



Northern Territory: youth justice supervision in 2015–16



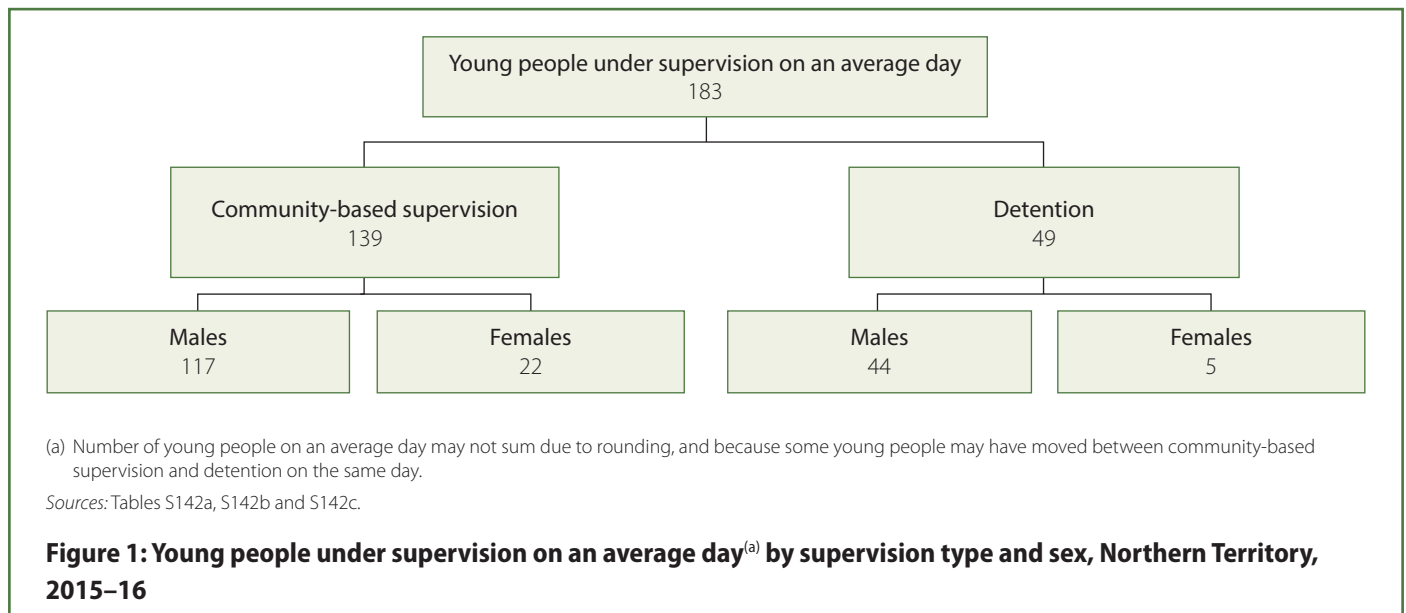
This fact sheet focuses on youth justice supervision in the Northern Territory in 2015–16 and includes some national comparisons.

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 183 young people (aged 10 and over) who were under youth justice supervision in the Northern Territory (Figure 1; see Box 2 for a definition of ‘average day’). Young people under supervision in the Northern Territory made up about 3% of all those under supervision on an average day in Australia (Table S1a).

About 3 in 4 (76%, or 139) young people under supervision in the Northern Territory were supervised in the community, and the remainder (27% or 49) were in detention. Note that some young people may have moved between community-based supervision and detention on the same day (Figure 1). The proportion of young people in the Northern Territory under community-based supervision was lower than the national proportion (84%) (tables S1a and S36a).



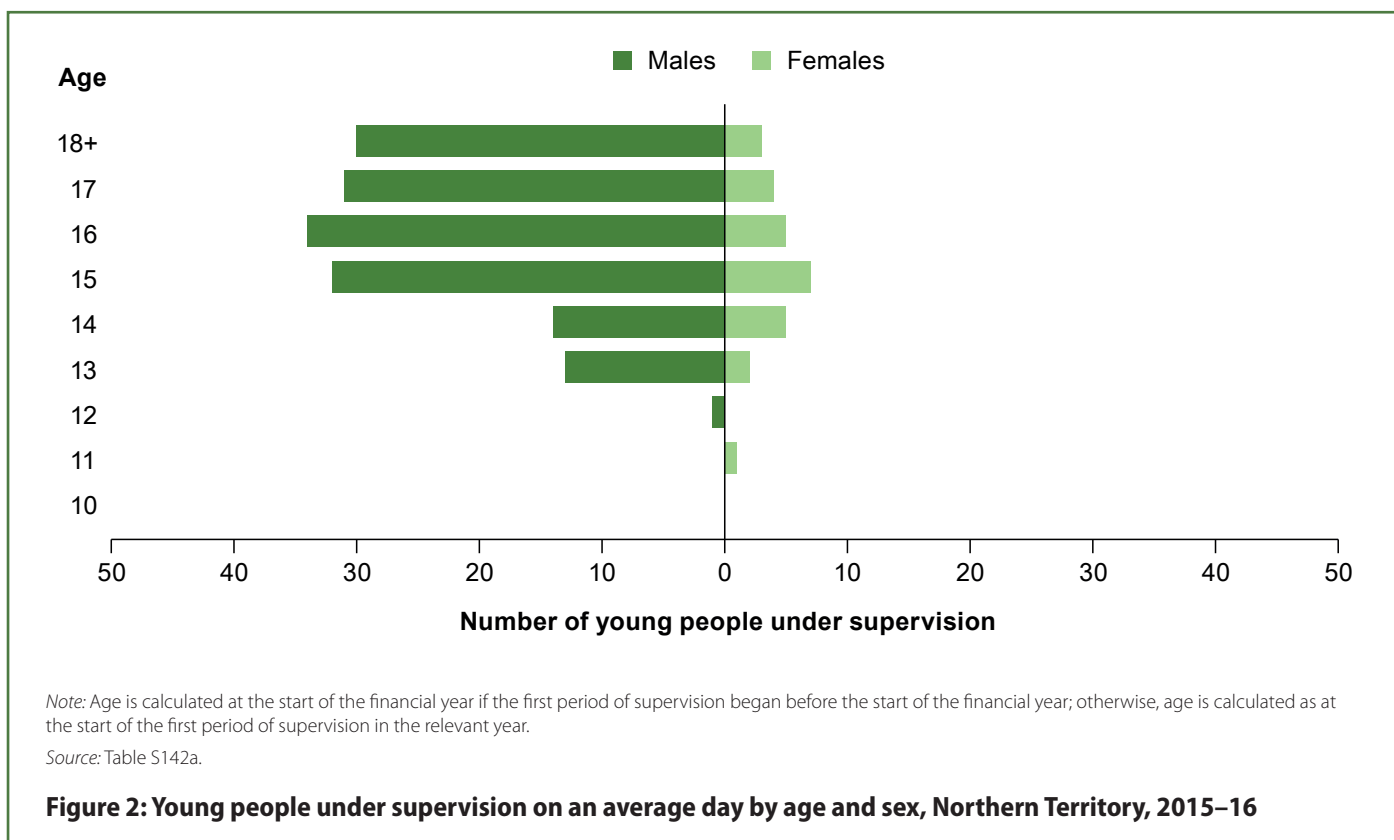
There were 57 young people aged 10–17 under supervision in the Northern Territory on an average day for every 10,000 in the population (Table S4a). This was the highest rate of all the states and territories (21 per 10,000 nationally). Rates of young people aged 10–17 under community-based supervision (40 per 10,000) and in detention (18 per 10,000) were also highest in the Northern Territory, compared to the national averages of 18 and 3 per 10,000, respectively (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>.

In the Northern Territory, most (83%) young people under supervision on an average day were aged 10–17, and the remainder were aged 18 and over (Figure 2). The proportion aged 10–17 was similar to the national average of 88% (Table S1a). Almost two-thirds (62%) of those under supervision in the Northern Territory were aged 15, 16 or 17.

Consistent with the other states and territories, the majority (85%) of young people under supervision on an average day in the Northern Territory were male. The national figure was 82% (Table S2a).



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 the Northern Territory, Indigenous young people constitute 45% of the population aged 10–17 (Table S145) but made up 95% of those aged 10–17 under supervision on an average day in 2015–16 (Table S142a). Indigenous young people made up 95% of those aged 10–17 under community-based supervision, and 96% of those aged 10–17 in detention on an average day in the Northern Territory.

The rate of Indigenous young people aged 10–17 under supervision on an average day in the Northern Territory was 120 per 10,000, compared with 5 per 10,000 for non-Indigenous young people (Table S4a). This means that Indigenous young people aged 10–17 were about 26 times as likely as non-Indigenous young people to be under supervision on an average day, which is higher than the national result (17 times as likely).

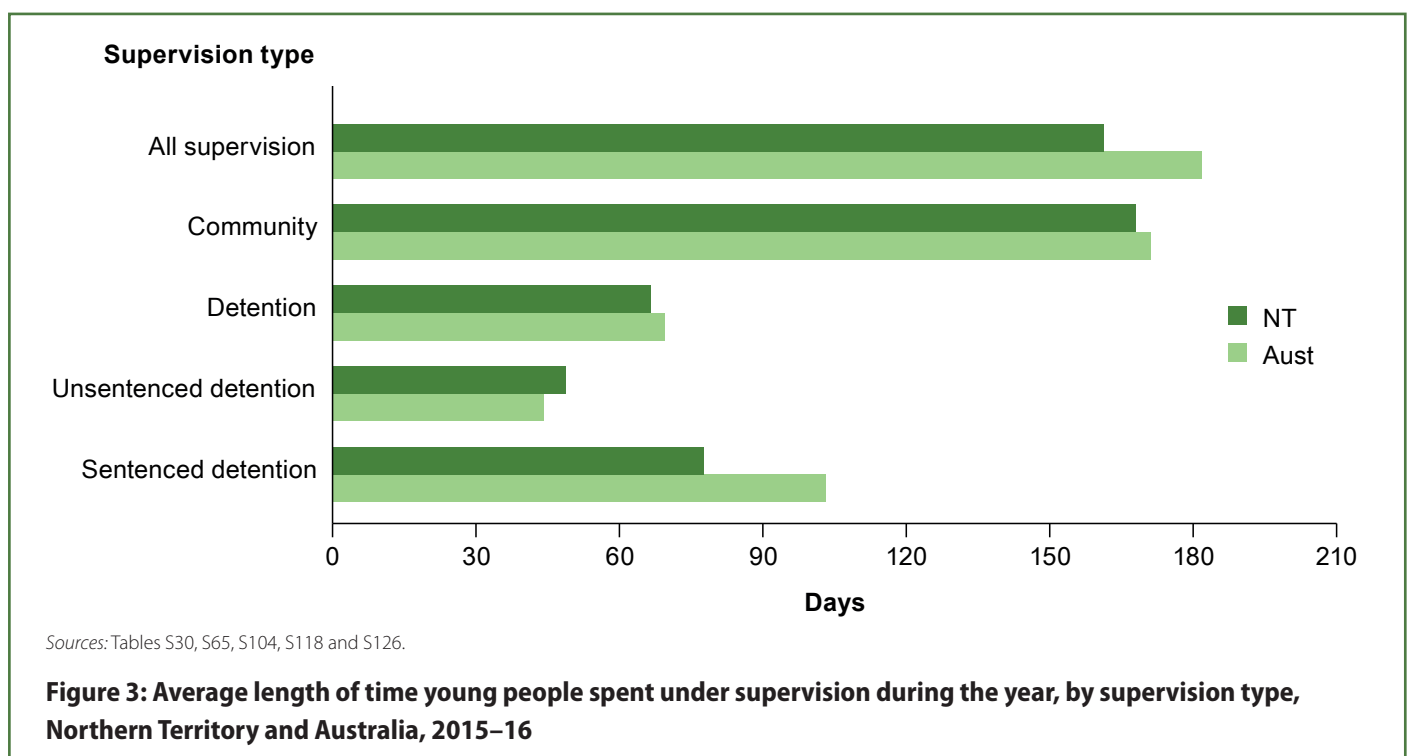
The Indigenous rate ratio could not be calculated for type of supervision (that is, community-based supervision or detention) due to small numbers of non-Indigenous young people under supervision in the Northern Territory (tables S39a and S77a).

Time under supervision

In the Northern Territory, the median duration of periods of supervision that were completed during 2015–16 was 17 days, or just over 2 weeks. Note this includes time under supervision prior to 1 July 2015 if the period of supervision began before 1 July 2015 (Table S29). This was much shorter than the national median of 123 days, or about 18 weeks.

When all periods of supervision during the year are considered (including periods that are ongoing, that is, not yet completed), young people in the Northern Territory spent 161 days (about 23 weeks), on average, under supervision (Figure 3). This was less than the national average (182 days, or 26 weeks).

Completed periods of community-based supervision in the Northern Territory were typically longer than periods of detention (median 67 days compared with 11 days: tables S64 and S103). In terms of the total length of time spent under supervision during the year, young people in the Northern Territory spent an average of 168 days under community-based supervision and 67 days in detention (Figure 3). This pattern was similar to the national result.



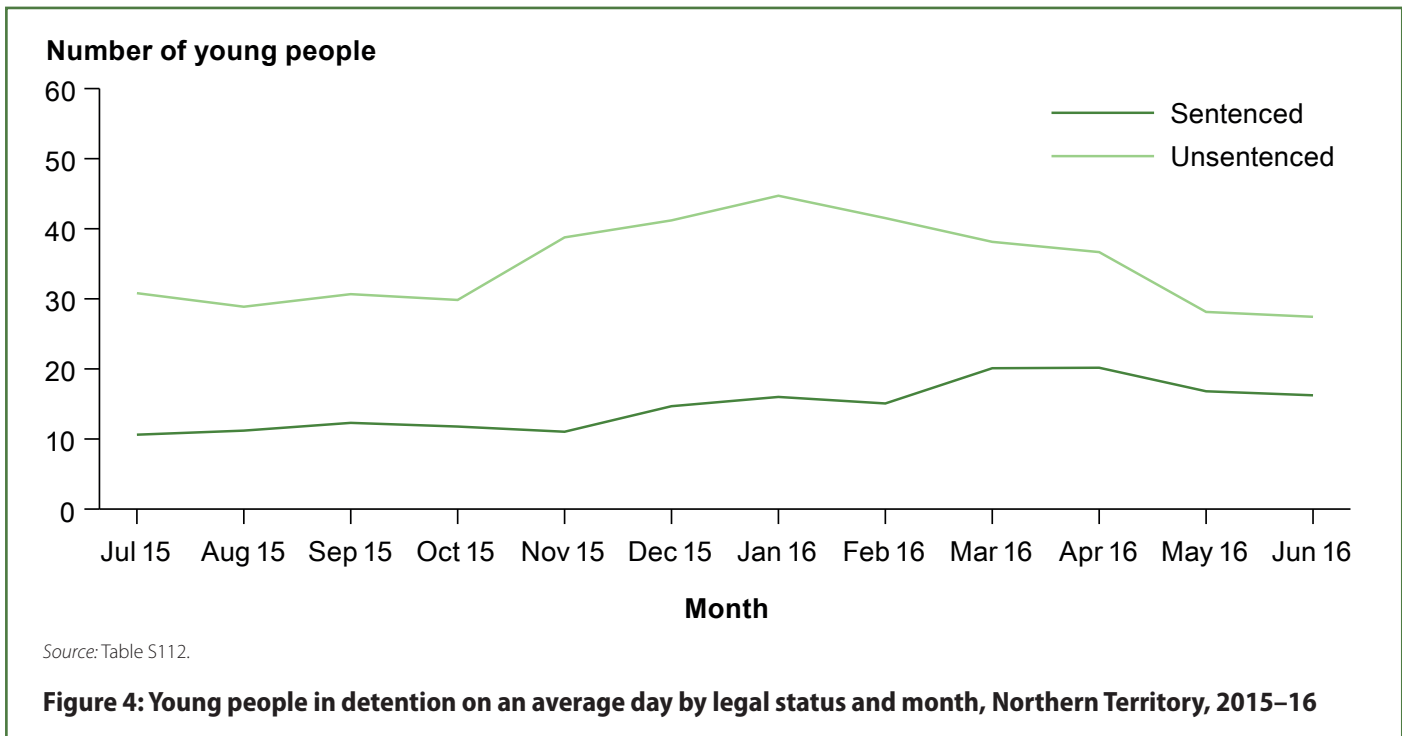
Young people may be under supervision when they are ‘unsentenced’—that is, when they have been charged with an offence and are awaiting the outcome of their court matter, or when they have been found or pleaded guilty and are awaiting sentencing. They may also be ‘sentenced’ to a period of supervision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

In the Northern Territory in 2015–16, completed periods of sentenced detention were typically longer than periods of unsentenced detention (median 35 days compared with 11 days) (tables S117 and S124). Similarly, when all time in detention during the year is considered, young people spent slightly longer in sentenced detention: 78 days, on average, compared with 49 days (tables S118 and S126). The average time spent in sentenced detention in the Northern Territory was less than the national result (103 days).

Sentenced and unsentenced detention

On an average day in 2015–16, the majority (71%) of young people in detention in the Northern Territory were unsentenced (Table S109a). This proportion was higher than the national average, where just over half (57%) of those in detention were unsentenced.

Each month, there were 27–45 young people in unsentenced detention in the Northern Territory on an average day and 11–20 in sentenced detention (Figure 4).



Recent trends: 2011–12 to 2015–16

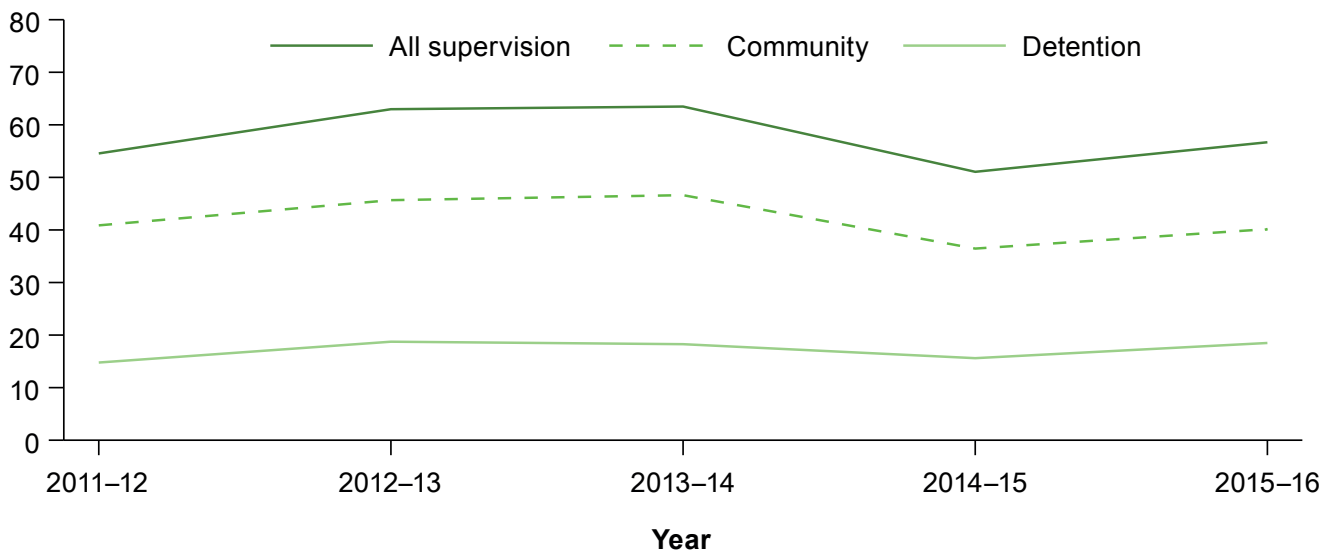
Over the 5 years to 2015–16, there were overall increases in the number and the rate of those aged 10–17 under supervision on an average day in the Northern Territory, although there were fluctuations from year to year (Figure 5; Table S11a). The numbers of young people increased from 163 to 194 from 2011–12 to 2013–14, decreased in 2014–15 to 169, then increased in 2015–16 to 183. Similarly, the rates of those aged 10–17 under supervision increased from 55 to 63 per 10,000 before dropping in 2014–15 to 51 per 10,000 and increasing again to 57 in 2015–16.

This pattern was in contrast to the national trend, where there were consistent falls in both the number (down 21%) and rate (from 27 to 21 per 10,000) of young people under supervision over the 5-year period.

Both community-based supervision and detention numbers showed similar patterns. In community-based supervision, the rate of young people aged 10–17 on an average day rose from 41 per 10,000 in 2011–12 to 47 per 10,000 in 2013–14, fell to 36 per 10,000 in 2014–15, then rose again to 40 per 10,000 in the most recent year (Table S47a). In detention, the rate rose from 15 to 19 per 10,000 in 2012–13, fell to 16 per 10,000 in 2014–15 and rose again to 18 per 10,000 in 2015–16 (Table S85a).

Over the 5-year period, the level of Indigenous over-representation of young people under supervision (as shown by the rate ratio) in the Northern Territory fluctuated. Indigenous young people aged 10–17 were between 12 and 26 times as likely as non-Indigenous young people to be under supervision on an average day each year (Table S12a). Nationally, the Indigenous rate ratio increased from 13 to 17 times the non-Indigenous rate over the same period.

Number per 10,000



Sources: Tables S12a, S47a and S85a.

Figure 5: Young people aged 10–17 years under supervision on an average day by supervision type, Northern Territory, 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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This publication is part of the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare's Youth Justice fact sheet series. A complete list of the Institute's publications is available from the Institute's website www.aihw.gov.au.

ISBN 978-1-76054-104-0

ISSN 2202-1841

Suggested citation

Australian Institute of Health and Welfare 2017. Northern Territory: youth justice supervision in 2015–16. Youth justice fact sheet no. 77. Cat. no. JUV 98. Canberra: AIHW.

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Published by the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare.