

insights2017



NT

Kids Helpline Statistical Summary Northern Territory

Insights into young people in Australia



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 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 the Northern Territory 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. This is compounded by the small size of the Northern 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 2017, 2,879 of the 339,724 attempts made to contact Kids Helpline counselling service (or 0.8%) came from the Northern Territory (NT).
- Most of these attempts were made by phone (2,356) but also by web chat (475) and email (48).
- 1,056 of these attempts were answered by counsellors, corresponding to a response rate of 37%. 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 Northern Territory phone contacts in 2017 was 50%.

Trends over time

- From 2015 to 2017 there was an overall increase of 8% in attempted contacts from the Northern Territory across all media. Phone attempts decreased by 5%, email increased by 24%, while web chat attempts increased by 244%.
- Across all media, response rates for the Northern Territory have decreased from 57% in 2015 to 37% in 2017.

Table 1. NT 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										
NT	2,482	1,396	56%	2,955	1,303	44%	2,356	811	34%	-5%
All States	290,767	169,802	58%	276,960	135,719	49%	248,008	109,793	44%	-15%
Web chat										
NT	138	76	55%	272	124	46%	475	197	41%	244%
All States	43,464	24,115	55%	65,954	31,765	48%	79,054	35,201	45%	82%
Email										
NT	39	39	100%	61	61	100%	48	48	100%	24%
All States	15,886 ³	15,886	100%	13,681 ⁴	13,681	100%	12,662	12,662	100%	-92%
All media										
NT	2,659	1,510	57%	3,288	1,489	45%	2,879	1,056	37%	8%
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 13,681 emails received and responded to in 2017, 418 outreach emails were sent.

Who contacted the service

Demographic characteristics

- Kids Helpline counsellors recorded data in relation to 154,868 contacts from children and young people across Australia who were aged 5-25 years. State or territory information was available for 140,007 of these contacts, and of this subset 962 (or 1%) were known to be from the Northern Territory.
- Table 2 shows the demographic characteristics of these contacts from the Northern Territory and compares them with the characteristics of contacts from the rest of Australia where their state or territory was known.
- As with contacts from the rest of Australia, roughly three out of four (76%) Northern Territory contacts were female and one in four (22%) male. Two in 100 were Intersex, Trans & Gender Diverse.

- As with contacts from the rest of Australia, roughly one in ten (12%) Northern Territory contacts were aged 5-12 years, half (50%) were aged 13-18 years, and a little over a third were aged 19-25 years.

Table 2. Characteristics of Kids Helpline contacts 2017 aged 5-25 years – Northern Territory and rest of Australia¹

Contact characteristics		Northern Territory (N= 962)		Rest of Australia (N= 139,045)	
		n	%	n	%
Gender					
	Female	435	76%	72,497	74%
	Male	123	22%	24,153	24%
	Intersex, Trans & Gender Diverse	13	2%	1,964	2%
	Total	571	100%	98,614	100%
	Unknown	391		40,431	
Age group					
	5-12 years	63	12%	11,587	13%
	13-18 years	253	50%	46,711	52%
	19-25 years	193	38%	31,600	35%
	Total	509	100%	89,898	100%
	<26 but age unknown	453		49,147	
Cultural background²					
	Aboriginal &/or TSI	61	25%	1,089	3%
	CALD	41	17%	13,137	36%
	Neither ATSI nor CALD	140	58%	22,141	61%
	Total	242	100%	36,367	100%
	Unknown	720		102,678	
Remoteness³					
	Major Cities	26	8%	43,942	73%
	Inner Regional	0	0%	11,634	19%
	Outer Regional/Remote	289	92%	4,809	8%
	Total	315	100%	60,385	100%
	Unknown	647		78,660	
Medium					
	Phone	797	83%	105,213	76%
	Web chat	148	15%	29,243	21%
	Email	17	2%	4,589	3%
	Total	962	100%	139,045	100%
Type of help-seeking					
	Counselling contact	333	35%	57,571	41%
	Information/Referral/Other contact	629	65%	81,474	59%
	Total	962	100%	139,045	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.

- In terms of other characteristics, Northern Territory contacts have some notably different demographic characteristics to contacts from the rest of Australia. Compared with contacts from the rest of Australia, Northern Territory contacts in 2017 were:
 - much more likely to be Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander (ATSI) and less likely to be from other culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds (CALD); about the same proportion of contacts are from persons classed as Caucasian Australian.
 - much less likely to be situated in Major Cities or Inner Regional areas and much more likely to be living in Outer Regional and Remote localities
 - slightly more likely to engage with Kids Helpline via telephone and less likely to engage via web chat.

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, 35% of contacts from Northern Territory in 2017 were seeking counselling support while 65% were seeking information/referral or other forms of non-counselling support. Northern Territory contacts were slightly more likely to be seeking non-counselling-type support than contacts from the rest of Australia (65% c.f. 59%).

Demographic trends over time

Table 3 presents the characteristics of Northern Territory 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 Northern Territory contacts over the last three years, including:
 - a decrease in the proportion of Northern Territory contacts aged 5-12 years and corresponding increases in the proportion of those aged 13-18 and 19-25 years
 - a decrease in the proportion of contacts known to be Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander and a corresponding increase in the proportion from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds (CALD), and
 - an increase in the proportion who were seeking counselling support relative to 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 Northern Territory contacting Kids Helpline over this period.

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

Contact characteristics	2015 (N= 1,420)		2016 (N= 1,421)		2017 (N= 962)	
	n	%	n	%	%	n
Gender²						
Female	575	76%	569	76%	435	76%
Male	179	24%	173	23%	123	22%
Intersex, Trans & Gender Diverse	0	0%	4	1%	13	2%
Total	754	100%	746	100%	571	100%
Unknown	666		675		391	
Age group						
5-12 years	158	29%	127	21%	63	12%
13-18 years	234	42%	250	41%	253	50%
19-25 years	159	29%	229	38%	193	38%
Total	551	100%	606	100%	509	100%
<26 but age unknown	869		815		453	
Cultural background³						
Aboriginal &/or TSI	113	38%	134	36%	61	25%
CALD	26	9%	30	8%	41	17%
Neither ATSI nor CALD	161	54%	208	56%	140	58%
Total	300	100%	372	100%	242	100%
Unknown	1,120		1,049		720	
Remoteness⁴						
Major Cities	11	4%	20	5%	26	8%
Inner Regional	0	0%	1	0%	0	0%

Contact characteristics	2015 (N= 1,420)		2016 (N= 1,421)		2017 (N= 962)	
	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%	%	<i>n</i>
Outer Regional/Remote	293	96%	348	94%	289	92%
Total	304	100%	369	100%	315	100%
<i>Unknown</i>	<i>1,116</i>		<i>1,052</i>		<i>647</i>	
Medium						
Phone	1,328	94%	1,259	89%	797	83%
Web chat	64	5%	138	10%	148	15%
Email	28	2%	24	2%	17	2%
Total	1,420	100%	1,421	100%	962	100%
Type of help-seeking						
Counselling contact	360	25%	378	27%	333	35%
Information/Referral/Other contact	1,060	75%	1,043	73%	629	65%
Total	1,420	100%	1,421	100%	962	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.

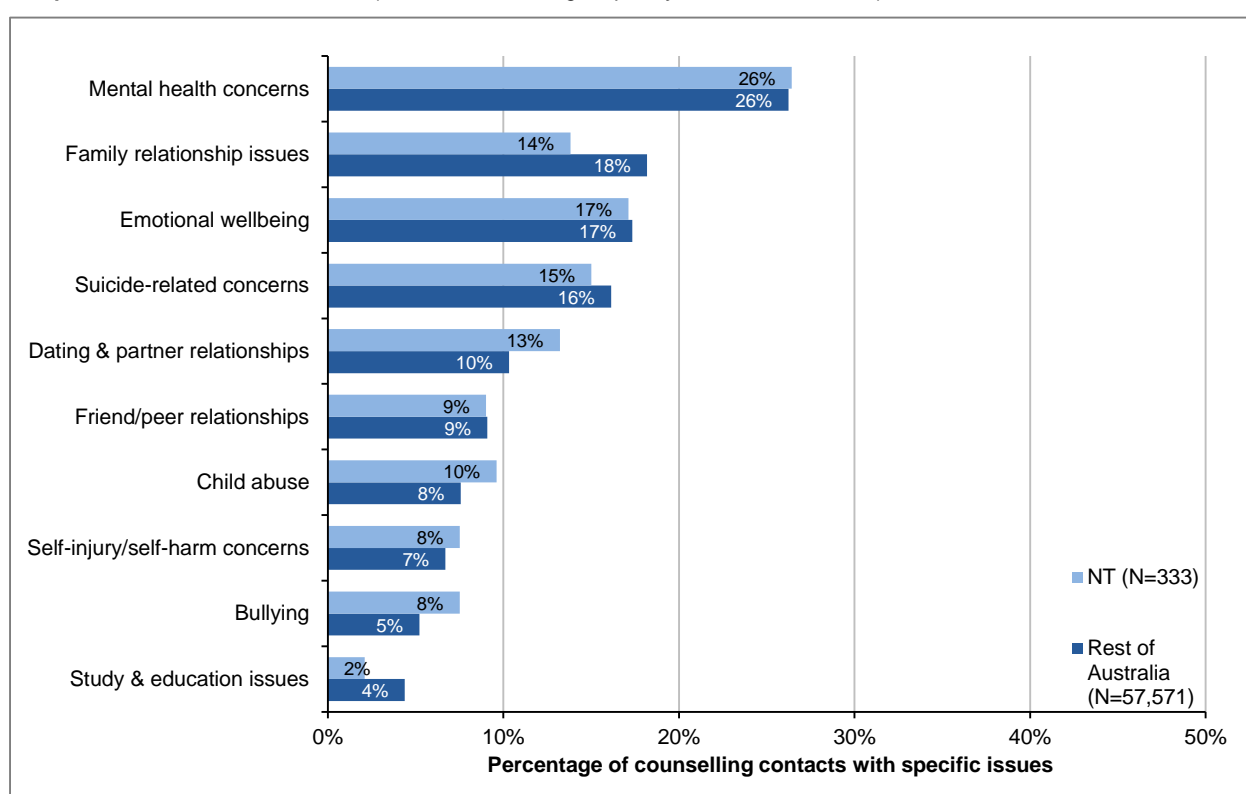
Most common concerns of children and young people who received counselling

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 people in Australian today.

Northern Territory compared with rest of Australia

- State or territory information was available for 57,904 of these 66,386 counselling contacts and of this subset 333 (or 0.6%) were known to be from the Northern Territory.
- Figure 1 shows the 10 most common concerns of Northern Territory counselling contacts in 2017 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 observations to be noted from the data are that:
 - the frequency with which children and young people in the Northern Territory 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.
 - The one exception to this is concern about *family relationship issues*, which was recorded less commonly among contacts from the Northern Territory (14% c.f. 18% nationally)

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



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

Trends over time

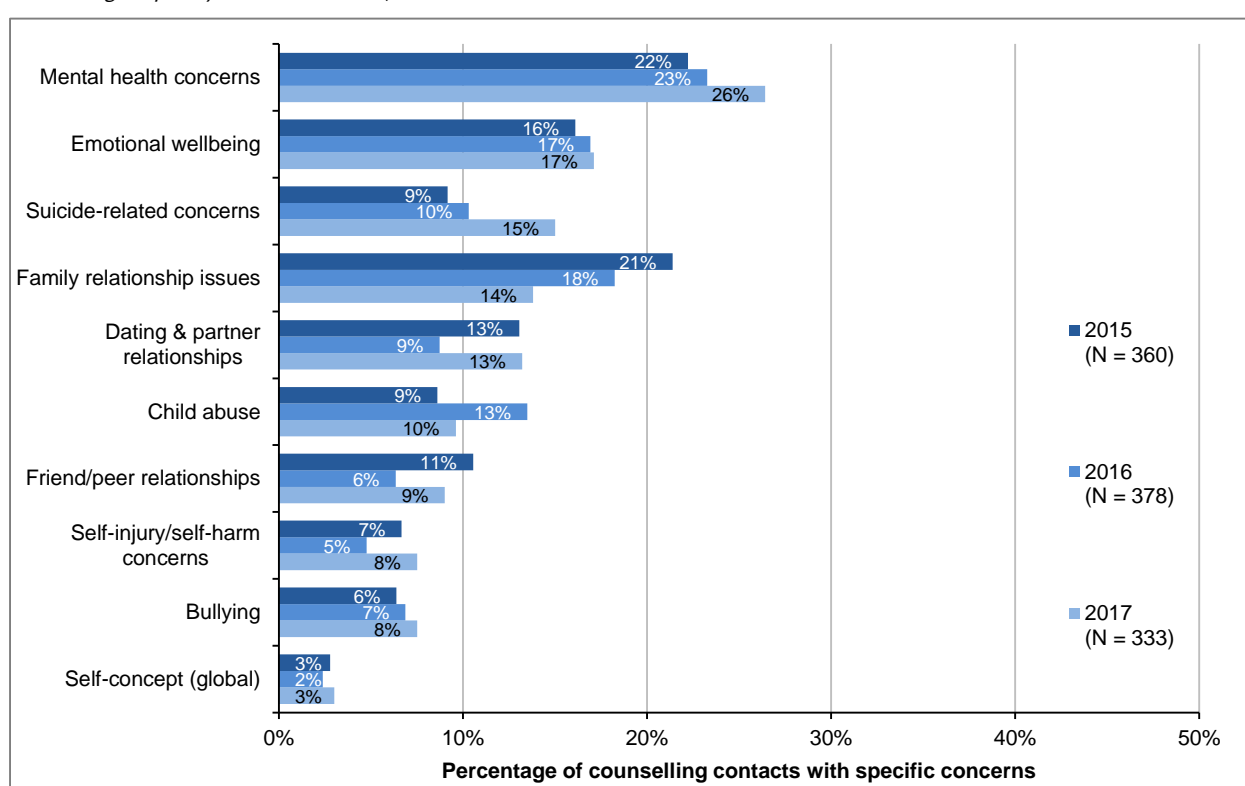
Figure 2 shows the 10 most common concerns of Northern Territory counselling contacts in 2017 and compares this with the frequency with which these concerns were raised by Northern Territory contacts in 2015 and 2016.

Key observations from the data include the following:

- The relative frequency of contacts about mental health concerns has increased in the last three years
- The relative frequency of contacts about suicide has increased in the last three years
- The relative frequency of contacts about family relationship issues has decreased in the last three years

The small size of the Northern Territory subpopulation and the greater likely influence of repeat contacts on percentage frequencies in this context may help to account for the observed variation. In any case, these issues undermine the absolute reliability of the data presented and care needs to be taken, accordingly, with how these data are used and interpreted.

Figure 2. Most frequently recorded concerns of Northern Territory 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 the Northern Territory 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.

Key observations to be noted from the data in Table 4 are:

- There is slight to moderate variation in the frequency with which numerous concerns have been raised over the last three years with counsellors, although few systematic trends are apparent.
- Non-systematic variation is most likely attributable to the small size of the Northern Territory subpopulation and the greater likely influence of repeat contacts on percentage frequencies in this context
- It is likely that, commensurate with national trends, the absolute counts and relative frequencies of *mental health concerns* (as a collection) have increased (up 11% 2015-2017), due to increases (within that collection) of counts of contacts focused on mental-health-related concerns and suicide-related concerns. There is always a risk however that as the raw N of contacts gets small, estimates of proportionate increases or decreases over time become exaggerated, so apparent trends must be interpreted cautiously (for instance that 11% increase 2015-17 represents just 20 contacts).

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

Concern and concern class	2015 (N= 360)		2016 (N= 378)		2017 (N= 333)	
	n	%	n	%	n	%
Mental health & emotional wellbeing	175	48.6%	195	51.6%	195	58.6%
Mental health concerns	80	22.2%	88	23.3%	88	26.4%
Emotional wellbeing	58	16.1%	64	16.9%	57	17.1%
Suicide-related concerns	33	9.2%	39	10.3%	50	15.0%
Self-injury/self-harm concerns	24	6.7%	18	4.8%	25	7.5%
Loss and grief	4	1.1%	8	2.1%	7	2.1%
Friends, peers, partners & dating	84	23.3%	56	14.8%	71	21.3%
Dating and partner relationships	47	13.1%	33	8.7%	44	13.2%
Friends/peer relationships	38	10.6%	24	6.3%	30	9.0%
Family relationships	77	21.4%	69	18.3%	46	13.8%
Child-parent relationships	46	12.8%	53	14.0%	31	9.3%
Other family relationships	19	5.3%	11	2.9%	7	2.1%
Changing family structures	13	3.6%	7	1.9%	5	1.5%
Parenting own children	2	0.6%	2	0.5%	5	1.5%
Identity & self-concept	18	5.0%	22	5.8%	14	4.2%
Self-concept (global)	10	2.8%	9	2.4%	10	3.0%
Body image	1	0.3%	5	1.3%	3	0.9%
Sexual orientation	5	1.4%	3	0.8%	0	0.0%
Gender/sex identification	2	0.6%	2	0.5%	1	0.3%
Disability-related concerns	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
Cultural identity	1	0.3%	3	0.8%	0	0.0%
Violence & abuse (non-family)	31	8.6%	39	10.3%	35	10.5%
Bullying - school related	18	5.0%	23	6.1%	17	5.1%
Bullying - other	5	1.4%	3	0.8%	8	2.4%
Sexual assault or abuse (non-family)	1	0.3%	6	1.6%	5	1.5%
Dating and partner violence	7	1.9%	8	2.1%	4	1.2%
Harassment and assault (non-sexual)	1	0.3%	0	0.0%	1	0.3%

Concern and concern class	2015 (N= 360)		2016 (N= 378)		2017 (N= 333)	
	n	%	n	%	n	%
Sexual harassment	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	1	0.3%
Child abuse & family violence	31	8.6%	51	13.5%	32	9.6%
Physical abuse	16	4.4%	34	9.0%	16	4.8%
Sexual abuse	6	1.7%	2	0.5%	6	1.8%
Emotional abuse	6	1.7%	12	3.2%	6	1.8%
Neglect of child	1	0.3%	3	0.8%	2	0.6%
Exploitation by family member	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
Exposure to family violence	5	1.4%	8	2.1%	3	0.9%
Living-in-care issues	1	0.3%	3	0.8%	4	1.2%
School, education & work	14	3.9%	16	4.2%	10	3.0%
Study and education issues	10	2.8%	8	2.1%	7	2.1%
Employment issues	3	0.8%	7	1.9%	2	0.6%
School authority issues	1	0.3%	1	0.3%	1	0.3%
Physical or sexual health & development	12	3.3%	21	5.6%	11	3.3%
Physical health concerns	1	0.3%	11	2.9%	5	1.5%
Pregnancy-related concerns	2	0.6%	6	1.6%	2	0.6%
Sexual activity	8	2.2%	4	1.1%	4	1.2%
Physical/sexual development	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
Contraception/safe sex	1	0.3%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
Homelessness & basic needs assistance	13	3.6%	13	3.4%	5	1.5%
Homelessness	9	2.5%	9	2.4%	1	0.3%
Practical/material assistance	4	1.1%	3	0.8%	4	1.2%
Financial assistance/concerns	0	0.0%	1	0.3%	0	0.0%
Substance use, addictions & risk-taking	2	0.6%	4	1.1%	9	2.7%
Drug use	2	0.6%	2	0.5%	5	1.5%
Alcohol use	0	0.0%	2	0.5%	2	0.6%
Addictive behaviours (not drugs/alcohol)	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	1	0.3%
Physical risk-taking	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
Gang/cult involvement	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	1	0.3%
Offending, abusive or violent actions	1	0.3%	3	0.8%	3	0.9%
Illegal/offending behaviour	1	0.3%	2	0.5%	0	0.0%
Abusive or violent actions	0	0.0%	1	0.3%	3	0.9%
Sexual violence/offending actions	0	0.0%	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.

Online harassment



Starting work



Respect in relationships



Dealing with peer pressure



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Kids Helpline is a service of **yourtown** for 5-25 year olds

