

Annual Impact Report shows Kids Helpline does not have enough resources to keep up with demand

The annual Kids Helpline Impact Report for 2022, highlights that demand continues to exceed capacity with only two in five children and young people able to get through to a counsellor in 2022.

The findings, released today, outlines the prevalence of symptoms of anxiety and depression (emotional wellbeing), continues to rise among young people. The worsening of mental health can be attributed to limited access to mental health services, and the length of time it takes for a young person to get counselling support when they need it most.

Kids Helpline, a service of **yourtown**, paints a bleak picture in the 2022 Impact Report, with lack of funding to match demand. Mental health interventions dealing with suicide attempts, suicidal ideation and child abuse have also increased compared to before the pandemic.

“As the prevalence of mental health and wellbeing related issues in childhood rises, the significant gap in accessing support deepens. Kids Helpline continues to be a critical safety-net for children and young people, however we cannot keep pace with demand, said **yourtown** CEO Tracy Adams.

“Over the last two years we have undertaken almost 180,000 counselling sessions for young people. As an organisation we are doing the heavy lifting because the cost of mental health services for young people puts access out of reach for most – yet we are free and accessible.

If Government invested a small amount of what they have pulled out of Medicare rebated sessions, and invested into Kids Helpline, we could do more and have greater impacts,” Ms Adams continued.

“The Australian Government’s support to Kids Helpline is still an underspend, but we are doing our best. Often our professional counsellors are the last line of support, providing support 24 hours a day 7 days a week when there is limited after-hours mental health support available to children and young people.

“Nearly 70% of all counselling sessions are provided outside normal business hours, late in the evening or over the weekend.

“Kids Helpline is the safety-net of youth mental health services in Australia,” Ms Adams continued.

“Funding for Kids Helpline needs to be a priority for Government, the current serious funding shortfall means that many children and young people are simply not getting the timely care they need. With adequate Federal and State funding support and timely intervention, young people experiencing mental distress may be able to bounce back, but Kids Helpline requires a major technology uplift to cope with this increasing demand,” said Ms Adams.

These most recent figures show 328,424 young people tried to contact Kids Helpline in 2022 whilst 145,000 connected with a counsellor (44% or 2 in 5) were attended to.

Main findings Kids Helpline Impact Report 2022:

- 328,424 answerable demand
- A child or young person attempts to contact Kids Helpline every 80 seconds
- Every day 56% of contacts from children and young people went unanswered
- Nearly 145,000 answered – 2 in 5 young people
- Of these answered contacts 2 out of 3 counselling sessions are provided outside of regular working hours (33% vs 67%)
- Emotional wellbeing, Mental health, Family relationships and Suicide were the top concerns for young people in 2022
- The average counselling session time in 2022 was 44 mins, and 7 mins for a non-counselling or referral contact. An increase in the complexity of issues and the need for more intensive, longer sessions has seen a spike in dedicated counselling time required since the pandemic
- The My Circle platform supported nearly 5,000 new participants with facilitated peer-to-peer support
- Almost 70% of contacts responded to were from females; 22% were males and 9% were trans & gender diverse.
- 5,026 were Duty of Care interventions - 97 every week
 - Of these duty of care interventions 1 in 3 (37%) were suicide attempts
 - Of these duty of care interventions 1 in 3 (31%) were child abuse
 - Of these duty of care interventions 1 in 10 (10%) were sexual assault
- Self-help content on social media platforms had a total reach of 5.8 Million
- Nearly 56,000 students participated in Kids Helpline @ School (primary and secondary)
- **yourtown** Art Unions and community support funded 52% of Kids Helpline in 2022

Ms Adams said Kids Helpline acted as a safety-net not just for vulnerable children but all children and young people.

Kids Helpline is Australia's only free and confidential 24/7 phone and online counselling service for young people aged 5 to 25. Since 1991, Kids Helpline's specialised counsellors have responded to over 8.6 million contacts. Kids Helpline aims to deliver services that best meet the needs and preferences of young people, with digital services the choice they are increasingly comfortable to use.

Kids Helpline is here anytime and for any reason. If young people want to talk to someone, they can call Kids Helpline on 1800 551 800, 24 hours a day, 7 days a week or use WebChat or email services www.kidshelpline.com.au

Facebook: @kidshelplineofficial, Instagram: @kidshelplineau, Twitter: @Kids HelplineAU.

To buy a **yourtown** Prize Home ticket and support Kids Helpline go to www.yourtown.com.au

contact

For more information or to arrange a media interview, please contact Maree Reason-Cain, **yourtown** Corporate Affairs & Media Advisor.



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about yourtown

yourtown is a trusted provider of services for young people, with a focus on mental health and wellbeing, long term unemployment, prevention of youth suicide, child protection, as well as support for those experiencing family and domestic violence.

yourtown.com.au