

Introduction

What is Kids Helpline?

Kids Helpline has been operating for 26 years and is Australia's only 24/7 counselling and support service for children and young people aged between 5 and 25 years.

Tertiary qualified counsellors provide free, private and confidential support via telephone, web chat and email. Telephone and email counselling is offered 24/7 and web counselling is available from 8am to midnight (AEST) seven days a week.

The service operates a substantial website with a diverse range of resources for self-directed help-seeking by children, young people and adults. In addition, support from Optus enables Kids Helpline to deliver an early intervention and prevention program in primary schools called *Kids Helpline @ School* through their Digital Thumbprint Program.

Kids Helpline is a service of **yourtown** and is 72% funded by the community through **yourtown** Art Union ticket sales, donations and corporate support. The remaining 28% is funded through State and Commonwealth Government grants.

What this report is about and who is it for

This report is an appendix to *Kids Helpline Insights 2017: National Statistical Overview*. It provides summary data on Kids Helpline service demand and client concerns and characteristics for Western Australia in relation to the 2017 calendar year. It will be of value to people working in social policy and research roles, journalists and others in the community who need to understand the current and changing help-seeking needs of children and young people in Australia today.

The *Kids Helpline Insights 2017: National Statistical Overview* and other related reports can be accessed at www.yourtown.com.au/insights/annual-overviews.

Notes on data collection, analysis and interpretation

Substantial missing data in relation to a number of data collection fields, most notably remoteness and cultural background, undermine the reliability of data presented in a number of tables and figures in this report. Please consult the Appendix of the *National Statistical Overview* for more detailed information on data collection, analysis and interpretation.

Where to get more information

This report has been compiled by **yourtown** Strategy and Research. For further information, please contact

yourtown:

PHONE 07 3368 3399

EMAIL yourtown@yourtown.com.au

WEB yourtown.com.au

For media enquiries:

PHONE 07 3867 1395

EMAIL media@yourtown.com.au

How to cite this report

yourtown (2018). *Kids Helpline Insights 2017 Statistical Summary ACT*. Brisbane. Author.

Service demand

Attempted and answered contacts

- In 2017, 31,314 of the 339,724 attempts made to contact Kids Helpline counselling service (or 9%) came from Western Australia (WA).
- Most of these attempts were made by phone (22,991) but also by web chat (6,927) and email (1,396).
- 13,578 of these attempts were answered by counsellors, corresponding to a response rate of 43%. This compares with a response rate of 46% across Australia.
- Note that when phone attempts are adjusted to exclude callers who dropped out before the 21 second mandatory wait message, the response rate for WA phone contacts in 2017 was 53%.

Trends over time

- From 2015 to 2017 there was an overall increase of 8% in attempted contacts from WA across all media. Phone attempts decreased by 6% and web chat increased by 115%; email attempts reduced by 1% over the period.
- Across all media, response rates for WA have decreased from 59% in 2015 to 43% in 2017.

Table 1. WA attempted and answered contacts – by medium and year of contact, with comparison to all states¹

Medium of contact	2015			2016			2017			% change in attempts 2015-2017
	Attempts	Answered	Response rate	Attempts	Answered	Response rate	Attempts	Answered	Response rate	
Phone										
WA	24,335	13,863	57%	24,507	11,079	45%	22,991	9,371	41%	-6%
All States	290,767	169,802	58%	276,960	135,719	49%	248,008	109,793	44%	-15%
Web chat										
WA	3,215	1,757	55%	5,614	2,524	45%	6,927	2,811	41%	115%
All States	43,464	24,115	55%	65,954	31,765	48%	79,054	35,201	45%	82%
Email										
WA	1,406	1,406	100%	1,470	1,470	100%	1,396	1,396	100%	-1%
All States	15,886 ²	15,886	100%	13,681 ³	13,681	100%	12,662 ⁴	12,662	100%	-92%
All media										
WA	28,956	17,026	59%	31,591	15,074	48%	31,314	13,578	43%	8%
All States	350,117	209,803	60%	356,595	181,165	51%	339,724	157,656	46%	-3%

1. The data presented in this table are sourced from KHL phone, web chat and email systems databases.

2. In addition to 15,886 emails received and responded to in 2015, 535 outreach emails were sent.

3. In addition to 13,681 emails received and responded to in 2016, 413 outreach emails were sent.

4. In addition to 12,662 emails received and responded to in 2017, 418 outreach emails were sent.

Who contacted the service

Demographic characteristics

- Kids Helpline counsellors recorded data in relation to 154,868 contacts from children and young people across Australia who were aged 5-25 years. State or territory information was available for 140,007 of these contacts, and of this subset 12,276 (or 9%) were known to be from WA.
- Table 2 shows the demographic characteristics of these contacts from WA and compares them with the characteristics of contacts from the rest of Australia where the contact's state or territory was known.
- As with contacts from the rest of Australia, just over half (52%) of WA contacts were aged 13-18 years and over seven out of 10 (74%) were female.

- Compared with contacts from the rest of Australia, WA contacts were:
 - Slightly more likely to be aged under 13 years
 - Slightly less likely to be from culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) backgrounds and more likely to be from a Caucasian Australian background, and
 - less likely to be living in Inner Regional localities and more likely to be living in Major Cities.

Table 2. Characteristics of Kids Helpline contacts 2017 aged 5-25 years – WA and rest of Australia¹

Contact characteristics	WA (N= 12,276)		Rest of Australia (N= 127,731)	
	n	%	n	%
Gender				
Female	6,339	74%	66,593	73%
Male	2,136	25%	22,140	24%
Intersex, Trans & Gender Diverse	86	1%	1,891	2%
Total	8,561	100%	90,624	100%
Unknown	3,715		37,107	
Age group				
5-12 years	1,200	16%	10,450	13%
13-18 years	4,058	52%	42,906	52%
19-25 years	2,479	32%	29,314	35%
Total	7,737	100%	82,670	100%
<26 but age unknown	4,539		45,061	
Cultural background²				
Aboriginal &/or TSI	121	3%	1,029	3%
CALD	1,162	33%	12,016	36%
Neither ATSI nor CALD	2,272	64%	20,009	61%
Total	3,555	100%	33,054	100%
Unknown	8,721		94,677	
Remoteness³				
Major Cities	4,336	81%	39,632	72%
Inner Regional	440	8%	11,194	20%
Outer Regional/Remote	565	11%	4,533	8%
Total	5,341	100%	55,359	100%
Unknown	6,935		72,372	
Medium				
Phone	9,393	77%	96,617	76%
Web chat	2,378	19%	27,013	21%
Email	505	4%	4,101	3%
Total	12,276	100%	127,731	100%
Type of help-seeking				
Counselling contact	4,993	41%	52,911	41%
Information/Referral/Other contact	7,283	59%	74,820	59%
Total	12,276	100%	127,731	100%

1. Where column percentages sum to more or less than 100%, this is due to rounding.

2. TSI = Torres Strait Islander. CALD = Culturally and linguistically diverse. ATSI = Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander

3. Remoteness classifications are adapted from the Australian Statistical Geography Standard (ASGS) used by the Australian Bureau of Statistics. See *Kids Helpline Insights 2017: National Statistical Overview* for more information.

Types of help-seeking

The Kids Helpline counselling and support service responds to two broad categories of help-seeking: those children and young people seeking counsellor assistance for a particular concern or problem (*counselling contacts*), and those seeking information, referral to other services, or some other form of non-counselling support, like general conversation or playful engagement (*non-counselling contacts*, also called *information, referral and other contacts*).

As shown in Table 2, 41% of contacts from WA in 2017 were seeking counselling support while 59% were seeking information/referral or other forms of non-counselling support.

Demographic trends over time

Table 3 presents the characteristics of WA contacts over the last three years to consider whether there have been noteworthy variations in the client group over the short term. Key observations from the data in Table 3 include the following:

- There would appear to be moderate variation in the characteristics of WA contacts over the last three years, including:
 - A slight increase in the proportion aged under 13 years
 - a slight increase in both the proportion of contacts identified as culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) backgrounds, with a corresponding decrease in the proportion of those known to be Caucasian Australians
 - an increase in the proportion of contacts who engaged with the service by web chat and a decrease in the proportion who engaged by phone, and
 - an increase in the proportion seeking counselling support and a corresponding decrease in the proportion seeking non-counselling support.

Table 3. Characteristics of WA Kids Helpline contacts aged 5-25 years – by year¹

Contact characteristics	2015 (N = 15,628)		2016 (N = 13,576)		2017 (N = 12,276)	
	n	%	n	%	%	n
Gender²						
Female	6,372	71%	6,432	74%	6,339	74%
Male	2,528	28%	2,162	25%	2,136	25%
Intersex, Trans & Gender Diverse	33	0%	75	1%	86	1%
Total	8,933	100%	8,669	100%	8,561	100%
Unknown	6,695		4,907		3,715	
Age group						
5-12 years	1,325	18%	1,461	19%	1,200	16%
13-18 years	3,762	50%	3,909	51%	4,058	52%
19-25 years	2,402	32%	2,271	30%	2,479	32%
Total	7,489	100%	7,641	100%	7,737	100%
<26 but age unknown	8,139		5,935		4,539	
Cultural background³						
Aboriginal &/or TSI	111	3%	88	3%	121	3%
CALD	822	25%	841	27%	1,162	33%
Neither ATSI nor CALD	2,345	72%	2,227	71%	2,272	64%
Total	3,278	100%	3,156	100%	3,555	100%
Unknown	12,350		10,420		8,712	
Remoteness⁴						
Major Cities	3,759	79%	4,220	81%	4,336	81%
Inner Regional	476	10%	399	8%	440	8%
Outer Regional/Remote	526	11%	564	11%	565	11%
Total	4,761	100%	5,183	100%	5,341	100%
Unknown	10,867		8,393		6,935	
Medium						
Phone	13,435	86%	10,815	80%	9,393	77%
Web chat	1,493	10%	2,219	16%	2,378	19%
Email	700	4%	542	4%	505	4%
Total	15,628	100%	13,576	100%	12,276	100%
Type of help-seeking						
Counselling contact	5,011	32%	5,237	39%	4,993	41%

Contact characteristics	2015 (N = 15,628)		2016 (N = 13,576)		2017 (N = 12,276)	
	n	%	n	%	%	n
Information/Referral/Other contact	10,617	68%	8,339	61%	7,283	59%
Total	15,628	100%	13,576	100%	12,276	100%

1. Where column percentages sum to more or less than 100%, this is due to rounding.
2. A new gender category was introduced into Kids Helpline data collection from January 2015.
3. TSI = Torres Strait Islander. CALD = Culturally and linguistically diverse. ATSI = Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander
4. Remoteness classifications are adapted from the Australian Statistical Geography Standard (ASGS) used by the Australian Bureau of Statistics. See *Kids Helpline Insights 2017: National Statistical Overview* for more information.

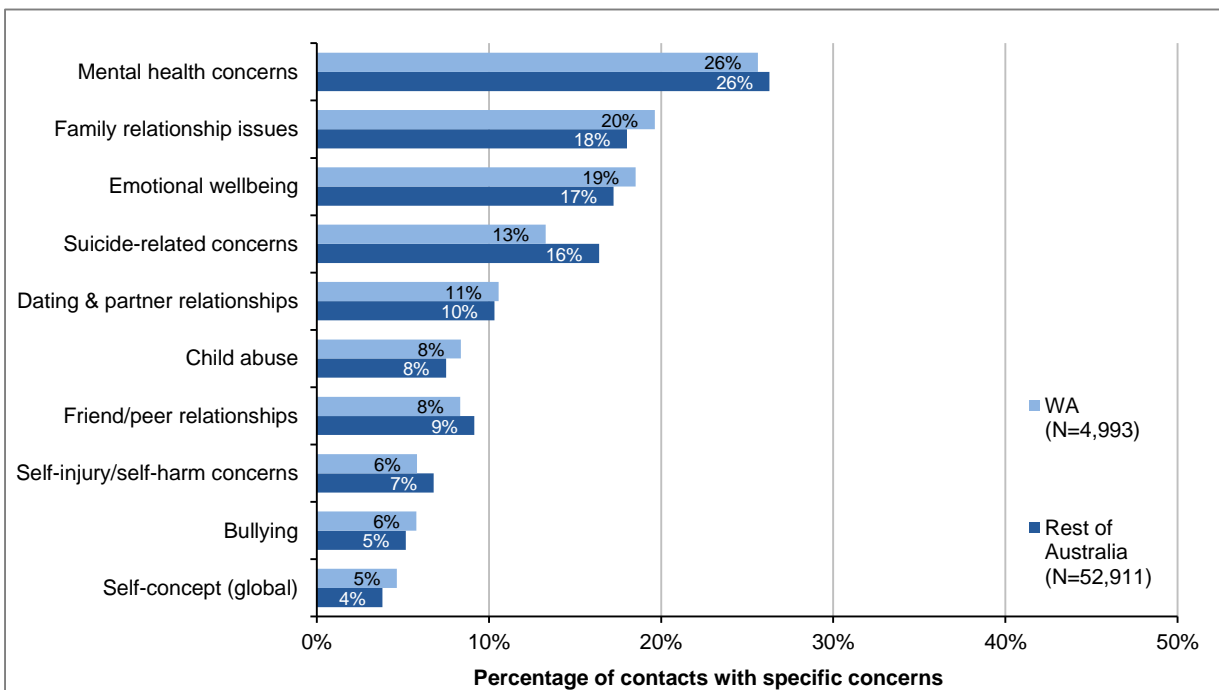
Most common concerns of children and young people who received counselling

During 2017, Kids Helpline counsellors responded to 66,386 contacts from children and young people who were seeking help about specific problems or concerns (i.e. counselling contacts). Analysis of the types of issues and concerns raised by children and young people in these sessions provide a valuable insight into the concerns of young Australians today.

WA compared with rest of Australia

- State or territory information was available for 57,904 of these 66,386 counselling contacts and of this subset 4,993 (or 9%) were known to be from WA.
- Figure 1 shows the 10 most common concerns of WA counselling contacts in 2017 and compares this with the frequency with which these concerns were raised by counselling contacts from the rest of Australia where state or territory information was known.
- The key observation to be noted from the data is that the frequency with which children and young people in WA sought help from Kids Helpline for all of these issues is consistent with the frequency with which children and young people elsewhere in Australia sought help for these issues.

Figure 1. Most frequently recorded concerns of Kids Helpline counselling contacts 2017 aged 5-25 years – WA compared with the rest of Australia (sorted in descending frequency of WA concerns)¹



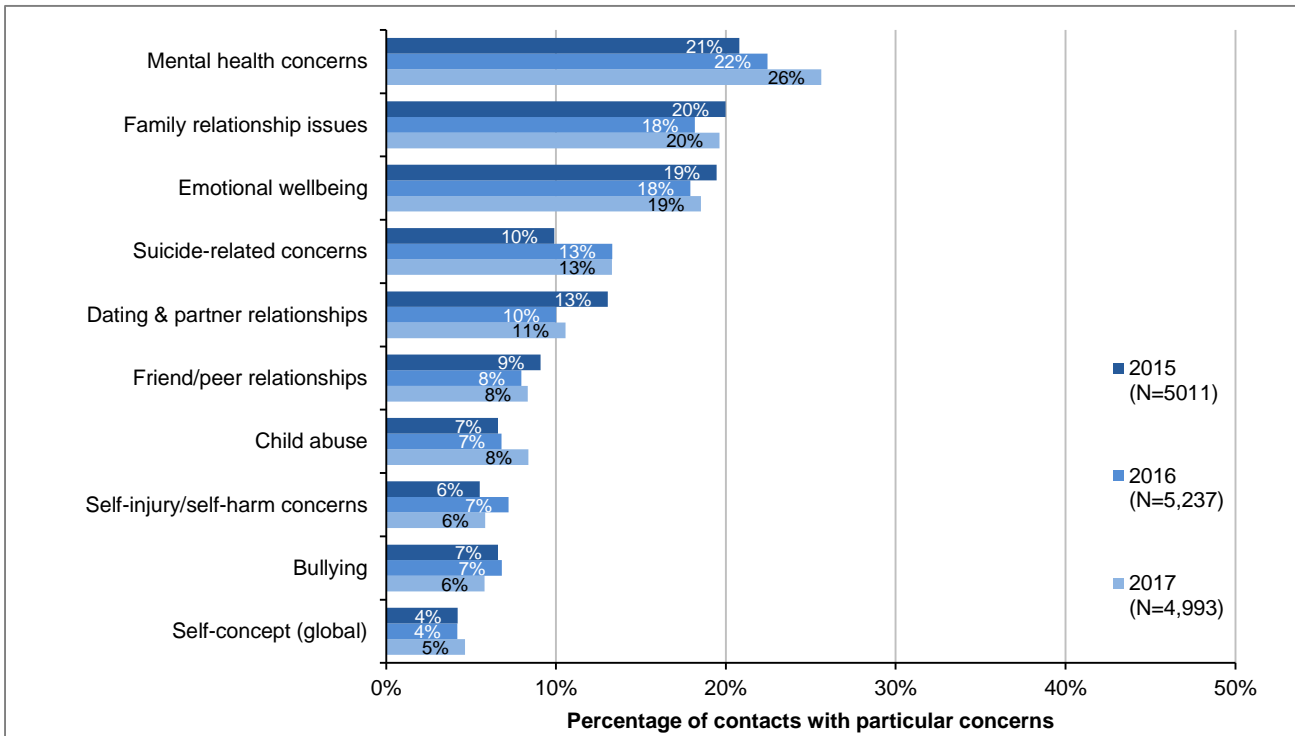
1. Up to four concerns per contact may be recorded. Accordingly, percentages may sum to more than 100%.

Trends over time

Figure 2 shows the 10 most common concerns of WA counselling contacts in 2017 and compares this with the frequency with which these concerns were raised by WA contacts in 2015 and 2016.

- The key observation to note from the data is that the frequency with which children and young people in WA are contacting Kids Helpline about most of these concerns has remained consistent over the short-term, and
- There appears to have been an increase in contacts about mental health concerns since 2015.

Figure 2. Most frequently recorded concerns of WA Kids Helpline counselling contacts aged 5-25 years – by year (sorted in descending frequency of 2017 concerns)¹



1. Up to four concerns per contact may be recorded. Accordingly, percentages may sum to more than 100%.

All concerns of children and young people who received counselling

Children and young people contact Kids Helpline about a very wide range of concerns, and focusing on the 10 most common concerns can obscure that diversity and the emergence of trends in other areas of less common client concern.

To address this issue, Table 4 reports the frequency with which *every concern* in the Kids Helpline's concern classification system was raised by counselling contacts from WA in 2017 and compares this with the frequency with which the concern was raised in 2015 and 2016. Table 4 groups individual concerns together under eleven 'concern classes' which aggregate frequencies across conceptual clusters of client concern.

- Key observation to be noted from the data in Table 4 is that the frequency with which children and young people in WA are contacting Kids Helpline about almost all these different concerns and classes of concern is quite consistent over the short-term with one exception:
 - there would appear to be a slight increase in the frequency with which children and young people are seeking help for the class of concern 'mental health and emotional wellbeing'.

Table 4. Number and proportion of Kids Helpline counselling contacts 5-25 years with particular concerns and classes of concern – WA by year¹

Concern and concern class	2015 (N = 5,011)		2016 (N = 5,237)		2017 (N = 4,993)	
	n	%	n	%	n	%
Mental health & emotional wellbeing	2,521	50.3%	2,846	54.3%	2,823	56.5%
Mental health concerns	1,042	20.8%	1,176	22.5%	1,279	25.6%
Emotional wellbeing	975	19.5%	938	17.9%	925	18.5%
Suicide-related concerns	496	9.9%	697	13.3%	664	13.3%
Self-injury/self-harm concerns	276	5.5%	377	7.2%	291	5.8%
Loss and grief	122	2.4%	172	3.3%	187	3.7%
Friends, peers, partners & dating	1,090	21.8%	928	17.7%	920	18.4%
Dating and partner relationships	654	13.1%	524	10.0%	527	10.6%
Friends/peer relationships	456	9.1%	417	8.0%	416	8.3%
Family relationships	1,001	20.0%	952	18.2%	980	19.6%
Child-parent relationships	679	13.6%	637	12.2%	654	13.1%
Other family relationships	237	4.7%	236	4.5%	183	3.7%
Changing family structures	154	3.1%	132	2.5%	166	3.3%
Parenting own children	10	0.2%	12	0.2%	43	.9%
Identity & self-concept	385	7.7%	388	7.4%	358	7.2%
Self-concept (global)	211	4.2%	219	4.2%	232	4.6%
Body image	44	0.9%	69	1.3%	62	1.2%
Sexual orientation	70	1.4%	58	1.1%	18	.4%
Gender/sex identification	36	0.7%	34	0.6%	26	.5%
Disability-related concerns	27	0.5%	17	0.3%	16	.3%
Cultural identity	10	0.2%	9	0.2%	11	.2%
Violence & abuse (non-family)	500	10.0%	535	10.2%	418	8.4%
Bullying - school related	287	5.7%	305	5.8%	253	5.1%
Bullying - other	45	0.9%	53	1.0%	39	.8%
Sexual assault or abuse (non-family)	54	1.1%	67	1.3%	52	1.0%
Dating and partner violence	62	1.2%	83	1.6%	45	.9%
Harassment and assault (non-sexual)	31	0.6%	21	0.4%	15	.3%
Sexual harassment	27	0.5%	18	0.3%	20	.4%
Child abuse & family violence	330	6.6%	356	6.8%	418	8.4%
Physical abuse	169	3.4%	190	3.6%	229	4.6%
Sexual abuse	50	1.0%	48	0.9%	61	1.2%
Emotional abuse	98	2.0%	99	1.9%	124	2.5%
Neglect of child	19	0.4%	19	0.4%	13	.3%
Exploitation by family member	0	0.0%	6	0.1%	0	0.0%
Exposure to family violence	37	0.7%	51	1.0%	51	1.0%
Living-in-care issues	10	0.2%	11	0.2%	16	.3%
School, education & work	321	6.4%	254	4.9%	269	5.4%
Study and education issues	215	4.3%	163	3.1%	194	3.9%
Employment issues	72	1.4%	67	1.3%	64	1.3%
School authority issues	39	0.8%	26	0.5%	17	.3%
Physical or sexual health & development	246	4.9%	282	5.4%	248	5.0%
Physical health concerns	113	2.3%	132	2.5%	133	2.7%
Pregnancy-related concerns	57	1.1%	86	1.6%	54	1.1%
Sexual activity	61	1.2%	57	1.1%	47	.9%
Physical/sexual development	11	0.2%	7	0.1%	13	.3%
Contraception/safe sex	4	0.1%	2	0.0%	4	.1%
Homelessness & basic needs assistance	142	2.8%	127	2.4%	89	1.8%
Homelessness	67	1.3%	74	1.4%	45	.9%
Practical/material assistance	54	1.1%	43	0.8%	35	.7%

Concern and concern class	2015 (N= 5,011)		2016 (N= 5,237)		2017 (N= 4,993)	
	n	%	n	%	n	%
Financial assistance/concerns	24	0.5%	13	0.2%	13	.3%
Substance use, addictions & risk-taking	110	2.2%	137	2.6%	113	2.3%
Drug use	78	1.6%	80	1.5%	72	1.4%
Alcohol use	31	0.6%	51	1.0%	28	.6%
Addictive behaviours (not drugs/alcohol)	3	0.1%	7	0.1%	14	.3%
Physical risk-taking	2	0.0%	0	0.0%	3	.1%
Gang/cult involvement	2	0.0%	0	0.0%	1	.0%
Offending, abusive or violent actions	41	0.8%	61	1.2%	65	1.3%
Illegal/offending behaviour	20	0.4%	27	0.5%	25	.5%
Abusive or violent actions	18	0.4%	35	0.7%	40	.8%
Sexual violence/offending actions	3	0.1%	0	0.0%	1	.0%

1. Up to four concerns per contact may be recorded. Totals provided for class of concern will be less than the sum of the individual concerns that make up that class due to the fact that multiple concerns within the class may have been identified in a single contact.