

Juvenile justice supervision periods allow the analysis of repeated contacts with the juvenile justice system. This is in contrast to juvenile justice episodes which allow for the analysis of progression through the juvenile justice system within juvenile justice supervision periods.

Escapes

The data item in the centre collection relating to escapes (of at least 7 days in length) was expanded to differentiate between escapes from the actual detention centre and escapes from secure escorts. The options agreed to are:

- Escapes from within a secure perimeter of a juvenile justice remand/detention centre
- Escapes from other legal custody, whilst escorted and under juvenile justice supervision
- Escapes from a juvenile justice remand/detention centre that result in a charge of escape

Issues for future inclusion in the Juvenile Justice NMDS

The NMDS in its current form represents a starting point for the collection of nationally relevant information on young people involved in juvenile justice systems in Australia. There are a number of remaining areas of interest which, for a variety of reasons, have yet to be included in the data set. Development of the data set and performance indicators will continue, and it is hoped that information such as the following will be available in the future:

- Juveniles held in police watch houses
- Juveniles held in adult detention facilities
- Offence data
- Diversion data, e.g. conferencing
- Pre-sentence reports
- Cultural and linguistic background—draft data item to be defined

As of August 2004, the *Juvenile Justice NMDS Data Dictionary v1.3* contains the data items shown in Box 2.

Implementation of the Juvenile Justice NMDS

Management of the national collection

In May 2004 the Australasian Juvenile Justice Administrators (AJJA) endorsed the creation of a permanent committee (Data Sub-committee (DSC)) with the delegation to implement the Juvenile Justice NMDS and manage the performance of the data custodian and all data issues that arise in the course of dealing with and reporting on the Juvenile Justice NMDS. A member of AJJA will chair this committee, and the secretariat will be the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare (AIHW).

Juvenile justice: A new national collection

Box 2: Juvenile Justice NMDS Data Dictionary Version 1.3

Data items

Juvenile justice client	Juvenile justice episode	Juvenile justice remand/detention centre
Unique client ID	Entry date	Centre name
Letters of name	Episode type	Centre postcode
Date of birth	Transferred from	Juvenile justice remand/detention centre capacity
Sex	Last known home suburb/locality/town name	Number of juvenile justice detainees
Indigenous status	Last known home postcode	Escapes— from secure perimeter
Cultural and linguistic background (to be defined)	Juvenile justice agency name	Escapes— from other legal custody
Statistical linkage key	Juvenile justice agency postcode	Escapes—resulting in charge of escape
	Reason for exit	
	Exit date	

Data concepts

A juvenile justice client is defined as:

A person who is under the supervision or case management of the juvenile justice department as a result of:

- having committed or allegedly committed an offence between the ages of 10 years and 17 years; OR
- having committed or allegedly committed an offence at age greater than 17 years, and who is treated as a juvenile due to his or her vulnerability or immaturity.

A juvenile justice episode is defined as:

A period of time during which a client is under the supervision of, or is case managed by, a state or territory juvenile justice department, as a result of having committed or allegedly committed, an offence, and where there is no change in the type of supervision provided or the specific juvenile justice agency responsible.

A supervision period is a continuous period of contact with the juvenile justice system, and may contain several episodes. It is defined as:

A period of time during which a juvenile justice client is under the supervision of, or is case managed by, a state or territory juvenile justice department, as a result of having committed or allegedly committed an offence.

Data custodian

At the November 2003 meeting of AJJA, the AIHW was appointed as data custodian for the Juvenile Justice NMDS. A memorandum of understanding between the AIHW and the AJJA has been agreed which lasts for a period of 3 years from 1 July 2004 with the option for renewal for a further 3 years.

Timing of full implementation

The full implementation of the Juvenile Justice NMDS will proceed during 2004–05. The first report on the data is due to be released in November 2005, and will include data for the first 3 years of the ongoing collection—2001–03. Annual reports will be produced thereafter.

Privacy of the Juvenile Justice NMDS data

Ensuring the privacy of information about juvenile justice clients is an essential criterion to be considered in the implementation of the Juvenile Justice NMDS. With the AIHW as data custodian, there are certain legislative protections in place to ensure privacy is protected.

The Privacy Act 1988 contains 11 Information Privacy Principles (IPPs) which govern the conduct of Australian and Australian Capital Territory government agencies in the collection, management, use and disclosure of records containing personal information. Juvenile justice departments in all other jurisdictions are bound by their jurisdiction's legislation. Each jurisdiction already collects information about their clients that enables them to meet service accountability, for the protection of the public, to monitor, and to analyse the diversion, rehabilitation and post release outcomes of the service interventions for young offenders, both individually and group according to their personal characteristics.

The AIHW, as data custodian, is bound by the strict provisions (which allow for imprisonment of offenders for breach) of Section 29 of the *Australian Institute of Health and Welfare Act 1987* to ensure confidentiality of its data holdings. The AIHW acts as data custodian for many collections for which privacy and confidentiality are imperative. All AIHW collections must be cleared by its Ethics Committee before commencement. The implementation of the Juvenile Justice NMDS has received ethics clearance from that committee.

These provisions combine to ensure that the data holdings will be protected from unauthorised access, alteration or loss and meet all accepted compliance standards.

References

AIHW: Broadbent A 2001. Report on the development of a Juvenile Justice National Minimum Data Set. AIHW cat. no. CWS 14. Canberra: AIHW.

Legislation

Australian Institute of Health and Welfare Act 1987 (Cwlth) s29. Viewed 20 September 2004, <http://www.aihw.gov.au/aboutus/legislation.html>.

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