



Australian Government

**Australian Institute of
Health and Welfare**

Children and young people at risk of social exclusion

Links between homelessness, child protection and juvenile justice

DATA LINKAGE SERIES NO. 13



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Health and Welfare**

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

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Number 13

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Australian Institute of Health and Welfare
Canberra

Cat. no. CSI 13

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Australian Institute of Health and Welfare

Board Chair

Dr Andrew Refshauge

Director

David Kalisch

Any enquiries about or comments on this publication should be directed to:

Communications, Media and Marketing Unit

Australian Institute of Health and Welfare

GPO Box 570

Canberra ACT 2601

Tel: (02) 6244 1032

Email: info@aihw.gov.au

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Abbreviations

AIHW	Australian Institute of Health and Welfare
CDSMAC	Community and Disability Services Ministers' Advisory Council
CP	child protection
CP NDC	Child Protection National Data Collection
JJ NMDS	Juvenile Justice National Minimum Data Set
SAAP NDC	Supported Accommodation Assistance Program National Data Collection
SLK	statistical linkage key
SLK-581	statistical linkage key comprising five letters of name, eight digits for date of birth and one digit for sex.

Symbols

–	nil or rounded to zero
..	not applicable
n.a.	not available
n.p.	not publishable because of small numbers, confidentiality or other concerns about the quality of the data

Summary

Current research demonstrates relationships between child abuse and neglect, homelessness and criminal activity. This report presents key findings from analysis of a data set linking three community-sector data collections: Supported Accommodation Assistance Program (SAAP), juvenile justice supervision, and child protection notifications and substantiations in Victoria and Tasmania.

While this project demonstrated that linking these collections is both feasible and worthwhile, the results are limited by data availability (this project used 3 years of SAAP data, 10 years of juvenile justice data, 18 years of Victorian child protection data and 3 years of Tasmanian child protection data). The accumulation of data over multiple years for all sectors would enable the flows between services over the long term to be identified, but despite the data limitations, the results highlight the possibilities for data linkage in these sectors although caution must be used in generalising these findings.

People with involvement in one of the three sectors are more likely to be involved in another of the sectors than the general population

Almost 15% of young people under juvenile justice supervision had received SAAP support in the year before their most recent supervision and 8% received support in the year after their most recent supervision. For those with a substantiated child protection notification, 6% received support in the year before and 7% in the year after their most recent substantiated notification. In contrast, about 1% of those aged 10 and older in the general population receive SAAP services as a client in a year and about 2% receive services as an accompanying child (AIHW 2010).

More than 10% of those who received SAAP support as an adult had a history of juvenile justice supervision – by comparison, about 1% of those aged 16 or 17 (the peak age for juvenile justice supervision) are under supervision in any given year (AIHW 2011c). (National figures on the proportion of the adult population with a history of juvenile justice supervision are not available.)

Young people with a child protection history enter juvenile justice supervision at a younger age

Of those under juvenile justice supervision who had one or more substantiated child protection notifications, 21% first entered supervision aged 10–13 compared with 6% of those with no substantiated notifications. Young people without substantiated notifications were more likely to have entered supervision when they were older, with 33% doing so at age 17 compared with 11% of those who had one or more substantiated notifications.

Young people, particularly young women, completing a detention sentence are at greater risk of homelessness

Within 1 month after the end of a period of sentenced detention, 3% of periods were followed by a period of SAAP support – this increased to 9% within 6 months. Young women were twice as likely as young men to receive SAAP support in the month after the end of a sentenced detention period.

1 Introduction and background

Each year, at least 100,000 children and young Australians access homelessness services, 30,000 have a notification of abuse or neglect substantiated by a child protection agency, 70,000 are proceeded against by police for criminal activity, and 14,500 are supervised by juvenile justice agencies in the community or placed in juvenile detention. Extensive research demonstrates that there are considerable overlaps between homelessness, child abuse and neglect, and criminal activity. For example, children who are abused or neglected may be at greater risk of being homeless and committing criminal activity than children who have never been abused or neglected (see Section 1.5).

Quantifying the extent of multiple-sector involvement for these children and young people would provide a number of benefits. For example, having information about children who are likely to end up homeless or commit criminal activity would allow policy makers to devise and implement early intervention strategies. Similarly, knowledge about the extent of multiple-sector involvement and the types of children and young people who are involved would allow government and non-government agencies to provide more targeted services.

One way of assessing the extent of multiple-sector involvement is to create a data set that contains information on those involved in each sector. Where suitable data exists, data for individuals can be linked so that the characteristics of those who are involved in multiple sectors, and their pathways through these sectors, can be analysed.

Based on the findings of a study into the feasibility of linking relevant data sets (AIHW 2008a), the AIHW was funded by the Community and Disability Services Ministers' Advisory Council to implement such a linkage. This report presents the key findings from the analysis of this linked data set. (For more information on the linkage method, see AIHW 2012a.)

1.1 How many children and young people are homeless, abused or neglected, or involved in criminal activity?

Each year, a number of children and young people access homelessness services, are found to have been abused or neglected, or are supervised as a result of having been charged with or proven guilty of an offence. In Australia, information on many of these children and young people are available from administrative data sets.

Currently, national data are available on children and young people who:

- access specialist homelessness services – Supported Accommodation Assistance Program National Data Collection (SAAP NDC)
- have substantiated child protection investigations – Child Protection National Data Collection (CP NDC)
- are under juvenile justice supervision – Juvenile Justice National Minimum Data Set (JJ NMDS).

Because these data sets relate only to those who receive services or who are known to authorities, these data may underestimate the true number of children and young people in

the population who are homelessness or at risk of homelessness, abused or neglected, or involved in criminal activity.

National data are also available on young people proceeded against by police (ABS 2011); however, these data, as well as the national child protection data, are not included in this linkage project as they are aggregate data and not available in the format required.

- **Homelessness:** Almost 80,000 children and young people accompany a parent or guardian who received support from a specialist homelessness service at least once during the year because they are homeless or at risk of being homeless. About 17,000 unaccompanied children and young people receive support from a specialist homelessness service (AIHW 2010).
- **Criminal activity:** Almost 70,000 are proceeded against by police for allegedly committing a crime each year (ABS 2011). About 14,500 are under juvenile justice supervision (either sentenced or unsentenced) and of these, 10,000 serve one or more supervised sentences (AIHW 2011b).
- **Child maltreatment:** About 30,000 have one or more substantiated child protection notifications (AIHW 2011a).

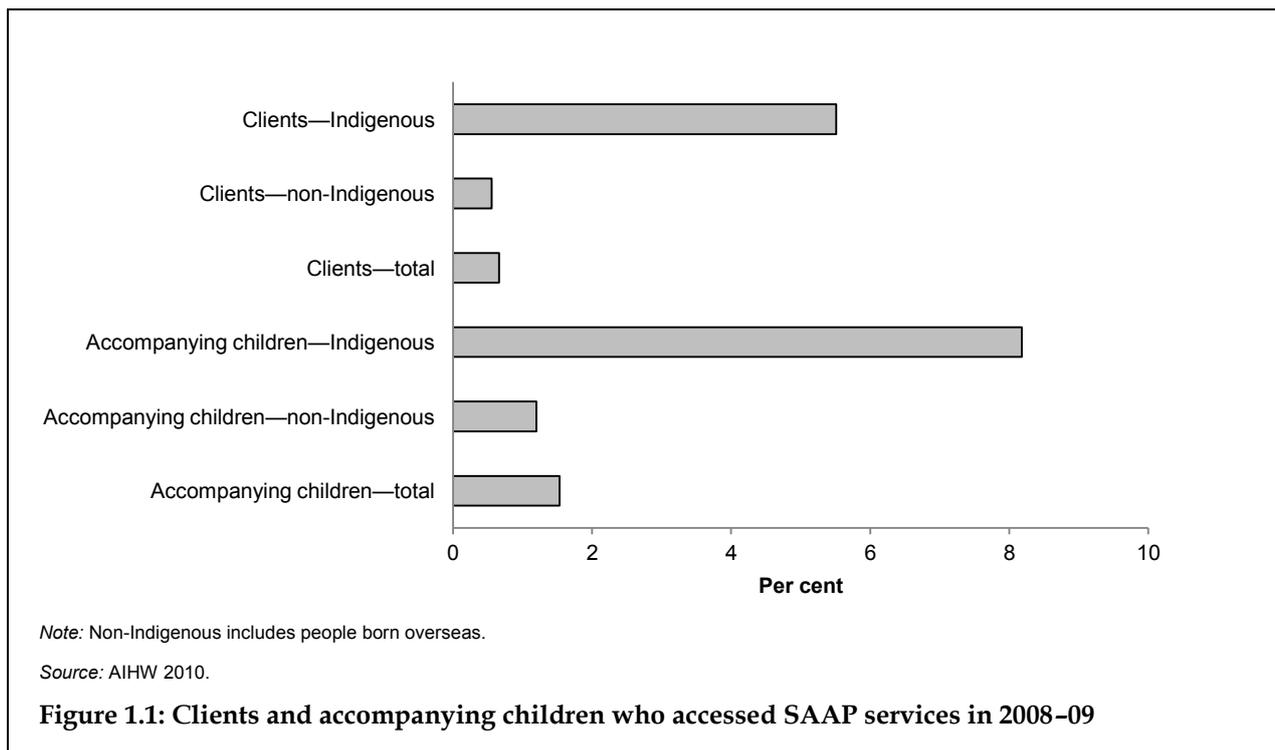
In all states and territories of Australia, 10 years is the minimum age of criminal responsibility so children under the age of 10 cannot be proceeded against by police or be supervised by juvenile justice agencies. However, children under the age of 10 can access specialist homelessness services (either alone or accompanied by their families) and be the subject of a substantiated child protection notification.

1.2 Children and young people who are homeless or at risk of homelessness

Services for people who are homeless or at risk of homelessness are provided by specialist agencies, and before July 2011 many of these services were consolidated under the Supported Accommodation Assistance Program (SAAP). The SAAP NDC is a national information system that contains information from SAAP agencies and provides an estimate of the total number of people who are homeless or at risk of homelessness, although not all people who are homeless or at risk of homelessness access SAAP services. (In July 2011, the SAAP NDC was replaced with the Specialist Homelessness Services Collection.)

During 2008–09, about 80,000 children and young people in Australia aged 0–17 received services from the SAAP as accompanying children – that is, they attended services with their parent or guardian (AIHW 2010). In addition, about 17,000 received services as clients, which means they attended without a parent or guardian.

Overall, 0.7% of Australians aged 10 and older received SAAP services as a client and 1.5% of Australian children aged 0–17 received services as an accompanying child (Figure 1.1). Indigenous people were more likely to receive services than non-Indigenous people: 6% of Indigenous Australians aged 10 and older and 8% of Indigenous children aged 0–17 received services as a client or accompanying child, compared with 0.6% and 1.2%, respectively, for non-Indigenous people and children.

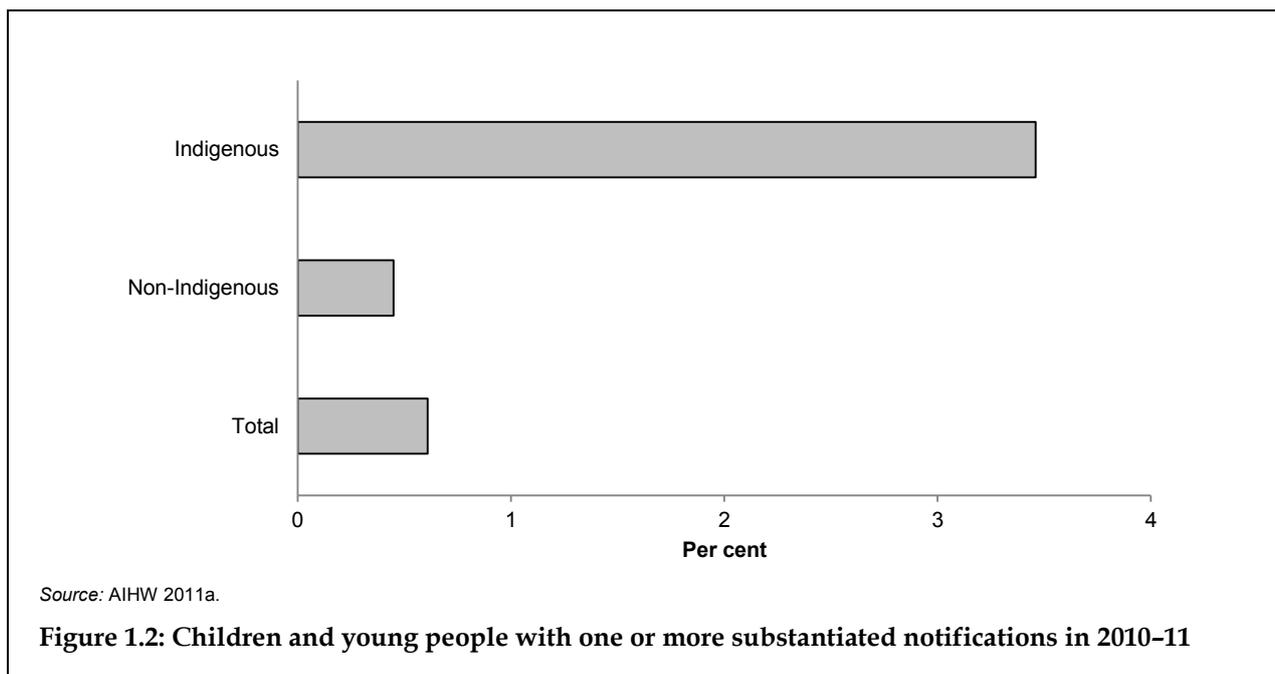


1.3 Children and young people who are maltreated

Child protection, which is the responsibility of state and territory governments, deals with children who are suspected of being, have been, or are being, abused, neglected or otherwise harmed (AIHW 2011a). Information on child protection is collected by the AIHW and published in the *Child protection Australia* reports.

While the broad child protection processes are similar, there are substantial differences across states and territories as each jurisdiction has its own legislative requirements, policies and practices, such as in the mandatory reporting of suspected child abuse or neglect (AIHW 2011a). Key aspects of the child protection system that are in all states and territories include reports of concern to the department; notifications, investigations and substantiations, care and protection orders; out-of-home care; and family support services. Reports to the department about concern for a child may be made through a number of avenues. These are screened to determine whether they relate to a family support issue or a child protection notification, and the definition of what constitutes a notification varies across jurisdictions. Notifications are assessed to determine whether they warrant investigation; once an assessment of the degree of harm or risk for the child is made, a notification will either be 'substantiated' or 'not substantiated'. A substantiated notification is one where it is concluded that the child has been, is being, or is likely to be, abused, neglected or otherwise harmed.

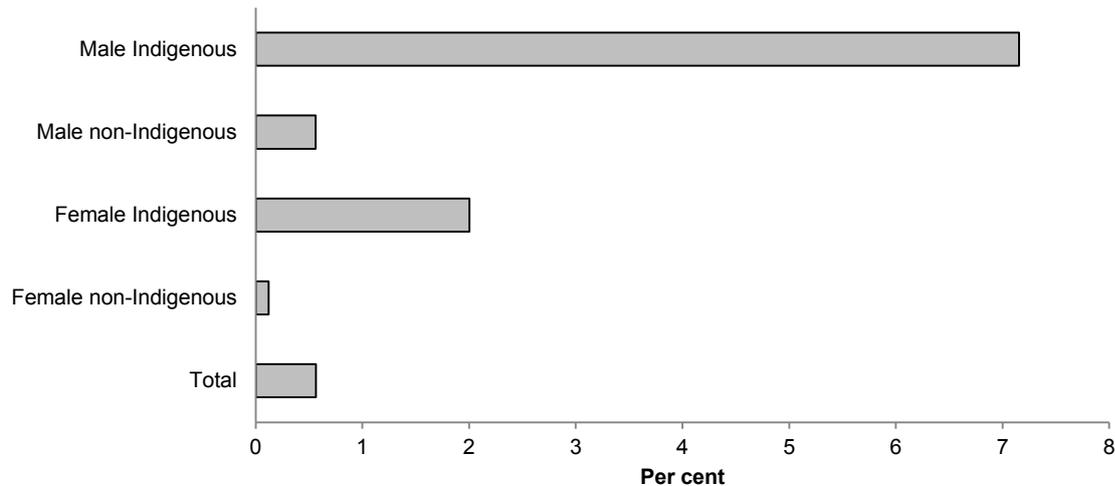
In 2010-11, there were about 165,000 children and young people who were the subject of a child protection notification and about 32,000 children and young people who were the subject of a substantiated child protection notification (AIHW 2011a). Overall, 0.6% of the Australian population aged 0-17 was the subject of a substantiated notification; this proportion was 3.5% for Indigenous children and young people and 0.5% for non-Indigenous children and young people (Figure 1.2).



1.4 Children and young people involved in criminal activity

Juvenile justice, which is the responsibility of state and territory governments, deals with young people aged 10-17 (10-16 in Queensland) who have committed or are alleged to have committed a criminal offence (AIHW 2011c). Young people first enter the juvenile justice system when they are investigated by police. Information about those proceeded against by police is available from the Australian Bureau of Statistics *Recorded crime – offenders* publication (ABS 2011). If the young person is not diverted through a non-court action, the matter proceeds to court and the young person may be sentenced if proven guilty. Young people may be supervised by juvenile justice agencies at various stages of the juvenile justice system, and this supervision may occur in the community or in detention (AIHW 2011c). Information on young people under juvenile justice supervision is available from the AIHW JJ NMDS.

In 2009-10, about 7,250 young people were under juvenile justice supervision in Australia on an average day, and about 15,000 at some time during the year (AIHW 2011c). Nationally, just 0.6% of young Australians were under supervision at some time during 2009-10. Indigenous young people were more likely to be under supervision than non-Indigenous young people: 7% of young Indigenous men and 2% of young Indigenous women were under supervision during 2009-10, compared with 0.6% of young non-Indigenous men and 0.1% of young non-Indigenous women (Figure 1.3).



Note: Western Australia and the Northern Territory did not supply JJ NMDS data for 2009–10. An Australian total was calculated using estimates. See AIHW 2011c for more information.

Source: AIHW 2011c.

Figure 1.3: Children and young people aged 10–17 years under juvenile justice supervision during the year, 2009–10

1.5 Research into the relationships between child maltreatment, criminal activity and homelessness

There is strong evidence that children who suffered abuse or neglect are more likely to engage in criminal activity than those who did not (Dennison et al. 2006; Prichard & Payne 2005; Stewart et al. 2005). There is also extensive research demonstrating that young people who have been involved in the child protection system are over-represented among the homeless (National Youth Commission 2008), and there is evidence that many young people under juvenile justice supervision were not living in a family home before entering supervision (Kenny & Lennings 2007; NSW Department of Juvenile Justice 2003). Less research has been conducted into the levels of homelessness among young people who have been under juvenile justice supervision, but there is evidence that they have difficulties finding stable accommodation (National Crime Prevention 1999).

There are several possible reasons for the links between child maltreatment, criminal activity and homelessness. First, children who are maltreated typically have parents or guardians who, usually due to social and economic stress, are not able to provide adequate supervision, which increases the probability of the child's involvement in delinquent activity (Weatherburn & Lind 2006). Second, young people who have been involved in the child protection system are more likely to be homeless (Johnson et al. 2010) and often have low levels of educational attainment and employment, and thus are more likely to commit survival crimes such as theft. They are also more likely to have drug and alcohol problems (Cashmore 2011). These links between homelessness and crime also exist for young people who have not been involved in the child protection system (Martijn & Sharpe 2006; Minkes

2005). Third, young people under juvenile justice supervision typically have higher levels of substance abuse and mental and physical illness than other young people, and typically have lower levels of educational attainment (Kenny & Lennings 2007; NSW Department of Juvenile Justice 2003). These attributes are likely to increase their probability of being homeless.

Consequently, possible pathways through these sectors include:

1. Child maltreatment (child protection system) followed by criminal activity (juvenile justice supervision).
2. Child maltreatment (child protection system) followed by homelessness (accessing SAAP services) accompanied by criminal activity (juvenile justice supervision).
3. Child maltreatment (child protection system) followed by homelessness (accessing SAAP services).
4. Homelessness – either as an individual or as part of a family – (accessing SAAP services) accompanied by criminal activity (juvenile justice supervision).

It is also likely that involvement in multiple sectors is concurrent; for example, that children and young people in the child protection system are simultaneously under juvenile justice supervision and that homeless young people are in and out of juvenile detention.

Additionally, it is likely that the type and severity of child maltreatment affect the type and frequency of criminal activity (Egeland 2002; Jonson-Reid & Barth 2000), that being homeless will affect the type of juvenile justice supervision experienced (for example, homeless young people are more likely to be placed on remand instead of released on bail, especially in jurisdictions without supported accommodation programs), and that the type and frequency of juvenile justice supervision could affect factors such as educational attainment and employment that affect a young person's ability to find safe and stable accommodation.

2 Data and methods

2.1 Data

The data used in this linkage project come from four sources:

Supported Accommodation and Assistance Program National Data Collection (SAAP NDC): this data collection contains information from specialist agencies that provide services to people who are homeless or at risk of homelessness under the Supported Accommodation and Assistance Program.

Juvenile Justice National Minimum Data Set (JJ NMDS): this data set contains information on young people who are supervised either in the community or in detention by juvenile justice agencies.

Department of Human Services, Victoria: the Victorian Government supplied data on children and young people who had been the subject of a notification, investigation, or substantiation relating to a child protection issue.

Department of Health and Human Services, Tasmania: the Tasmanian Government supplied data on children and young people who had been the subject of a notification, investigation, or substantiation relating to a child protection issue.

Data for this project comprised SAAP NDC data for 2006–07 to 2008–09, JJ NMDS for 2000–01 to 2009–10 (for most states and territories) and child protection (CP) data for 1990–91 to 2008–09 (Victoria) and 2004–05 to 2006–07 (Tasmania) (Table 2.1).

Table 2.1: SAAP NDC, JJ NMDS and CP data availability

State or territory	SAAP NDC	JJ NMDS	CP
NSW	2006–07 to 2008–09	2000–01 to 2009–10	n.a.
Vic	2006–07 to 2008–09	2000–01 to 2009–10	1990–91 to 2008–09
Qld	2006–07 to 2008–09	2000–01 to 2009–10	n.a.
WA	2006–07 to 2008–09	2000–01 to 2007–08	n.a.
SA	2006–07 to 2008–09	2000–01 to 2009–10	n.a.
Tas	2006–07 to 2008–09	2000–01 to 2009–10	2004–05 to 2006–07
ACT	2006–07 to 2008–09	2004–05 to 2009–10	n.a.
NT	2006–07 to 2008–09	2000–01 to 2007–08	n.a.

SAAP NDC

The SAAP NDC is held by the SAAP National Data Collection Agency at the AIHW. Data for 2006–07 to 2008–09 were included in this project as they contain the standard SLK-581 (a statistical linkage key comprising 5 letters of name, date of birth and sex) and were of good quality. Only records where the client had provided consent for the SAAP NDC were included in this project. Data for 2005–06 also contain the standard SLK-581, but were found to have data quality issues and so were excluded. Data before 2005–06 contain an SLK with fewer components and therefore are not suitable for this project.

Child protection data

The Victorian Department of Human Services and the Tasmanian Department of Health and Human Services provided data on child protection notifications, investigations and substantiations directly to the AIHW for inclusion in this project. The Victorian data are for 1990–91 to 2008–09 and the Tasmanian data are for 2004–05 to 2006–07. The AIHW collects data on child protection from all states and territories; however, these data are currently in aggregate form and therefore not suitable for this project. The AIHW is working with states and territories to develop a national unit-record collection for child protection, and these data would be suitable for future linkage.

JJ NMDS

The JJ NMDS is administered by the AIHW under the auspices of the Australasian Juvenile Justice Administrators. Data for most states and territories are available from 2000–01 to 2009–10, although complete detention data are only available from 2006–07 for Tasmania, data for 2000–01 to 2002–03 are unavailable for the Australian Capital Territory, and Western Australia and the Northern Territory have not supplied data for 2008–09 or 2009–10 (see Section 3.4 in AIHW 2011c for more information).

2.2 Linkage method

The available data were linked using the AIHW enhanced step-wise deterministic linkage method (see AIHW 2012a for more information).

2.3 Cohorts used for analysis

Because of the limited availability of data and age restrictions for the child protection and juvenile justice sectors, it is not possible for all young people in each source data set to appear in another data set, and possible pathways between the sectors will depend on year of birth. For example, a young person born in 1983–84 would have been able to appear in 2 years of SAAP NDC data when aged 23–25, several years of Victorian child protection data when aged 7–18 and 2 years of JJ NMDS data when aged 17–18. Therefore, to allow for a more meaningful analysis of the links between data sets, different cohorts were used depending on the service being analysed. See Appendix for more details.

2.4 Supplementary tables

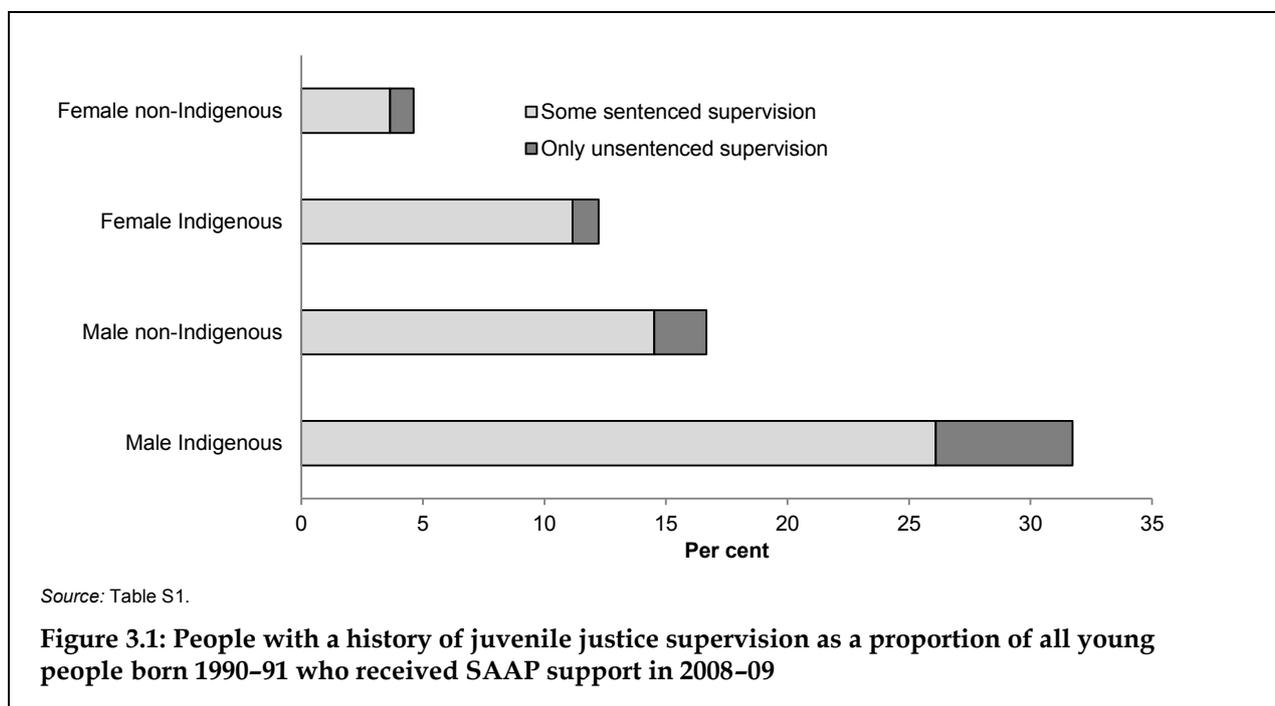
Supplementary tables referred to in this publication (tables with a prefix of S) are available to download from <http://www.aihw.gov.au/publications/>.

3 People receiving SAAP services with a history of juvenile justice supervision

As previously noted, research has shown links between homelessness and crime. This section looks at a cohort of people who received SAAP services and explores their history of juvenile justice supervision. To enable meaningful analysis, this section is restricted to people born in 1990–91, as this cohort will have all possible juvenile justice supervision available in the linked data.

Overall, 11% of people born in 1990–91 who received SAAP support in 2008–09 had a history of juvenile justice supervision – in comparison, about 1% of those aged 16 or 17 (the peak age for juvenile justice supervision) are under supervision in any given year (AIHW 2011c). A history of supervision was more likely for Indigenous people: 32% of Indigenous men and 12% of Indigenous women had a history of supervision, compared with 17% of non-Indigenous men and 5% of non-Indigenous women (Figure 3.1).

Most of these people had a history of sentenced juvenile justice supervision: overall, 85% of those with a history of juvenile justice supervision had experienced sentenced supervision, which means just 15% of those with a history of juvenile justice supervision had only unsentenced supervision. Of those with a history of any juvenile justice supervision, Indigenous women were more likely than Indigenous men to have a history including some sentenced supervision (91% compared with 82%), but the pattern was reversed for non-Indigenous men (87%) and women (79%).



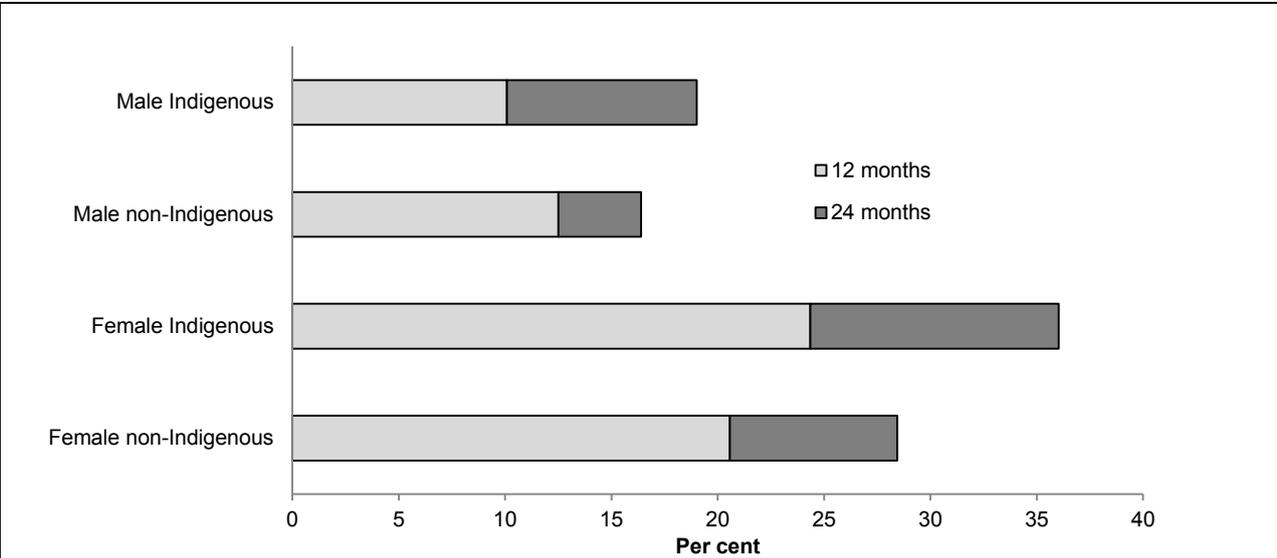
4 Young people under juvenile justice supervision

Young people who are homeless may be more likely to commit crimes such as theft and therefore end up under juvenile justice supervision, and young people who are under supervision may be more vulnerable to homelessness in later years. This section explores the SAAP support received before and after young people’s most recent supervision.

4.1 SAAP support received before most recent juvenile justice supervision

Almost 15% of young people under juvenile justice supervision received SAAP support within 1 year before the start of their most recent supervision, and this proportion increased to almost 20% for the previous 2 years. For comparison, 0.7% of Australians aged 10 and older received SAAP support as a client and 1.5% of Australian children aged 0–17 received SAAP services as an accompanying child in 2008–09 (see Section 1.2).

Young women were more likely to have received SAAP support before their supervision than young men: in the 12 months preceding their most recent supervision, 24% of young Indigenous women and 21% of young non-Indigenous women received support, compared with 10% of young Indigenous men and 13% of young non-Indigenous men. For the 24 months preceding supervision, 36% of young Indigenous women and 28% of young non-Indigenous women received support, compared with 19% of young Indigenous men and 16% of young non-Indigenous men (Figure 4.1).

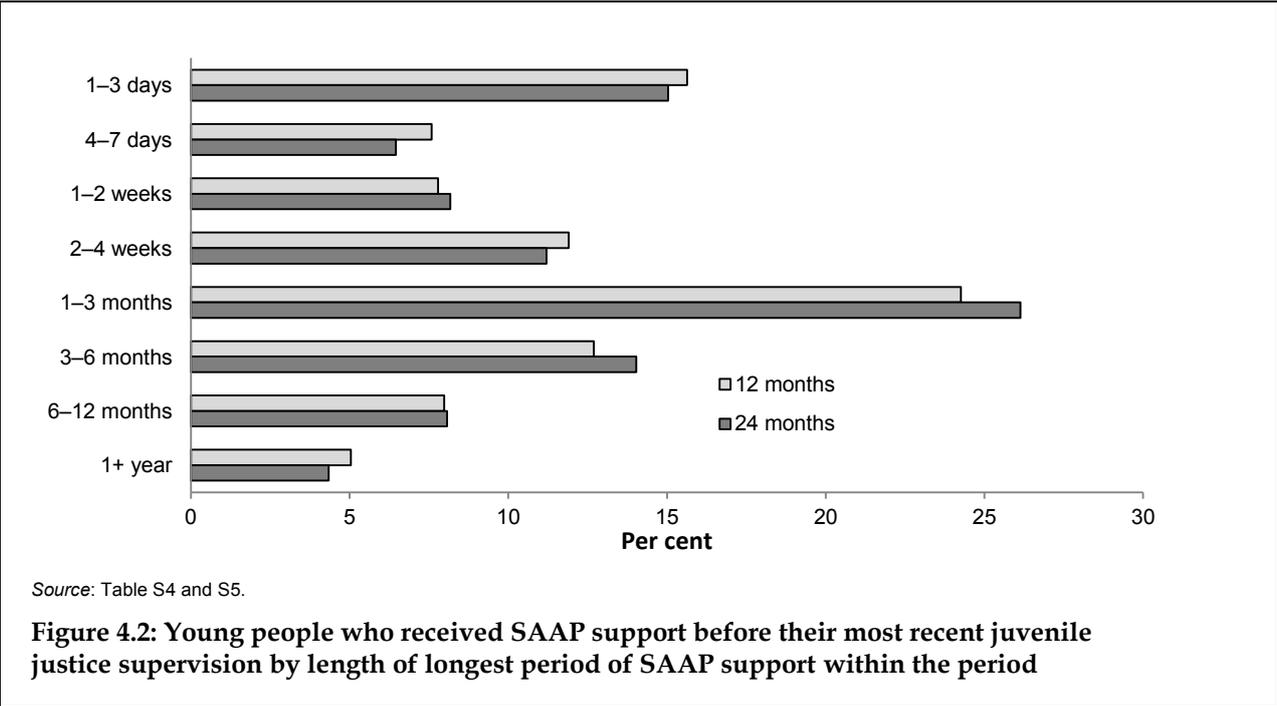


Source: Table S2 and Table S3.

Figure 4.1: Young people who received SAAP support before their most recent juvenile justice supervision

For 1 in every 4 (24%) young people who received SAAP support within 12 months before the start of their most recent juvenile justice supervision, their longest support period was 1–3 months (Figure 4.2). For one-quarter (21%), their longest support period was 3–12 months and just 5% had support lasting more than 1 year. Almost one-third (31%) received support for no more than 2 weeks and 16% did not have a support period longer than 3 days.

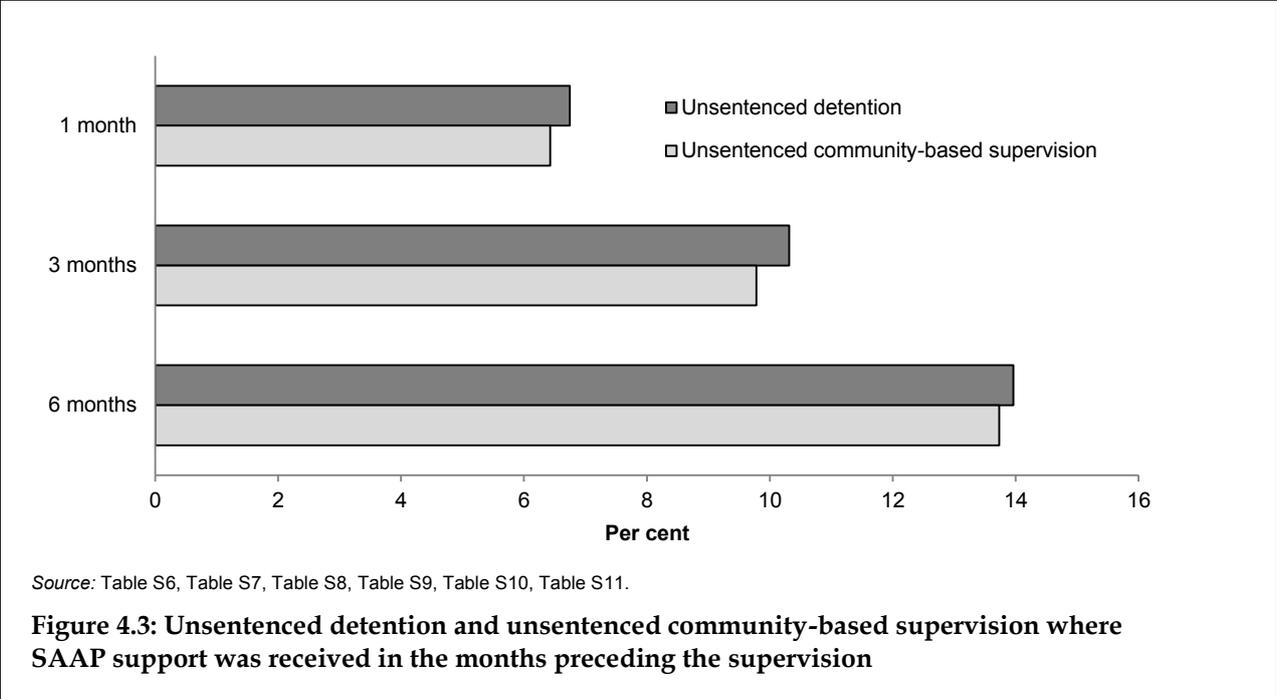
Proportions were similar for those who received SAAP support within 2 years (Figure 4.2): for just over one-quarter (26%), the longest support period was 1–3 months, but for a further 30%, the longest period was no more than 2 weeks. For 1 in 5 (22%), the longest support period was between 3 and 12 months, while for 4%, it lasted more than 1 year.



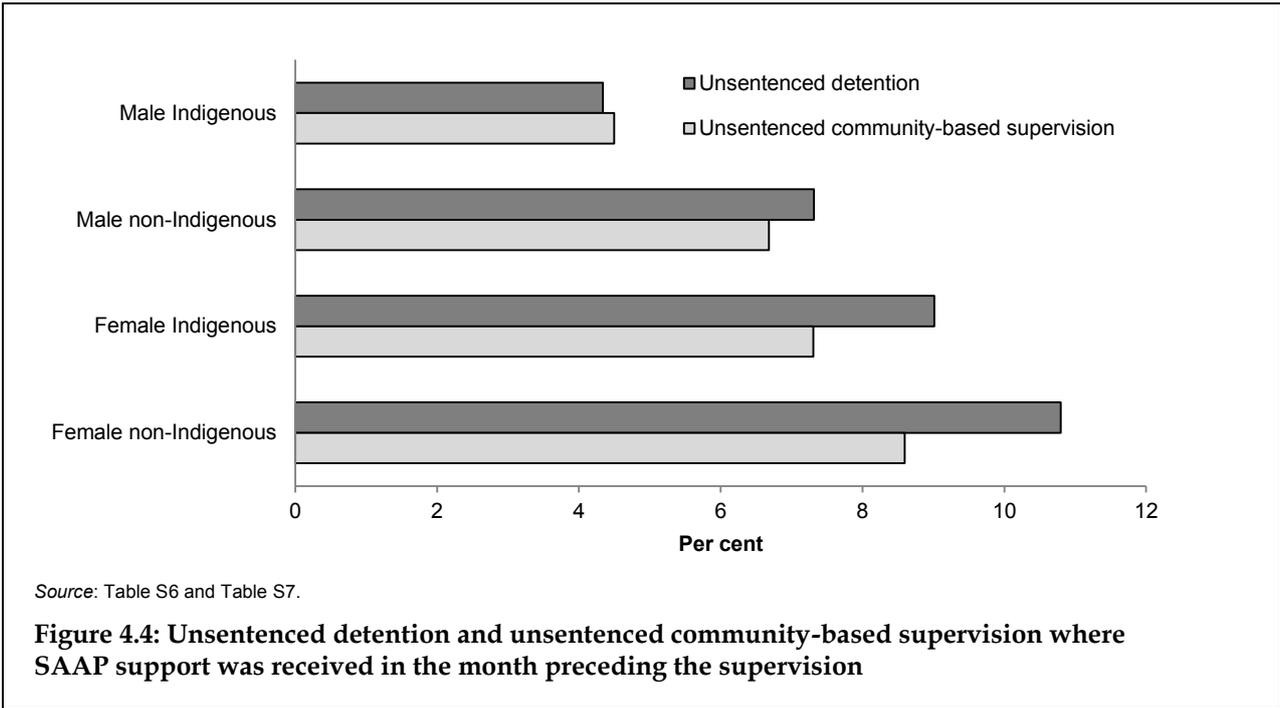
4.2 SAAP support received before unsentenced juvenile justice supervision

The experience of homelessness may influence the type of juvenile justice supervision received. For example, young people who are homeless may be at greater risk of being placed on remand in situations where, if they were not homeless, they would be released on bail. However, it is important to note that the juvenile justice data used in this project only contains information on periods of supervision and not on unsupervised orders such as unsupervised bail. Also, the level of support provided to young people to assist them in finding accommodation in situations where this is the primary reason for being remanded in custody and to help them meet the conditions of their supervised bail varies by state and territory.

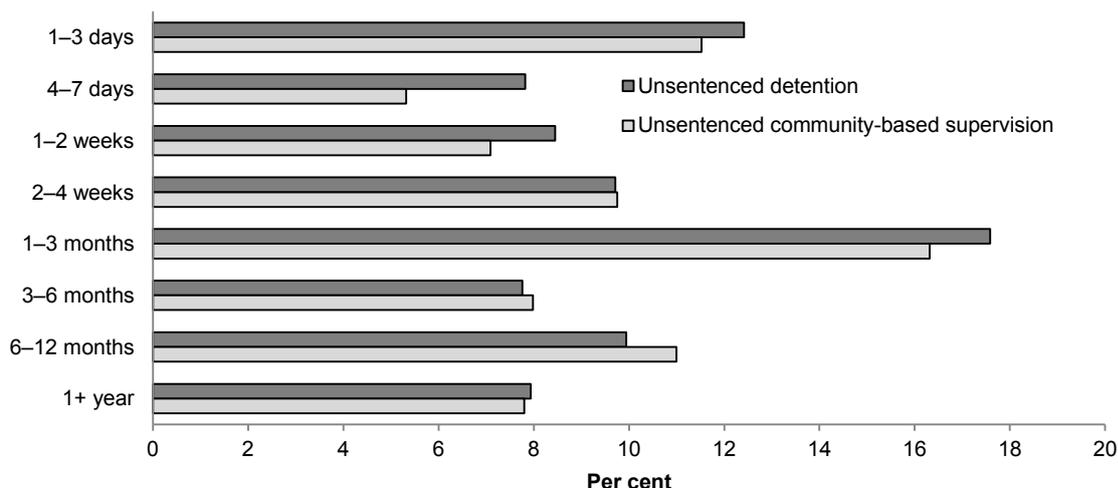
Unsentenced detention was slightly more likely to have been preceded by SAAP support in the short term than unsentenced community-based supervision (Figure 4.3). Seven per cent of unsentenced detention periods were preceded by a period of support that ended within 1 month of the start of the supervision, compared with 6% of unsentenced community-based supervision. However, the proportion was the same for both types of unsentenced supervision for support received in the preceding 6 months (14% for unsentenced detention and 13.7% for unsentenced community-based supervision).



Young non-Indigenous women were most likely to have had SAAP support (11% of periods of unsentenced detention) in the month before unsentenced detention, followed by young Indigenous women (9%), young non-Indigenous men (7%) and young Indigenous men (4%) (Figure 4.4). A similar pattern occurred for periods of unsentenced community-based supervision: 9% of periods for young non-Indigenous women had support in the preceding month, followed by 7% for young Indigenous women, 7% for young non-Indigenous men and 4% for young Indigenous men. Only for young Indigenous men were unsentenced detention periods less likely to have been preceded by a period of support than periods of unsentenced community-based supervision.



For young people who received SAAP support in the month before a period of unsentenced supervision, the longest period of support tended to be shorter for unsentenced detention than for unsentenced community-based supervision (Figure 4.5). The preceding SAAP support was no longer than 2 weeks for 29% of unsentenced detention periods, compared with 24% of unsentenced community-based supervision periods. Almost one-fifth (19%) of unsentenced community-based supervision periods had support that lasted 6 months or more and ended in the month preceding supervision, compared with 17% of unsentenced detention periods. For both types of supervision, 8% of periods had SAAP support lasting more than 1 year.



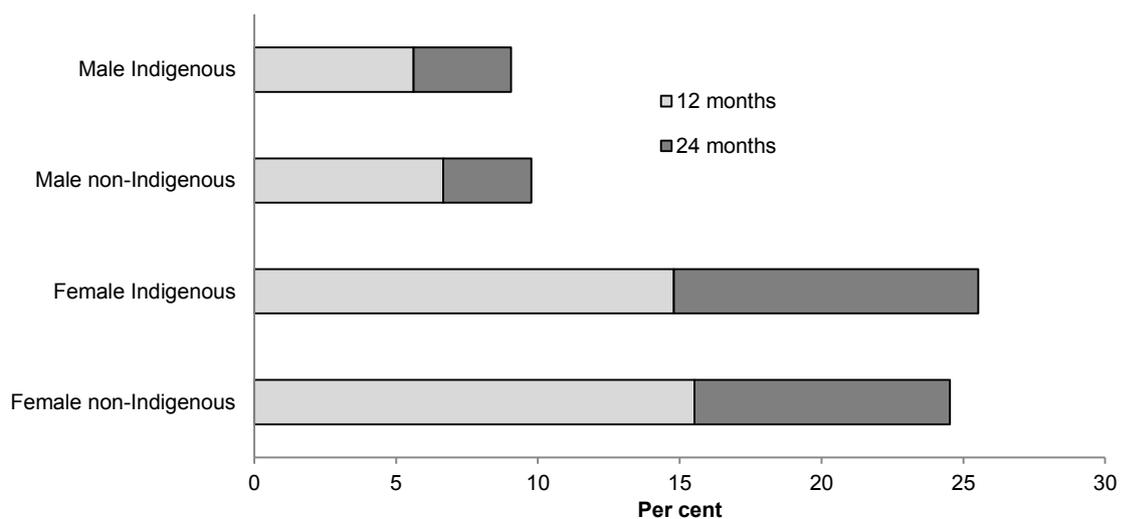
Source: Table S12 and Table S13.

Figure 4.5: Unsentenced detention and unsentenced community-based supervision where SAAP support was received in the month preceding the supervision by length of longest period of SAAP support within the period

4.3 SAAP support received after most recent juvenile justice supervision

One in 12 (8%) of young people received SAAP support within 12 months after the end of their most recent juvenile justice supervision, while 1 in 8 (12%) received it within 2 years.

As with the SAAP support received before supervision, young women were more likely to receive support after supervision than young men: 16% of young non-Indigenous women and 15% of young Indigenous women received support, compared with 7% of young non-Indigenous men and 6% of young Indigenous men (Figure 4.6). Over the 24 months, 26% of young Indigenous women and 25% of young non-Indigenous women received support, compared with 9% of young Indigenous men and 10% of young non-Indigenous men.

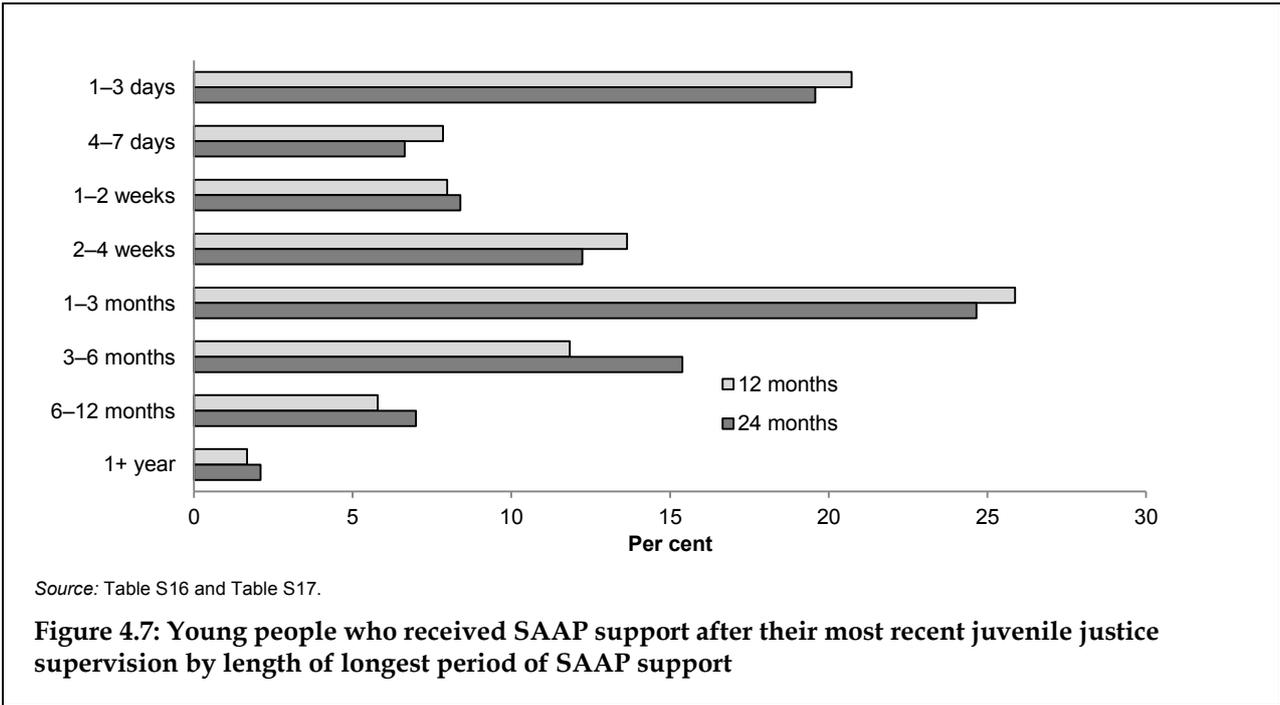


Source: Table S14 and Table S15.

Figure 4.6: Young people who received SAAP support after their most recent juvenile justice supervision

A similar pattern was found for the duration of SAAP support periods after supervision to that which occurred before supervision (see Figure 4.1): for 26% of young people having support within 12 months after supervision, their longest support period was 1–3 months (Figure 4.7). However, a greater proportion had only short support periods: 37% had periods lasting no more than 2 weeks, while for 21%, support did not last more than 3 days.

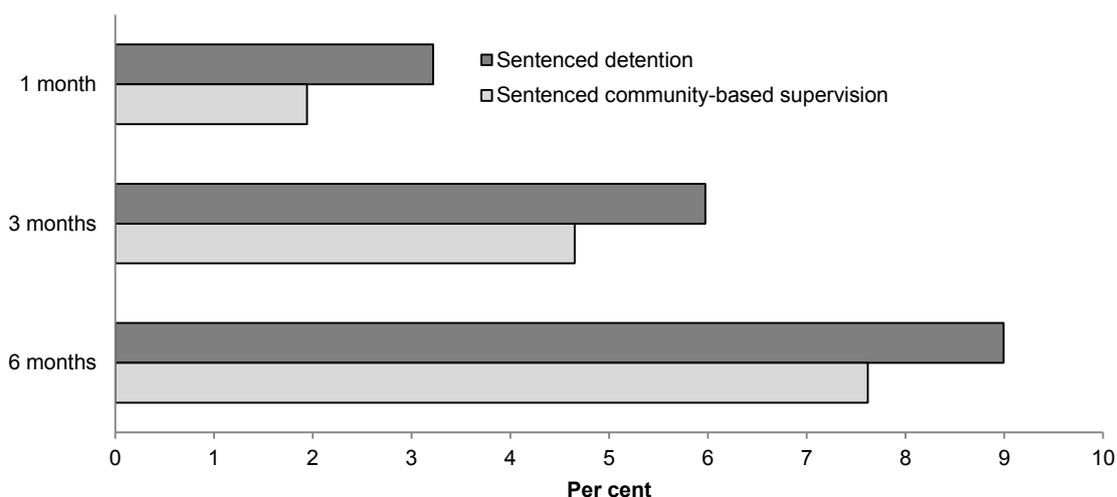
Those who received support within 2 years tended to have slightly longer support periods, but the proportion receiving only short periods of support was still high: 35% received support lasting no more than 2 weeks (and 20% received support of only 1–3 days) (Figure 4.7). One-quarter (25%) received support lasting 1–3 months, while a further one-fifth (22%) received support lasting 3 months or more.



4.4 SAAP support received after sentenced juvenile justice supervision

Young people who exit sentenced juvenile justice supervision may be vulnerable to homelessness, particularly if they leave detention. In recognition of this, states and territories provide programs and support to assist young people leaving detention, although the level of support varies by state and territory.

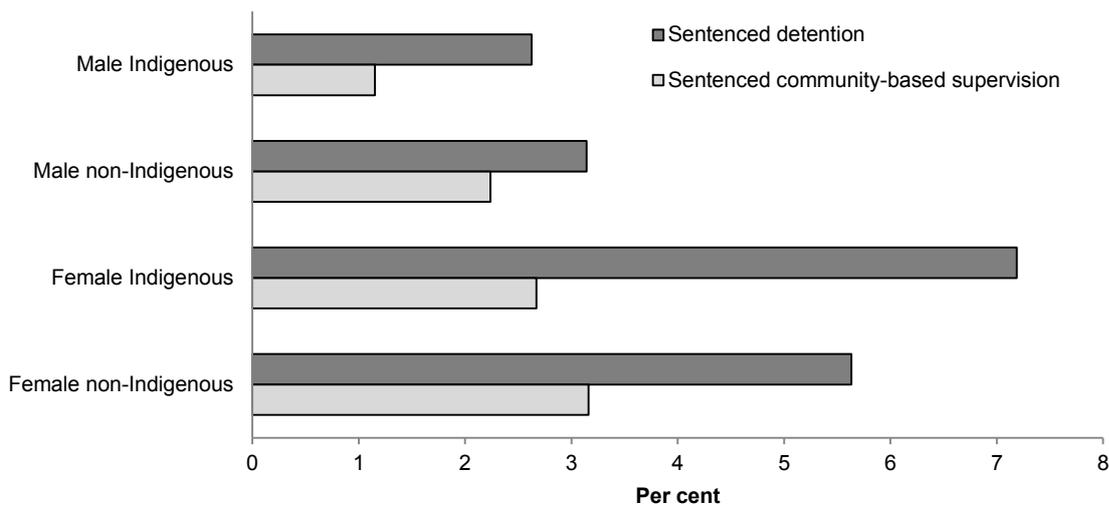
Receiving SAAP support after sentenced supervision was slightly less common than receiving support before unsentenced supervision (see Figure 4.3), and SAAP support was slightly more common after the end of sentenced detention than sentenced community-based supervision (Figure 4.8). Three per cent of sentenced detention periods were followed by support that started within 1 month of the detention ending, compared with 2% of sentenced community-based supervision periods. In the 6 months after the end of supervision, 9% of sentenced detention periods and 8% of sentenced community-based supervision periods were followed by SAAP support.



Source: Table S18, Table S19, Table S20, Table S21, Table S22, Table S23.

Figure 4.8: Sentenced detention and sentenced community-based supervision where SAAP support was received in the months after the supervision

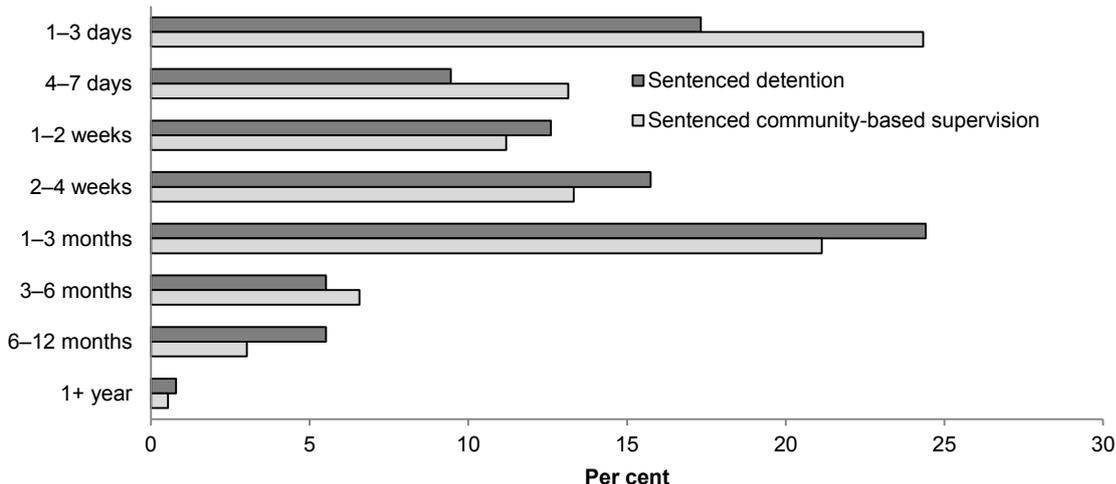
While periods of sentenced community-based supervision completed by young women were only slightly more likely than those completed by young men to be followed by SAAP support within 1 month, periods of sentenced detention completed by young women were twice as likely to be followed by support as those completed by young men (Figure 4.9). Seven per cent of sentenced detention periods completed by young Indigenous women were followed by SAAP support within 1 month, compared with 6% of those completed by young non-Indigenous women and 3% of periods completed by both young Indigenous and non-Indigenous men. In contrast, 3% of periods of sentenced community-based supervision completed by both young Indigenous and non-Indigenous women were followed by support within 1 month, as were 2% of those completed by young non-Indigenous men and 1% of those completed by young Indigenous men.



Source: Table S18, Table S19.

Figure 4.9: Sentenced detention and sentenced community-based supervision where SAAP support was received in the month following the supervision

For young people who received SAAP support in the month after sentenced supervision, the longest period of support tended to be greater for detention than for community-based supervision (Figure 4.10). For almost half (49%) of periods of sentenced community-based supervision with support in the following month, the support lasted no more than 2 weeks, compared with 40% of sentenced detention periods. In contrast, for 6% of sentenced detention periods with support in the following month, the support lasted 6 months or more, compared with 4% of sentenced community-based supervision periods.



Source: Table S24 and Table S25.

Figure 4.10: Sentenced detention and sentenced community-based supervision where SAAP support was received in the month following the supervision by length of longest period of SAAP support within the period

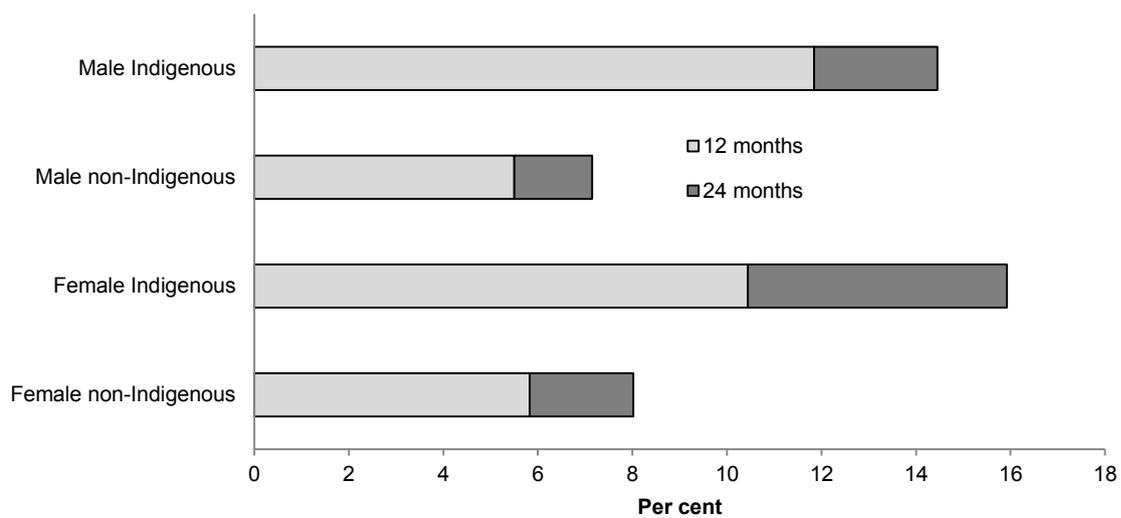
5 Children and young people with child protection notifications

Children in the child protection system may have been at risk of homelessness before entering the system, for example, in situations involving family violence or breakdown. Young people leaving this system are also at risk of homelessness. This section explores SAAP support received before and after the most recent child protection notification for those whose most recent child protection notification occurred in Victoria or Tasmania (data for Victoria are available for 1990–91 to 2008–09, while data for Tasmania are available for 2004–05 to 2006–07).

5.1 SAAP support received before most recent child protection notification

Four per cent of children and young people with a child protection notification received SAAP support in the 12 months preceding their most recent notification. SAAP support in the preceding 12 months was slightly more common among those who had substantiated notifications (almost 20% of notifications for this group were substantiated), at 6% (tables A26 and A27). A similar pattern was found for the 24 months preceding notification; with 6% overall and 9% of those whose notification was substantiated receiving support (tables A28 and A29).

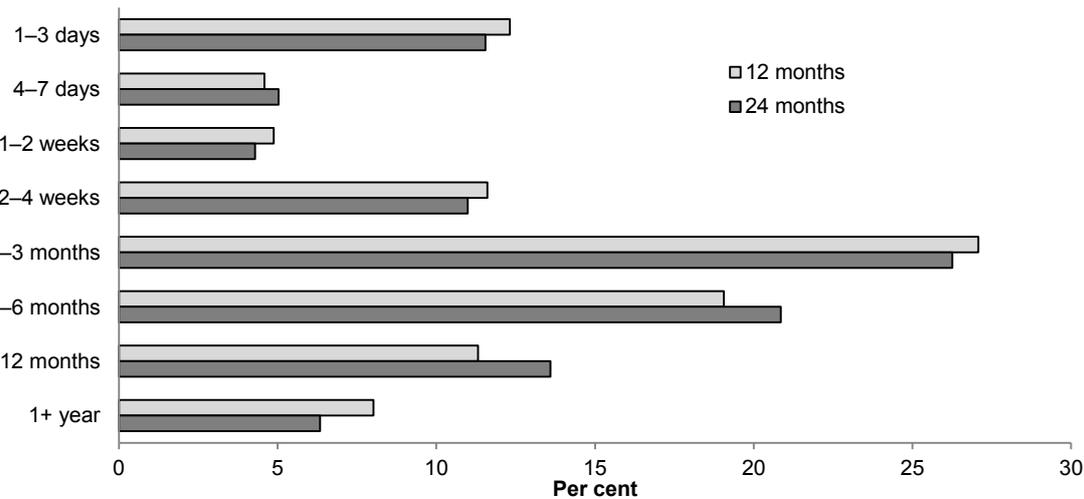
There was little difference in the proportion of girls and young women and boys and young men who had received SAAP support preceding the most recent child protection notification, whether substantiated or not. However, Indigenous young people were about twice as likely as non-Indigenous young people to have received support before their most recent notification: 13% of Indigenous young people had received support in the preceding 24 months, compared with 6% for non-Indigenous young people (Table S28), and a similar pattern occurred for substantiated notifications. Of those whose most recent notification was substantiated, 14% of Indigenous boys and young men received support in the 24 months preceding, compared with 7% for non-Indigenous boys and young men, while the proportions for girls and young women were 16% for Indigenous and 8% for non-Indigenous (Figure 5.1).



Source: Table S27 and Table S29.

Figure 5.1: Children and young people who received SAAP support before their most recent child protection notification as a proportion of all children and young people whose most recent child protection notification was substantiated

For more than one-quarter (27%) of children and young people with a substantiated notification, their longest period of SAAP support in the preceding 12 months was 1–3 months, while for 19%, the longest period was 3–6 months (Figure 5.2). However, 22% did not have a support period longer than 2 weeks – and 12% did not have a support period longer than 3 days. Proportions for those who received support in the preceding 24 months were similar – for 21%, their longest support period was 3–6 months, and for 14%, it was 6–12 months. One-fifth (21%) did not have a support period longer than 2 weeks in the preceding 2 years.



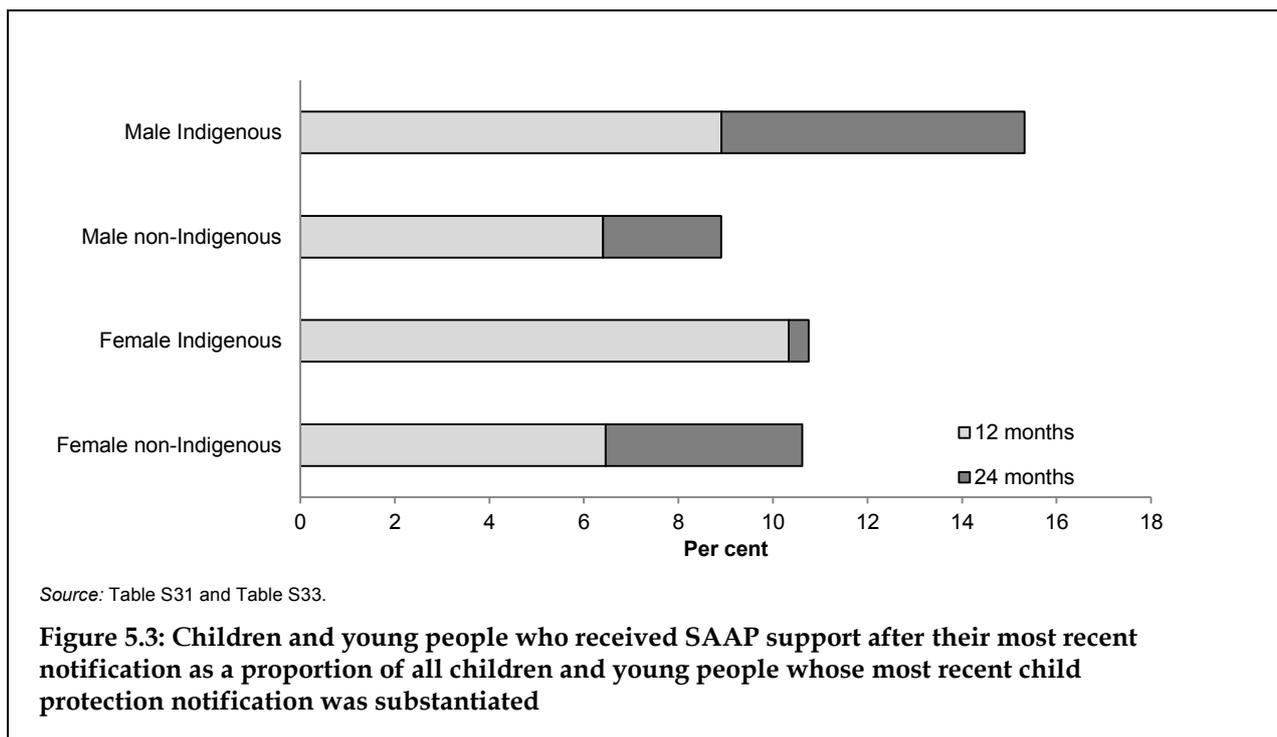
Source: AIHW analysis.

Figure 5.2: Children and young people whose most recent child protection notification was substantiated and received SAAP support before this notification by length of longest period of SAAP support

5.2 SAAP support received after most recent child protection notification

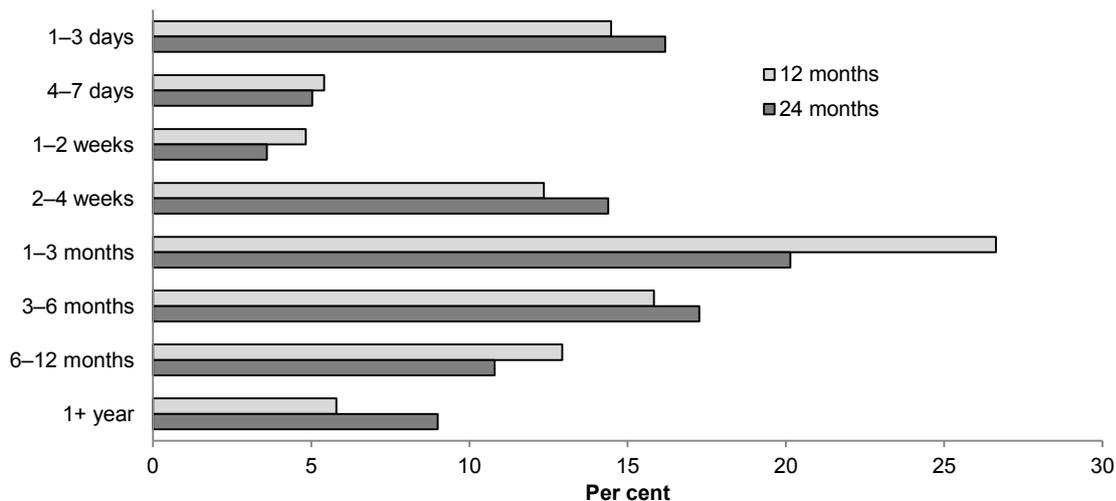
As with SAAP support received before the most recent notification, SAAP support after the most recent notification was slightly more common for those for whom this notification was substantiated: overall, 4% of young people received support in the 12 months after their most recent notification, while of those whose most recent notification was substantiated, 7% received support in the 12 months after this notification (tables A30 and A31). A similar pattern was found for the 24 months after notification, with 7% overall and 10% of those whose notification was substantiated receiving support (tables A32 and A33).

For those whose most recent notification was substantiated, non-Indigenous boys and young men and non-Indigenous girls and young women were equally likely to have received SAAP support in the following 12 months (6% for both), although non-Indigenous girls and young women were slightly more likely to have received support in the following 24 months (11% compared with 9%) (Figure 5.3). However, while the two Indigenous groups were also equally likely to have received support in the following 12 months (9% for males and 10% for females), Indigenous boys and young men were more likely to have support in the 24-month period (15% compared with 11%).



For more than one-quarter (27%) of those whose most recent notification was substantiated and had SAAP support in the following 12 months, their longest period of support was 1–3 months, while for 16%, the longest period was 3–6 months (Figure 5.4). However, one-quarter (25%) did not have a support period lasting more than 2 weeks, and 14% did not have a support period of more than 3 days.

Those who had support in the 24 months after notification were slightly more likely to have long support periods – for 9%, their longest period was more than 1 year, compared with 6% of those with support in the following 12 months (Figure 5.4). However, both groups were equally likely to have had only short periods of SAAP support – one-quarter (25%) had support lasting no more than 2 weeks.



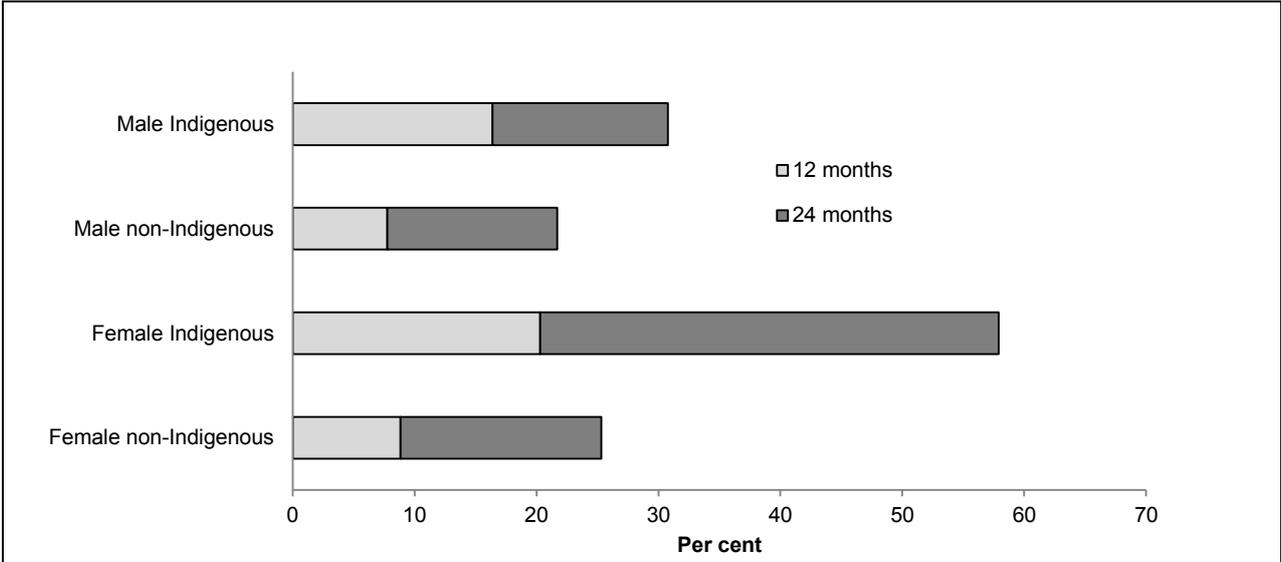
Source: AIHW analysis.

Figure 5.4: Children and young people whose most recent child protection notification was substantiated and received SAAP support after this notification by length of longest period of SAAP support

5.3 Leaving child protection and subsequent SAAP support

From the age of 15, young people begin transitioning from care to independence, and in most states and territories child protection agencies are required to prepare plans and provide assistance to help in this transition (FaHCSIA 2010). Young people who receive SAAP support in the years after out-of-home care may be experiencing difficulties in transitioning to independence. The data used in this project does not include information on out-of-home care, so this section focuses on young people who were aged 15 or older at their most recent child protection notification. Notifications were not restricted to those that were substantiated as not all notifications for this age group are investigated because of the limited time before the young person ‘ages out’ of the system. Not all young people who are the subject of a child protection notification are in out-of-home care, so the data in this section may not directly reflect the experience of young people transitioning from out-of-home care.

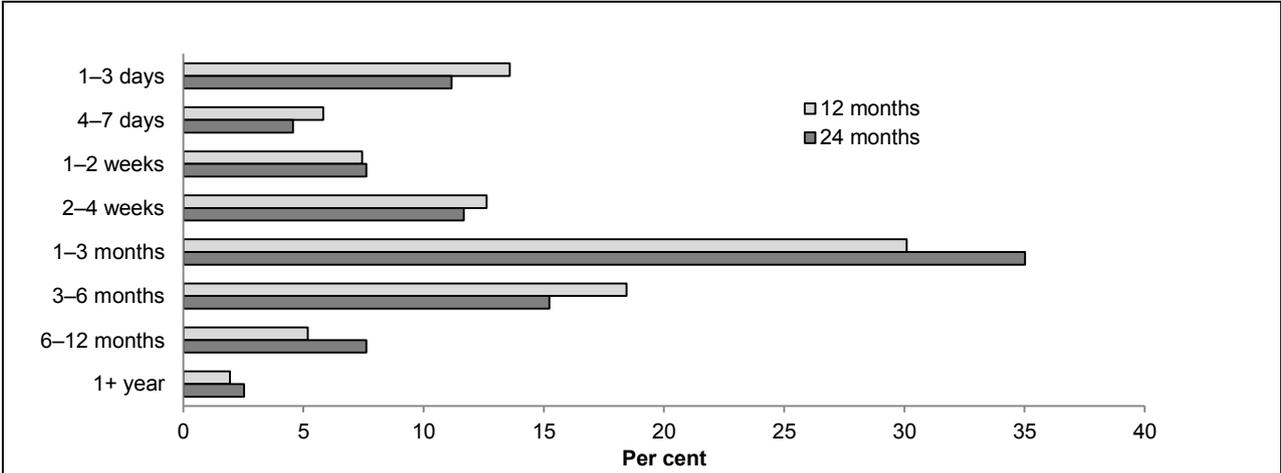
Overall, 8% of those aged 15 or older at their most recent notification received SAAP support within 12 months, and 18% had received support within 2 years. This group of young people included a relatively high proportion with unknown Indigenous status, and they were less likely to have received support than either Indigenous or non-Indigenous young people (5% received support within 12 months and 8% within 24 months). Indigenous young people were more than twice as likely to receive support – 16% of Indigenous young men and 20% of Indigenous young women received support, compared with 8% of non-Indigenous young men and 9% of non-Indigenous young women (Figure 5.5). Within the 24-month period, young Indigenous women were the most likely to have received support at 58%, compared with 25% for non-Indigenous young women, 31% for Indigenous young men, and 22% for non-Indigenous young men.



Source: Table S34 and Table S35.

Figure 5.5: Young people aged 15+ who received SAAP support after their most recent notification as a proportion of all young people aged 15+ at their most recent notification

For almost one-third (30%) of young people aged 15 or older at their most notification who received support in the following 12 months, their longest support period was 1–3 months; this proportion increased to 35% for those who had support within the following 2 years (Figure 5.6). For another 18% the longest support period was 3–6 months in the 12 months after their most recent notification; this proportion dropped to 15% for those who had support in the following 2 years. About one-quarter had support periods lasting no longer than 2 weeks (27% for those with support in the following 12 months and 23% for those with support in the following 2 years).



Source: AIHW analysis.

Figure 5.6: Young people aged 15+ who received SAAP support after their most recent child protection notification by length of longest period of SAAP support

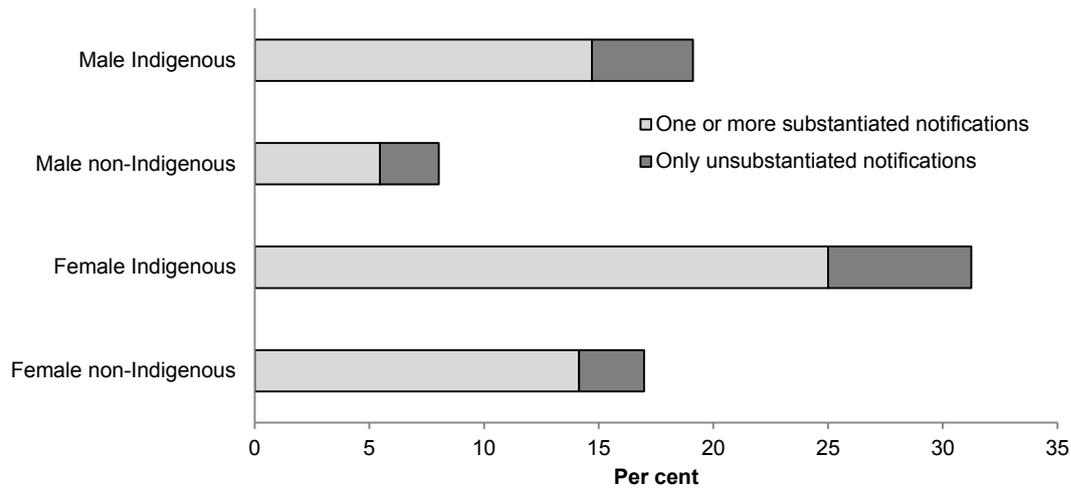
6 People born in 1990–91—involvement in Victorian juvenile justice and child protection systems

Young people born in 1990–91 were aged 0–18 for the period of available Victorian child protection data and aged 10–18 for the period of available juvenile justice data. This means this birth cohort have all their possible Victorian child protection notification history and all their possible juvenile justice supervision history in the data available for this project. Because data on those who received SAAP support is only available for 3 years, involvement in this sector is not included in this section. Although Tasmania supplied child protection data, the data cover only 3 years and therefore cannot be used to assess the overall level of involvement in both the juvenile justice and child protection systems.

6.1 Juvenile justice cohort

Of those born in 1990–91 who had juvenile justice supervision in Victoria from 2000–01 to 2008–09, 10% had a child protection notification in Victoria from 1990–01 to 2008–09, while 8% had a substantiated child protection notification. In all cases except one, the first child protection notification preceded the first juvenile justice supervision.

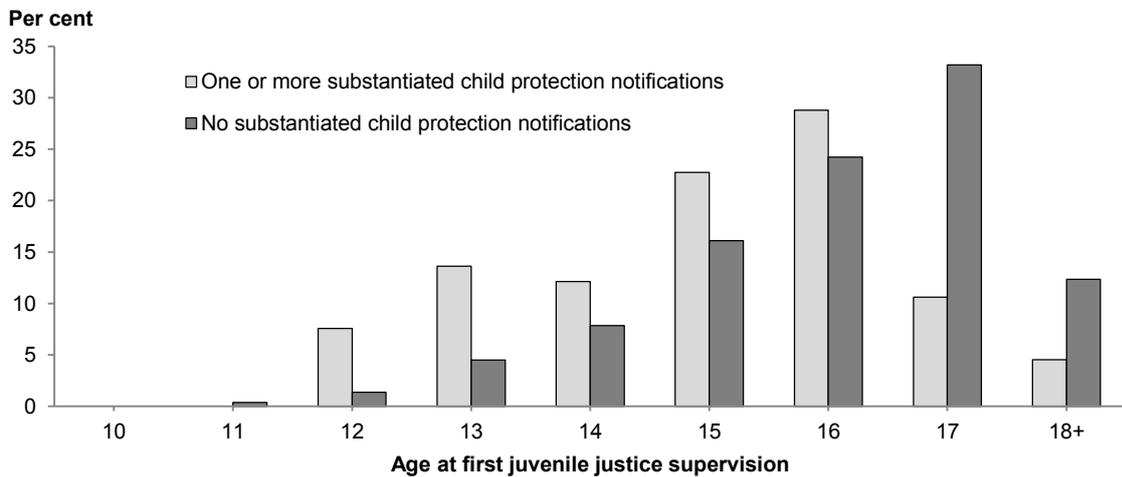
Indigenous young people under juvenile justice supervision were more likely to have one or more child protection notifications than non-Indigenous young people, and young women were more likely to have had a notification than young men (Figure 6.1). Almost one-third (31%) of young Indigenous women under supervision had one or more notifications, compared with 19% of young Indigenous men, 17% of young non-Indigenous women and 8% of young non-Indigenous men. There was a similar pattern with substantiated child protection notifications: one-quarter (25%) of young Indigenous women under supervision had at least one substantiated notification, compared with 15% of young Indigenous men, 14% of young non-Indigenous women and 5% of young non-Indigenous men.



Source: AIHW analysis.

Figure 6.1: People born 1990–91 with one or more child protection notifications in Victoria as a proportion of all people with juvenile justice supervision in Victoria

Young people with a history of substantiated notifications were more likely to enter supervision at a younger age than those with no substantiated notifications (Figure 6.2). Of those under supervision who had one or more substantiated notifications, 21% first entered supervision aged 10–13, compared with 6% of those with no notifications. In contrast, only 11% of those under supervision who had one or more substantiated notifications first entered supervision aged 17, compared with 33% of those with no substantiated notifications.



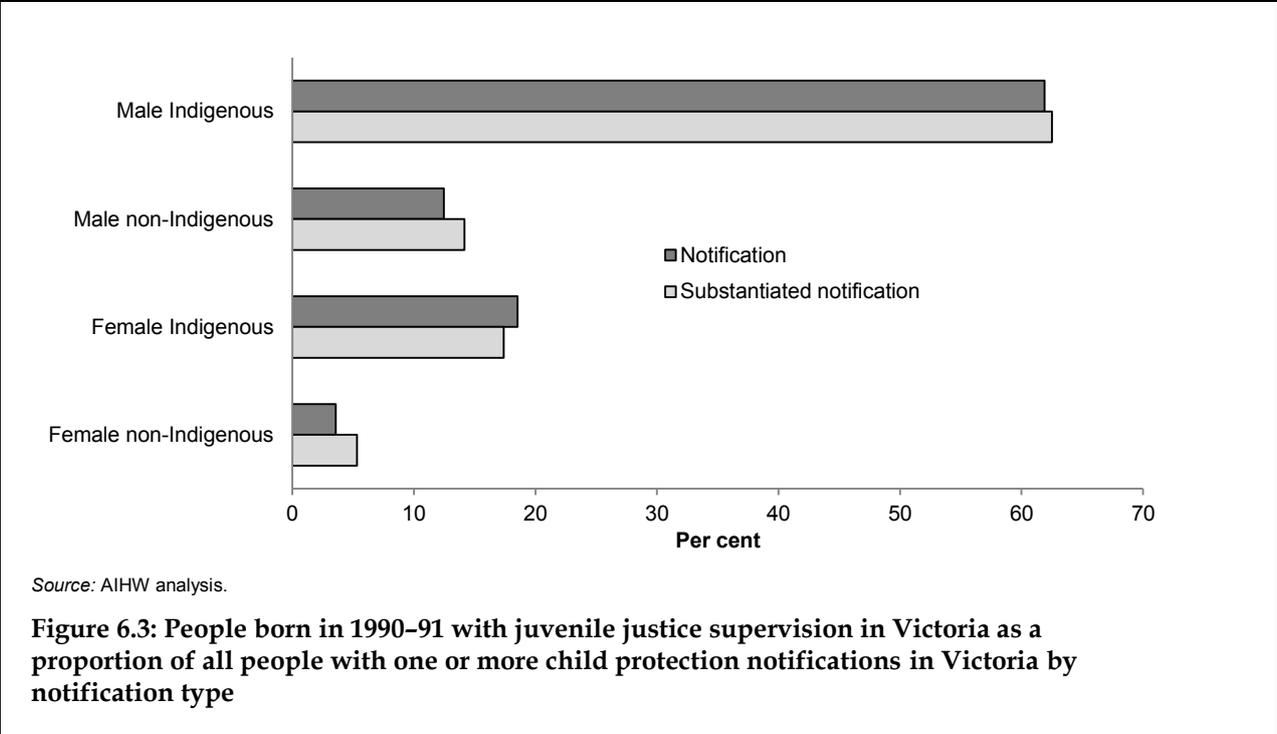
Source: AIHW analysis.

Figure 6.2: People born in 1990–91 with juvenile justice supervision in Victoria by age at first supervision and child protection notification status

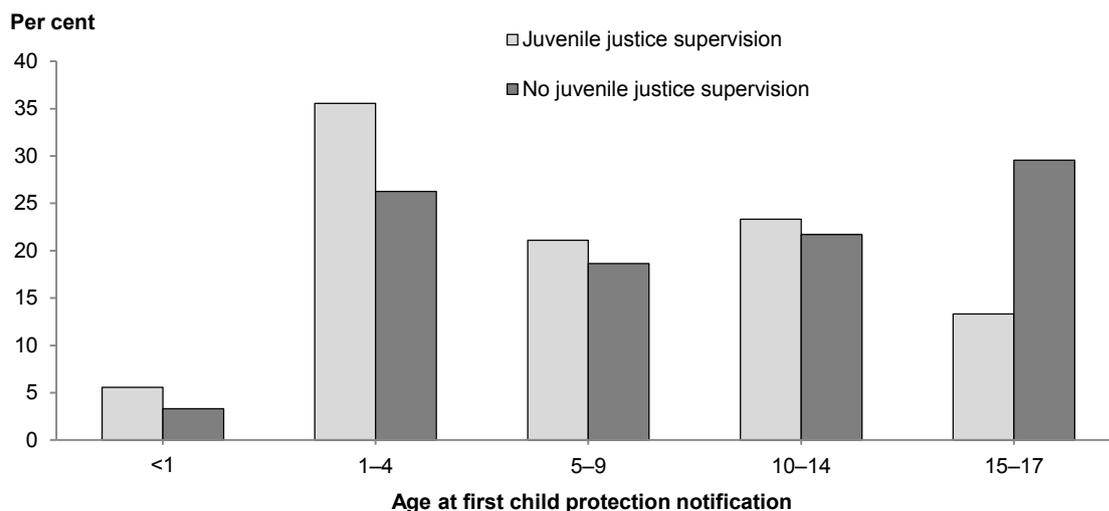
6.2 Child protection cohort

Of those born in 1990–91 who had one or more child protection notifications in Victoria, 8% were also under juvenile justice supervision in Victoria. Indigenous people were more likely to have been under supervision than non-Indigenous people, and men were more likely to have been under supervision than women (Figure 6.3). Almost two-thirds (62%) of Indigenous men with a notification had also been under supervision in Victoria, compared with 12% for non-Indigenous men, while 19% of Indigenous women had been under supervision, compared with 4% of non-Indigenous women.

The proportion of those with a substantiated child protection notification who were also under juvenile justice supervision was slightly higher for all groups except Indigenous women (Figure 6.3). Almost two-thirds (63%) of Indigenous men with a substantiated notification in Victoria had also been under supervision in Victoria, compared with 14% for non-Indigenous men, 17% for Indigenous women and 5% for non-Indigenous women.



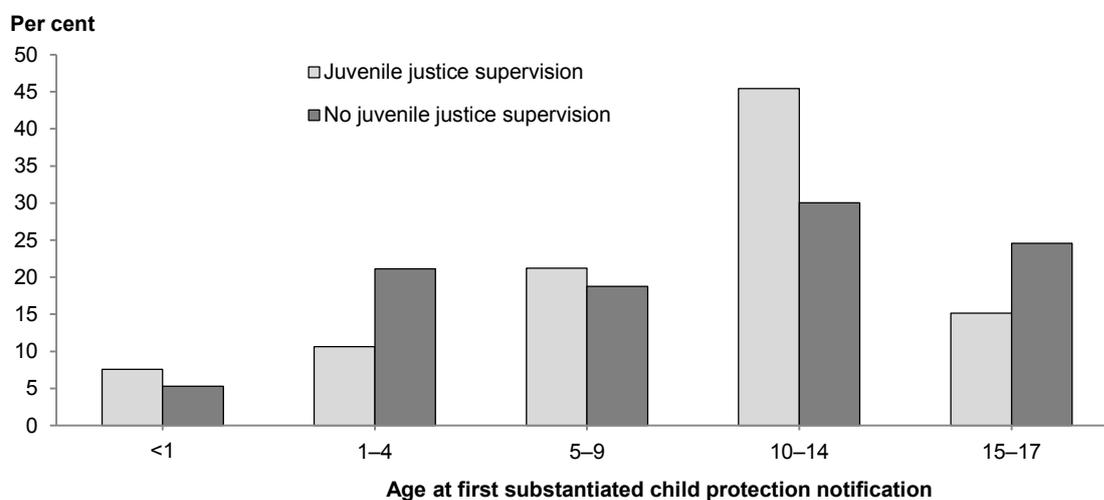
Overall, those who were under juvenile justice supervision were more likely to have had their first child protection notification at a younger age (Figure 6.4). More than one-third (36%) of those who were under supervision had their first notification aged 1–4, compared with one-quarter (26%) of those not under supervision, while 13% of those who were under supervision had their first notification aged 15–17, compared with 30% of those not under supervision.



Source: AIHW analysis.

Figure 6.4: People born in 1990-91 with one or more child protection notifications in Victoria by age at first child protection notification and juvenile justice supervision status

Similar to those with one or more notifications, people with one or more substantiated notification who were also under supervision tended to be younger at their first substantiation than those not under supervision, although this pattern did not occur for the 1-4 age group (Figure 6.5).



Source: AIHW analysis.

Figure 6.5: People born in 1990-91 with one or more substantiated child protection notifications in Victoria by age at first substantiated child protection notification and juvenile justice supervision status

7 Possible future directions

While this project demonstrated that linking these community-sector data collections is feasible and worthwhile, the results are limited by the available data. The accumulation of data over a number of years would enable flows between services over the long term to be identified and allow more sophisticated analyses. The data for two of the three collections linked in this project will improve in forthcoming years, which will enhance the results that could be derived from future linkage.

7.1 Data on homelessness

The SAAP NDC was replaced by the Specialist Homelessness Services Collection in July 2011. This new collection has a number of advantages over the SAAP NDC (AIHW 2012b). Not only has the scope been expanded to include more agencies, but children who receive services directly are counted as clients rather than 'accompanying children', which means more information will be collected on this client group. Additionally, validity rate of the statistical linkage key, which was used in this project to link records from different collections (see AIHW 2012a for more information) has improved from 86% in the last quarter of the SAAP NDC to 93% in the first quarter of the new collection, and it is expected to improve in forthcoming quarters. These improvements mean that future linkage with the new collection will allow more complete analyses on involvement in multiple sectors.

7.2 Data on child protection

The existing national data collection on child protection is in aggregate format, which makes it unsuitable for linkage (see AIHW 2008b). Unit-record data on child protection notifications was provided by Victoria and Tasmania for this project. However, the AIHW, with the support of the states and territories, is implementing a unit-record child protection data collection, which will be suitable for linkage with other unit-record collections. In addition, this unit-record collection will contain information on care and protection orders and out-of-home care placements as well as on notifications, investigations and substantiations. This means that future linkage with this collection will not only involve all Australian states and territories, but also include more detailed information on children and young people's involvement with the child protection system.

7.3 Data on juvenile justice supervision

The JJ NMDS is a long-standing unit-record data collection with data on all supervised legal arrangements and orders for most states and territories from 2000–01 (see AIHW 2011c for details). Data on offences is likely to be available for some states and territories in future years, which will add to the value of any analysis of linked data.

7.4 Data on other services

A number of AIHW unit-record data collections have or will be expanded to include statistical linkage keys that will allow them to be linked with the homelessness, child protection and juvenile justice supervision data collections. These collections include the

Disability Services NMDS, for which the SLK-851 has been in place for many years, the Alcohol and Other Drugs Treatment Services NMDS (SLK-851 implemented in 2012–13 collection) and the Community Mental Health Care NMDS (SLK-851 under consideration for inclusion). Linking these collections with the three collections in this project would provide additional information on multiple service use in the community sector. It would also be possible to link with a number of administrative health data collections for which statistical linkage keys could be derived from full names.

Appendix: Cohorts for analysis

Because of the limited availability of data (Figure A1) and age restrictions for the child protection services and juvenile justice supervision, it is not possible for all young people in each source data set to appear in another data set.



Figure A1: Data available for SAAP, child protection and juvenile justice by financial year

People receiving SAAP services

To analyse the history of juvenile justice supervision of people receiving SAAP services, a cohort of people born in 1990-91 who received SAAP support in 2008-09 was used. With the available juvenile justice data, all possible years of juvenile justice supervision are available in the linked data (Table A1).

Table A1: Cohort for people receiving SAAP services

Data source	Age	Years of service
SAAP NDC	17-18	2008-09
JJ NMDS	10-18	2000-01 to 2008-09

Young people under juvenile justice supervision and children and young people with child protection notifications

Because data on people receiving SAAP services are only available for 2006-07 to 2008-09, the relevant periods in which the most recent juvenile justice supervision could start or end or the most recent child protection notification could occur were restricted (Table A2).

Table A2: Cohorts for young people under juvenile justice supervision and children and young people with child protection notifications

SAAP support received	Period of juvenile justice or child protection data
12 months preceding	2007-08 to 2008-09
24 months preceding	2008-09
12 months following	2006-07 to 2008-09
24 months following	2006-07

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Related publications

Children and young people at risk of social exclusion: links between homelessness, child protection and juvenile justice is a report on a project to link Supported Accommodation Assistance Program, child protection and juvenile justice data. A companion report describes the methods used to link the three collections:

AIHW 2012. Linking SAAP, child protection and juvenile justice data: technical report. Data linkage series 14. Cat. no. CSI 14. Canberra: AIHW.

A report exploring the feasibility of linking these three data collections was published in 2008:

AIHW 2008. Linking SAAP, child protection and juvenile justice data collections: a feasibility study. Data linkage series no. 5. Cat. no. CSI 5. Canberra: AIHW.

The following publications may also be of interest:

AIHW 2010. Government-funded specialist homelessness services: SAAP National Data Collection annual report 2008-09 Australia. Cat. no. HOU 219. Canberra: AIHW.

AIHW 2011. Child protection Australia 2010-11. Child welfare series no. 53. Cat. no. CWS 41. Canberra: AIHW.

AIHW 2011. Juvenile justice in Australia 2009-10. Juvenile justice series no. 8. Cat. no. JUV 8. Canberra: AIHW.

These publications can be downloaded for free from the AIHW website <<http://www.aihw.gov.au/publications/>>.

The website also includes information on ordering printed copies.

Following the release of a study exploring the feasibility of linking three community-sector data collections, the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare was funded to link available child protection, juvenile justice and Supported Accommodation Assistance Program data.

Analysis of the linked data shows that children and young people who are involved in one of these three sectors are more likely to be involved in another of the sectors than the general population.

While the results are limited by data availability, the project highlights the valuable information that can be gained by data linkage.