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**Australian Institute of
Health and Welfare**

Young people in child protection and under youth justice supervision 2014–15

DATA LINKAGE SERIES NO. 22



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*Authoritative information and statistics
to promote better health and wellbeing*

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Number 22

Young people in child protection and under youth justice supervision 2014–15

Australian Institute of Health and Welfare
Canberra

Cat. no. CSI 24

The Australian Institute of Health and Welfare is a major national agency that provides reliable, regular and relevant information and statistics on Australia's health and welfare. The Institute's purpose is to provide authoritative information and statistics to promote better health and wellbeing among Australians.

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Contents

- Acknowledgments..... iv**
- Abbreviations..... v**
- Notes v**
- Summaryvi**
- 1 Introduction.....1**
 - 1.1 What is child protection?2
 - 1.2 What is youth justice supervision?2
 - 1.3 Data3
 - Child protection data.....3
 - Youth justice supervision data3
 - Data available only for limited jurisdictions4
 - Age is restricted to young people aged 10–17.....4
 - 1.4 Linkage method.....4
 - 1.5 Report structure6
- 2 Young people in child protection and under youth justice supervision.....7**
- 3 Young people in the child protection system8**
 - 3.1 Overlap with youth justice8
 - 3.2 Investigated notifications.....9
 - 3.3 Care and protection orders10
 - 3.4 Out-of-home care11
- 4 Young people under youth justice supervision12**
 - 4.1 Overlap with child protection.....12
 - 4.2 Community-based supervision.....13
 - 4.3 Detention15
 - 4.4 Age at first youth justice supervision.....17
- 5 Future reporting.....18**
 - 5.1 Data availability for states and territories18
 - 5.2 Longitudinal analyses of pathways and the links between specific events18
 - 5.3 Other data collections.....19
- References20**
- List of figures21**
- List of supplementary tables22**
- Related publications23**

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Abbreviations

AIHW	Australian Institute of Health and Welfare
CP NMDS	Child Protection National Minimum Data Set
JJ NMDS	Juvenile Justice National Minimum Data Set
NMDS	National Minimum Data Set

Notes

Percentages are rounded to 1 decimal place in text.

Rate ratios are calculated from percentages as presented in text.

Figures (charts) present unrounded percentages.

Summary

Research shows that children and young people who have been abused or neglected are at greater risk of engaging in criminal activity and entering the youth justice system. A better understanding of the characteristics and pathways of children and young people who are both in the child protection system and under youth justice supervision can assist support staff, case workers and policy makers to get the best outcomes for these children and young people. With the recent introduction of a national unit record child protection data collection, it is now possible to link child protection and youth justice supervision data to explore the relationships between child protection and youth justice supervision.

This report presents information on young people aged 10–17 who were involved in the child protection system and subject to youth justice supervision at some time during 2014–15, using data from the linked child protection and youth justice supervision data collection. Results are limited to the 5 jurisdictions with both child protection and youth justice National Minimum Data Set data for 2014–15 (Victoria, Queensland, South Australia, Tasmania and the Australian Capital Territory) – a total of 30,402 young people aged 10–17.

The results from the linked data collection will be enhanced in future years as data become available for more states and territories and as years of data accumulate. Linking to other health and welfare data collections would also provide additional information on multiple service use among vulnerable children and young people.

Young people in the child protection system were 14 times as likely as the general population to be under youth justice supervision in the same year

In 2014–15, 5.5% of those aged 10–17 who were in the child protection system were also under youth justice supervision in the same year (although not necessarily at the same time), compared with just 0.4% of the general population aged 10–17. Indigenous young people in the child protection system were more than twice as likely to be under youth justice supervision as non-Indigenous young people (10.4% compared with 4.3%).

The level of dual involvement was 8.0% for those under care and protection orders, 6.3% for those in out-of-home care and 4.1% for those who were the subject of an investigated notification.

Young people under youth justice supervision were 15 times as likely as the general population to be in the child protection system in the same year

In 2014–15, 32.4% of those under youth justice supervision were also in the child protection system. Two (2) in 5 (40.8%) of those in detention were involved in the child protection system in the same year, which is 19 times the rate for the general population. The level of child protection involvement for those under community-based supervision in 2014–15 was also high: with about one-third (32.1%) also in the child protection system.

The younger someone was at their first youth justice supervision, the more likely they were to also be in child protection in 2014–15: of those under youth justice supervision in 2014–15, 3 in 5 (60.0%) of those aged 10 at their first youth justice supervision were also in child protection in 2014–15, compared with 9.4% of those aged 17.

1 Introduction

In 2014–15, around 107,100 children and young people aged 0–17 had a notification of abuse or neglect investigated by a department responsible for child protection (AIHW 2016a) and almost 10,000 young people aged 10–17 were supervised by a department responsible for youth justice, in the community or in youth detention centres (AIHW 2016c). Some young people are involved in both the child protection system and youth justice supervision (AIHW 2016b).

Research shows that children and young people who have been abused or neglected are at greater risk of engaging in criminal activity and entering the youth justice system. For example, one study found that being maltreated as a child roughly doubles the probability of committing a crime (Currie & Tekin 2006). Similarly, those who are in the youth justice system, particularly in detention, are highly likely to have had a history of abuse or neglect. A survey of young people in youth detention in New South Wales found that 81% of young women and 57% of young men had been abused or neglected, while 49% and 19%, respectively, had suffered ‘severe’ abuse or neglect (Indig et al. 2011).

Procedures used within the child protection and youth justice systems can also facilitate involvement of one system with the other. For example, contact with youth justice agencies may lead to a child protection notification being made if abuse or neglect is suspected by, or reported to, agency staff (AIFS 2016).

This highlights the importance of better understanding the characteristics and pathways of children and young people who are both in the child protection system and under youth justice supervision. This information can assist support staff, case workers and policy makers to get the best outcomes for children and young people.

Previous work by the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare (AIHW) found that linking child protection and youth justice supervision data was both feasible and beneficial (AIHW 2012). This earlier work used data from the Juvenile Justice National Minimum Data Set (JJ NMDS) along with selected Victorian and Tasmanian child protection data relating to notifications. With the introduction of a national unit record data collection on children and young people in the child protection system – the Child Protection National Minimum Data Set (CP NMDS) – it is now possible to link child protection system data to the existing data on youth justice supervision. This linkage, in turn, enables reporting on the relationships between child protection and youth justice supervision on an annual basis (AIHW 2015). The first of these annual reports was released in 2016; it was based on 2013–14 data (AIHW 2016b). This report, the second in the series, is based on 2014–15 data.

This report presents information on a total of 30,402 young people who were involved in the child protection system or under youth justice supervision at some time during 2014–15 in Victoria, Queensland, South Australia, Tasmania and the Australian Capital Territory. Of this group, 4.9% (or 1,499) were in both child protection and under youth justice supervision in that year. This is a subset of the total number of children and young people in these states and territory who were involved in both the child protection system and under youth justice supervision at some point during childhood and adolescence, as some children were in child protection in the years before or after youth justice supervision, but not during the same year. This report also does not differentiate between young people who were involved with the child protection system first and young people who were first involved with the youth justice system.

As more data become available in future years, it will be possible to more fully analyse the links and pathways between child protection and youth justice supervision over a number of years. Detailed information on the method used for this report can be found in *Developing a linked data collection to report on the relationships between child protection and youth justice supervision* (AIHW 2015).

1.1 What is child protection?

In Australia, state and territory departments responsible for child protection assist vulnerable children and young people who have been, or are at risk of being, abused, neglected or otherwise harmed, or whose parents are unable to provide adequate care or protection (AIHW 2016a).

There are 3 main components of the child protection system:

- the assessment and investigation of **notifications** of possible abuse, neglect or other harm: these notifications are screened by child protection departments; if necessary, the report is investigated. If the investigation finds that the child is being or is likely to be abused, neglected or otherwise harmed, the notification is recorded as substantiated
- **care and protection orders**, which are legal orders or arrangements that give child protection departments some responsibility for a child's welfare
- the placement of children in **out-of-home care**, which is overnight care for which the department has made or offered a financial payment to the carer. This option is taken up when parents cannot give adequate care, when children need a more protective environment, or when other accommodation is needed during family conflict. Consistent with the principle of keeping children with their families, out-of-home care is considered an intervention of last resort.

It is possible for children and young people to be involved in each of these 3 components at the same time. For more information on child protection policies and practices in the states and territories, see AIHW 2016a.

1.2 What is youth justice supervision?

In Australia, the states and territories are responsible for dealing with young people who have committed, or who are alleged to have committed, criminal offences. The youth justice system applies to children and young people aged 10–17 at the time of the offence in all states and territories except Queensland, where it applies to those aged 10–16. Children aged under 10 cannot be charged with a criminal offence in any state or territory. Young people enter the system when they are investigated by police for allegedly committing an offence and (depending on the outcome of the investigation) charges may be laid. If the young person is proven guilty, they will then be sentenced by a court.

Youth justice supervision is a component of the youth justice system. Young people may be supervised by a youth justice department at any stage of the youth justice system. There are 2 main types of supervision:

- **community-based supervision**, for young people who reside in the community who are supervised by the youth justice department. Young people may be unsentenced (before a court hearing or while awaiting the outcome of a trial or sentencing) or may have been sentenced to a period of community-based supervision by a court. Community-based

supervision also includes young people who have been released from sentenced detention on parole or supervised release

- **detention**, for young people who are detained in a youth justice centre or detention facility. As with those under community-based supervision, these young people may be unsentenced or may have been sentenced to a period of detention by a court.

Young people may be under multiple types of youth justice supervision in the same year, and may be under multiple types at the same time where these supervision orders relate to different court matters.

Young people who are in the youth justice system may also be unsupervised in the community (for example, on unsupervised bail). Information on these unsupervised community-based orders is not available from the data collection on youth justice supervision and is not included in this report.

For more information on youth justice supervision in Australia, see *Youth justice in Australia 2014–15* (AIHW 2016c).

1.3 Data

Child protection data

Child protection data in this report are from the **Child Protection National Minimum Data Set** (CP NMDS). This longitudinal person-based data set contains information on the demographics of children and young people who receive child protection services, the details of the notifications received by child protection departments, and the care and protection orders and out-of-home care placements relating to these children and young people in a financial year. It contains data for all states and territories except New South Wales. For information on data quality, see the CP NMDS 2014–15 data quality statement at <<http://meteor.aihw.gov.au/content/index.phtml/itemId/635365>>.

The scope of child protection data in this report is restricted to investigated notifications, care and protection orders and out-of-home care. Excluded are notifications that were not investigated, care and protection orders that were 'other' or 'not stated', and living arrangements that do not constitute out-of-home care.

As the legislative and policy frameworks for assessing child protection notifications vary widely between states and territories, the number of notifications and the proportion of these that are investigated are not comparable between states and territories.

Youth justice supervision data

Youth justice supervision data in this report are from the **Juvenile Justice National Minimum Data Set** (JJ NMDS). This longitudinal person-based data set contains information on the demographics of young people who are supervised by youth justice departments in the financial year and the details of their unsentenced and sentenced supervision, both in the community and in youth justice detention centres. It contains data for all states and territories except Western Australia and the Northern Territory. For information on data quality, see the JJ NMDS data quality statement at <<http://meteor.aihw.gov.au/content/index.phtml/itemId/635597>>.

In this report, 'youth justice supervision' refers only to supervised community-based orders and detention orders (both unsentenced and sentenced). It does not include unsupervised orders such as unsupervised bail, or diversionary activities that are not supervised orders.

Data available only for limited jurisdictions

The data in this report relate only to selected jurisdictions. As the CP NMDS at the time of linkage did not contain data for New South Wales, and the JJ NMDS did not contain data for Western Australia and the Northern Territory, the data in this report relate only to Victoria, Queensland, South Australia, Tasmania and the Australian Capital Territory. For comparative purposes, the rates of child protection and youth justice supervision for the general population mentioned in this report are restricted to these 5 jurisdictions.

Together, these 5 jurisdictions account for 46.2% of those aged 10–17 receiving child protection services and 51.3% of those under youth justice supervision in Australia in 2014–15 (AIHW 2016a, 2016c). It is expected that data for additional states and territories will be available in future years; see Chapter 5 for more details.

Age is restricted to young people aged 10–17

Data in this report relate only to young people aged 10–17. This report explores the involvement of young people in both the child protection and youth justice supervision systems in the same financial year. Children aged under 10 are excluded from this report, even if they were in the child protection system, as children aged under 10 cannot be under youth justice supervision. As years of data accumulate, it will be possible to explore the involvement of children and young people in both sectors over a number of years; see Chapter 5 for more information.

1.4 Linkage method

The available data were linked using a **multi-step key-based linkage method**, which allows data collections without common person identifiers or full names to be linked. The aim of key-based linkage is to minimise the likelihood both of false positives (where records that belong to different people are incorrectly identified as belonging to the same person) and of false negatives (where records that belong to the same person are incorrectly identified as belonging to different people). Using linkage keys protects the privacy of individuals, and lowers the burden on data providers, as existing data collections can be used.

This multi-step key-based linkage method uses a series of keys that vary in distinctiveness to reduce the possibility that records belonging to different people are incorrectly recorded as belonging to the same person. At the same time, it increases the possibility that records belonging to the same person will be identified, even where components such as family name have changed. This method can be used where values are missing (such as unknown date of birth) and, where available, it can also use alternative information such as alias names.

To link the child protection and youth justice supervision data collections, linkage keys were formed using data items available in both collections: selected letters of name, date of birth, sex, Indigenous status and information about the suburb or town of usual residence. Complete address information was not available.

Once all the possible linkage keys were identified, the utility of each key was measured using the available child protection and youth justice supervision data. These measures were used to order the keys, and the keys were then tested to find the point at which further linkage keys added no value to the linkage. A total of 331 keys were used to link the 2014–15 data collections.

The resulting ordered list of linkage keys was used to link the individual state and territory data sets. The most precise key (as decided by the measures of utility) was used first, followed by the next most precise key, and so on. The final linked data set was then created by combining the records that linked using the ordered list of keys with the records that remained unlinked. A project-specific identifier was created so that distinct people could be counted.

Once the linked data set was constructed, analysis data sets were created for any youth justice supervision, including a breakdown of detention and community-based supervision, and any child protection involvement, including a breakdown of investigated notifications, care and protection orders, and out-of-home care:

- The youth justice supervision dataset was created by extracting record identifiers from both the detention file and the community-based supervision file in the youth justice supervision dataset (the JJ NMDS).
 - The **detention data set** was created by extracting data from the detention file in the source youth justice supervision data set. As it is not possible to be in detention in more than one state or territory at the same time, conflicting records (where a detention record for a person starts or ends in one state or territory while another detention record for the same person is active in another state or territory) were identified and removed. Less than 0.1% of individuals had conflicting detention records and no individuals were removed as a result of this data cleaning, which indicates that the quality of the linkage was high.
 - The **community-based supervision data set** was created by extracting information from the orders file in the source youth justice supervision data set. Episodes of community-based supervision were created by removing any portions of community-based orders that were covered by a period of detention (as a young person cannot be in detention and under community-based supervision at the same time).
- The child protection data set was created by extracting record identifiers from the investigated notifications, care and protection orders and out-of-home care data sets.
 - The **investigated notifications data set** was created by extracting information from the notifications file in the source child protection data set. All notifications that were investigated in 2014–15 (including those where the investigation was in progress at the end of the financial year) were included.
 - The **care and protection orders data set** was created by extracting information from the care and protection orders file in the source child protection data set.
 - The **out-of-home care data set** was created by extracting information from the living arrangements file in the source child protection data set. As it is not possible to be in detention and in out-of-home care at the same time, a check was run to identify and remove conflicting records (where a person has an out-of-home record that starts or ends while a detention record is active). (Detention records that ended the same day that an out-of-home care record started and out-of-home care records that started the

same day that a detention record ended were not considered to conflict.) This check revealed that in 2014–15 there were no conflicting records.

For more detail on the linkage method, see *Developing a linked data collection to report on the relationships between child protection and youth justice supervision* (AIHW 2015).

1.5 Report structure

There are 5 chapters in this report:

- This first chapter introduces the report, provides an overview of child protection and youth justice supervision and describes the data and the method used to create the linked data set and resulting analysis data sets.
- Chapter 2 explores the demographic characteristics of young people involved in both child protection and youth justice supervision.
- Chapter 3 examines the demographic characteristics of young people involved in both child protection and youth justice supervision from the perspective of the child protection system, by reporting on the proportion of young people in the child protection system that is also under youth justice supervision.
- Chapter 4 examines the demographic characteristics of young people involved in both child protection and youth justice supervision from the perspective of youth justice supervision, by reporting on the proportion of young people under youth justice supervision that is also in the child protection system.
- Chapter 5 summarises the limitations of the current report and outlines ways in which future reporting can be expanded and enhanced.

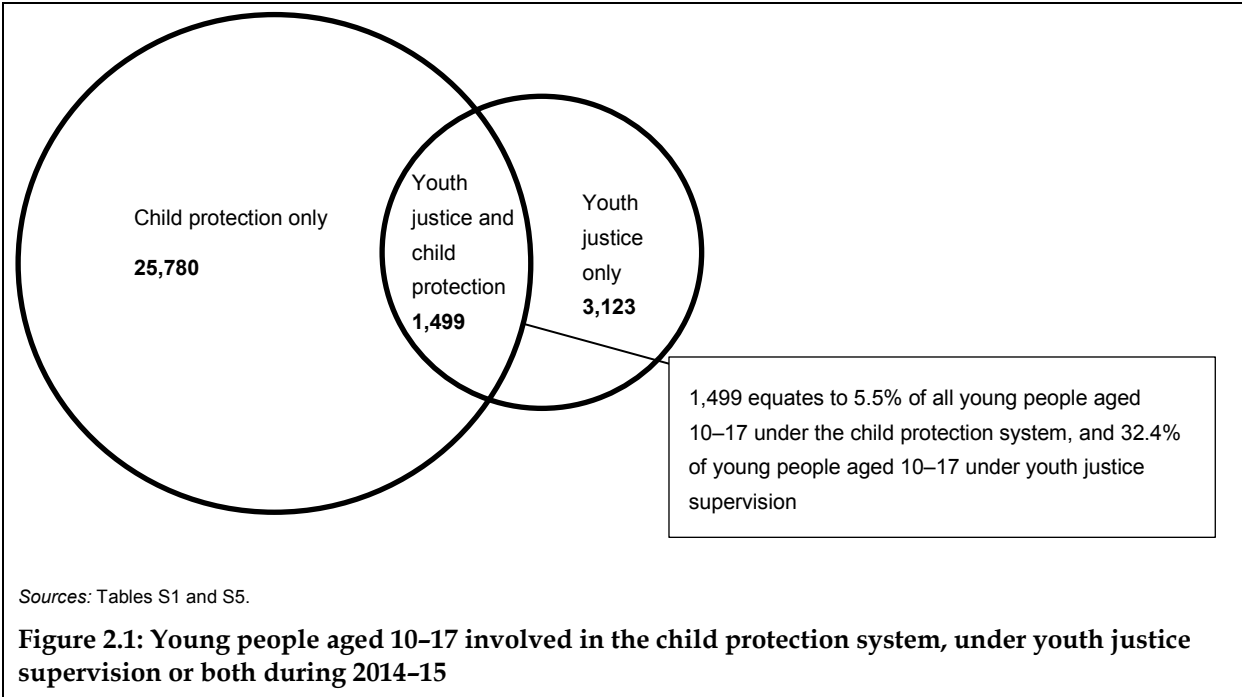
Supplementary tables referred to in this report (tables with a prefix of S) are available to download from <<http://www.aihw.gov.au/publications>>.

2 Young people in child protection and under youth justice supervision

This chapter provides information on the number of young people involved in any part of the child protection system and under any type of youth justice supervision during 2014–15. As noted in Chapter 1, the data in this chapter relate only to Victoria, Queensland, South Australia, Tasmania and the Australian Capital Territory.

In 2014–15, there were 30,402 young people aged 10–17 involved in the child protection system, under youth justice supervision, or both. Of these, 4.9% (1,499 young people) were involved in both the child protection system and under youth justice supervision.

Of the 27,279 young people aged 10–17 involved in the child protection system during 2014–15, only 5.5% had some type of youth justice supervision during the same year. However, of the 4,622 young people aged 10–17 under youth justice supervision, 32.4% had been involved in child protection during the same year (Figure 2.1). This suggests that while experiencing youth justice supervision is uncommon among those receiving child protection services, it is not uncommon for those who are under youth justice supervision to have had contact with the child protection system.



As these data relate to the 2014–15 period only, the actual involvement in both sectors over time may be higher. A full analysis of the complete overlap between these sectors could be done once all child protection system and youth justice supervision data over a number of years are considered. This could be achieved once suitable longitudinal child protection data are available (see Chapter 5).

3 Young people in the child protection system

This chapter explores the demographic characteristics of young people involved in both child protection and youth justice supervision from the perspective of those within the child protection system. As noted in Chapter 1, the data in this chapter relate only to Victoria, Queensland, South Australia, Tasmania and the Australian Capital Territory.

As data accumulate over time, it will be possible to construct a longitudinal data set that can be used to explore the links between different types of events (see Chapter 5 for more details).

Key findings

Young people aged 10–17 who were receiving child protection services in 2014–15 were 14 times as likely as the general population to be under youth justice supervision at some time in 2014–15.

Compared with 0.4% of the general population aged 10–17 under youth justice supervision:

- 4.1% of those who were the subject of an investigated notification were also under youth justice supervision
- 8.0% of those who were the subject of a care and protection order were also under youth justice supervision
- 6.3% of those in out-of-home care were also under youth justice supervision.

3.1 Overlap with youth justice

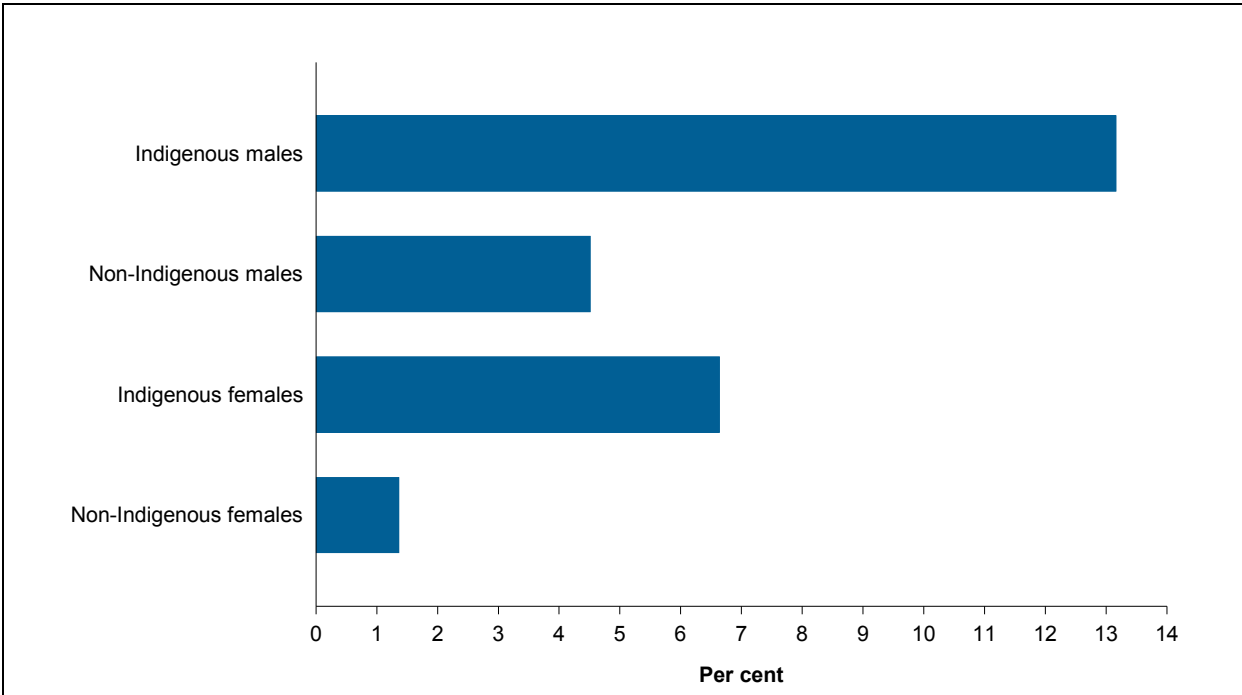
There were 27,279 young people aged 10–17 involved in the child protection system during 2014–15, of which 5.5% also had some type of youth justice supervision during the same year (Table S1). This is 14 times the rate of youth justice supervision for the general population (Table S11).

Males and Indigenous young people were over-represented among the group of young people aged 10–17 involved in the child protection system who also had youth justice supervision in 2014–15. Among this group:

- Indigenous young people were over 2 times as likely as non-Indigenous young people to be under youth justice supervision during the year (10.4% compared with 4.3%)
- males were more than 2 times as likely as females to have youth justice supervision during the year (7.9% compared with 3.2%).

3.2 Investigated notifications

Of the 16,585 young people aged 10–17 who were the subject of an investigated notification in 2014–15, 4.1% were also under youth justice supervision in the same year (Table S2), which is 10 times the rate of youth justice supervision for the general population (Table S11). Youth justice supervision was most likely for Indigenous young people: 13.2% of Indigenous males and 6.6% of Indigenous females who were the subject of an investigated notification were also under youth justice supervision during the year, compared with 4.5% of non-Indigenous males and 1.4% of non-Indigenous females (Figure 3.1).



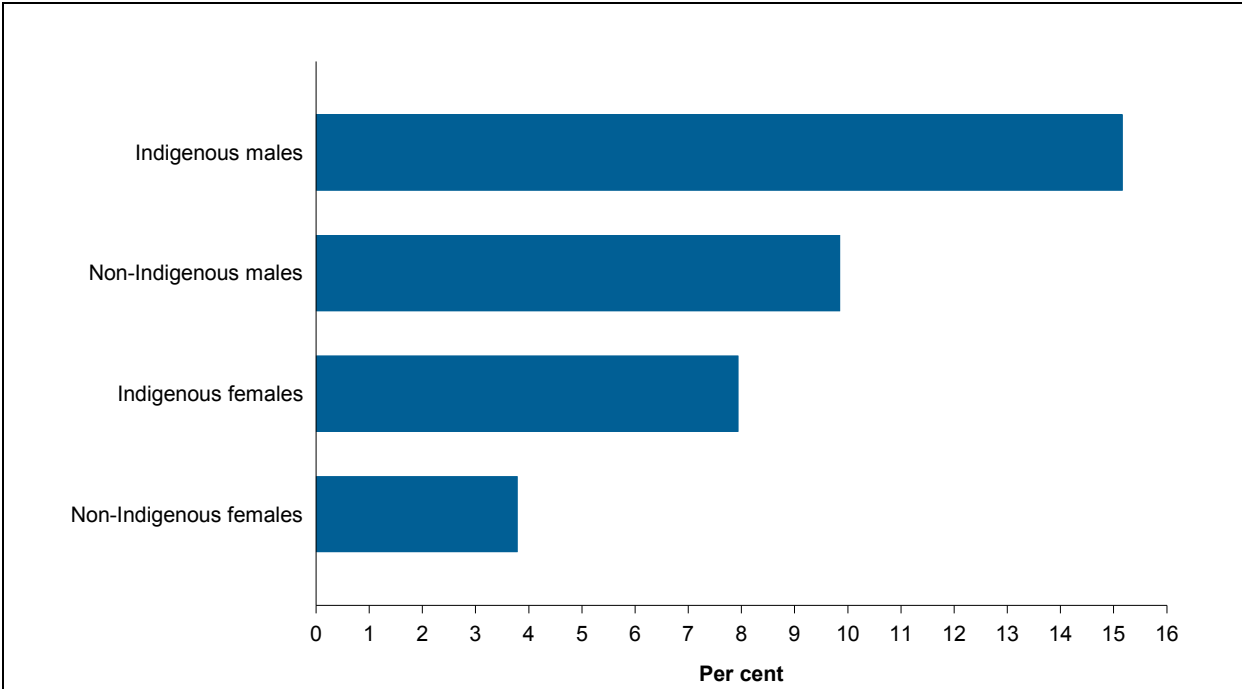
Source: Table S2.

Figure 3.1: Young people aged 10–17 who were the subject of investigated notifications and also under youth justice supervision in 2014–15, by sex and Indigenous status

Further analysis showed there was little difference between young people who had at least one notification substantiated through the year and those whose investigated notifications were not substantiated: 4.2% of those with a substantiated notification were also under youth justice supervision in the same year, compared with 3.9% of those whose investigated notifications were not substantiated.

3.3 Care and protection orders

Youth justice supervision in the same year was twice as likely for those who were the subject of a care and protection order as for those who were the subject of an investigated notification. Of the 12,301 young people aged 10–17 who were the subject of a care and protection order, 8.0% were also under youth justice supervision in 2014–15 (Table S3). This means, in 2014–15, children aged 10–17 under care and protection orders were 20 times as likely as the general population of the same age to be under youth justice supervision (Table S11). Again, youth justice supervision was most likely for Indigenous males: 15.2% of those who were the subject of a care and protection order were also under youth justice supervision, compared with 9.9% of non-Indigenous males, 7.9% of Indigenous females and 3.8% of non-Indigenous females (Figure 3.2).

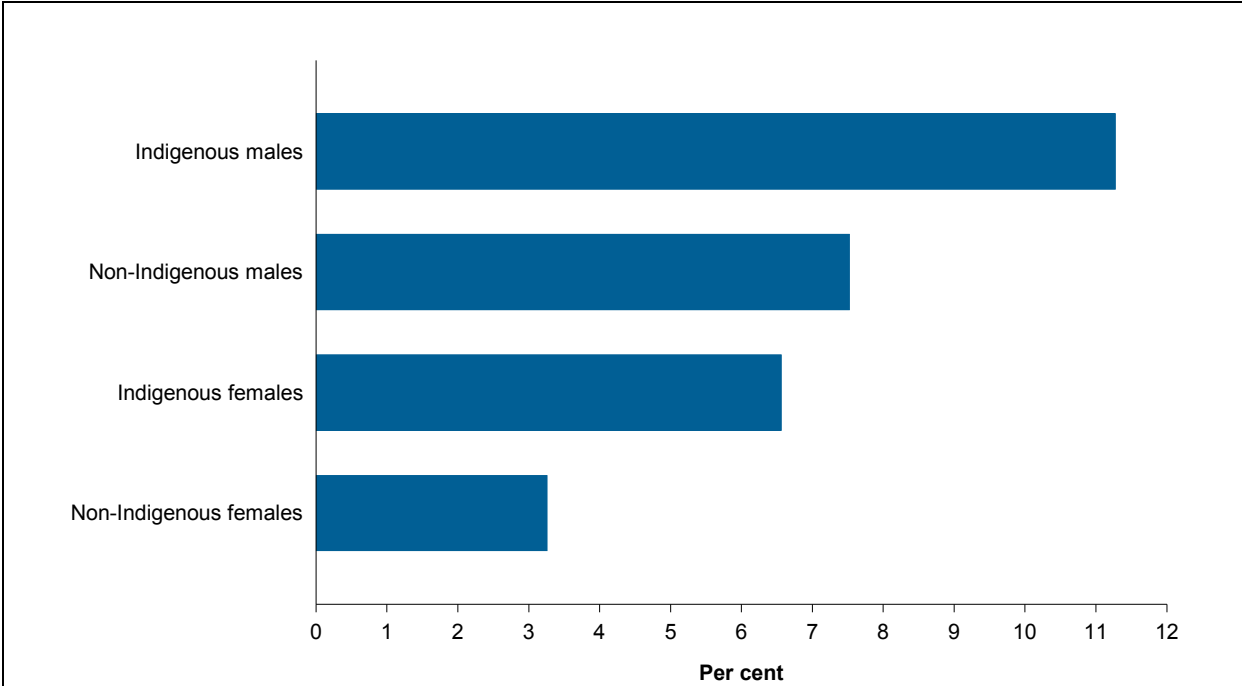


Source: Table S3.

Figure 3.2: Young people aged 10–17 who were the subject of a care and protection order and also under youth justice supervision in 2014–15, by sex and Indigenous status

3.4 Out-of-home care

Of the 10,840 young people aged 10–17 who were in out-of-home care during 2014–15, 6.3% were also under youth justice supervision (Table S4). Young people aged 10–17 in out-of-home care were therefore 16 times as likely as the equivalent general population to be under youth justice supervision (Table S11). Indigenous males were again most likely to also be under youth justice supervision, with 11.3% of those in out-of-home care also under youth justice supervision, compared with 7.5% of non-Indigenous males, 6.6% of Indigenous females and 3.3% of non-Indigenous females (Figure 3.3).



Source: Table S4.

Figure 3.3: Young people aged 10–17 who were in out-of-home care and also under youth justice supervision in 2014–15, by sex and Indigenous status

4 Young people under youth justice supervision

This chapter explores the demographic characteristics of young people involved in both child protection and youth justice supervision from the perspective of those under youth justice supervision. As noted in Chapter 1, the data in this chapter relate only to Victoria, Queensland, South Australia, Tasmania and the Australian Capital Territory. As data accumulate over time, it will be possible to construct a longitudinal data set that can be used to explore the links between different types of events (see Chapter 5 for more details).

Key findings

Young people aged 10–17 who were under youth justice supervision in 2014–15 were 15 times as likely as the general population to be receiving child protection services at some time in 2014–15.

Compared with 2.1% of the general population aged 10–17 in the child protection system:

- 32.1% of those under community-based supervision were also in the child protection system
- 40.8% of those in detention were also in the child protection system.

The younger someone was at their first youth justice supervision, the more likely they were to also be in child protection in 2014–15.

4.1 Overlap with child protection

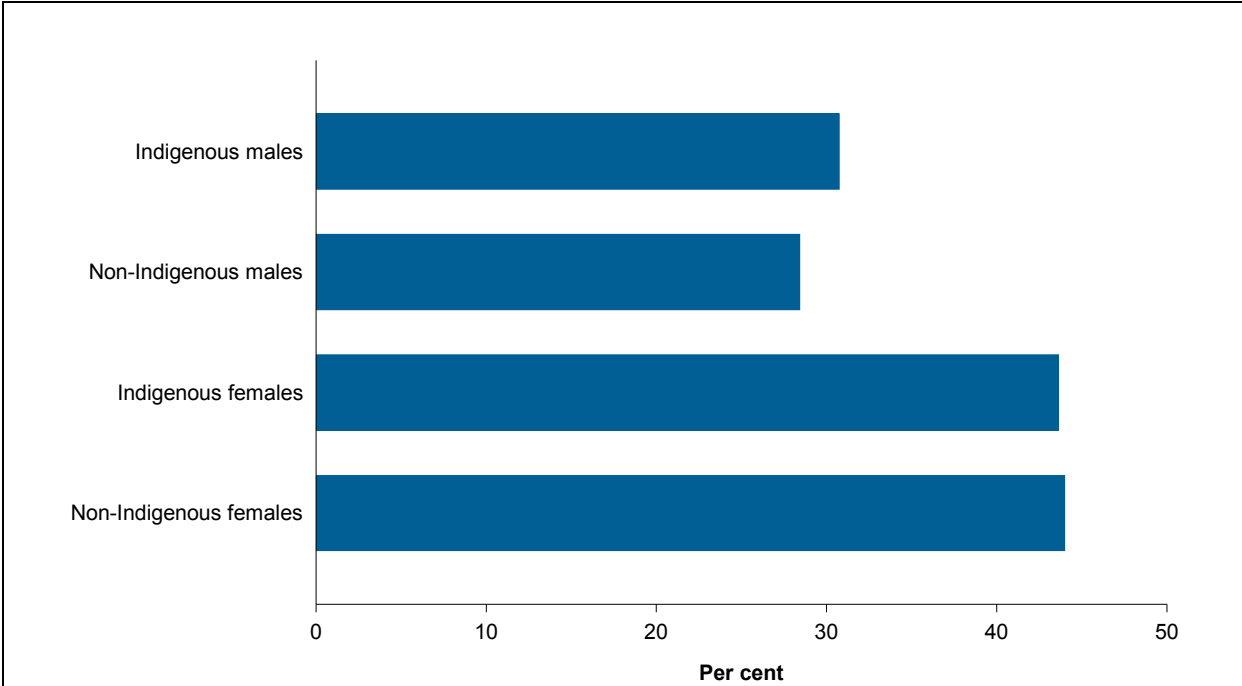
Of the 4,622 young people aged 10–17 under youth justice supervision during 2014–15, 32.4% also had contact with the child protection system during the same year (Table S5). This is 15 times the rate for the general population (Table S11).

Females under youth justice supervision were 1.5 times as likely as males to have been involved with the child protection system during the year (43.2% compared with 29.4%).

Indigenous and non-Indigenous young people under youth justice supervision had similar levels of contact with the child protection system (34.2% compared with 31.9%, respectively).

4.2 Community-based supervision

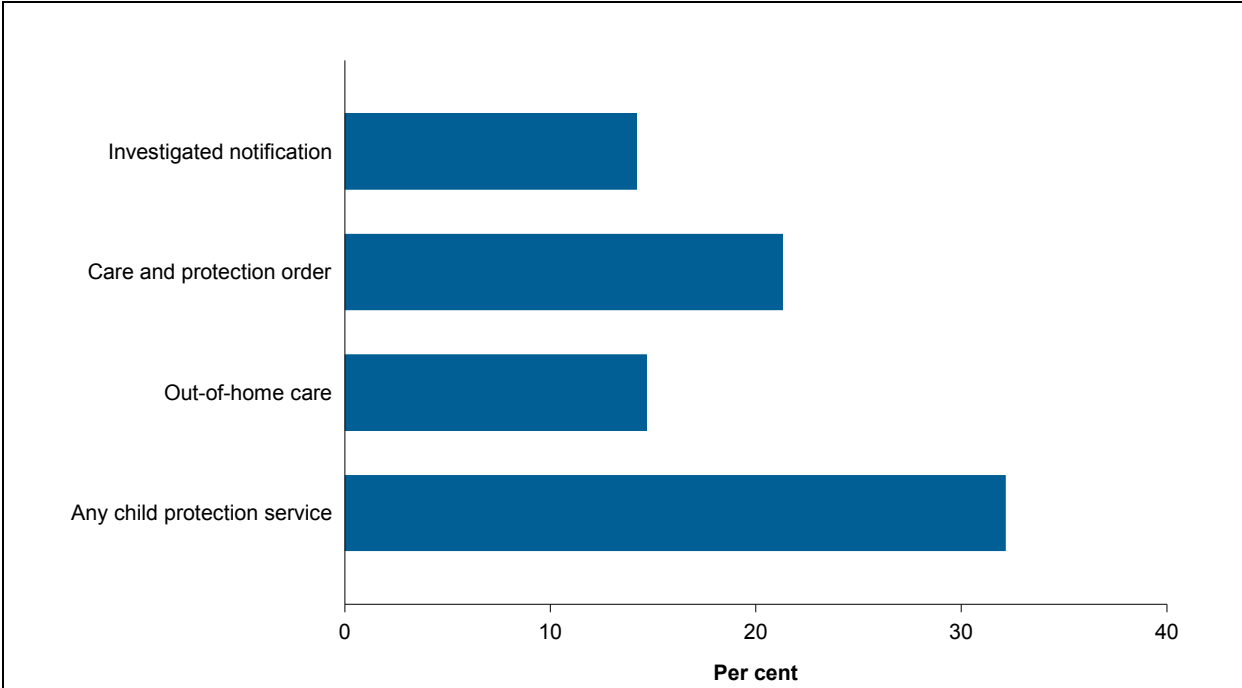
Just under one-third (32.1%) of the 4,280 young people under youth justice community-based supervision were also in the child protection system in 2014–15 (Table S6), which is 15 times the rate for the general population (Table S11). Of those under community-based supervision, young women were most likely to also be in the child protection system: 43.6% of Indigenous females and 44.0% of non-Indigenous females under youth justice supervision were also in child protection, compared with 30.7% of Indigenous males and 28.4% of non-Indigenous males (Figure 4.1).



Source: Table S6.

Figure 4.1: Young people aged 10–17 who were under community-based supervision and also in the child protection system in 2014–15, by sex and Indigenous status

For those under community-based supervision in 2014–15 who were also in the child protection system in the same year, the most common types of child protection service were care and protection orders (21.3% of those under youth justice community-based supervision), followed by out-of-home care (14.7%) and investigated notifications (14.2%) (Figure 4.2). Non-Indigenous females were most likely to also be the subject of a care and protection order or to be in out-of-home care; however, Indigenous young women were the most likely to be the subject of investigated notifications (Table S7).



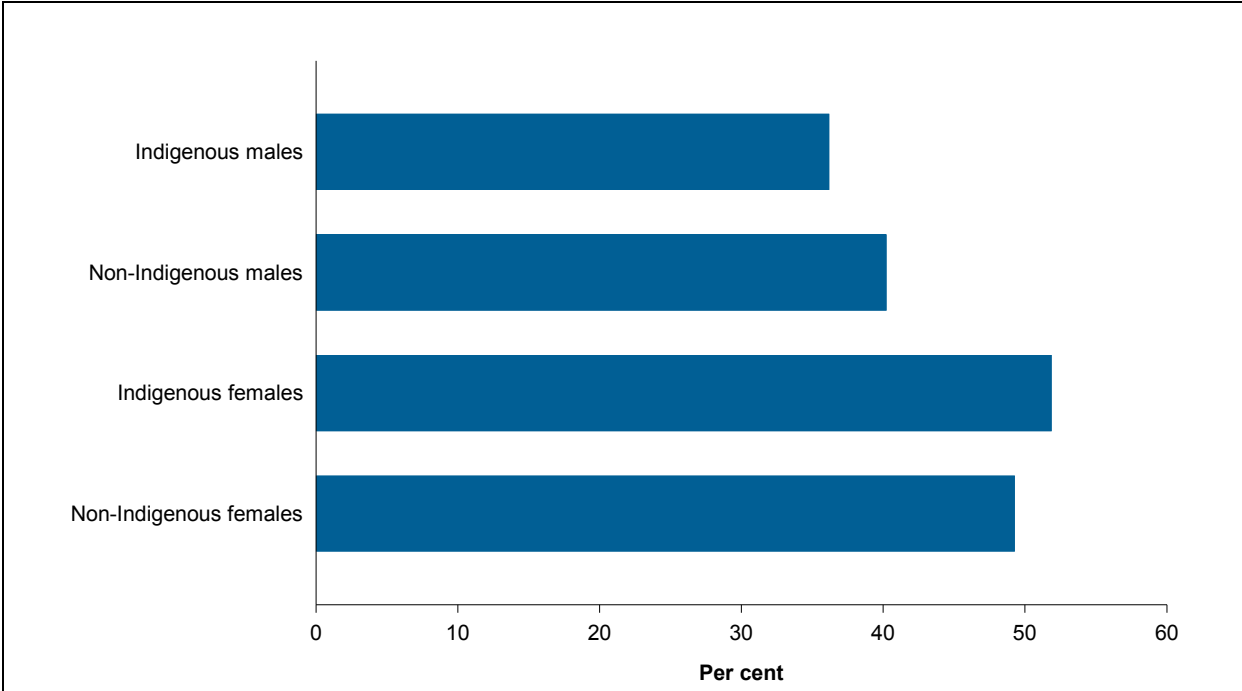
Source: Table S7.

Figure 4.2: Young people aged 10–17 who were under community-based supervision and also in the child protection system in 2014–15, by type of child protection service

4.3 Detention

Over one-third (40.8%) of the 1,909 young people in detention in 2014–15 were also in the child protection system at some time in the same year (Table S8), which means they were 19 times as likely as the equivalent general population to be in the child protection system (Table S11).

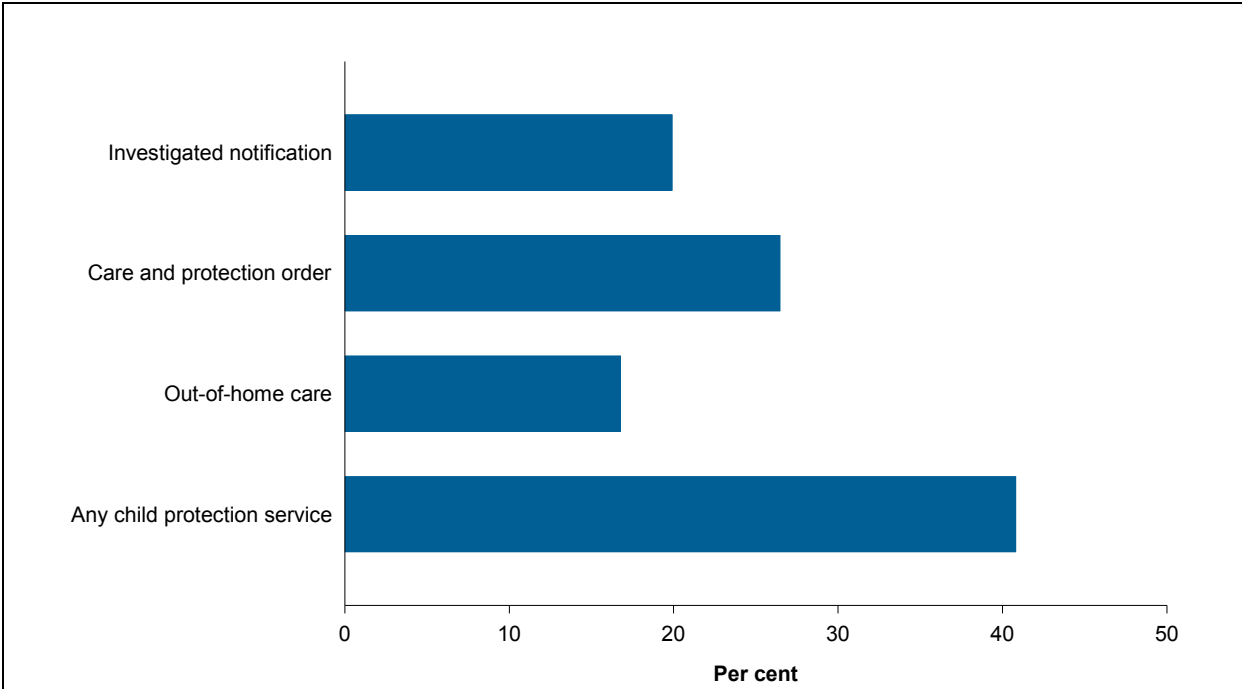
About half of Indigenous and non-Indigenous young women in detention during the year were also in the child protection system (51.9% and 49.2%, respectively) (Figure 4.3). Indigenous males in detention were slightly less likely than non-Indigenous males in detention to also be in the child protection system (36.2% compared with 40.2%).



Source: Table S8.

Figure 4.3: Young people aged 10–17 who were in detention and also in the child protection system in 2014–15, by sex and Indigenous status

The most common types of child protection service for those in detention who were also in the child protection system in 2014–15 were care and protection orders (26.5%), followed by investigated notifications (19.9%) and out-of-home care (16.8%) (Figure 4.4).

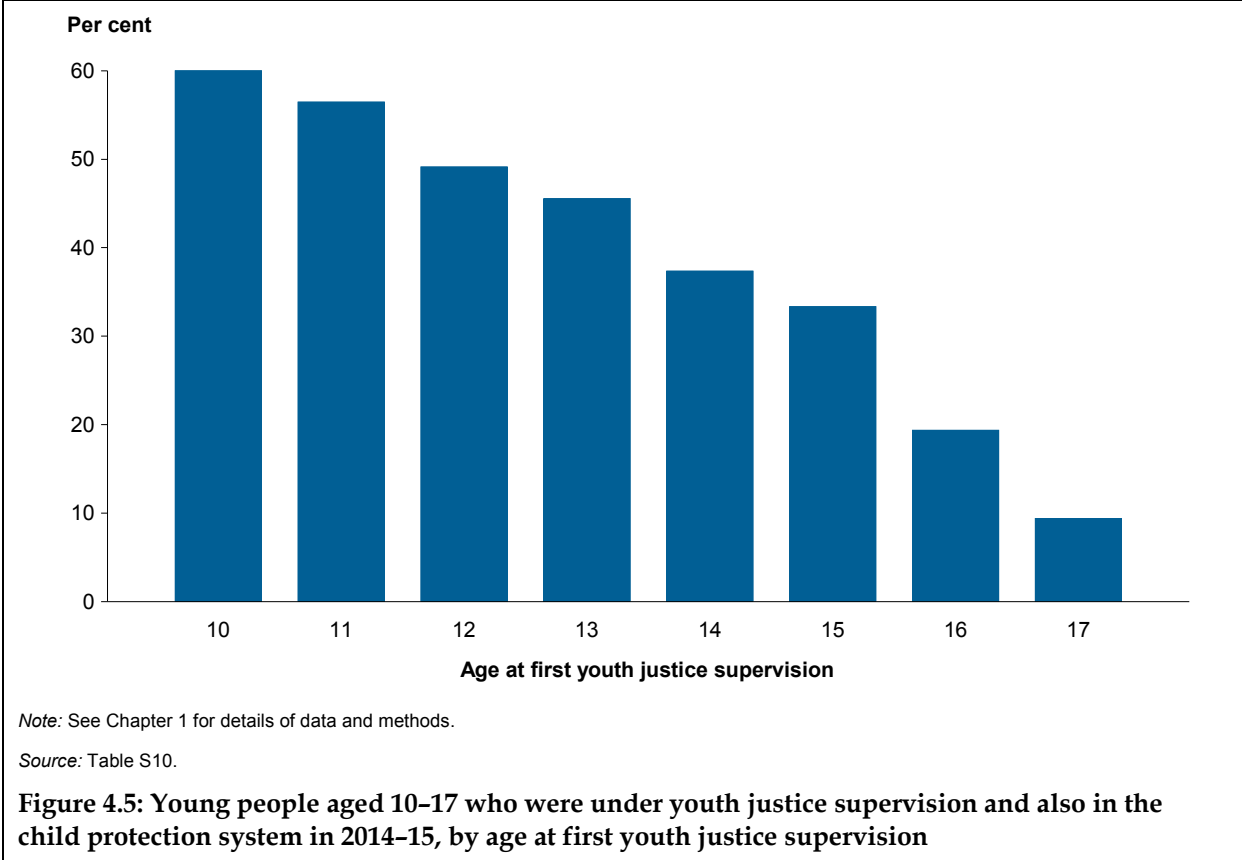


Source: Table S9.

Figure 4.4: Young people aged 10-17 who were in detention and also in the child protection system in 2014-15, by type of child protection service

4.4 Age at first youth justice supervision

Those who were younger at their first youth justice supervision were more likely to also be in child protection in 2014–15 than those who were older at their first youth justice supervision (which may have been before 2014–15) (Figure 4.5). Three (3) in 5 (60.0%) of those aged 10 at their first youth justice supervision were also in child protection, compared with 9.4% of those aged 17.



5 Future reporting

This report expands on earlier AIHW reports that linked selected child protection data with the youth justice supervision data set (the JJ NMDS) (AIHW 2012, 2015, 2016b), which showed that linking child protection and youth justice supervision data on an annual basis is both feasible and informative. This report updates these findings with results based on the 2014–15 data collections.

Results from the linked data collection will be enhanced in future years as data become available for more states and territories and as years of data accumulate. As well, including data from other health and welfare data collections will be considered to supply more information on multiple service use among vulnerable children and young people.

5.1 Data availability for states and territories

Data limitations meant that analyses in this report were restricted to data for those who were in child protection or under youth justice supervision in the following 5 Australian jurisdictions: Victoria, Queensland, South Australia, Tasmania and the Australian Capital Territory. Child protection data for Western Australia are already available, and it is expected that youth justice supervision data for Western Australia will be available in 2017, which means that data for this state is likely to be included in future reports.

As data for more jurisdictions become available, there will be sufficient numbers to explore the links between child protection and youth justice supervision by demographic characteristics other than sex and Indigenous status (including age, remoteness and socioeconomic status of usual residence) and to examine the similarities and differences between the states and territories.

5.2 Longitudinal analyses of pathways and the links between specific events

This report used available data to explore the characteristics of young people who were in both the child protection system and under youth justice supervision in 2014–15. The findings of this report were consistent with the statistics presented in the previous report using 2013–14 data (AIHW 2016b).

These data are a subset of the total number of children and young people who were involved in both systems at some point during childhood and adolescence, which prevents the analysis of pathways taken through the respective systems. As years of data accumulate for both data collections, it will be possible to construct a longitudinal data set that can be used to explore the links between different types of events, such as whether there is an association between the number and length of out-of-home care placements and being placed in unsentenced detention instead of unsentenced community-based supervision.

Over time, it will be also be possible to examine the pathways from early childhood, and explore the impact of childhood abuse or neglect on later involvement in the youth justice supervision system.

5.3 Other data collections

It is also possible to expand the linked child protection and youth justice supervision data collection to include information from other health and welfare data collections. This would enhance the value of the linked data collection and yield valuable information on a range of issues such as mental health conditions, acquired brain injury, alcohol and other drug problems, and homelessness.

Data collections with information on health and welfare issues that are suitable for linkage include the following collections:

- Alcohol and Other Drug Treatment Services NMDS
- Disability Services NMDS
- National Prisoner Health Data Collection
- Specialist Homelessness Services Data Collection.

References

AIFS (Australian Institute of Family Studies) 2016. Melbourne: AIFS. Mandatory reporting of child abuse and neglect. CFCA resource sheet, May 2016. Viewed 25 August 2016, <<https://aifs.gov.au/cfca/publications/mandatory-reporting-child-abuse-and-neglect>>.

AIHW (Australian Institute of Health and Welfare) 2012. Children and young people at risk of social exclusion: links between homelessness, child protection and juvenile justice. Data linkage series no. 13. Cat. no. CSI 13. Canberra: AIHW.

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List of figures

- Figure 2.1: Young people aged 10–17 involved in the child protection system, under youth justice supervision or both during 2014–157
- Figure 3.1: Young people aged 10–17 who were the subject of investigated notifications and also under youth justice supervision in 2014–15, by sex and Indigenous status9
- Figure 3.2: Young people aged 10–17 who were the subject of a care and protection order and also under youth justice supervision in 2014–15, by sex and Indigenous status10
- Figure 3.3: Young people aged 10–17 who were in out-of-home care and also under youth justice supervision in 2014–15, by sex and Indigenous status11
- Figure 4.1: Young people aged 10–17 who were under community-based supervision and also in the child protection system in 2014–15, by sex and Indigenous status13
- Figure 4.2: Young people aged 10–17 who were under community-based supervision and also in the child protection system in 2014–15, by type of child protection service14
- Figure 4.3: Young people aged 10–17 who were in detention and also in the child protection system in 2014–15, by sex and Indigenous status15
- Figure 4.4: Young people aged 10–17 who were in detention and also in the child protection system in 2014–15, by type of child protection service.....16
- Figure 4.5: Young people aged 10–17 who were under youth justice supervision and also in the child protection system in 2014–15, by age at first youth justice supervision.....17

List of supplementary tables

- Table S1: Young people aged 10–17 who were under the child protection system and were also under youth justice supervision in 2014–15, by sex and Indigenous status
- Table S2: Young people aged 10–17 who were the subject of investigated notifications and were also under youth justice supervision in 2014–15, by sex and Indigenous status
- Table S3: Young people aged 10–17 who were the subject of a care and protection order and also under youth justice supervision in 2014–15, by sex and Indigenous status
- Table S4: Young people aged 10–17 who were in out-of-home care and also under youth justice supervision in 2014–15, by sex and Indigenous status
- Table S5: Young people aged 10–17 who were under youth justice supervision and also in the child protection system in 2014–15, by sex and Indigenous status
- Table S6: Young people aged 10–17 who were under community-based supervision and also in the child protection system in 2014–15, by sex and Indigenous status
- Table S7: Young people aged 10–17 who were under community-based supervision and also in the child protection system in 2014–15, by type of child protection service
- Table S8: Young people aged 10–17 who were in detention and also in the child protection system in 2014–15, by sex and Indigenous status
- Table S9: Young people aged 10–17 who were in detention and also in the child protection system in 2014–15, by type of child protection service
- Table S10: Young people aged 10–17 who were youth justice supervision and also in the child protection system in 2014–15, by age at first youth justice supervision
- Table S11: Young people aged 10–17 who were under the child protection system and youth justice supervision in 2014–15 by state and territory

Related publications

This report can be downloaded free of charge from <http://www.aihw.gov.au/youth-justice-publications/>.

More information about children and young people in the child protection system in Australia and under youth justice supervision in Australia is available from the AIHW website at <http://www.aihw.gov.au/families-and-children/>.

As well as the publications listed in the References, the following AIHW publications may also be of interest:

- AIHW 2016. Young people in child protection services and under youth justice supervision 2013–14. Data linkage series no. 21. Cat. no. CSI 22. Canberra: AIHW.
- AIHW 2016. Young people returning to sentenced youth justice supervision 2014–15. Juvenile justice series no. 20. Cat. no. JUV 84. Canberra: AIHW.
- AIHW 2016. Pathways through youth justice supervision: further analyses. Juvenile justice series no. 19. Cat. no. JUV 75. Canberra: AIHW.
- AIHW 2015. Youth detention population in Australia 2015. AIHW bulletin no. 131. Cat. no. AUS 196. Canberra: AIHW.
- AIHW 2014. Pathways through youth justice supervision. Juvenile justice series no. 15. Cat. no. JUV 40. Canberra: AIHW.

This report presents information on young people aged 10–17 who were both in the child protection system and under youth justice supervision in 2014–15; it demonstrates the insights that can be gained through data linkage. Two (2) in 5 (40.8%) young people in youth justice detention in 2014–15 were also in the child protection system that year. Those who were younger at their first youth justice supervision were more likely to also be in child protection.