

Kids Helpline always there when needed most

- National Child Protection Week runs from 4 – 10 September 2022.
- Kids Helpline reminds families & community that protecting children is everyone's business, every day of the year.
- National Child Protection Week is about putting the best interests of children and young people at the forefront of public attention.

"Kids Helpline shares a commitment to the safety and wellbeing of young people and the prioritisation of the needs of vulnerable young people through our invisible safety-net, in the form of a free 24/7 counselling service for children and young people aged 5 – 25 years of age," said **yourtown** Head of Advocacy and Research Kathryn Mandla.

"Every child in every community needs a fair go. To understand the complexity of child abuse and neglect, we need to work together to prevent it. Kids Helpline is part of the child protection system by working with children and young people dealing with complex needs and risk factors. We have almost 200 counsellors available at no charge around the clock 24 hours a day, to support vulnerable children when they need it.

"Kids Helpline has reported an increase of 254% more emergency interventions over the past five years. The most common reasons were due to child abuse, suicide attempts, sexual assault, and mental health escalation. Across this five-year period, emergency responses for sexual assault have spiked from 31 to 736 interventions. Emergency responses relating to suicide attempts almost tripled, increasing from 659 to 1,800 and those relating to child abuse almost quadrupled from 562 to 2055. Emergency responses due to mental illness escalation increased by 261% from 123 to 444 since FY17/18 to FY21/22.

An emergency intervention happens when Kids Helpline counsellors contact police, child protection or ambulance services when a child or young person is deemed to be at imminent risk of harm. Emergency intervention assistance was required on average 16 times a day in 2021," explained Ms Mandla.

"What we are trying to do, with Child Protection Week is to call on all governments to work with us and other counselling and support services to work collaboratively to support children and young people when they need it, as part of a 'no wrong door' policy.

"In this way, every door in the mental health care system should provide access to the services needed," Ms Mandla continued.

It's a watershed moment, there's pent up demand from children and young people for mental health support, and governments from all levels need to prioritize mental health care for at-risk young people.

Kids Helpline calls on governments to prioritize children's mental health by bolstering funding support to Kids Helpline to match levels of community funding to the service.

"There is immense pressure on Kids Helpline.

"Greater digital access to support the experience of help-seeking by leveraging new technology solutions is a clear opportunity for Kids Helpline. We will be able to reach more young people along every step of their journey by creating multiple, personalised channels to connect with counsellors, which is why future consideration in government budgets will help us sustain crucial services provided by Kids Helpline and allow some of our most vulnerable children and young people get the help they rightly deserve," concluded Ms Mandla.

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contact

For more information or to arrange a media interview, please contact Tracey Gillinder, **yourtown** Head of Marketing and Fundraising.



0434 077478



tgillinder@yourtown.com.au

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.

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