

Introduction

What is Kids Helpline?

Kids Helpline has been operating for 27 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* through their Digital Thumbprint Program.

Kids Helpline is a service of **yourtown** and is approximately 72% funded by the community through **yourtown** Art Union ticket sales, donations and corporate support. The remaining 28% 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 2017: 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 2017 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 2017: National Statistical Overview* and other related reports can be accessed at www.yourtown.com.au/insights/annual-overviews.

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

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Service demand

Attempted and answered contacts

- In 2017, 113,155 of the 339,724 attempts made to contact Kids Helpline counselling service (or 33%) came from New South Wales (NSW).
- Most of these attempts were made by phone (83,750) but also by web chat (25,771) and email (3,634).
- 51,043 of these attempts were answered by counsellors, corresponding to a response rate of 45%. This compares with a response rate of 46% 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 58%.

Trends over time

- From 2015 to 2017 there was an overall decrease of 15% in attempted contacts from NSW across all media. Phone attempts decreased by 26% and email by 19%, while web chat attempts increased by 71%.
- Across all media, response rates for NSW have decreased from 59% in 2015 to 45% in 2017.

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

| Medium of contact | 2015 | | | 2016 | | | 2017 | | | % change in attempts 2015-2017 |
|-------------------|---------------------|----------|---------------|---------------------|----------|---------------|---------------------|----------|---------------|--------------------------------|
| | Attempts | Answered | Response rate | Attempts | Answered | Response rate | Attempts | Answered | Response rate | |
| Phone | | | | | | | | | | |
| NSW | 113,447 | 65,281 | 58% | 99,894 | 49,003 | 49% | 83,750 | 35,836 | 43% | -26% |
| All States | 290,767 | 169,802 | 58% | 276,960 | 135,719 | 49% | 248,008 | 109,793 | 44% | -15% |
| Web chat | | | | | | | | | | |
| NSW | 15,078 | 8,363 | 55% | 21,412 | 10,355 | 48% | 25,771 | 11,573 | 45% | 71% |
| All States | 43,464 | 24,115 | 55% | 65,954 | 31,765 | 48% | 79,054 | 35,201 | 45% | 82% |
| Email | | | | | | | | | | |
| NSW | 4,500 | 4,500 | 100% | 3,655 | 3,655 | 100% | 3,634 | 3,634 | 100% | -19% |
| All States | 15,886 ² | 15,886 | 100% | 13,681 ³ | 13,681 | 100% | 12,662 ⁴ | 12,662 | 100% | -92% |
| All media | | | | | | | | | | |
| NSW | 133,026 | 78,145 | 59% | 124,960 | 63,012 | 50% | 113,155 | 51,043 | 45% | -15% |
| All States | 350,117 | 209,803 | 60% | 356,595 | 181,165 | 51% | 339,724 | 157,656 | 46% | -3% |

1. The data presented in this table are sourced from KHL phone, web chat and email systems databases.
2. In addition to 15,886 emails received and responded to in 2015, 535 outreach emails were sent.
3. In addition to 13,681 emails received and responded to in 2016, 413 outreach emails were sent.
4. In addition to 12,662 emails received and responded to in 2017, 418 outreach emails were sent.

Who contacted the service

Demographic characteristics

- In 2017, Kids Helpline counsellors recorded data in relation to 154,868 contacts from children and young people across Australia, aged 5-25 years. State or territory information was available for 140,007 of these contacts, and of this subset 45,187 (or 32%) 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 (73%) contacts from NSW were female and four in seven (56%) were aged 13-18 years. Four in nine (44%) 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,
 - more likely to come from major cities. 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 2017 aged 5-25 years – NSW and rest of Australia¹

| Contact characteristics | NSW (N= 45,187) | | Rest of Australia (N= 94,820) | |
|--|--------------------|-------------|----------------------------------|-------------|
| | n | % | n | % |
| Gender | | | | |
| Female | 22,687 | 73% | 50,245 | 74% |
| Male | 7,761 | 25% | 16,515 | 24% |
| Intersex, Trans & Gender Diverse | 689 | 2% | 1,288 | 2% |
| Total | 31,137 | 100% | 68,048 | 100% |
| <i>Unknown</i> | <i>14,050</i> | | <i>26,772</i> | |
| Age group | | | | |
| 5-12 years | 3,550 | 13% | 8,100 | 13% |
| 13-18 years | 15,855 | 56% | 31,109 | 50% |
| 19-25 years | 8,801 | 31% | 22,992 | 37% |
| Total | 28,206 | 100% | 62,201 | 100% |
| <i><26 but age unknown</i> | <i>16,981</i> | | <i>32,619</i> | |
| Cultural background² | | | | |
| Aboriginal &/or TSI | 439 | 4% | 711 | 3% |
| CALD | 5,022 | 44% | 8,156 | 33% |
| Neither ATSI nor CALD | 6,077 | 53% | 16,204 | 65% |
| Total | 11,538 | 100% | 25,071 | 100% |
| <i>Unknown</i> | <i>33,649</i> | | <i>69,749</i> | |
| Remoteness³ | | | | |
| Major Cities | 14,937 | 78% | 29,031 | 70% |
| Inner Regional | 3,136 | 16% | 8,498 | 20% |
| Outer Regional/Remote | 1,004 | 5% | 4,094 | 10% |
| Total | 19,077 | 100% | 41,623 | 100% |
| <i>Unknown</i> | <i>26,110</i> | | <i>53,197</i> | |
| Medium | | | | |
| Phone | 34,181 | 76% | 71,829 | 76% |
| Web chat | 9,678 | 21% | 19,713 | 21% |
| Email | 1,328 | 3% | 3,278 | 3% |
| Total | 45,187 | 100% | 94,820 | 100% |

| Contact characteristics | NSW (N = 45,187) | | Rest of Australia (N = 94,820) | |
|------------------------------------|---------------------|-------------|-----------------------------------|-------------|
| | n | % | n | % |
| Type of help-seeking | | | | |
| Counselling contact | 18,180 | 40% | 39,724 | 42% |
| Information/Referral/Other contact | 27,007 | 60% | 55,096 | 58% |
| Total | 45,187 | 100% | 94,820 | 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 2017: 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, 40% of contacts from NSW in 2017 were seeking counselling support while 60% were seeking information/referral or other forms of non-counselling support. NSW contacts were slightly more likely to be seeking counselling support than contacts from the rest of Australia (60% c.f. 58%).

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 two exceptions are an increase in the proportion of contacts engaging with the service by web chat and a corresponding decrease in those engaging by phone, and an increase in the proportion of counselling contacts and a corresponding decrease in the proportion of information/referral contacts.

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

| Contact characteristics | 2015 (N = 70,977) | | 2016 (N = 56,905) | | 2017 (N = 45,187) | |
|--|----------------------|-------------|----------------------|-------------|----------------------|-------------|
| | n | % | n | % | % | n |
| Gender² | | | | | | |
| Female | 26,198 | 66% | 23,646 | 69% | 22,687 | 73% |
| Male | 13,324 | 34% | 10,461 | 30% | 7,761 | 25% |
| Intersex, Trans & Gender Diverse | 153 | 0% | 346 | 1% | 689 | 2% |
| Total | 39,675 | 100% | 34,453 | 100% | 31,137 | 100% |
| Unknown | 31,302 | | 22,452 | | 14,050 | |
| Age group | | | | | | |
| 5-12 years | 3,826 | 12% | 3,543 | 12% | 3,550 | 13% |
| 13-18 years | 18,110 | 57% | 17,465 | 59% | 15,855 | 56% |
| 19-25 years | 10,039 | 31% | 8,539 | 29% | 8,801 | 31% |
| Total | 31,975 | 100% | 29,547 | 100% | 28,206 | 100% |
| <26 but age unknown | 39,002 | | 27,358 | | 16,981 | |
| Cultural background³ | | | | | | |
| Aboriginal &/or TSI | 496 | 3% | 651 | 5% | 439 | 4% |
| CALD | 6,561 | 43% | 5,179 | 39% | 5,022 | 44% |
| Neither ATSI nor CALD | 8,052 | 53% | 7,595 | 57% | 6,077 | 53% |
| Total | 15,109 | 100% | 13,425 | 100% | 11,538 | 100% |
| Unknown | 55,868 | | 43,480 | | 33,649 | |
| Remoteness⁴ | | | | | | |
| Major Cities | 13,424 | 69% | 14,645 | 75% | 14,937 | 78% |

| Contact characteristics | 2015 (N = 70,977) | | 2016 (N = 56,905) | | 2017 (N = 45,187) | |
|------------------------------------|----------------------|-------------|----------------------|-------------|----------------------|-------------|
| | n | % | n | % | % | n |
| Inner Regional | 4,871 | 25% | 3,841 | 20% | 3,136 | 16% |
| Outer Regional/Remote | 1,050 | 5% | 1,167 | 6% | 1,004 | 5% |
| Total | 19,345 | 100% | 19,653 | 100% | 19,077 | 100% |
| <i>Unknown</i> | <i>51,632</i> | | <i>37,252</i> | | <i>26,110</i> | |
| Medium | | | | | | |
| Phone | 61,498 | 87% | 46,476 | 82% | 34,181 | 76% |
| Web chat | 7,319 | 10% | 9,083 | 16% | 9,678 | 21% |
| Email | 2,160 | 3% | 1,346 | 2% | 1,328 | 3% |
| Total | 70,977 | 100% | 56,905 | 100% | 45,187 | 100% |
| Type of help-seeking | | | | | | |
| Counselling contact | 20,269 | 29% | 18,407 | 32% | 18,180 | 40% |
| Information/Referral/Other contact | 50,708 | 71% | 38,498 | 68% | 27,007 | 60% |
| Total | 70,977 | 100% | 56,905 | 100% | 45,187 | 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 2017: National Statistical Overview* for more information.

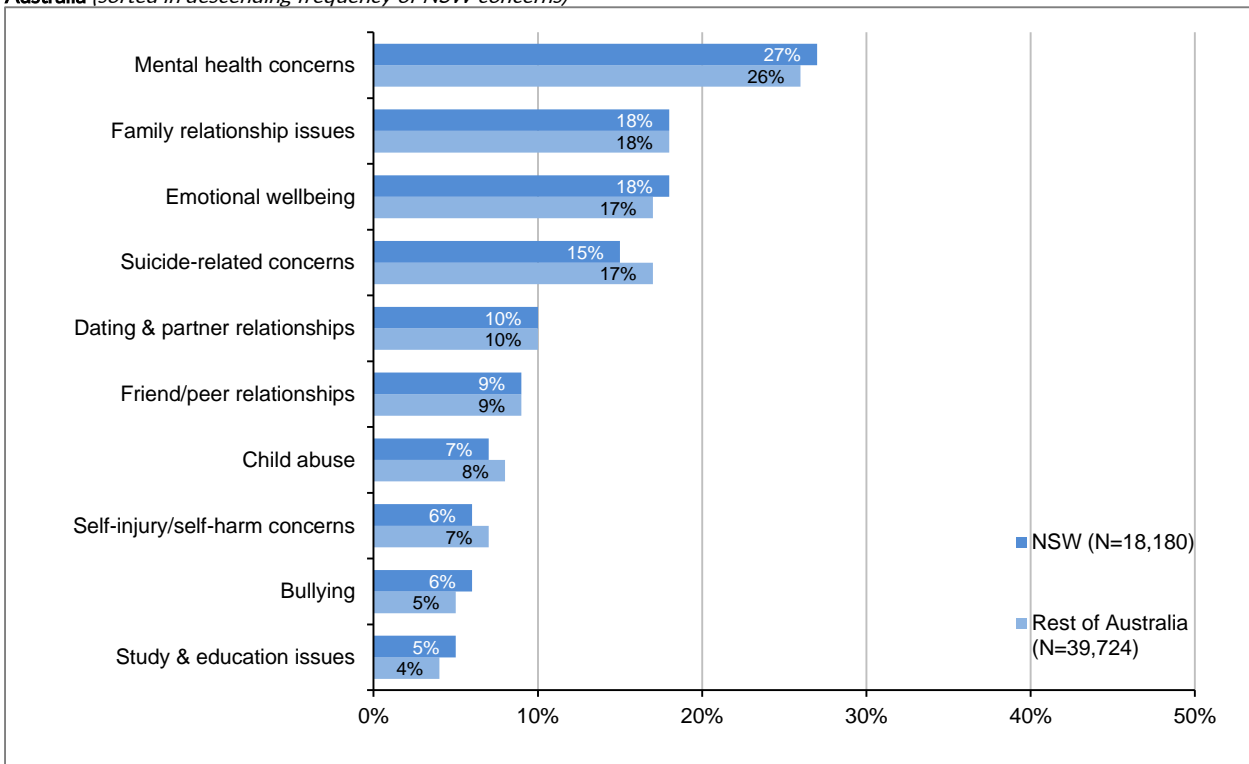
Most common concerns of children and young people who received counselling

During 2017, Kids Helpline counsellors responded to 66,386 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 57,904 of these 66,386 counselling contacts and of this subset 18,180 (or 31%) were known to be from NSW.
- Figure 1 shows the 10 most common concerns of NSW counselling contacts in 2017 and compares these 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 observations to be noted from the data are that the relative frequency with which children and young people in NSW sought help from Kids Helpline for all of these issues is consistent with the relative frequency with which children and young people elsewhere in Australia sought help for these issues by and large, and that suicide-related concerns relatively less frequently among contacts from children and young people in NSW than is the case for the rest of Australia (15% c.f. 17%).

Figure 1. Most frequently recorded concerns of Kids Helpline counselling contacts 2017 aged 5-25 years – NSW compared with the rest of Australia (sorted in descending frequency of NSW concerns)¹



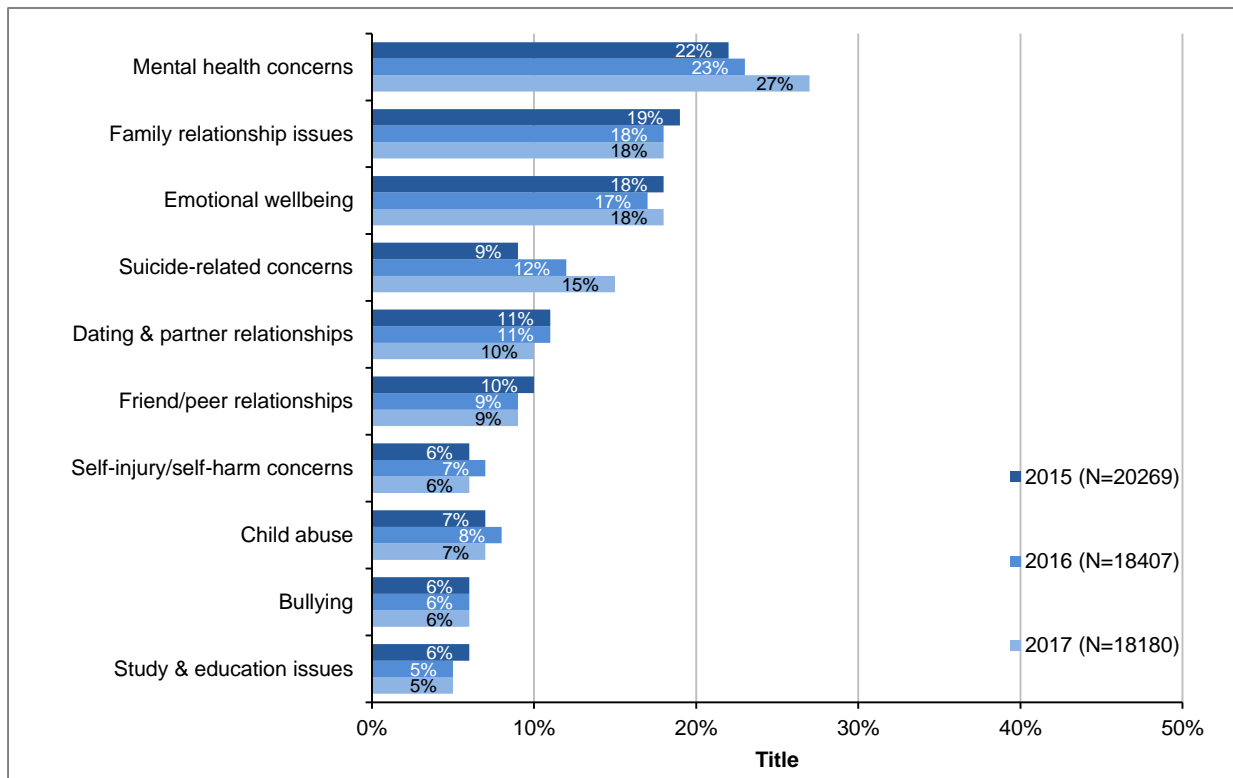
1. Up to four concerns per contact may be recorded. Accordingly, percentages may sum to more than 100%.

Trends over time

Figure 2 shows the 10 most common concerns of NSW counselling contacts in 2017 and compares this with the frequency with which these concerns were raised by NSW contacts in 2015 and 2016.

- 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, although mental-health-related contacts and suicide-related contacts appear in the short-term to be increasing.

Figure 2. Most frequently recorded concerns of NSW Kids Helpline counselling contacts aged 5-25 years – by year (sorted in descending frequency of 2017 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 NSW in 2017 and compares this with the frequency with which the concern was raised in 2015 and 2016. 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 year¹

| Concern and concern class | 2015 (N = 20,269) | | 2016 (N = 18,407) | | 2017 (N = 18,180) | |
|--|----------------------|--------------|----------------------|--------------|----------------------|-------|
| | n | % | n | % | n | % |
| Mental health & emotional wellbeing | 10,362 | 51.1% | 9,703 | 52.7% | 10,504 | 57.8% |
| Mental health concerns | 4,532 | 22.4% | 4,319 | 23.5% | 4,880 | 26.8% |
| Emotional wellbeing | 3,711 | 18.3% | 3,092 | 16.8% | 3,231 | 17.8% |
| Suicide-related concerns | 1,877 | 9.3% | 2,237 | 12.2% | 2,690 | 14.8% |
| Self-injury/self-harm concerns | 1,213 | 6.0% | 1,215 | 6.6% | 1,148 | 6.3% |
| Loss and grief | 723 | 3.6% | 574 | 3.1% | 606 | 3.3% |
| Friends, peers, partners & dating | 4,096 | 20.2% | 3,580 | 19.4% | 3,494 | 19.2% |
| Dating and partner relationships | 2,180 | 10.8% | 1,953 | 10.6% | 1,899 | 10.4% |
| Friends/peer relationships | 2,023 | 10.0% | 1,708 | 9.3% | 1,694 | 9.3% |
| Family relationships | 3,825 | 18.9% | 3,386 | 18.4% | 3,237 | 17.8% |
| Child-parent relationships | 2,699 | 13.3% | 2,400 | 13.0% | 2,276 | 12.0% |
| Other family relationships | 834 | 4.1% | 726 | 3.9% | 757 | 4.2% |
| Changing family structures | 448 | 2.2% | 421 | 2.3% | 376 | 2.1% |
| Parenting own children | 75 | 0.4% | 51 | 0.3% | 38 | 0.2% |
| Identity & self-concept | 1,498 | 7.4% | 1,401 | 7.6% | 1,374 | 7.6% |
| Self-concept (global) | 806 | 4.0% | 739 | 4.0% | 731 | 4.0% |
| Body image | 250 | 1.2% | 182 | 1.0% | 232 | 1.3% |
| Sexual orientation | 236 | 1.2% | 230 | 1.2% | 164 | 0.9% |
| Gender/sex identification | 107 | 0.5% | 184 | 1.0% | 163 | 0.9% |
| Disability-related concerns | 95 | 0.5% | 75 | 0.4% | 78 | 0.4% |
| Cultural identity | 54 | 0.3% | 50 | 0.3% | 47 | 0.3% |
| Violence & abuse (non-family) | 1,730 | 8.5% | 1,646 | 8.9% | 1,573 | 8.7% |
| Bullying - school related | 1,051 | 5.2% | 882 | 4.8% | 844 | 4.6% |
| Bullying - other | 175 | 0.9% | 162 | 0.9% | 174 | 1.0% |
| Sexual assault or abuse (non-family) | 242 | 1.2% | 329 | 1.8% | 307 | 1.7% |
| Dating and partner violence | 146 | 0.7% | 138 | 0.7% | 126 | 0.7% |
| Harassment and assault (non-sexual) | 79 | 0.4% | 93 | 0.5% | 94 | 0.5% |
| Sexual harassment | 65 | 0.3% | 72 | 0.4% | 66 | 0.4% |
| Child abuse & family violence | 1,449 | 7.1% | 1,384 | 7.5% | 1,354 | 7.4% |
| Physical abuse | 735 | 3.6% | 720 | 3.9% | 645 | 3.5% |
| Sexual abuse | 274 | 1.4% | 243 | 1.3% | 224 | 1.2% |
| Emotional abuse | 330 | 1.6% | 355 | 1.9% | 414 | 2.3% |
| Neglect of child | 81 | 0.4% | 73 | 0.4% | 68 | 0.4% |
| Exploitation by family member | 1 | 0.0% | 3 | 0.0% | 8 | 0.0% |
| Exposure to family violence | 152 | 0.7% | 153 | 0.8% | 163 | 0.9% |
| Living-in-care issues | 92 | 0.5% | 59 | 0.3% | 82 | 0.5% |

| Concern and concern class | 2015 (N= 20,269) | | 2016 (N= 18,407) | | 2017 (N= 18,180) | |
|--|---------------------|-------------|---------------------|-------------|---------------------|------|
| | n | % | n | % | n | % |
| School, education & work | 1,588 | 7.8% | 1,283 | 7.0% | 1,240 | 6.8% |
| Study and education issues | 1,166 | 5.8% | 897 | 4.9% | 905 | 5.0% |
| Employment issues | 266 | 1.3% | 306 | 1.7% | 279 | 1.5% |
| School authority issues | 179 | 0.9% | 105 | 0.6% | 82 | 0.5% |
| Physical or sexual health & development | 1,063 | 5.2% | 914 | 5.0% | 860 | 4.7% |
| Physical health concerns | 469 | 2.3% | 433 | 2.4% | 436 | 2.4% |
| Pregnancy-related concerns | 242 | 1.2% | 228 | 1.2% | 186 | 1.0% |
| Sexual activity | 282 | 1.4% | 213 | 1.2% | 210 | 1.2% |
| Physical/sexual development | 49 | 0.2% | 28 | 0.2% | 26 | 0.1% |
| Contraception/safe sex | 48 | 0.2% | 35 | 0.2% | 22 | 0.1% |
| Homelessness & basic needs assistance | 530 | 2.6% | 530 | 2.9% | 372 | 2.0% |
| Homelessness | 309 | 1.5% | 286 | 1.6% | 188 | 1.0% |
| Practical/material assistance | 182 | 0.9% | 203 | 1.1% | 140 | 0.8% |
| Financial assistance/concerns | 54 | 0.3% | 57 | 0.3% | 52 | 0.3% |
| Substance use, addictions & risk-taking | 422 | 2.1% | 426 | 2.3% | 333 | 1.8% |
| Drug use | 262 | 1.3% | 242 | 1.3% | 190 | 1.0% |
| Alcohol use | 101 | 0.5% | 116 | 0.6% | 105 | 0.6% |
| Addictive behaviours (not drugs/alcohol) | 51 | 0.3% | 65 | 0.4% | 43 | 0.2% |
| Physical risk-taking | 10 | 0.0% | 5 | 0.0% | 12 | 0.1% |
| Gang/cult involvement | 13 | 0.1% | 14 | 0.1% | 4 | 0.0% |
| Offending, abusive or violent actions | 243 | 1.2% | 177 | 1.0% | 159 | 0.9% |
| Illegal/offending behaviour | 128 | 0.6% | 93 | 0.5% | 81 | 0.4% |
| Abusive or violent actions | 102 | 0.5% | 77 | 0.4% | 65 | 0.4% |
| Sexual violence/offending actions | 18 | 0.1% | 12 | 0.1% | 13 | 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.