



# New South Wales: youth justice supervision in 2015–16



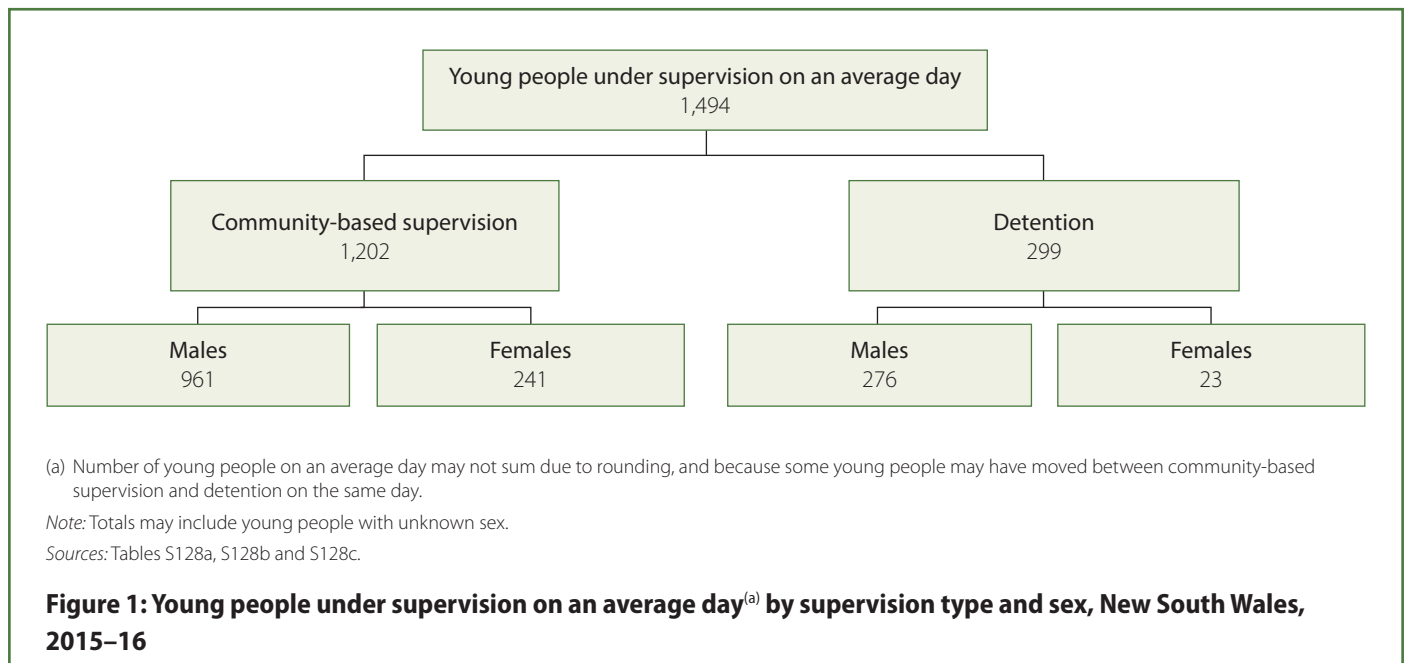
This fact sheet summarises statistics on youth justice supervision in New South Wales in 2015–16 and includes some national comparisons.

Differences in youth justice supervision among the states and territories may reflect differences in legislation as well as policy and practice. Detailed information about the youth justice systems, policies and programs in each state and territory is available online: <<http://www.aihw.gov.au/youth-justice/states-territories>>.

## Number and rate under supervision

On an average day in 2015–16, there were 1,494 young people (aged 10 and over) in New South Wales who were under youth justice supervision (Figure 1; see also Box 2 for a definition of ‘average day’). Young people under supervision in New South Wales made up about one-quarter (27%) of all young people under youth justice supervision in Australia (Table S1a).

On an average day, 4 in 5 (80%, or 1,202) young people under supervision in New South Wales were supervised in the community, and the remainder (20%) were in detention (Figure 1). Note that some young people may have moved between community-based supervision and detention on the same day. The proportion of young people under community-based supervision was slightly lower than the national average of 84% (tables S1a and S36a).



For young people aged 10–17, on an average day in 2015–16, the rate of those under supervision in New South Wales was 19 per 10,000, which was slightly lower than the national figure of 21 per 10,000 (Table S4a). In terms of supervision type, 16 per 10,000 aged 10–17 were under community-based supervision on an average day and 3 per 10,000 were in detention (tables S39a and S77a).

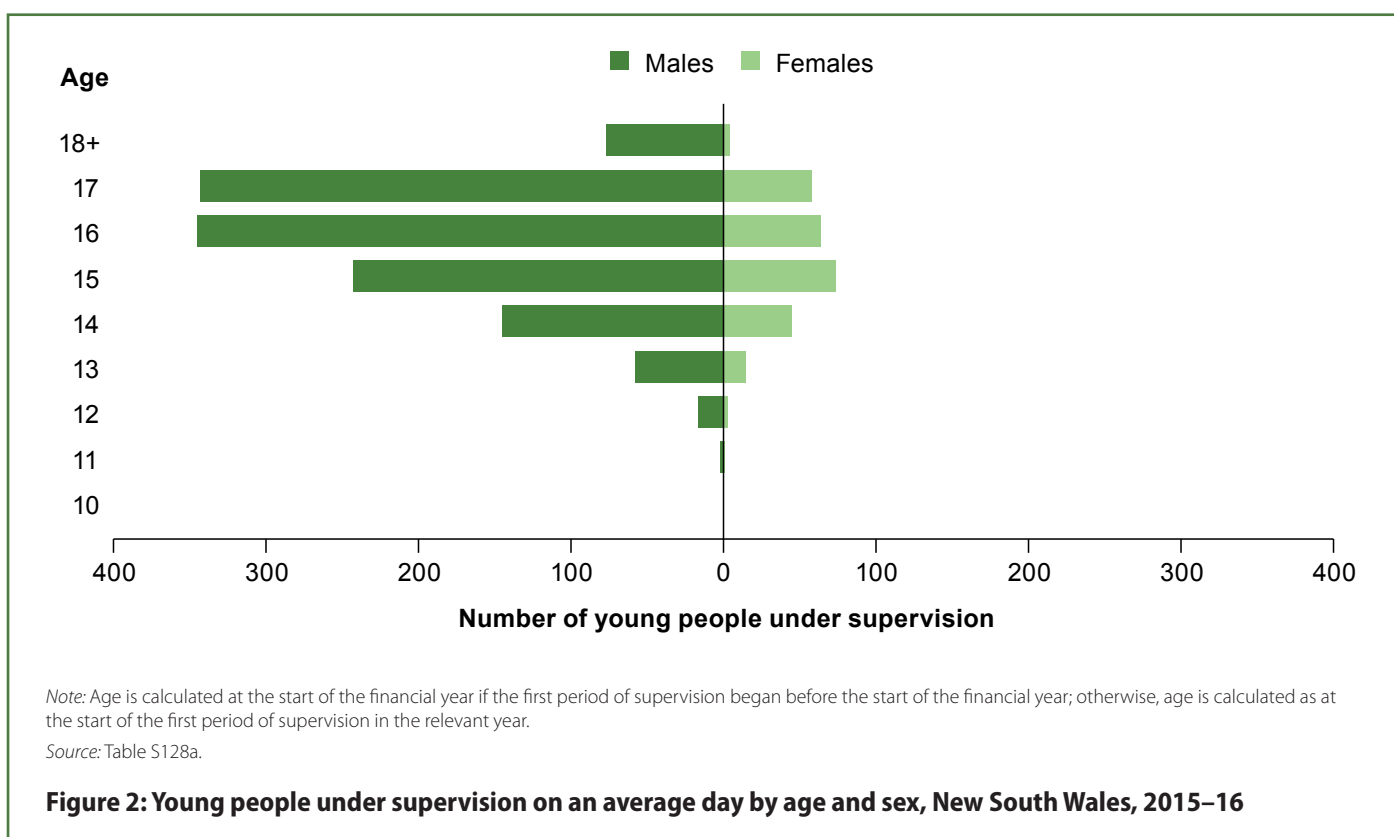
## Age and sex

In most cases in Australia, the upper age limit in the youth justice system is 17 years at the time of the offence. However, it is also possible for young people aged 18 and over to be under youth justice supervision. Reasons may include their age at the time of the offence, the continuation of supervision once they turn 18, or their vulnerability or immaturity. More information on the age limits for youth justice supervision is available online: <<http://www.aihw.gov.au/youth-justice/youth-justice-system-in-Australia>>.

Most young people (95%) under supervision in New South Wales on an average day in 2015–16 were aged 10–17, and the remainder were aged 18 and over (Table S1a). This proportion was higher than the national average of 88%.

About 4 in 5 (82%) young people under supervision in New South Wales on an average day were male (matching the national result of 82%) (Table S2a). Males made up a larger proportion of those in detention (92%) than those under community-based supervision (80%), which was similar to the national pattern (91% in detention and 81% in community-based supervision) (tables S37a and S75a).

Young males under supervision tended to be slightly older than young females, on average. On an average day in 2015–16, numbers of young people under supervision in New South Wales were highest among males aged 16 and females aged 15 (Figure 2).



## Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people have a long history of over-representation in both the youth and adult justice systems in Australia. In New South Wales Indigenous young people constitute 5% of the state's population aged 10–17 (Table S145) but made up 47% of those aged 10–17 under youth justice supervision on an average day in 2015–16 (Table S3a). This was slightly lower than the national average of 48%.

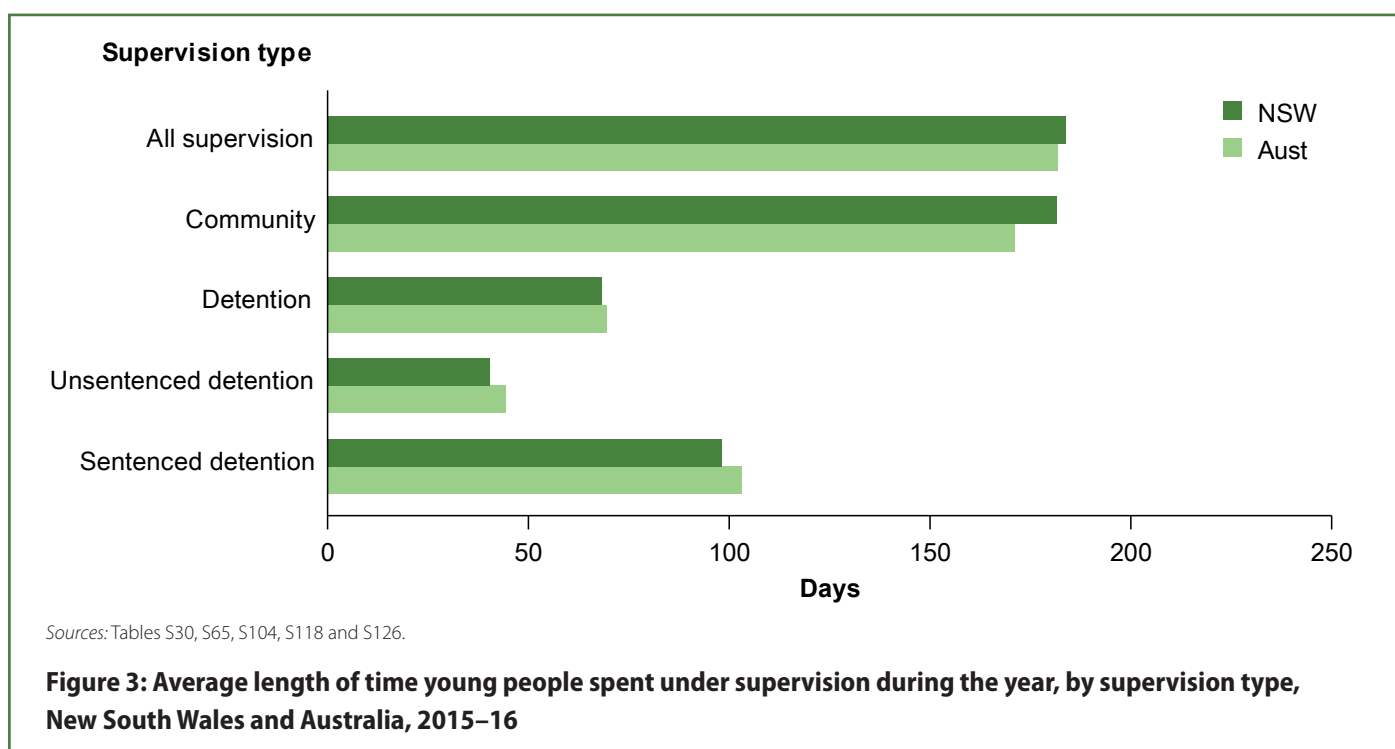
The rate of Indigenous young people aged 10–17 under supervision on an average day in New South Wales was 167 per 10,000, compared with 10 per 10,000 for non-Indigenous young people. This means that Indigenous young people aged 10–17 were about 17 times as likely as non-Indigenous young people to be under supervision on an average day, which exactly matches the national result (also 17 times as likely) (Table S4a).

In New South Wales the level of Indigenous over-representation (as measured by the rate ratio) was higher among young people in detention where (Indigenous young people were 24 times as likely as non-Indigenous young people to be in detention on an average day) than under community-based supervision, where they were 16 times as likely (tables S39a and S77a). This pattern was also evident at the national level, where the Indigenous rate was 25 times the non-Indigenous rate in detention and 15 times in community-based supervision.

### Time under supervision

The median duration of individual periods of supervision that were completed in New South Wales during 2015–16 was 121 days, or about 17 weeks; this includes time under supervision prior to 1 July 2015 if the period of supervision began before 1 July 2015 (Table S29). This was similar to the national median of 123 days.

When all periods of supervision during the year are considered, including periods that were ongoing (that is, yet to be completed), young people in New South Wales spent a total of 184 days (just over 26 weeks), on average, under supervision, which was close to the national average of 182 days (Figure 3).



The typical amount of time spent under youth justice supervision varied according to the type of supervision. Completed periods of community-based supervision were typically longer on average (137 days) than periods of detention (4 days) (tables S64 and S103). When all time spent under supervision during the year is considered, young people in New South Wales spent an average of 182 days under community-based supervision, and 68 days in detention (tables S65 and S104). This compares to national results of 171 days and 69 days, respectively.

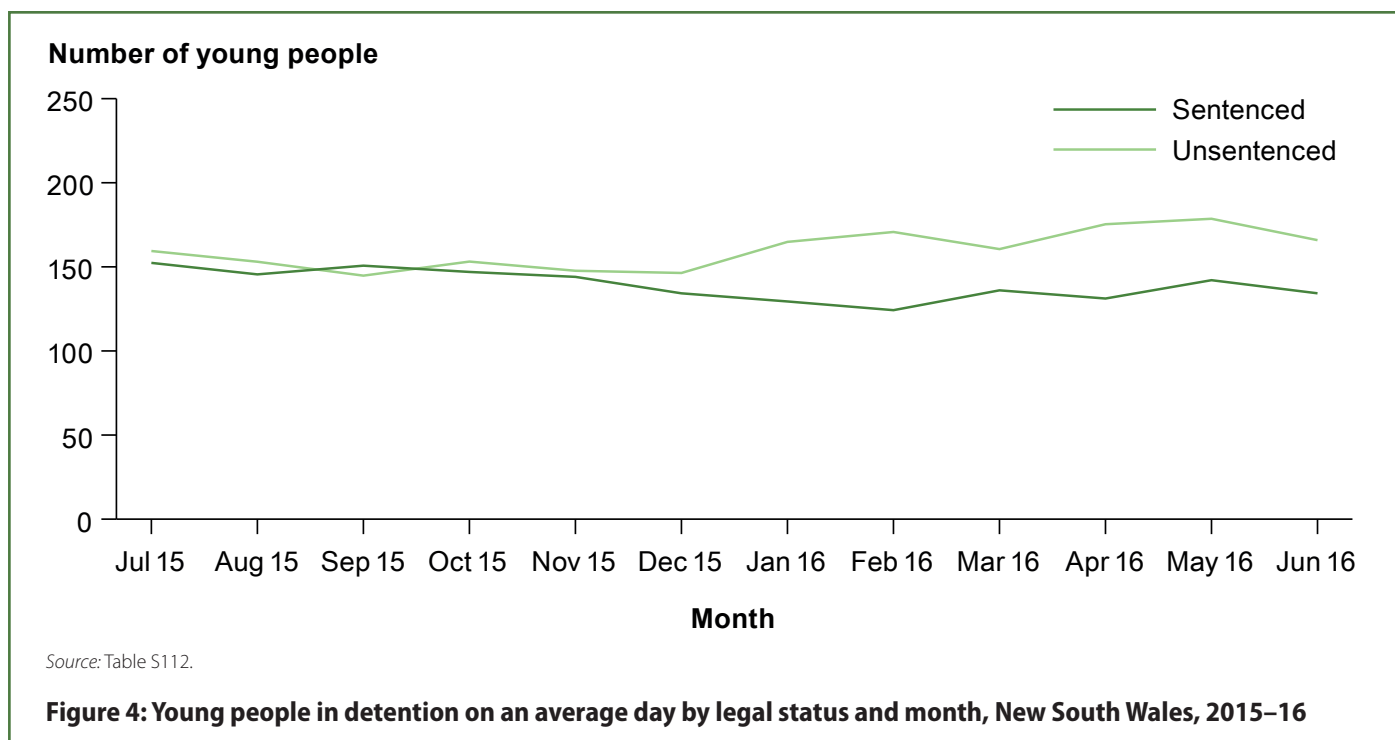
Young people may be under supervision when they are ‘unsented’—that is, when they have been charged with an offence and are awaiting the outcome of their court matter, or when they have been found or pleaded guilty and are awaiting sentencing. They may also be ‘sented’ to a period of supervision if proved guilty in a court.

In New South Wales in 2015–16, completed periods of sentenced detention were typically longer than periods of unsented detention (median 59 days compared with 3 days) (tables S117 and S124). Similarly, when all time in detention during the year is considered, young people spent longer in sentenced detention (98 days, on average) than unsented detention (40 days) (tables S118 and S126). This was similar to the national pattern.

## Sentenced and unsentenced detention

Almost half of all young people in detention (54% or 160) on an average day in New South Wales were unsentenced and the remainder (47% or 140) were serving a sentence (Table S109a). The proportion of unsentenced young people in detention was lower than the national result (57%).

Each month, there were 145–179 young people in unsentenced detention in New South Wales on an average day and 124–152 in sentenced detention (Figure 4). The average number in unsentenced detention tended to be higher in the second half of the year.



## Recent trends: 2011–12 to 2015–16

Over the 5 years to 2015–16, there were substantial decreases in the number of young people (of all ages) and the rate of those aged 10–17 under supervision on an average day in New South Wales. Numbers fell by 23% (from 1,952 to 1,494), while the rate dropped from 25 to 19 per 10,000 (Figure 5; Table S11a).

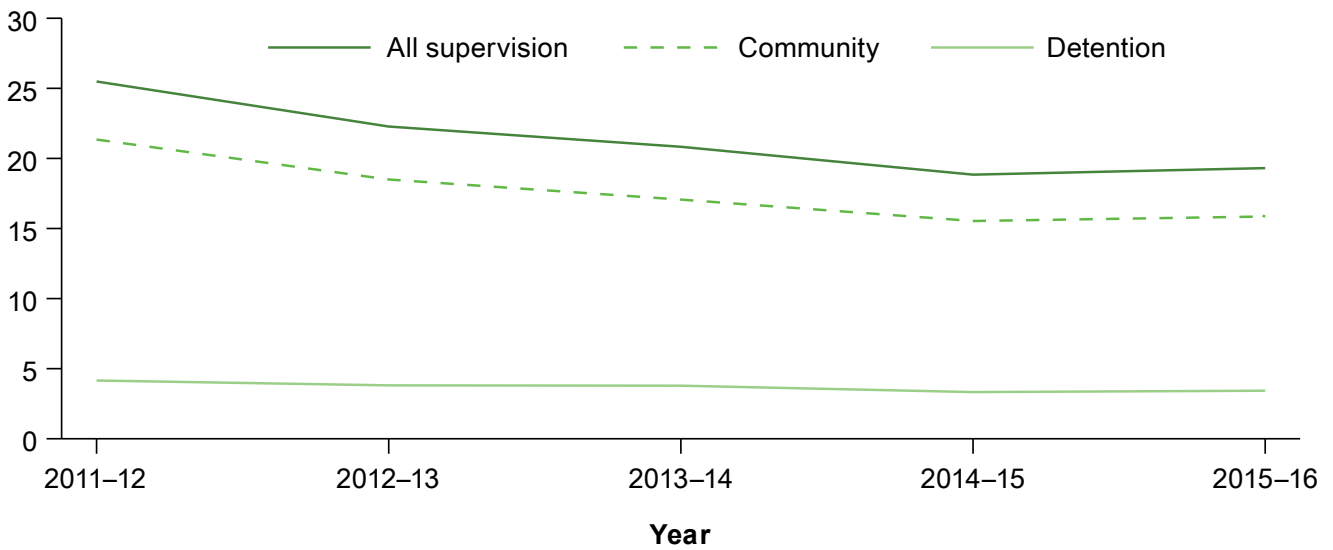
These decreases occurred in both community-based supervision and detention. Overall, for community-based supervision, the number of young people on an average day fell by 25% (from 1,601 to 1,202), while the rate fell from 21 to 16 per 10,000 (Figure 5; Table S46a). Similarly, in detention, the number fell by 18% (from 363 to 299) and the rate fell from 4 to 3 per 10,000 (Figure 5; Table S84a).

The New South Wales results were similar to the national trend, where the numbers and rates of young people under supervision (both community-based supervision and detention) also fell during the 5-year period from 2011–12 to 2015–16.

In terms of detention (both unsentenced and sentenced), there were similar drops in numbers over the period (Table S113) in New South Wales. Decreases occurred among both Indigenous and non-Indigenous young people, although the falls were greater for the non-Indigenous population.

The level of Indigenous over-representation of young people under supervision in New South Wales (as shown by the rate ratio) increased slightly over the period, from 14 to 17 times the non-Indigenous rate (Table S12a). This was due to a greater fall in the non-Indigenous rate than the Indigenous rate. The Indigenous rate ratio increased over the 5-year period for community-based supervision (from 14 to 16 times the non-Indigenous rate) and increased overall for those in detention, from 17 to 24 times (tables S47a and S85a).

### Number per 10,000



Sources: Tables S12a, S47a and S85a.

**Figure 5: Young people aged 10–17 under supervision on an average day by supervision type, New South Wales, 2011–12 to 2015–16 (rate)**

### Box 1: Youth justice supervision fact sheets

This fact sheet is part of the *Youth justice in Australia 2015–16* release, which also includes a bulletin, supplementary tables and web pages released in multiple stages throughout the year, see <http://www.aihw.gov.au/publications/youth-justice/>.

The supplementary data tables (those with a prefix of S) referred to in this fact sheet can be downloaded from <http://www.aihw.gov.au/publication-detail/?id=60129554714>.

For more information about young people under youth justice supervision, see <http://www.aihw.gov.au/youth-justice/>.

## Box 2: Technical notes

1. Information about young people under youth justice supervision in this fact sheet is based on data from the Juvenile Justice National Minimum Data Set (JJ NMDS). This data collection contains information about all young people who were supervised by state and territory youth justice agencies in Australia, both in the community and in detention. The Northern Territory did not supply JJ NMDS data for the period from 2008–09 to 2015–16, however non-standard data were supplied and used, where possible, in the calculation of national totals.
2. This fact sheet uses an 'average day' measure to illustrate the number of young people under supervision. The average day measure reflects the number of young people under supervision on a given day during the year, and gives an indication of the average number of young people supported by the supervision system at any one time. It is a summary measure that reflects both the number of young people supervised and the amount of time they spent under supervision.
3. Population rates allow for the comparison of different groups while taking into account differences in population sizes. Rates are restricted to those aged 10–17 due to differences between states and territories; they exclude young people where data is unavailable; and are not calculated where there are fewer than 5 young people due to a lack of statistical reliability.
4. Rate ratios are used to compare Indigenous and non-Indigenous rates and to provide a measure of the level of Indigenous over-representation. Rate ratios should be interpreted with caution where there are small denominators, rare events and rates that converge while declining (or diverge while increasing).

Further technical and data quality information, including definitions of key terms in this fact sheet, is available from <http://www.aihw.gov.au/youth-justice/data-quality/>.

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