 41,221)	
	n	%	n	%	n	%
<b>Gender<sup>2</sup></b>						
Female	24,434	75%	22,289	73%	20,512	74%
Male	8,207	25%	8,102	26%	6,728	24%
Intersex, Trans & Gender Diverse	-	-	253	1%	333	1%
<b>Total</b>	<b>32,641</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>30,644</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>27,573</b>	<b>100%</b>
Unknown	16,309		16,067		13,648	
<b>Age group</b>						
5-12 years	2,197	8%	2,386	9%	2,836	11%
13-18 years	14,929	54%	13,233	50%	12,557	51%
19-25 years	10,666	38%	10,778	41%	9,335	38%
<b>Total</b>	<b>27,792</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>26,397</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>24,728</b>	<b>100%</b>
<26 but age unknown	21,158		20,314		16,493	
<b>Cultural background<sup>3</sup></b>						
Aboriginal &/or TSI	510	3%	365	3%	389	4%
CALD	6,210	41%	5,063	39%	4,429	41%
Neither ATSI nor CALD	8,342	55%	7,608	58%	5,871	55%
<b>Total</b>	<b>15,062</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>13,036</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>10,689</b>	<b>100%</b>
Unknown	33,888		33,675		30,532	
<b>Remoteness<sup>4</sup></b>						
Major Cities	13,479	75%	12,528	74%	12,829	75%
Inner Regional	3,723	21%	3,798	22%	3,568	21%
Outer Regional/Remote	714	4%	607	4%	639	4%
<b>Total</b>	<b>17,916</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>16,933</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>17,036</b>	<b>100%</b>
Unknown	31,034		29,778		24,185	
<b>Medium</b>						
Phone	41,696	85%	38,846	83%	31,467	76%
Web chat	5,008	10%	6,029	13%	8,247	20%
Email	2,246	5%	1,836	4%	1,507	4%
<b>Total</b>	<b>48,950</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>46,711</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>41,221</b>	<b>100%</b>

Contact characteristics	2014 (N = 48,950)		2015 (N = 46,711)		2016 (N = 41,221)	
	n	n	n	%	%	n
<b>Type of help-seeking</b>						
Counselling contact	16,817	34%	16,979	36%	16,267	39%
Information/Referral/Other contact	32,133	66%	29,732	64%	24,954	61%
<b>Total</b>	<b>48,950</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>46,711</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>41,221</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.

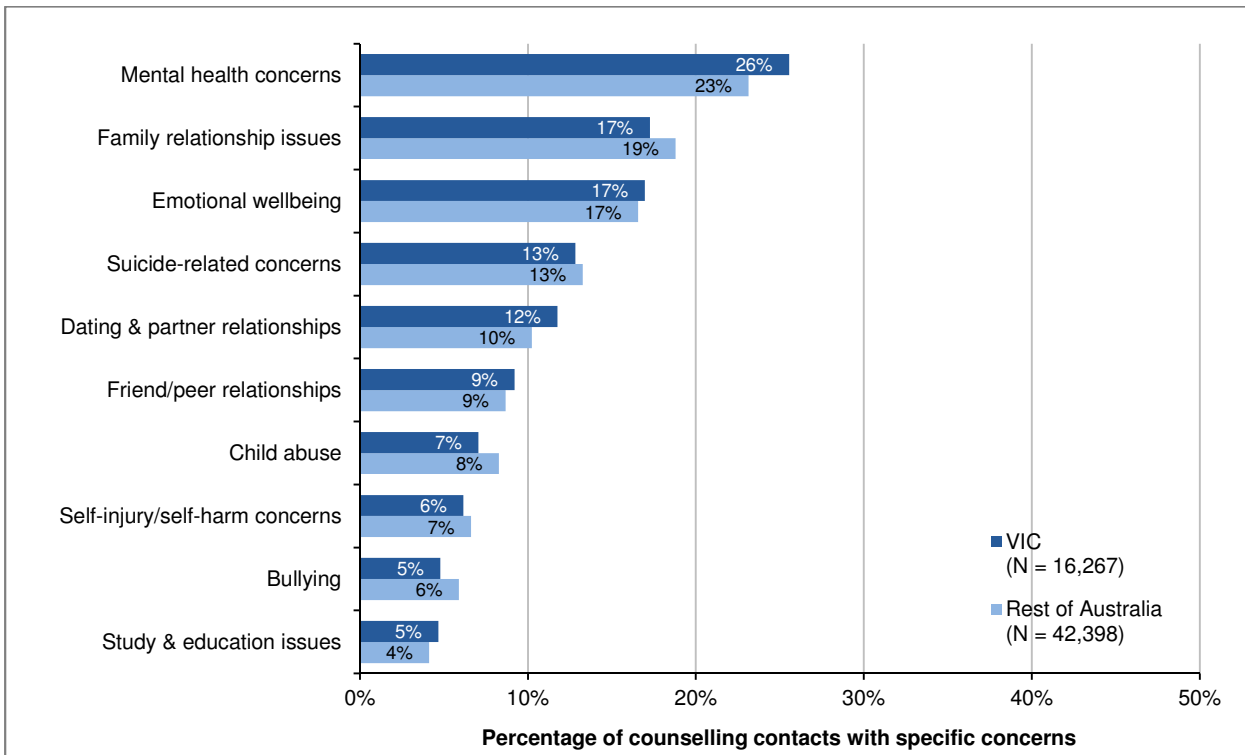
## Most common concerns of children and young people who received counselling

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.

### Victoria compared with rest of Australia

- State or territory information was available for 58,665 of these 66,963 counselling contacts and of this subset 16,267 (or 28%) were known to be from Victoria.
- Figure 1 shows the 10 most common concerns of Victoria 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 Victoria 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 – Victoria compared with the rest of Australia (sorted in descending frequency of Victorian concerns)<sup>1</sup>**



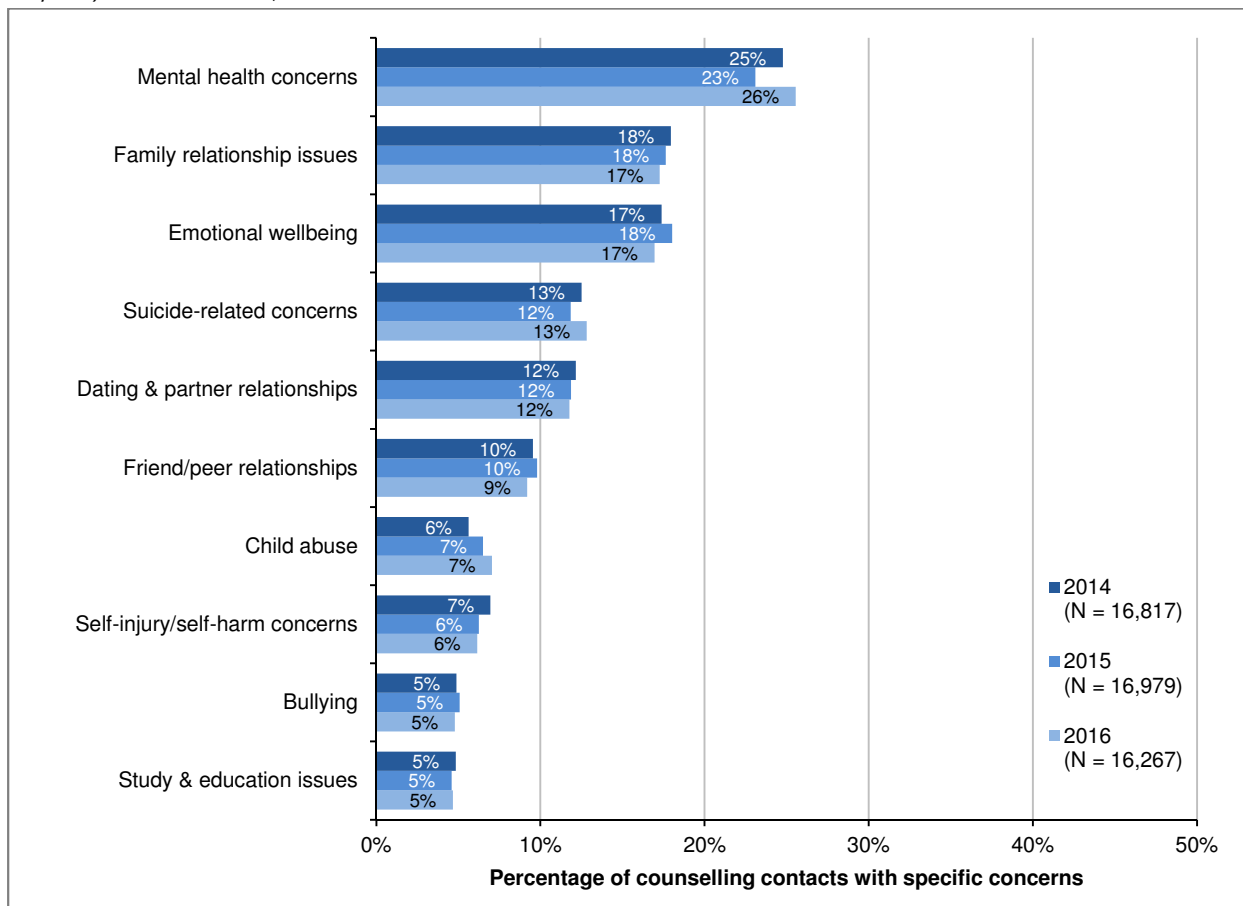
1. Up to four concerns per contact may be recorded. Accordingly, percentages may sum to more than 100%.

## Trends over time

Figure 2 shows the 10 most common concerns of Victoria counselling contacts in 2016 and compares this with the frequency with which these concerns were raised by Victoria 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 Victoria sought help from Kids Helpline for all of these issues has remained consistent over the short-term.

**Figure 2. Most frequently recorded concerns of Victorian Kids Helpline counselling contacts aged 5-25 years – by year (sorted in descending frequency of 2016 concerns)<sup>1</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 Victoria 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 Victoria 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 – Victoria by year<sup>1</sup>**

Concern and concern class	2014 (N = 16,817)		2015 (N = 16,979)		2016 (N = 16,267)	
	n	%	n	%	n	%
<b>Mental health &amp; emotional wellbeing</b>	<b>9,145</b>	<b>54.4%</b>	<b>9,048</b>	<b>53.3%</b>	<b>8,865</b>	<b>54.5%</b>
Mental health concerns	4,167	24.8%	3,920	23.1%	4,158	25.6%
Emotional wellbeing	2,924	17.4%	3,061	18.0%	2,759	17.0%
Suicide-related concerns	2,103	12.5%	2,012	11.8%	2,086	12.8%
Self-injury/self-harm concerns	1,170	7.0%	1,062	6.3%	1,001	6.2%
Loss and grief	497	3.0%	482	2.8%	423	2.6%
<b>Friends, peers, partners &amp; dating</b>	<b>3,552</b>	<b>21.1%</b>	<b>3,601</b>	<b>21.2%</b>	<b>3,318</b>	<b>20.4%</b>
Dating and partner relationships	2,045	12.2%	2,013	11.9%	1,914	11.8%
Friends/peer relationships	1,606	9.5%	1,663	9.8%	1,496	9.2%
<b>Family relationships</b>	<b>3,019</b>	<b>18.0%</b>	<b>2,995</b>	<b>17.6%</b>	<b>2,810</b>	<b>17.3%</b>
Child-parent relationships	2,111	12.6%	2,140	12.6%	2,069	12.7%
Other family relationships	652	3.9%	650	3.8%	563	3.5%
Changing family structures	343	2.0%	358	2.1%	326	2.0%
Parenting own children	85	0.5%	38	0.2%	31	0.2%
<b>Identity &amp; self-concept</b>	<b>1,465</b>	<b>8.7%</b>	<b>1,367</b>	<b>8.1%</b>	<b>1,234</b>	<b>7.6%</b>
Self-concept (global)	848	5.0%	776	4.6%	610	3.7%
Body image	246	1.5%	192	1.1%	234	1.4%
Sexual orientation	186	1.1%	235	1.4%	215	1.3%
Gender/sex identification	139	0.8%	104	0.6%	141	0.9%
Disability-related concerns	53	0.3%	77	0.5%	46	0.3%
Cultural identity	60	0.4%	41	0.2%	48	0.3%
<b>Violence &amp; abuse (non-family)</b>	<b>1,273</b>	<b>7.6%</b>	<b>1,342</b>	<b>7.9%</b>	<b>1,233</b>	<b>7.6%</b>
Bullying - school related	723	4.3%	712	4.2%	632	3.9%
Bullying - other	105	0.6%	159	0.9%	155	1.0%
Sexual assault or abuse (non-family)	249	1.5%	261	1.5%	240	1.5%
Dating and partner violence	94	0.6%	122	0.7%	115	0.7%
Harassment and assault (non-sexual)	75	0.4%	71	0.4%	78	0.5%
Sexual harassment	52	0.3%	40	0.2%	51	0.3%
<b>Child abuse &amp; family violence</b>	<b>946</b>	<b>5.6%</b>	<b>1,105</b>	<b>6.5%</b>	<b>1,146</b>	<b>7.0%</b>
Physical abuse	441	2.6%	538	3.2%	558	3.4%
Sexual abuse	238	1.4%	241	1.4%	226	1.4%
Emotional abuse	225	1.3%	291	1.7%	330	2.0%
Neglect of child	42	0.2%	36	0.2%	54	0.3%
Exploitation by family member	2	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
Exposure to family violence	98	0.6%	108	0.6%	116	0.7%
Living-in-care issues	39	0.2%	49	0.3%	22	0.1%
<b>School, education &amp; work</b>	<b>1,070</b>	<b>6.4%</b>	<b>1,023</b>	<b>6.0%</b>	<b>1,052</b>	<b>6.5%</b>
Study and education issues	815	4.8%	779	4.6%	759	4.7%
Employment issues	175	1.0%	171	1.0%	203	1.2%
School authority issues	96	0.6%	84	0.5%	109	0.7%
<b>Physical or sexual health &amp; development</b>	<b>908</b>	<b>5.4%</b>	<b>971</b>	<b>5.7%</b>	<b>865</b>	<b>5.3%</b>
Physical health concerns	507	3.0%	482	2.8%	453	2.8%
Pregnancy-related concerns	196	1.2%	214	1.3%	173	1.1%
Sexual activity	160	1.0%	228	1.3%	202	1.2%
Physical/sexual development	32	0.2%	37	0.2%	28	0.2%
Contraception/safe sex	34	0.2%	29	0.2%	34	0.2%
<b>Homelessness &amp; basic needs assistance</b>	<b>390</b>	<b>2.3%</b>	<b>391</b>	<b>2.3%</b>	<b>387</b>	<b>2.4%</b>
Homelessness	205	1.2%	201	1.2%	189	1.2%
Practical/material assistance	136	0.8%	142	0.8%	150	0.9%



Concern and concern class	2014 (N= 16,817)		2015 (N= 16,979)		2016 (N= 16,267)	
	n	%	n	%	n	%
Financial assistance/concerns	56	0.3%	57	0.3%	54	0.3%
<b>Substance use, addictions &amp; risk-taking</b>	<b>338</b>	<b>2.0%</b>	<b>386</b>	<b>2.3%</b>	<b>309</b>	<b>1.9%</b>
Drug use	215	1.3%	249	1.5%	209	1.3%
Alcohol use	99	0.6%	111	0.7%	78	0.5%
Addictive behaviours (not drugs/alcohol)	24	0.1%	28	0.2%	25	0.2%
Physical risk-taking	6	0.0%	11	0.1%	4	0.0%
Gang/cult involvement	2	0.0%	0	0.0%	4	0.0%
<b>Offending, abusive or violent actions</b>	<b>125</b>	<b>0.7%</b>	<b>151</b>	<b>0.9%</b>	<b>149</b>	<b>0.9%</b>
Illegal/offending behaviour	70	0.4%	89	0.5%	55	0.3%
Abusive or violent actions	44	0.3%	51	0.3%	84	0.5%
Sexual violence/offending actions	12	0.1%	11	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**

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