



**Australian Government**  
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# Young people in child protection and under youth justice supervision

1 July 2013 to 30 June 2017

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**Australian Government**

**Australian Institute of  
Health and Welfare**

Data linkage series

Number 24

# **Young people in child protection and under youth justice supervision**

**1 July 2013 to 30 June 2017**

Australian Institute of Health and Welfare  
Canberra

Cat. no. CSI 26

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- the Children and Families Data Network, which consists of representatives from the state and territory departments responsible for child and family services.

# Summary

Research shows that children and young people who have been abused or neglected are at greater risk of engaging in criminal activity, and of entering the youth justice system. A better understanding of the characteristics and pathways of children and young people who are both in the child protection system and under youth justice supervision can help support staff, case workers, and policymakers to get the best outcomes for these children and young people.

Using data from the linked child protection and youth justice supervision data collections, this report presents information on young people who had received child protection services, and had also been under youth justice supervision at some time between 1 July 2013 and 30 June 2017.

To ensure all possible youth justice supervision is included across the 4-year period, the cohort includes young people who were aged 10–14 on 1 July 2013—that is, young people who were aged between 10 and 17 within the time period 1 July 2013 to 30 June 2017. Results are limited to the 6 jurisdictions with data in both child protection and youth justice national minimum data sets—a total of 52,444 young people (48,379 from child protection and 7,776 from youth justice data sets). These 6 jurisdictions account for 57% of those aged 10–17 receiving child protection services and 70% of those under youth justice supervision in 2016–17.

## **Young people who had received child protection services were 9 times as likely as the general population to have also been under youth justice supervision**

Between 1 July 2013 and 30 June 2017, 7.7% of those who received child protection services (3,711 young people) had also been under youth justice supervision at some point during the same 4-year period, compared with 0.8% of the general population.

The level of youth justice supervision was 13.7% for those in out-of-home care; 13.4% for those under care and protection orders; and 7.3% for those who had been the subject of an investigated notification of child abuse and neglect.

## **Nearly half of those under youth justice supervision had also received child protection services**

Between 1 July 2013 and 30 June 2017, 47.7% of those under youth justice supervision (3,711 young people) had also received child protection services during the period. This is 9 times the rate of child protection for the general population.

As this is the overlap for a 4-year period among young people aged 10–17, the actual level of interaction between these 2 sectors over time is likely to be higher. As years of data accumulate, the full level of overlap can be measured.

Those in detention were more likely to have received child protection services (53.0%) than those under community-based supervision (48.0%). The younger people were at first supervision, the more likely they were to also have received child protection services during the period (68.3% of those aged 10 at first supervision, compared with 22.8% of those aged 17).

**Of those who had received both child protection services and youth justice supervision, most had child protection first**

Of the 3,711 young people who had received both child protection services and youth justice supervision between 1 July 2013 and 30 June 2017, most (81.7%) had received child protection services as their first contact during the measurement period.

**Females under youth justice supervision were more likely than males to also receive child protection services**

Between 1 July 2013 and 30 June 2017, two-thirds (64.2%) of the females under youth justice supervision had child protection services at some time during the same period, compared with 2 in 5 (42.5%) of males. This means that young females under youth justice supervision were 1.5 times as likely to have had child protection services as males.

**Young Indigenous Australians were more likely than their non-Indigenous counterparts to have received both child protection services and youth justice supervision**

Between 1 July 2013 and 30 June 2017, young Indigenous Australians aged 10–17 were 17 times as likely as their non-Indigenous counterparts to have been in both the child protection system and under youth justice supervision.



# 1 Introduction

In 2016–17, around 119,000 children and young people aged 0–17 had a notification of abuse or neglect investigated by a department responsible for child protection (AIHW 2018a) and almost 10,000 young people aged 10–17 were supervised by a department responsible for youth justice, either in the community or in a youth detention centre (AIHW 2018b). Some young people are involved in both the child protection system and youth justice supervision (AIHW 2017).

Research shows that children and young people who have been abused or neglected are at greater risk of engaging in criminal activity and entering the youth justice system. For example, one study found that being maltreated as a child roughly doubles the probability of committing a crime (Currie & Tekin 2006). While the majority of children who are abused and neglected do not go on to offend, a large proportion of children who offend have had a history of abuse or neglect (Cashmore 2011). This is particularly the case for young people in detention. A survey of young people in detention in New South Wales found that 63.6% of young women and 68.3% of young men had been abused or neglected, while 45.5% and 26.7%, respectively, had suffered severe abuse or neglect (JH&FMHN & JJNSW 2017). Other research has found that those who have experienced a greater number of substantiations of reported abuse or neglect; of ongoing abuse from childhood through to adolescence; and of placement into out-of-home care, are more likely to receive a conviction (Malvaso et al. 2017).

Procedures used within the child protection and youth justice systems can also bring about involvement of 1 system with the other. For example, contact with youth justice agencies might lead to a child protection notification being made if abuse or neglect is suspected by, or reported to, child protection agency staff (AIFS 2016).

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

Previous work by the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare (AIHW) found that linking child protection and youth justice supervision data was both feasible and beneficial (AIHW 2012). With the introduction in 2012–13 of a national unit record data collection on children and young people in the child protection system—the Child Protection National Minimum Data Set (CP NMDS)—it is possible to link child protection system data to the existing data on youth justice supervision. This linkage, in turn, enables reporting on the relationships between child protection and youth justice supervision on an annual basis (AIHW 2015). The first of these annual reports was released in 2016, based on 2013–14 data (AIHW 2016a). This report, the fourth in the series, is based on the available data up to 2016–17.

This report presents information on a total of 52,444 young people who had been involved in the child protection system and/or under youth justice supervision at some time between 1 July 2013 and 30 June 2017 in Victoria, Queensland, Western Australia, South Australia, Tasmania or the Australian Capital Territory, and who were aged 10–14 at the start of the study period. Of this group, 7.1% (or 3,711) experienced both child protection services and youth justice supervision at some time during the measurement period (not necessarily at the same time). This is a subset of the total number of children and young people in these jurisdictions who were involved in both the child protection system and under youth justice supervision at any point during childhood and adolescence. This is because some children

were in child protection in the years before or after youth justice supervision, but not during the same 4-year period from July 2013 to June 2017.

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

## 1.1 What is child protection?

In Australia, state and territory departments responsible for child protection assist vulnerable children and young people who have been, or are at risk of being, abused, neglected or otherwise harmed, or whose parents are unable to provide adequate care or protection (AIHW 2018a).

There are 3 main components of the child protection system:

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

It is possible for children and young people to be involved in each of these 3 components at the same time. For more information on child protection policies and practices in the states and territories, see *Child protection Australia 2016–17* (AIHW 2018a).

## 1.2 What is youth justice supervision?

Youth justice supervision is a component of the youth justice system. In Australia, the states and territories are responsible for dealing with young people who have committed, or who are alleged to have committed, criminal offences. Young people enter the system when they are investigated by police for allegedly committing an offence and (depending on the outcome of the investigation) charges may be laid. If the young person is proven guilty, they will then be sentenced by a court (AIHW 2018b).

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

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

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

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

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

The youth justice system now applies to children and young people aged 10–17 at the time of the offence in all states and territories. In Queensland, it previously applied to those aged 10–16. In February 2018, new legislation was enacted to include 17 year olds in the youth justice system, and since then, the Queensland government has been transferring those young people out of adult prisons. In Victoria, some young people aged 18–20 may be sentenced to detention in a youth facility under the state’s ‘dual track’ sentencing system, which is intended to prevent young people from entering the adult prison system at an early age. Children aged under 10 cannot be charged with a criminal offence in any state or territory.

For more information on youth justice supervision in Australia, see *Youth justice in Australia 2016–17* (AIHW 2018b).

## 1.3 Data

### Child protection data

Child protection data in this report are from the **Child Protection National Minimum Data Set** (CP NMDS). This longitudinal person-based data set contains information on the demographics of children and young people who receive child protection services; details of the notifications received by child protection departments; and the care and protection orders and out-of-home care placements relating to these children and young people in a financial year. It contains data for all states and territories except New South Wales. For information on data quality, see the CP NMDS 2016–17 data quality statement at <<http://meteor.aihw.gov.au/content/index.phtml/itemId/691095>>.

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

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

### Youth justice supervision data

Youth justice supervision data in this report are from the **Juvenile Justice National Minimum Data Set** (JJ NMDS). This longitudinal person-based data set contains information on the demographics of young people who are supervised by youth justice departments, by financial year, and the details of their unsentenced and sentenced supervision, both in the

community and in youth justice detention centres. It contains data for all states and territories except the Northern Territory. For information on data quality, see the JJ NMDS data quality statement at <<http://meteor.aihw.gov.au/content/index.phtml/itemId/696214>>.

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

## Data available for selected jurisdictions

The data in this report relate only to selected jurisdictions. As the CP NMDS at the time of linkage did not contain data for New South Wales, and the JJ NMDS did not contain data for the Northern Territory, the data in this report relate only to Victoria, Queensland, Western Australia, South Australia, Tasmania and the Australian Capital Territory. For comparative purposes, the rates of child protection and youth justice supervision for the general population mentioned in this report are restricted to these 6 jurisdictions.

Together, these 6 jurisdictions account for 57.0% of those aged 10–17 receiving child protection services and 70.4% of those under youth justice supervision in Australia in 2016–17 (AIHW 2018a, 2018b). It is expected that data for additional states and territories will be available in future years; see Chapter 5 for more details.

## Age is restricted

Data in this report relate only to young people who were aged 10–14 at the start of the measurement period (1 July 2013), as these young people remained within the 10–17 age group for the entire 4-year measurement period. This is to ensure that individuals in the study cohort are eligible for both child protection services and youth justice supervision throughout the measurement period. Children aged under 10 are excluded from this report, even if they were in the child protection system, as children aged under 10 cannot be under youth justice supervision. As years of data accumulate, it will be possible to explore the involvement of children and young people in both sectors over a number of years. (See Chapter 5 for more information.)

## 1.4 Report structure

There are 5 chapters in this report:

- Chapter 1 introduces the report, provides an overview of child protection and youth justice supervision and describes the data.
- Chapter 2 explores the demographic characteristics of young people involved in both child protection and youth justice supervision.
- Chapter 3 examines the demographic characteristics of young people involved in both child protection and youth justice supervision, from the perspective of the child protection system, by reporting on the proportion of young people in the child protection system who are also under youth justice supervision.
- Chapter 4 examines the demographic characteristics of young people involved in both child protection and youth justice supervision, from the perspective of youth justice supervision, by reporting on the proportion of young people under youth justice supervision who are also in the child protection system.
- Chapter 5 summarises the limitations of the current report and outlines ways in which future reporting can be expanded and enhanced.

Supplementary tables referred to in this report (tables with a prefix of S) are available to download from <<https://www.aihw.gov.au/reports-statistics/health-welfare-services/youth-justice/overview>>.

## **1.5 Notes**

Percentages are rounded to 1 decimal place in text.

Rate ratios are calculated from unrounded percentages, as presented in the supplementary tables.

Figures (charts) present unrounded percentages.

## 2 Young people in child protection and under youth justice supervision

This chapter provides information on the number of young people who received any child protection services and were under any type of youth justice supervision at some time between 1 July 2013 and 30 June 2017. As noted in Chapter 1, the data in this report relate to Victoria, Queensland, Western Australia, South Australia, Tasmania and the Australian Capital Territory, and the study cohort is restricted to young people aged 10–14 at 1 July 2013 so that only those who were aged 10–17 between 1 July 2013 and 30 June 2017 are included.

### Key findings

Being under youth justice supervision was relatively uncommon among those who had received child protection services, but it was fairly common for those who had been under youth justice supervision to have received child protection services:

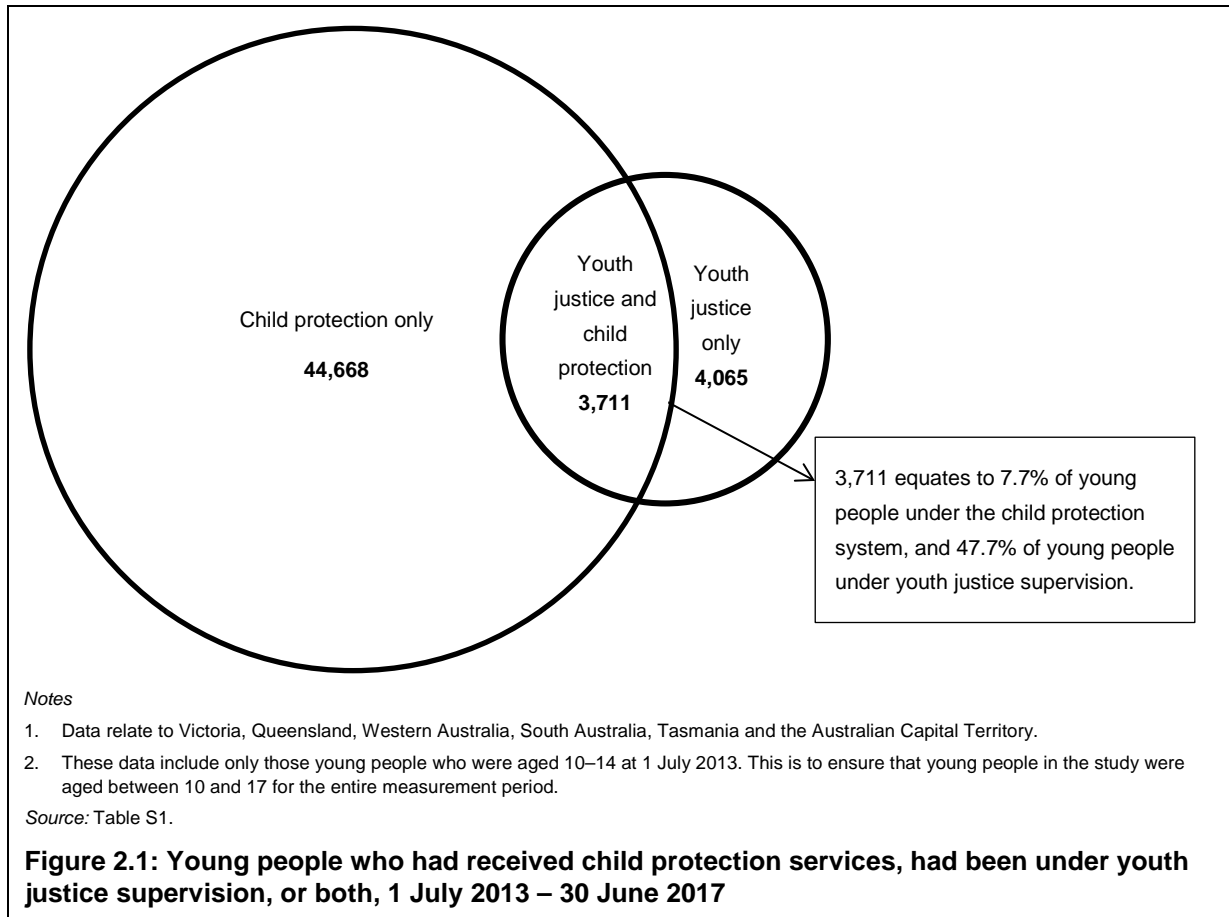
- 7.7% of those who received child protection services had also come under some type of youth justice supervision during the 4-year period from 1 July 2013 to 30 June 2017.
- 47.7% of those who were under youth justice supervision had also received child protection services at some time during the 4-year period.

81.7% of those who received both types of services had received a child protection service before entering youth justice supervision, and the remainder (18.3%) had entered youth justice supervision before receiving a child protection service.

The level of overlap in the use of both youth justice supervision and child protection services between 1 July 2013 and 30 June 2017 varied among the states and territories.

### 2.1 Overlap between child protection and youth justice supervision

Between 1 July 2013 and 30 June 2017, 52,444 young people aged 10–17 received child protection services, were under youth justice supervision or both at some point during the 4-year period. Of these, 7.1% (3,711) received child protection services, and also came under youth justice supervision (Figure 2.1).

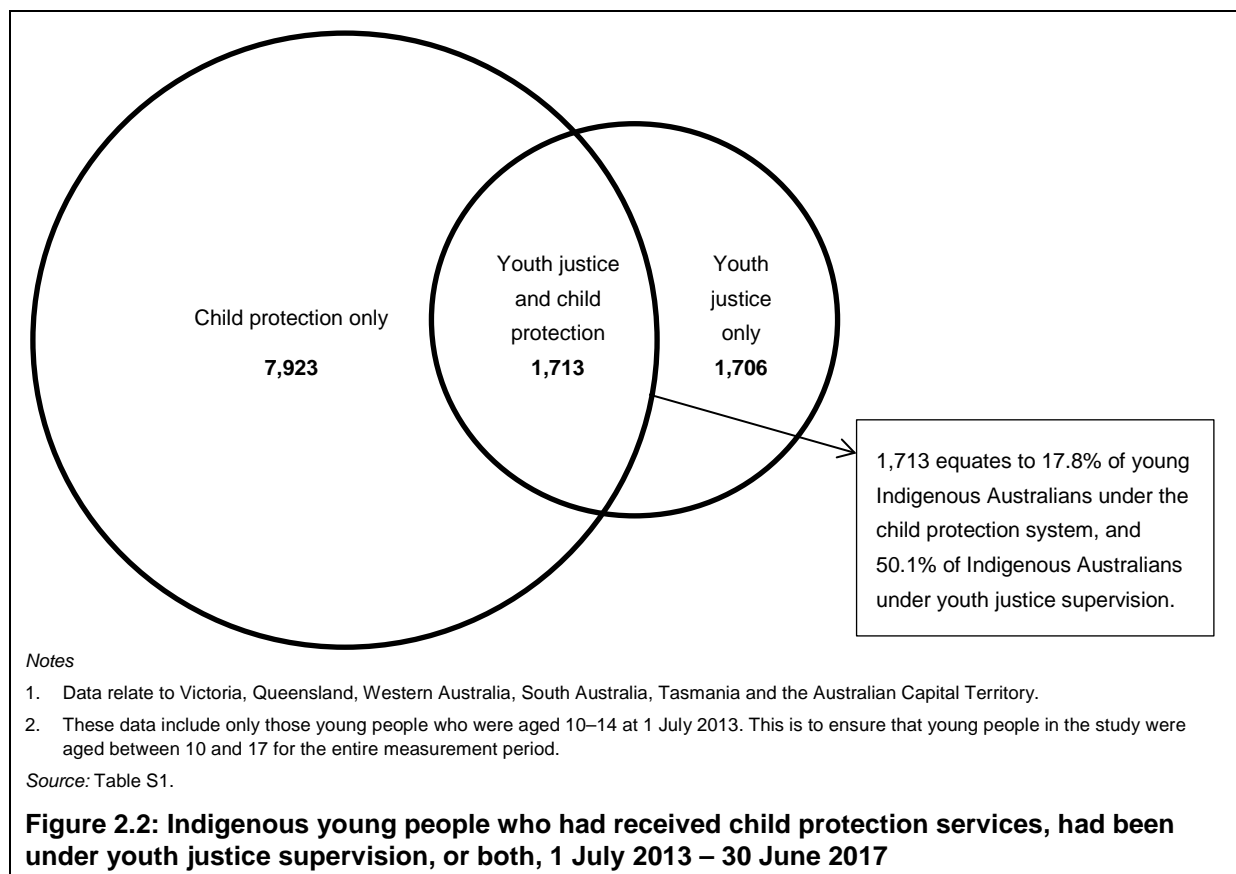


Of the 48,379 young people who received child protection services during the 4-year period, 1 in 13 (7.7%) also had some type of youth justice supervision in that time. However, of the 7,776 young people under youth justice supervision, nearly half (47.7%) had received child protection services (Figure 2.1).

This suggests that being under youth justice supervision was relatively uncommon among those receiving child protection services, but it was fairly common for those who were under youth justice supervision to have received child protection services.

Indigenous Australians aged 10–17 were more likely than their non-Indigenous counterparts to receive child protection services, or to be under youth justice supervision during the measurement period. Nearly 1 in 4 (24.6%) young Indigenous Australians had contact with either child protection or youth justice supervision, compared with 1 in 23 non-Indigenous young people (4.3%) (Table S1). This means that Indigenous Australians were almost 6 times as likely as their non-Indigenous counterparts to have received child protection services or been under youth justice supervision.

Of the 11,342 young Indigenous Australians who received child protection services or were under youth justice supervision between 1 July 2013 and 30 June 2017, 15.1% (1,713) had contact with both systems—compared with 5.2% of the 38,376 non-Indigenous young people (Figure 2.1; Table S1).



Of the 9,636 Indigenous young people receiving child protection services at some time between 1 July 2013 and 30 June 2017, almost 1 in 5 (17.8%) also had some type of youth justice supervision at some point during the same 4-year period. However, of the 3,419 Indigenous young people under youth justice supervision, half (50.1%) had also received child protection services during the same 4-year period (Figure 2.2).

As these data relate to a subset of children over a 4-year period only, the actual involvement in both sectors over time may be higher. A full analysis of the complete overlap between these sectors would be possible if all child protection system and youth justice supervision data over a larger number of years were considered. This could be achieved once a sufficient number of years of longitudinal child protection data are available (see ‘Chapter 5 Future reporting’).

## 2.2 Type of first contact

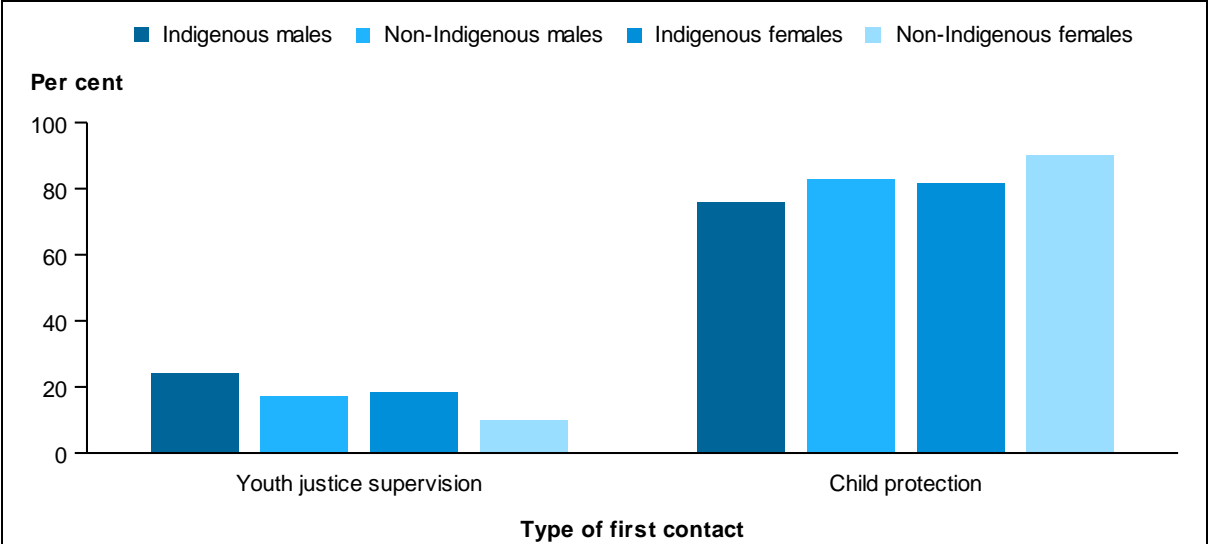
Of the 3,711 young people involved with both youth justice supervision and child protection between 1 July 2013 and 30 June 2017, 81.7% (3,031) had received a child protection service before entering youth justice supervision and almost 1 in 5 (18.3%) had entered youth justice supervision before receiving a child protection service (Table S2). This is consistent with data on the rates of service use by age in Australia. Rates of child protection services are higher among those who are younger (10–14 years) and the rate of youth justice supervision is higher among those who are older (15–17 years) (AIHW 2018a, 2018b).

Receiving child protection services before youth justice supervision was slightly more likely among non-Indigenous young people (Figure 2.3).



Of those in the study cohort:

- 22.1% of Indigenous young people were under youth justice supervision first, compared with 15.0% of non-Indigenous young people
- 85.8% of young females received a child protection service first, compared with 79.7% of young males (Table S2).



*Notes*

1. Data relate to Victoria, Queensland, Western Australia, South Australia, Tasmania and the Australian Capital Territory.
2. These data include only those young people who were aged 10–14 at 1 July 2013. This is to ensure that young people in the study were aged between 10 and 17 for the entire measurement period.

Source: Table S2.

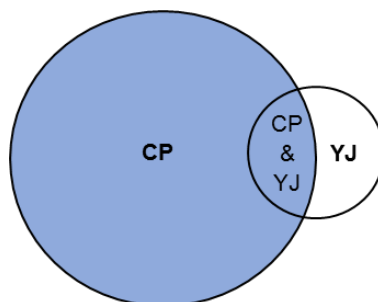
**Figure 2.3: Young people who had been under youth justice supervision and who had also received child protection services, by type of first contact, by Indigenous status, by sex, 1 July 2013 – 30 June 2017**

## 2.3 Overlap by state and territory

The level of overlap between youth justice supervision and child protection between 1 July 2013 and 30 June 2017 varied among the states and territories (figures 2.4 and 2.5). This may be due to variation in demographics, as well as in the procedures, policies, and practices in each state and territory relating to both youth justice and child protection.

### Young people in the child protection system who had youth justice supervision

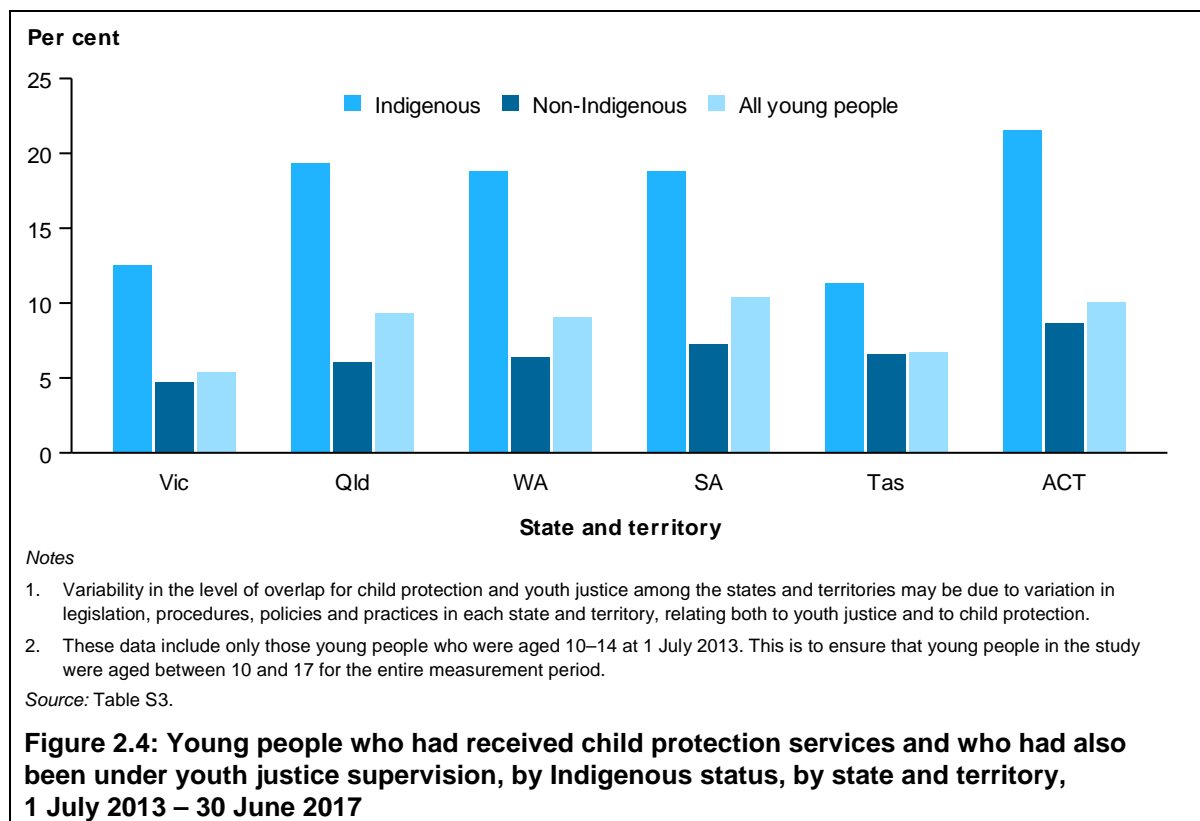
This section presents the overlap between child protection and youth justice supervision, relative to the child protection population, by jurisdiction.



Young people who received a child protection service in South Australia were the most likely to have been supervised by a youth justice agency at some point during the same 4-year period (10.4%) (Figure 2.4). This is nearly 13 times the rate of youth justice supervision for the age-equivalent population in South Australia over the same 4-year period (0.8%) (tables S3 and S15). Being under youth justice supervision was least likely among young people who received a child protection service in Victoria (5.4%), however this rate of youth justice supervision is still almost 11 times the rate for the age-equivalent Victorian population (0.5%) (tables S3 and S15). This shows that, regardless of the number of young people who received a child protection service in each state, those who did were more likely to also have youth justice supervision.

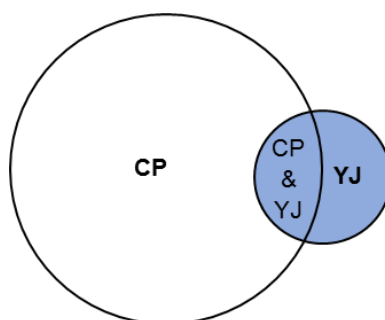
Of those who received child protection services in each state and territory:

- young Indigenous Australians were more likely than their non-Indigenous counterparts to have also been under youth justice supervision
- males were more likely than females to have been under youth justice supervision (Table S3).



### Young people under youth justice supervision who had child protection

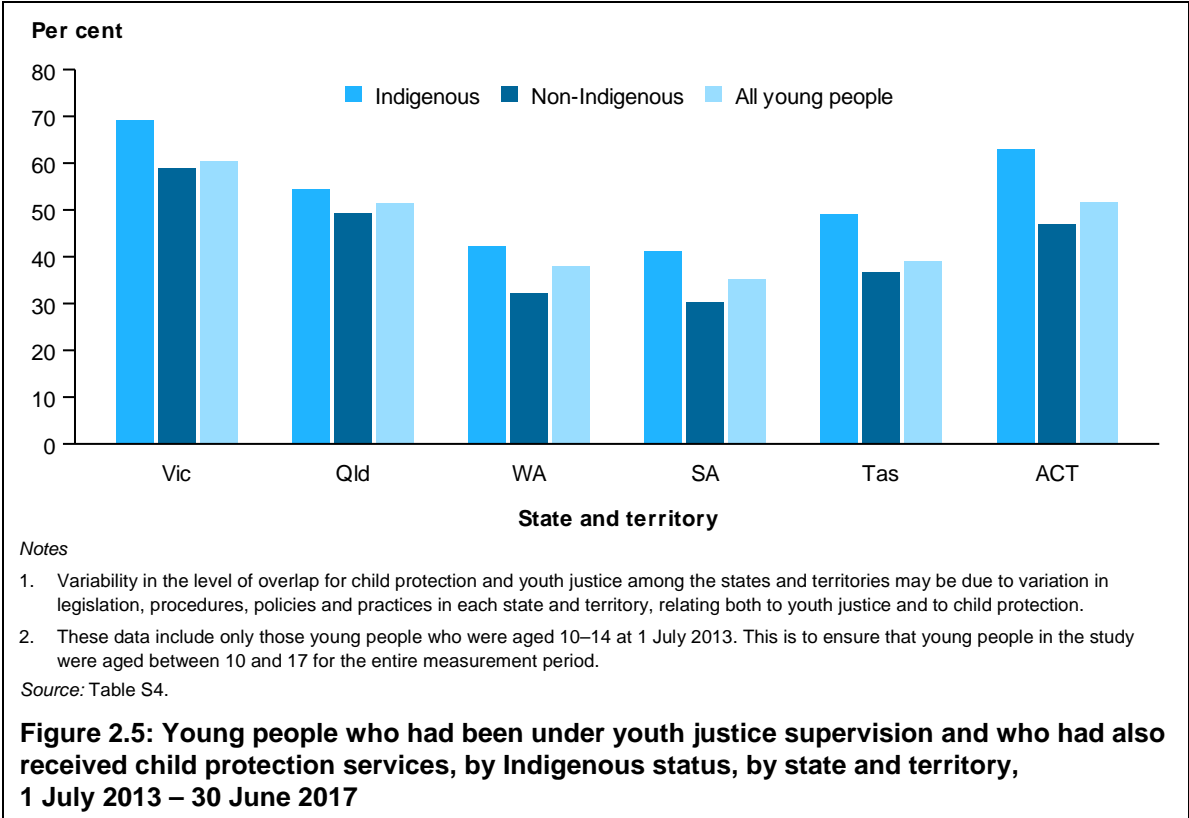
This section presents the overlap between child protection and youth justice supervision relative to the youth justice population, by jurisdiction.



Young people under youth justice supervision in Victoria were the most likely to have also received a child protection service during the same 4-year period (60.4%), which is just over 10 times the rate of child protection among the age-equivalent Victorian population. Young people under youth justice supervision in South Australia were the least likely of the selected jurisdictions to have received a child protection service during the same 4-year period (35.1%)—however this is still 13 times the rate of child protection of the age-equivalent population in this state (tables S4 and S15). This demonstrates that, regardless of the size of the youth justice population in each state, those who received youth justice supervision were more than 10 times as likely as the general population to have received child protection services.

Of those under youth justice supervision in each state and territory:

- young Indigenous Australians were more likely than their non-Indigenous counterparts to have received child protection services
- females were more likely than males to have received a child protection service (Table S4).



Differences among the states and territories in rates of, and overlaps between, child protection service use and youth justice supervision could be due to differences in policies, programs and practices, or to differences in need among the various populations. However, the rate ratios show that, regardless of the size of the child protection and youth justice populations within each state, once a person has had contact with one of these services, they are more likely to have contact with the other. This might be because contact with 1 system may prompt contact with the other; because the needs of these populations are closely related; or both.

## 3 Young people in the child protection system

This chapter explores the demographic characteristics of young people involved in both child protection and youth justice supervision from the perspective of those within the child protection system. As noted in Chapter 1, the data in this chapter relate only to Victoria, Queensland, Western Australia, South Australia, Tasmania and the Australian Capital Territory. The study cohort is restricted to young people aged 10–14 at 1 July 2013, so that only those who were aged 10–17 from 1 July 2013 to 30 June 2017 are included.

### Key findings

Young people who received child protection services at some time during the period from 1 July 2013 to 30 June 2017 were 9 times as likely as the general population to be under youth justice supervision at some time during this period.

Compared with 0.8% of the general population of the same age under youth justice supervision:

- 7.3% of those who were the subject of an investigated notification were also under youth justice supervision at some time during the period
- 13.4% of those who were the subject of a care and protection order were also under youth justice supervision at some time during the period
- 13.7% of those in out-of-home care were also under youth justice supervision at some time during the period.

### 3.1 Overlap with youth justice

Between 1 July 2013 and 30 June 2017, 48,379 young people received child protection services, and 7.7% of those also had some type of youth justice supervision during this period—9 times the rate of youth justice supervision for the general population (tables S1 and S15).

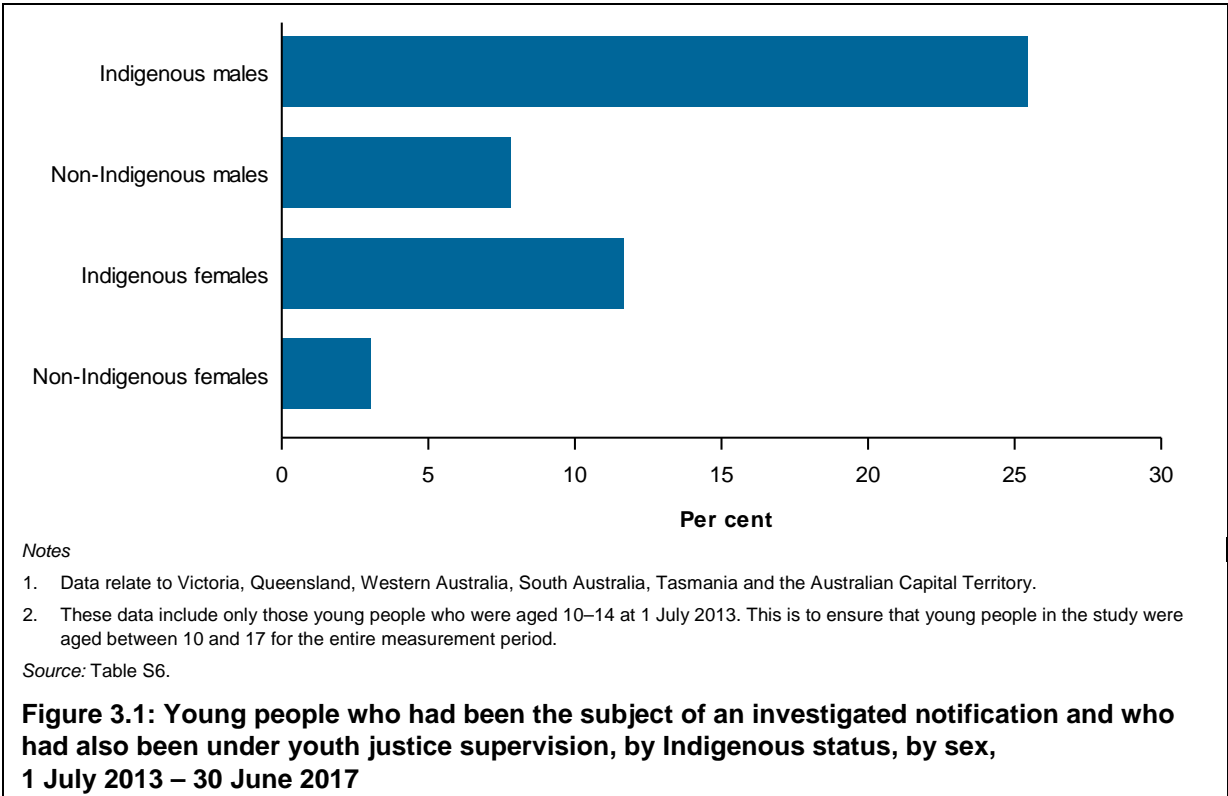
In the same period, young Indigenous Australians aged 10–17 were almost 5 times as likely as their non-Indigenous counterparts to be involved in the child protection system (Table S1). Young Indigenous Australians who had received child protection services were about 3 times as likely as their non-Indigenous counterparts to have also been under youth justice supervision (Table S5). Overall, Indigenous Australians aged 10–17 were 17 times as likely as their non-Indigenous counterparts to have received both child protection services and youth justice supervision during the 4-year period (Table S1).

Males who received child protection services were more than twice as likely as females to have also had youth justice supervision at some time during the 4-year period (11.1% compared with 4.7%) (Table S5).

### 3.2 Investigated notifications

Of the 42,039 young people in the study cohort who had been the subject of an investigated notification between 1 July 2013 and 30 June 2017, 7.3% had also been placed under youth justice supervision at some time in the same 4-year period—9 times the rate of youth justice supervision for the general population (tables S6 and S15).

Youth justice supervision was most likely for Indigenous young people: 25.5% of Indigenous males and 11.7% of Indigenous females who had been the subject of an investigated notification had also been under youth justice supervision at some time during the 4-year period, compared with 7.8% of non-Indigenous males, and 3.0% of non-Indigenous females (Figure 3.1).



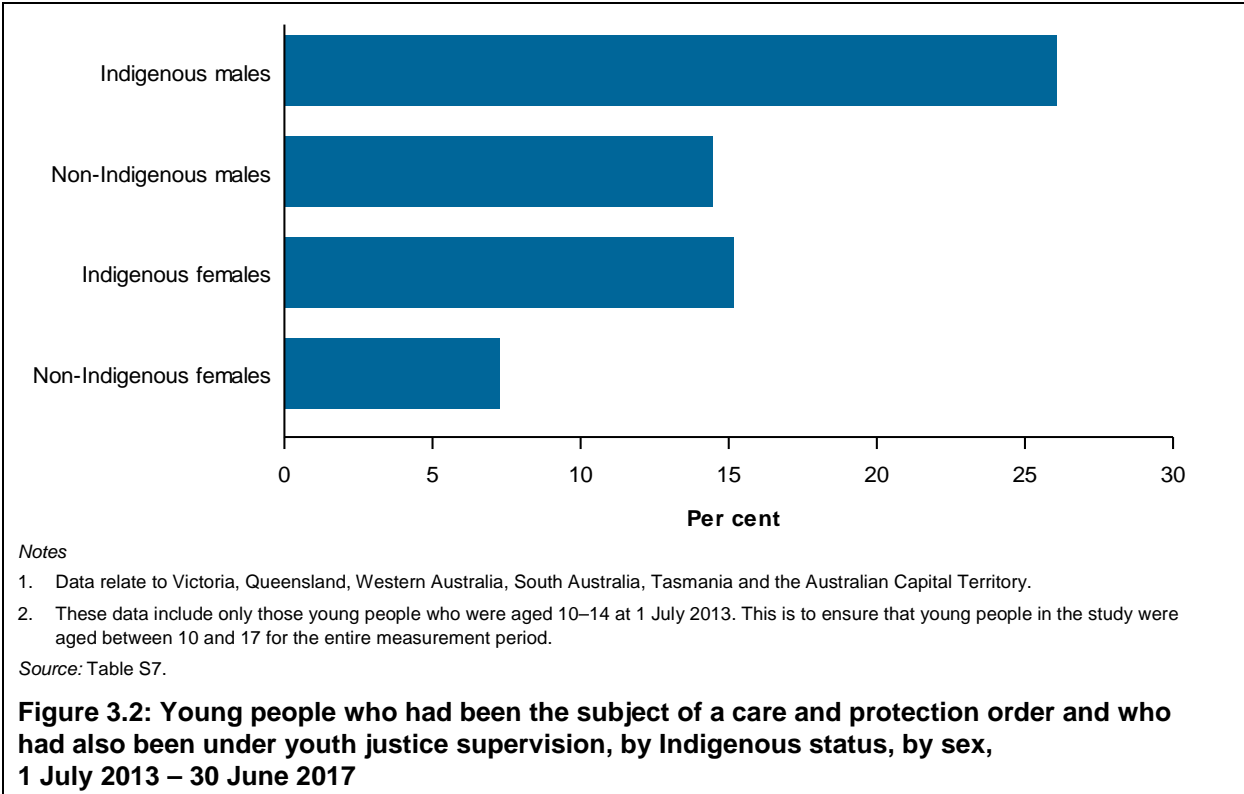
Further analysis showed differences between young people who had at least 1 notification substantiated through the period, and those whose investigated notifications were not substantiated. Of those who had had a substantiated notification, 8.7% were also placed under youth justice supervision at some time during the 4-year period, compared with 6.0% of those whose investigated notifications were not substantiated (Table S6).

### 3.3 Care and protection orders

Youth justice supervision in the same 4-year period was nearly twice as likely for young people who had been the subject of a care and protection order as for those who had been the subject of an investigated notification.

Between 1 July 2013 and 30 June 2017, of the 12,603 young people in the study cohort who had been the subject of a care and protection order, 13.4% had also been placed under youth justice supervision—16 times the rate for the general population of the same age (tables S7 and S15).

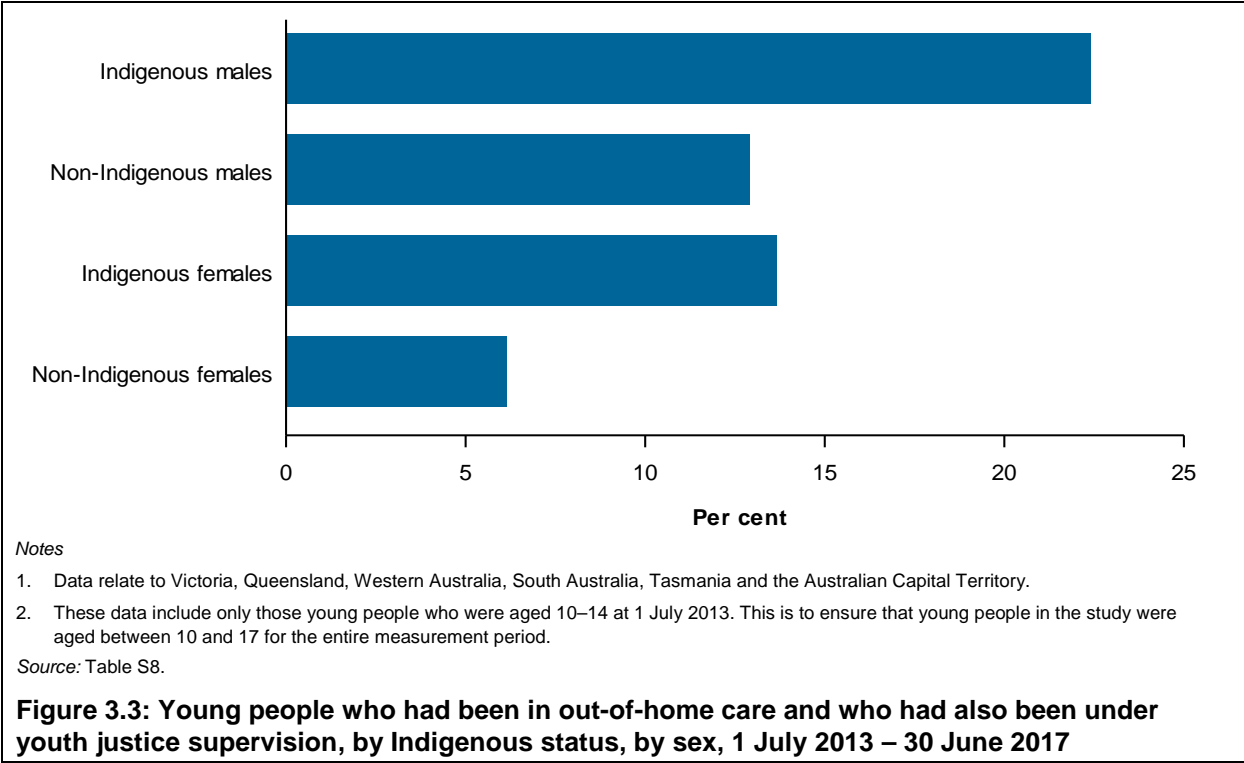
Youth justice supervision was most likely for Indigenous males—with 26.1% of those who had been the subject of a care and protection order also being placed under youth justice supervision within these 4 years, compared with 14.5% of non-Indigenous males, 15.2% of Indigenous females, and 7.3% of non-Indigenous females (Figure 3.2).



### 3.4 Out-of-home care

Between 1 July 2013 and 30 June 2017, of the 11,464 young people who had been in out-of-home care, 13.7% had also come under youth justice supervision at some time during the period—16 times the rate of the general population of the same age (tables S8 and S15).

Youth justice supervision was most likely for Indigenous males, with 25.2% of those who had been in out-of-home care also being placed under youth justice supervision at some stage in this period, compared with 14.9% of non-Indigenous males, 16.0% of Indigenous females, and 7.6% of non-Indigenous females (Figure 3.3).





## 4 Young people under youth justice supervision

This chapter looks at the demographic characteristics of young people involved in both child protection and youth justice supervision from the perspective of those under youth justice supervision. The data in this chapter relate only to Victoria, Queensland, Western Australia, South Australia, Tasmania, and the Australian Capital Territory and the study cohort is restricted to young people aged 10–14 at 1 July 2013, so that only those who were aged 10–17 from 1 July 2013 to 30 June 2017 are included.

### Key findings

Young people aged 10–17 who had been under youth justice supervision at some time between 1 July 2013 and 30 June 2017 were 9 times as likely as the general population to have received child protection services at some time during this 4-year period.

Compared with 5.2% of the general population aged 10–17 who had been in the child protection system:

- 48.0% of those under community-based supervision also received child protection services at some time during the period
- 53.0% of those in detention also received child protection services at some time during the period.

The younger people were at their first youth justice supervision, the more likely they were to have also received child protection services at some time during the 4-year period.

### 4.1 Overlap with child protection

Of the 7,776 young people under youth justice supervision between 1 July 2013 and 30 June 2017, 47.7% also received child protection services during the same 4-year period (Table S9). This rate was 9 times the rate for the general population (Table S15).

Of those under youth justice supervision, Indigenous Australians were more likely to receive child protection services than their non-Indigenous counterparts (50.1% compared with 46.2%, respectively) (Table S9).

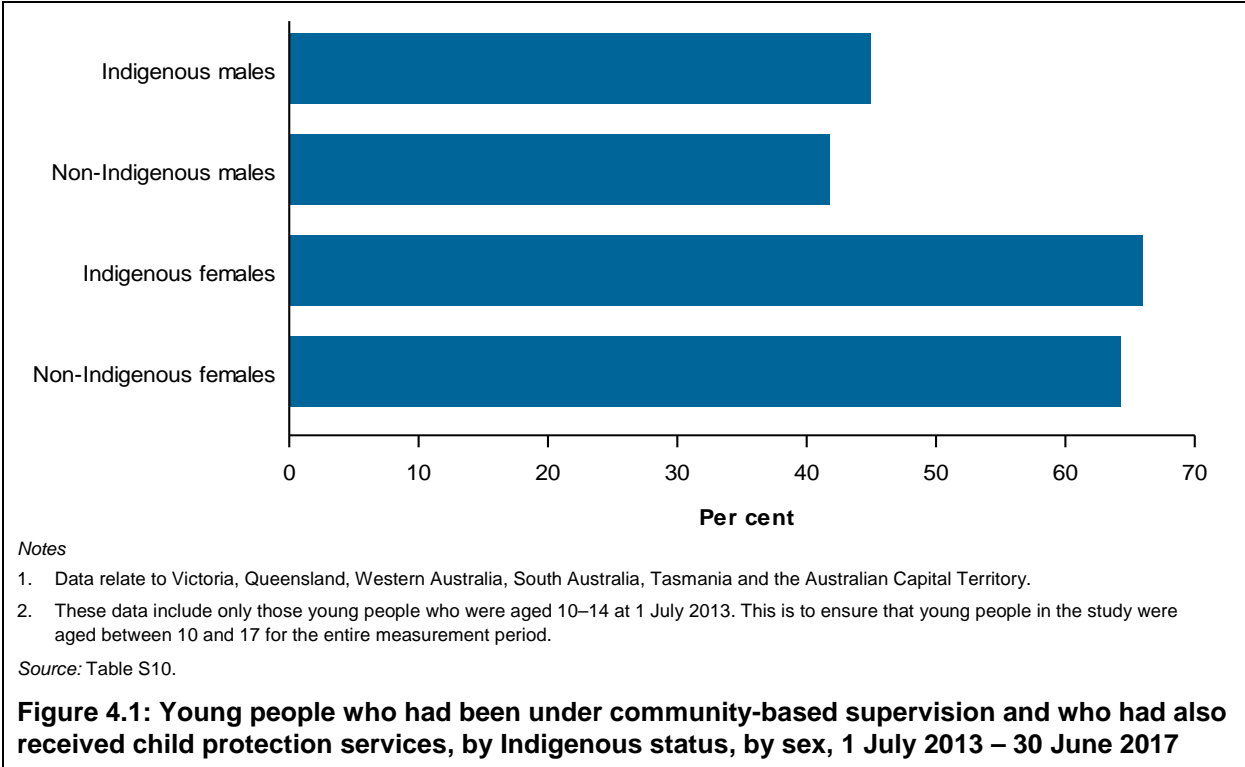
Overall, young Indigenous Australians aged 10–17 were nearly 6 times as likely as their non-Indigenous counterparts to have received either child protection services or youth justice supervision during the 4-year period, and 17 times as likely to have contact with both (Table S1).

Females under youth justice supervision were 1.5 times as likely as males to have received child protection services during the 4-year period (64.2% compared with 42.5%, respectively) (Table S9).

## 4.2 Community-based supervision

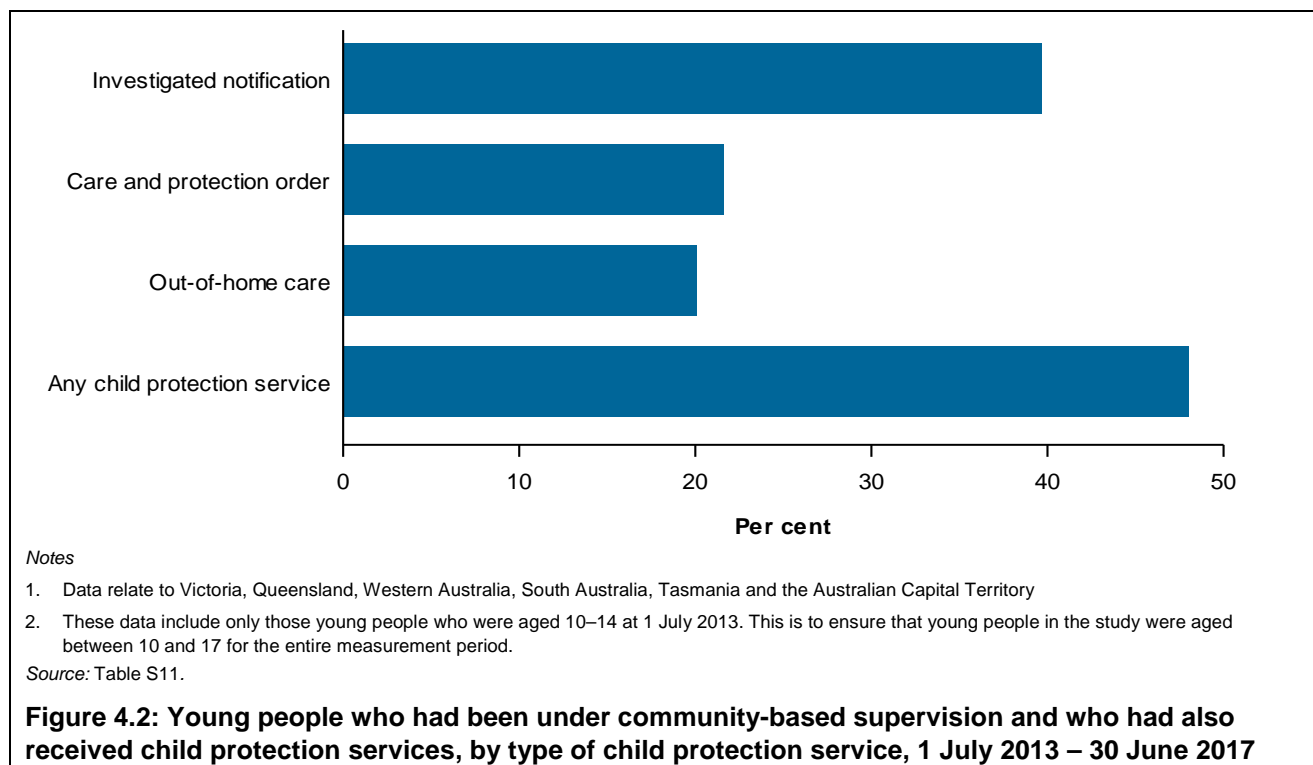
Nearly half, (48.0% or 3,426) of young people under youth justice community-based supervision also received child protection services at some time between 1 July 2013 and 30 June 2017 (Table S10). This was 9 times the rate for the general population (Table S15).

Of those under community-based supervision, young females were most likely to also receive child protection services at some time during the period—66.0% of Indigenous females, and 64.3% of non-Indigenous females were in the child protection system, compared with 45.0% of Indigenous males, and 41.8% of non-Indigenous males (Figure 4.1).



The most common type of child protection service for those under community-based supervision between 1 July 2013 and 30 June 2017 were investigated notifications (39.7% of those under youth justice community-based supervision), followed by care and protection orders (21.6%), and out-of-home care (20.1%) (Figure 4.2).

Non-Indigenous females were the most likely to also be the subject of a care and protection order (35.4%) or to be in out-of-home care (33.1%), but young Indigenous females were the most likely to be the subject of an investigated notification (54.9%) (Table S11).

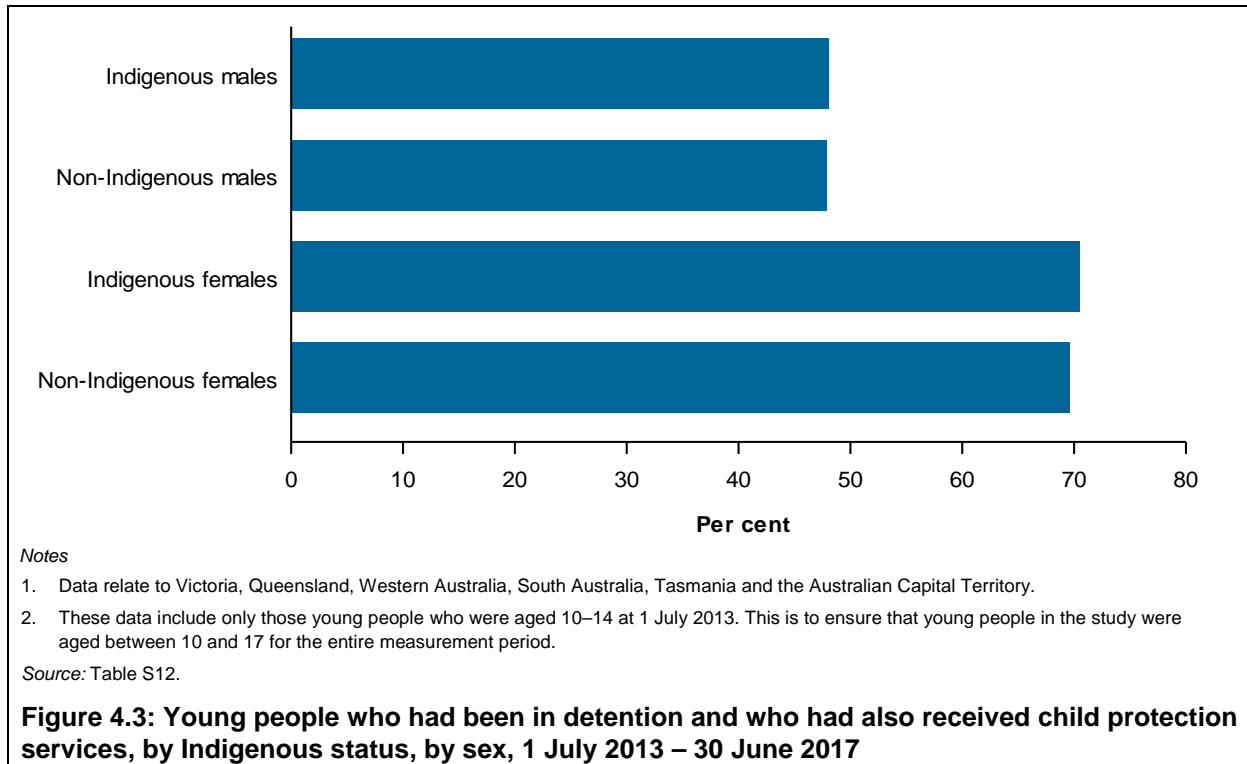


### 4.3 Detention

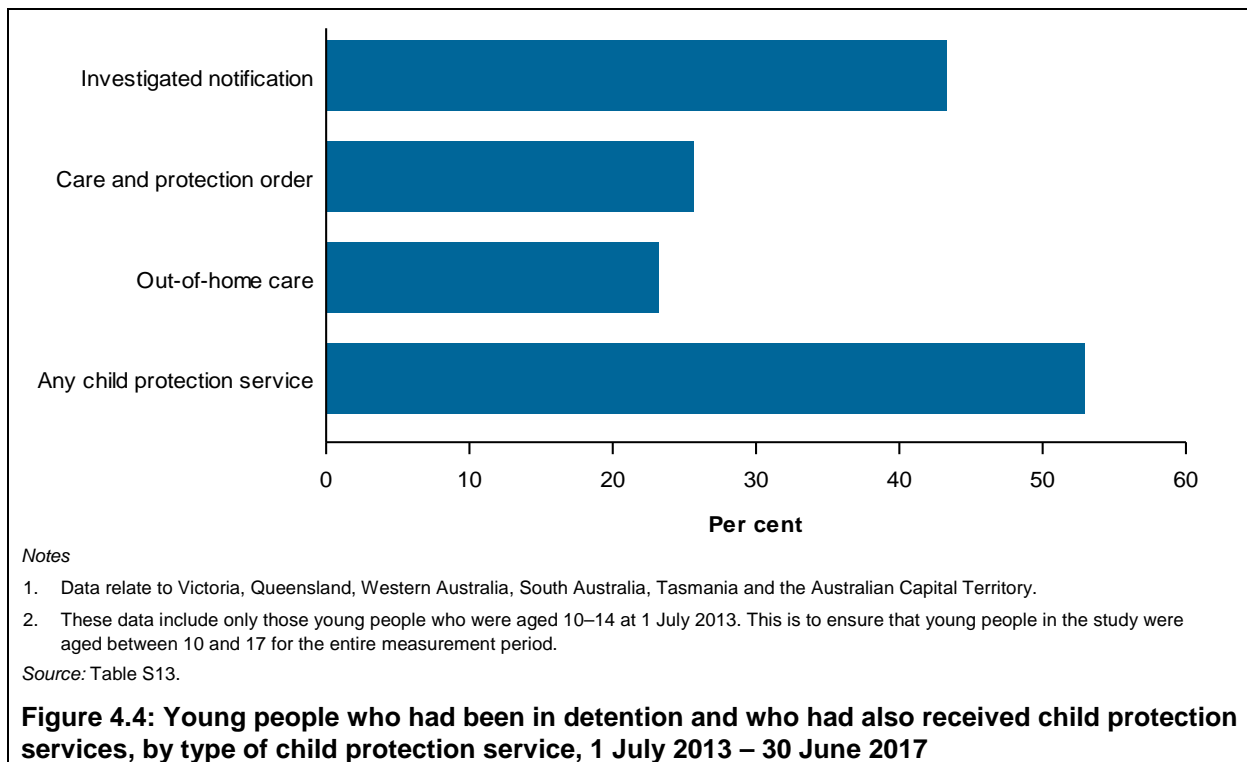
Just over half (2,367 or 53.0%) of young people who spent time in detention also received child protection services at some time between 1 July 2013 and 30 June 2017. This was 10 times the rate of child protection service use for the general population (tables S12 and S15).

Of those placed in detention during the measurement period, young females were most likely to have also received child protection services. Nearly 7 in 10 (69.9%) of young females in detention had received child protection services, compared with half of young males (47.9%). This means that females in detention were 1.5 times as likely as males to have also received child protection services during the measurement period (Table S12).

This pattern was seen among Indigenous and non-Indigenous young people—70.5% of Indigenous females, and 69.6% of non-Indigenous females who spent time in detention during the period had also received child protection services, compared with 48% of Indigenous males, and 47.9% of non-Indigenous males (Figure 4.3).



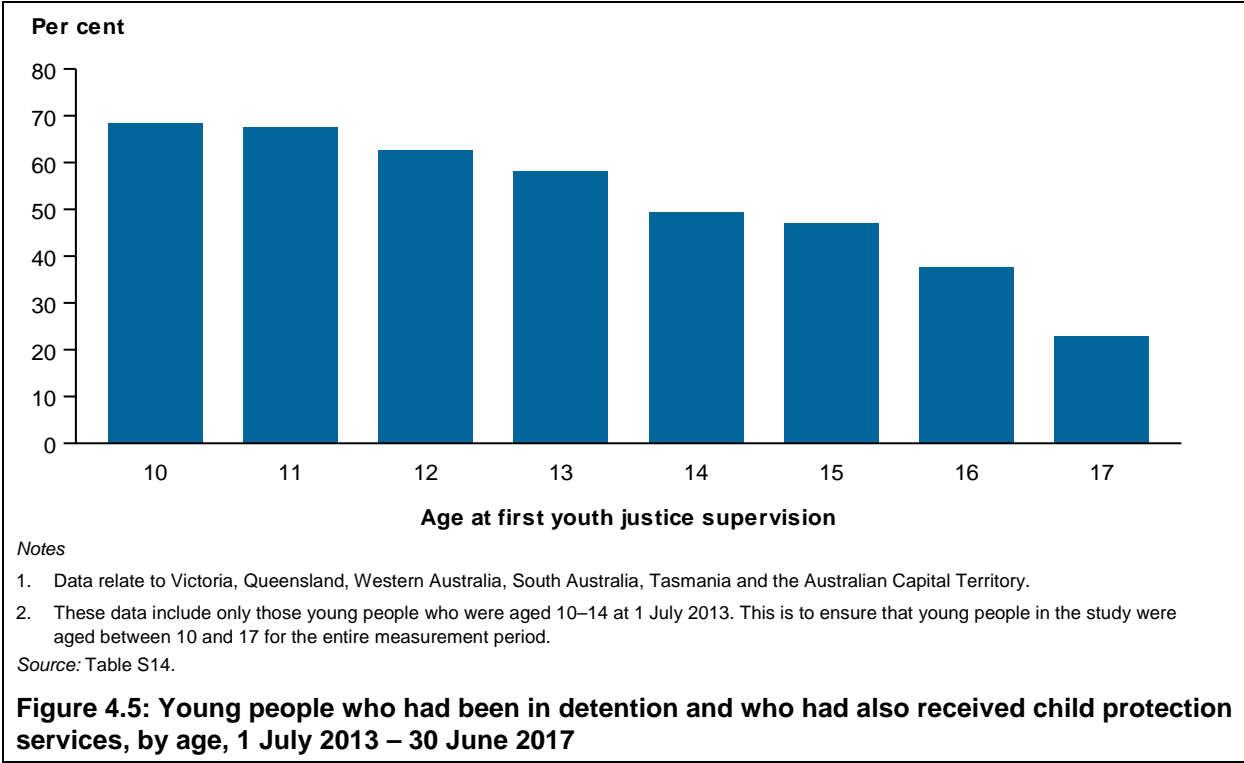
In the 4-year period, the most common types of child protection services for those in detention were investigated notifications (43.3%), followed by care and protection orders (25.7%), and out-of-home care (23.2%) (Figure 4.4).



## 4.4 Age at first youth justice supervision

Between 1 July 2013 and 30 June 2017, those who were younger at their first youth justice supervision were more likely to have also received child protection services, compared with those who were older at their first youth justice supervision (which may have been before the 4-year period) (Figure 4.5).

Of those aged 10 at their first youth justice supervision, just over two-thirds (68.3%) had also received child protection services at some stage in the 4-year period, compared with 22.8% of those aged 17.



## 5 Future reporting

This report expands on earlier AIHW reports that linked selected child protection data with the Juvenile Justice NMDS (AIHW 2015, 2016a, 2016b, 2017). This showed that linking child protection and youth justice supervision data annually is both feasible and informative. This report updates these findings with results based on the 2016–17 data collections, and expands the analysis period to cover 4 years (1 July 2013 to 30 June 2017).

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

### 5.1 Data availability for states and territories

Data limitations meant that analyses in this report were restricted to data for those who were in child protection or under youth justice supervision in only 6 Australian jurisdictions: Victoria, Queensland, Western Australia, South Australia, Tasmania and the Australian Capital Territory.

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

### 5.2 Longitudinal analyses of pathways and links

This report used available data to look at the characteristics of young people who were in both the child protection system and under youth justice supervision at any time between 1 July 2013 and 30 June 2017.

Although the period was expanded to cover a 4-year period, the findings of this report were largely consistent with the patterns presented in the previous reports using 2013–14, 2014–15 and 2015–16 data (AIHW 2016a, 2016b).

For example, single-year and 2-year period analyses showed that only a small proportion of young people who received child protection services had also come under youth justice supervision, but a substantial proportion of young people under youth justice supervision had received child protection services. Similarly, single-year and 2-year period analyses showed that young people in detention were more likely than those supervised in the community to have received child protection services.

These data are a subset of the total number of children and young people who were involved in both systems at some point during childhood and adolescence, which prevents the analysis of pathways taken through the respective systems.

As years of data accumulate for both data collections, it will be possible to create a longitudinal data set that can be used to look at the links between different types of events—such as whether there is an association between the number and length of out-of-home care placements and being placed in unsentenced detention instead of unsentenced community-based supervision.

Over time, it will be also be possible to look at the pathways from early childhood, and the relationship between childhood abuse or neglect and later involvement in the youth justice supervision system.

### 5.3 Other data collections

It is also possible to expand the linked child protection and youth justice supervision data collection to include information from other health and welfare data collections.

This would improve the value of the linked data collection, and yield valuable information on various issues, such as mental health conditions; acquired brain injury; alcohol and other drug problems; and homelessness.

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

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

In 2016, the AIHW linked child protection, youth justice and specialist homelessness services data. The results from this linkage are published in *Vulnerable young people: interactions across homelessness, youth justice and child protection: 1 July 2011 to 30 June 2015*.

There are also opportunities to better understand broader health and welfare outcomes for this population through linkage to other national data collections. Candidates for further exploration include data collections about use of hospital services (admissions and emergency department); the Medicare Benefits Schedule (for example, general practice attendances); the Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme (for example, use of specific medication types); adult corrections; income support; and mortality data. The AIHW is currently working with stakeholders to consider the feasibility of and appropriate data governance models for such work.

# Appendix

## Linkage method

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

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

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

Data were restricted to young people who were aged 10–14 at the start of the measurement period (1 July 2013). This was to ensure that individuals in the study cohort were eligible for both child protection services and youth justice supervision throughout the 4-year period.

Once all the possible linkage keys were identified, the utility of each key was measured using the available child protection and youth justice supervision data. These measures were used to order the keys, and the keys were then tested to find the point at which further linkage keys added no value to the linkage. A total of 100 keys were used to link the data collections.

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

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

- The youth justice supervision data set was created by extracting record identifiers from both the detention file and the community-based supervision file in the youth justice supervision data set (the JJ NMDS).
  - The **detention data set** was created by extracting data from the detention file in the source youth justice supervision data set. As it is not possible to be in detention in more than 1 state or territory at the same time, conflicting records (where a detention record for a person starts or ends in 1 state or territory while another detention record for the same person is active in another state or territory) were identified and removed. Less than 0.3% of individuals had conflicting detention records and no individuals



were removed as a result of this data cleaning, which indicates that the quality of the linkage was high.

- The **community-based supervision data set** was created by extracting information from the orders file in the source youth justice supervision data set. Episodes of community-based supervision were created by removing any portions of community-based orders that were covered by a period of detention (as a young person cannot be in detention and supervised in the community at the same time).
- The child protection data set was created by extracting record identifiers from the investigated notifications, care and protection orders and out-of-home care data sets.
  - The **investigated notifications data set** was created by extracting information from the notifications file in the source child protection data set. All notifications that were investigated from 1 July 2013 to 30 June 2017 (including those where the investigation was in progress) were included.
  - The **care and protection orders data set** was created by extracting information from the care and protection orders file in the source child protection data set.
  - The **out-of-home care data set** was created by extracting information from the living arrangements file in the source child protection data set. As it is not possible to be in detention and in out-of-home care at the same time, a check was run to identify and remove conflicting records (where a person has an out-of-home record that starts or ends while a detention record is active). (Detention records that ended the same day that an out-of-home care record started and out-of-home care records that started the same day that a detention record ended were not considered to conflict.) This check revealed that, from 1 July 2013 to 30 June 2017, 0.5% of out-of-home care records had a conflicting detention record and were removed from the analysis.

For more detail on the linkage method, see *Developing a linked data collection to report on the relationships between child protection and youth justice supervision* (AIHW 2015). For more information on child protection services, see *Child protection Australia 2016–17* (AIHW 2018a), and for more on youth justice see *Youth justice in Australia 2016–17* (AIHW 2018b).

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## Related publications

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More information about children and young people in the child protection system in Australia is available from  
<[www.aihw.gov.au/reports-statistics/health-welfare-services/child-protection/overview](http://www.aihw.gov.au/reports-statistics/health-welfare-services/child-protection/overview)>.

As well as the publications listed in the references, the following AIHW publications might also be of interest:

- AIHW 2016. Vulnerable young people: interactions across homelessness, youth justice and child protection: 1 July 2011 to 30 June 2015. Cat. no. HOU 279. Canberra: AIHW.
- AIHW 2017. Youth detention population in Australia 2017. Bulletin no. 143. Cat. no. AUS 220. Canberra: AIHW.
- AIHW 2018. Overlap between youth justice supervision and alcohol and other drug treatment services 2012–16. Cat. no. JUV 126. Canberra: AIHW.
- AIHW 2018. Young people returning to sentenced youth justice supervision 2016–17. Juvenile justice series no. 22. Cat. no. JUV 127. Canberra: AIHW.



This report presents information on young people aged 10–17 who had received child protection services and were under youth justice supervision at any time between 1 July 2013 and 30 June 2017. Young people who had been under youth justice supervision were 9 times as likely as the general population to have received child protection services. Indigenous Australians were 17 times as likely as their non-Indigenous counterparts to have received both child protection services and youth justice supervision.

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