

# Youth Justice Pathways

An examination of wellbeing indicators and outcomes for young people involved with youth justice

## Acknowledgements

The Oranga Tamariki Evidence Centre works to build the evidence base that helps us better understand wellbeing and what works to improve outcomes for New Zealand's children, young people and their whānau.

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# Executive Summary

The youth justice system is for young people who have or are alleged to have committed an offence. It holds them to account for their offending and gives them a genuine opportunity to change their lives for the better without getting a criminal record, by focusing on diversionary measures. Oranga Tamariki aims to work in partnership with others, such as the Police and the courts, to address the underlying factors that contribute to offending as early as possible, to reduce the potential for lifelong offending and poor outcomes.

Discussions around the outcomes of people who are involved in youth justice often focus on whether people flow from the youth justice system onto the adult justice system.

The purpose of this report is to

- explore the pathways young people take to the youth justice system
- understand what their wellbeing indicators<sup>1</sup> and outcomes look like before, during, and after youth justice involvement, and
- explore how they compare with people who had no youth justice involvement.

This report looks at people in New Zealand born in the years 1993-2002<sup>2</sup> and divides them into four groups representing lifetime statutory involvement with care and protection and youth justice. Care and protection statutory involvement includes those who have had a care and protection family group conference, family whānau agreement, or a care and protection out-of-home placement. Youth justice statutory involvement includes those who have had a youth justice family group conference or a youth justice placement. The four groups are

1. **The “crossover” group** - statutory involvement with both care and protection and youth justice. Roughly two percent (1.6%) of the population falls into this group.
2. **The “youth justice only” group** - statutory involvement with youth justice only (no statutory care and protection involvement). Two percent of the population falls into this group.
3. **The “care and protection only” group** - statutory involvement with care and protection only (no statutory youth justice involvement). Five percent of the population falls into this group.

<sup>1</sup> Wellbeing in this report is measured using the Children’s Wellbeing Model which is based on administrative data. This does not capture the full concept of wellbeing as it does not measure things like cultural connectedness. It is however the best accessible proxy we have for the wellbeing of children in New Zealand.

<sup>2</sup> The first two sections of this report ‘Journey to youth justice’ and ‘Wellbeing at age 17’ are based on people born 1997 - 2002. The final section, ‘Pathways beyond youth justice’, is based on people born 1993 - 1997. The two groups have been used due to availability of data required for analysis.

4. **The “no involvement” group** - no statutory involvement with youth justice or care and protection. Most people are in this group (92% of the population).

This report focuses on comparisons between the crossover and youth justice only group, and the care and protection and no involvement groups.

The evidence in this report shows the crossover group are the most vulnerable, followed by the youth justice only group and then the care and protection only group. Although the crossover group is the most vulnerable, it is also the smallest (around two percent of the population).

Young people involved in youth justice deal with a range of complex factors and often have contact with many government agencies years before entering youth justice. This suggests there is an opportunity for early cross-agency support.

The interaction of these factors may explain some of the drivers of offending behaviour. In the years before a young person’s first youth justice family group conference the majority had been the subject of a care and protection report of concern; around half had been truant from school at some point in their life; and rates of mental health and substance use treatment appeared higher.

The crossover group also have poorer wellbeing indicators at age 17 and are more likely to go onto correctional involvement than the rest of the population. In the year before turning 17 the crossover group were more likely to have committed an offence than other groups and more likely to have been in a youth justice placement than the youth justice only group. They were also more likely to have been in an out of home care and protection placement.

The crossover group experience higher rates of imprisonment than other groups. However, it is important to note that not everyone in this group will end up in prison or on community sentence as an adult. Almost 40% of the crossover group did not have any correctional involvement between the ages of 17 and 21.

This paper also shows that statutory interaction with care and protection does not place children and young people on the path to offending. Over half of those with statutory care and protection involvement do not offend as adults – whereas over 80% of those with statutory youth justice involvement offend as adults. Those that did offend between the ages of 17 and 21 offended less often on average than those involved in youth justice.

The vast majority (85%) of the care and protection only group did not receive a corrections sentence by the age of 22. Of the 15% that did receive a sentence, only two percent received a prison sentence. The care and protection only group were, however, more likely to receive a corrections sentence than people who had no statutory involvement with either the youth justice or care and protection system.

The care and protection only group generally experience some positive indicators of wellbeing in early adulthood, in particular when compared to those involved in youth justice. For example, 36% of the care and protection only group received mental health treatment, compared to 67% of those in the crossover group. They are also more likely to have achieved NCEA level 2 or higher (60% compared to 38%).



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# About the Youth Justice System

Youth justice is distinct from adult (criminal) justice, and deals with offending by children aged 10-13 years, and young people aged 14-16 years. Its processes and practice are governed by the Oranga Tamariki Act 1989.

The United Nations Committee on the Rights of the Child (UNCROC) ensures the right of young people to special care and the right to provision, protection and participation. Because of this need for special protection and care, children and young people who break the law are treated differently from adults who offend. The law makes sure that a young person is dealt with in a way that acknowledges their needs and general wellbeing. It also ensures they are held accountable and are encouraged to accept responsibility for their offending. In this way, young offenders can be held accountable, learn from their mistakes and develop in a socially acceptable way.

The New Zealand youth justice system works on the basis of diversion. It aims to resolve offending without young offenders receiving a criminal conviction, as they would under the criminal justice system. Experience shows that once a young person enters the formal justice system and receives a criminal record, they are more likely to develop a pattern of offending and their offences may get more serious. The aim is to avoid this as much as is possible taking into consideration the safety of the public.

The majority of young offenders are now kept out of the courts. Minor offences are dealt with by the Police either through frontline warning or caution, or referral to youth aid for an alternative action plan (as an alternative to instituting formal proceedings). More serious offending is dealt with by Oranga Tamariki through a family group conference, though the young person still may not be prosecuted in Court.

# Overview of the groups

This report focuses on people in New Zealand born in the years 1993-2002<sup>3</sup>.

The population was divided into four groups representing lifetime statutory involvement with care and protection and youth justice.<sup>4</sup>

1. **The “crossover” group** - statutory involvement with both care and protection and youth justice
2. **The “youth justice only” group** - statutory involvement with youth justice only (no statutory care and protection involvement)
3. **The “care and protection only” group** - statutory involvement with care and protection only (no statutory youth justice involvement)
4. **The “no involvement” group** - no statutory involvement with youth justice or care and protection.

Statutory involvement with youth justice in this report refers to involvement with the youth justice service arm of Oranga Tamariki (and previously Child, Youth and Family). Children and young people who offend and are dealt with by Police by warning or Alternative Action, and never have a referral to Oranga Tamariki youth justice services, are included in the “no involvement” group.

This report mainly focuses on the crossover and youth justice only group, using the others for comparison.

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<sup>3</sup> The first two sections of this report ‘Journey to youth justice’ and ‘Wellbeing at age 17’ are based on people born 1997 - 2002. The final section, ‘Pathways beyond youth justice’, is based on people born 1993 - 1997. The two groups have been used due to availability of data required for analysis.

<sup>4</sup> Care and protection statutory involvement includes those who have had a care and protection family group conference, family whānau agreement, or a care and protection out-of-home placement. Youth justice statutory involvement includes those who have had a youth justice family group conference or a youth justice placement.



## Scale of the four groups

Most people never have statutory involvement with care and protection or youth justice. Only around four percent<sup>5</sup> of people have youth justice statutory involvement (YJ), while 7% have care and protection statutory involvement (CP). A very small proportion (2%) are involved in both.

Table 1: Number and proportion of people in each group<sup>6</sup>

	YJ & CP	YJ only	CP only	No involvement
Number in group	4,968	6,393	13,764	278,910
Proportion of population	2%	2%	5%	92%

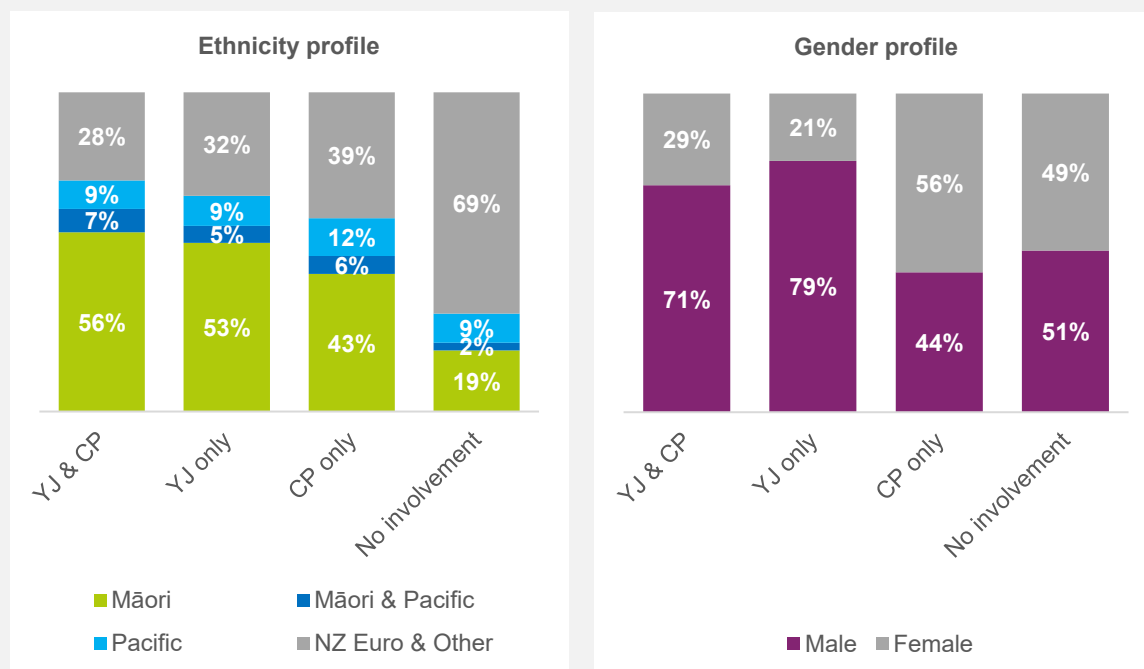
## Demographic profile

Figure 1 shows the gender and ethnicity make-up of each group.

Māori are overrepresented in both the youth justice and care and protection populations, making up over half of the entire youth justice population – 58% of the youth justice only group and 64% of the crossover group.

Males are also overrepresented in the youth justice population, accounting for more than half of the youth justice only and crossover groups.

Figure 1: Population group by ethnicity and gender



<sup>5</sup> Note this does not include young people who offend where it is not serious enough for referral to Oranga Tamariki youth justice services. Around 13-14% of young people become known to Police for offending before age 17 ([Child and youth offending patterns - research reports - Ministry of Social Development \(msd.govt.nz\)](https://www.msd.govt.nz/research-reports/child-and-youth-offending-patterns-research-reports))

<sup>6</sup> Based on the 1993-1997 cohort analysed in the 'Pathways beyond youth justice' section.

# Journey to youth justice

This section examines key available wellbeing indicators in the years leading up to a young person's first youth justice family group conference (YJ FGC). As such, this section only includes information about young people in the crossover and youth justice only groups. Only 4% of the young people born in New Zealand between 1997 and 2002 had a YJ FGC (around 11,400 young people out of 304,100).

Young people involved with youth justice deal with a range of complex factors. The interaction of these factors may explain some of the drivers of offending behaviour.

In the years before a young person's first YJ FGC

- the majority (81%) had a care and protection report of concern
- around half had been truant from school at some point in their life
- rates of mental health and substance usage treatment appear higher in the year prior

While these indicators are common for those with youth justice involvement, it's important to remember that any one of them in isolation, or even together, does not mean that a young person will offend. For example, by age 17 around 10% of the no involvement group have had a truancy spell (35,000 of 336,000 young people). For those involved in youth justice, the proportion is higher (68%), but this represents fewer young people (5,370 of 7,851). Being truant in itself does not mean a young person will become involved with youth justice.

## Most young people referred to their first YJ FGC have previously been involved in family violence notifications and/or care and protection reports of concern

The proportion varies by age and is higher for children first referred at younger ages – around half of those first referred at age 13 had prior care and protection FGCs (and 20% had been in an out-of-home placement).

Children who offend often receive a care and protection statutory response to address their offending which may be contributing to this increased prevalence. Exposure to family violence is also far more likely to be reported at younger ages due to the younger children being more vulnerable to harm.

Some had contact with care and protection at younger ages (e.g., more than five years ago) while others had more recent interactions.

Figure 2 shows the proportion of children and young people at ages 13-16<sup>7</sup> who had previous care and protection or family violence involvement one year, two years and between two and five years prior to their first YJ FGC.

The diagram below explains how to read Figure 2.



For example, the first line of Figure 2 shows that of people who were referred for their first YJ FGC at 16:

- 8% were in an out of home placement in the 2-5 years before their first referral.
- 6% were in an out of home placement in the 1-2 years before their first referral.
- 7% were in an out of home placement in the year before their first referral.

A person may appear in more than one of these time periods. For example, young person A may have been in an out of home placement in the year before their first referral – forming part of the 7%. Young person A may also have been in an out of home placement in the 1-2 years before their first referral – forming part of the 6%. These proportions cannot be added together across time periods.

<sup>7</sup> Indicators for 10-12 year olds were not extracted due to small numbers appearing in offending indicators.

**Figure 2: Young people with a YJ FGC referral – care and protection and family violence notification history prior to their YJ FGC referral**

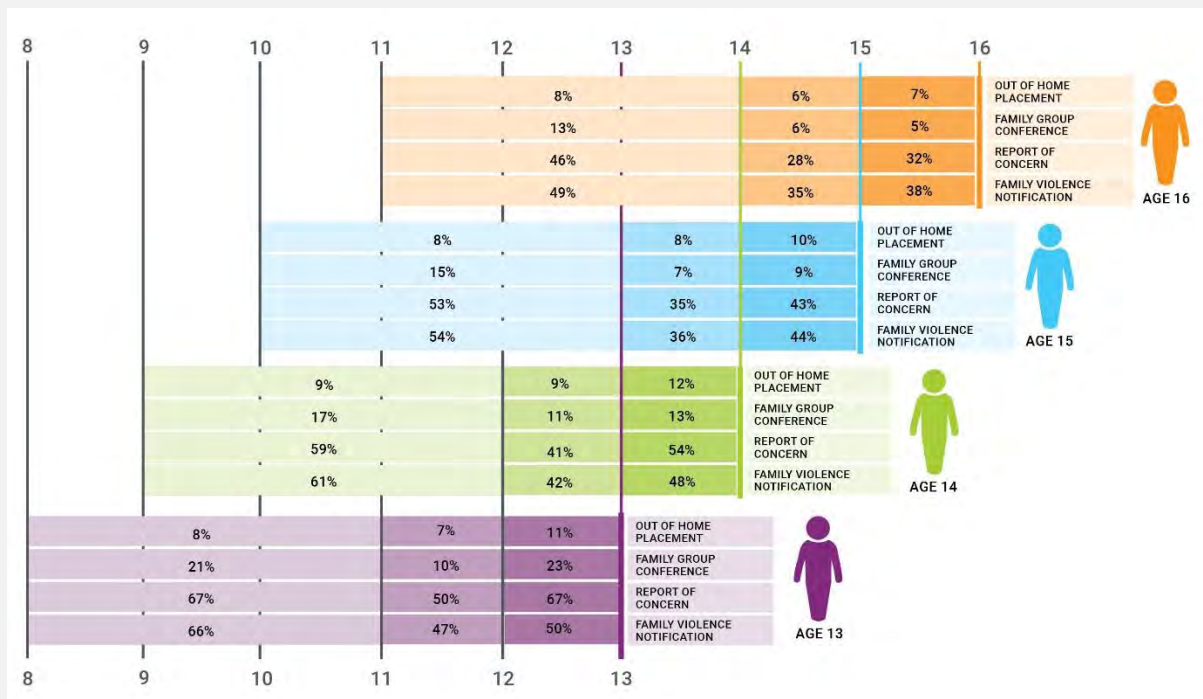


Table 2 shows the proportion of people who had care and protection involvement at any time in their life before their first youth justice family group conference referral.

**Table 2: Young people with a YJ FGC referral – care and protection history at any time prior to their YJ FGC referral**

Care and protection history	Age at first YJ FGC referral				All ages
	13	14	15	16	
Out of home placement	20%	24%	19%	17%	19%
Family group conference	54%	46%	39%	33%	39%
Report of concern	95%	89%	84%	77%	81%

Again, it is important to remember that having any one of these indicators is not a guarantee that a young person will offend. For example, by age 17 around 16% of the no involvement group have been subject to a report of concern (54,800 of 336,000 young people). For those involved in youth justice, the proportion is higher (87%), but this represents fewer young people (6,882 of 7,851). While there is a significant overlap, being the subject of a report of concern or a family violence notification does not mean a young person will become involved with youth justice.

## School disengagement occurs at varying rates in the years before a young person’s first YJ FGC

The proportion of people with a truancy, stand down or suspension increases in the lead up to their YJ FGC, suggesting that schools see an escalation of poor behaviour or non-attendance. Lower rates at ages 15 and 16 are likely due to young people known to youth justice leaving school early.

Across all ages approximately one in five experience truancy spells and one in three experience stand downs during the two to five year period before their YJ FGC. This indicates educational disengagement a significant amount of time before they first enter statutory youth justice involvement.

Figure 3 shows the proportion of children and young people at ages 13-16 who showed signs of school disengagement at one year, two years and between two and five years prior to their first YJ FGC.

To interpret Figure 3, consider people referred to their first YJ FGC at 16. Of these people

- 23% had a truancy spell in the 2-5 years before their first referral
- 29% had a truancy spell in the 1-2 years before their first referral
- 36% had a truancy spell in the year before their first referral.

As in the example in the previous section, a person may appear in more than one of these time periods within an indicator. These proportions cannot be added together across time periods.

**Figure 3: Young people with a YJ FGC referral – truancy, stand down and suspension history prior to their first YJ FGC referral**

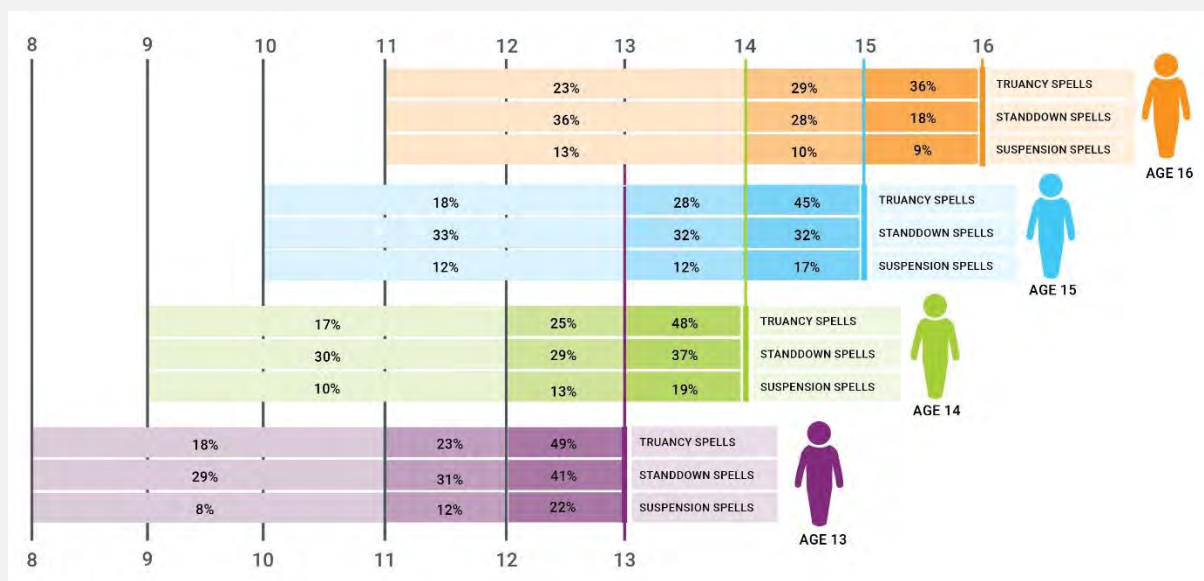


Table 3 shows the proportion of people who had a truancy spell, stand down or suspension at any time in their life before their first YJ FGC referral.

**Table 3: Young people with a YJ FGC referral – truancy, stand down and suspension history at any time prior to their first YJ FGC referral**

School disengagement history	Age of first YJ FGC referral				
	13	14	15	16	All ages
Truancy	60%	60%	59%	54%	55%
Stand downs	60%	65%	65%	60%	61%
Suspensions	34%	34%	33%	28%	31%

Again, it is important to remember that having any one of these indicators is not a guarantee that a young person will offend. For example, by age 17 around eight percent of the no involvement had been stood down from school (27,200 of 336,000 young people). For those with statutory involvement in youth justice, the proportion is higher (69%), but this represents fewer young people (5,385 of 7,851). Being stood down from school does not mean a young person will become involved with youth justice.

## **Rates of mental health and substance usage treatment appear higher in the year before a young person’s first YJ FGC**

Depending on the age the young person was referred, treatment rates were between 33% and 43%. ‘Treatment’ covers the dispensing of pharmaceuticals and specialist services from publicly funded hospitals and community providers classed for mental health issues or dependence on substances.

Approximately one in four young people received mental health treatment two to five years prior to their first YJ FGC across the age groups, indicating potential ongoing needs.

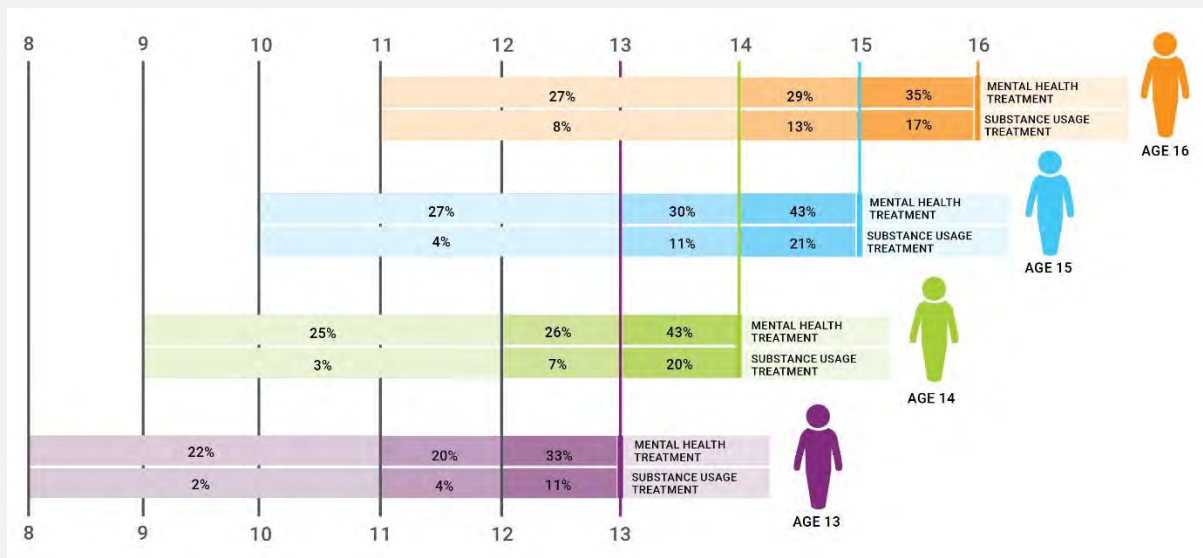
Figure 4 shows the proportion of young people aged 13-16 who had mental health and substance usage treatment one year, two years and between two and five years prior to their first YJ FGC referral.

To interpret Figure 4, consider people referred to their YJ FGC at 16. Of these people

- 27% had mental health treatment in the 2-5 years before their first referral
- 29% had mental health treatment in the 1-2 years before their first referral
- 35% had mental health treatment in the year before their first referral.

As in the previous examples, a person may appear in more than one of these indicators. These cannot be added together.

Figure 4: Young people with a YJ FGC referral – mental health and substance usage treatment history prior to their first YJ FGC referral



Again, it is important to remember that having any one of these indicators is not a guarantee that a young person will offend. For example, at age 17 around eight percent of the no involvement group had received mental health treatment in the previous 12 months (26,500 of 336,000 young people). For those with statutory involvement in youth justice, the proportion is higher (50%), but this represents fewer young people (3,900 of 7,851). Receiving mental health treatment does not mean a young person will become involved with youth justice. It is more likely that these young people receive mental health treatment because they are in contact with youth justice or other government services that the no involvement group have not been in contact with.

# Wellbeing indicators at age 17

This section presents key available wellbeing indicators for individuals at age 17. Examining wellbeing indicators and offending behaviour at age 17 indicates how things are going for young people as they age out of the youth justice and care and protection systems.

It presents indicators around the time of their 17th birthday for offending, youth justice placements, and care and protection interaction. It also provides information around health, education and other areas.

Wellbeing indicators suggest the crossover group has poorer wellbeing at age 17 than other groups.

The interaction of low wellbeing indicators across care and protection, education, income, health and victimisation may help to explain their offending behaviour.

## Youth justice indicators at age 17

The crossover group were more likely to

- Have committed an offence in the previous 12 months than other groups
- Have been in a youth justice placement than the youth justice only group.

## Care and protection indicators at age 17

The crossover group were more likely than the other groups to have

- a report of concern in the previous 12 months
- an out of home placement in the previous 12 months

## Youth justice involvement by age 17

As outlined in the overview of the groups, the groups in this analysis have been defined using statutory involvement with Oranga Tamariki. In the youth justice system, when a young person has been prosecuted, they can be detained in the custody of the chief executive of Oranga Tamariki on remand or sentence and will reside in a youth justice residence or community group remand home. This is referred to here as a '**youth justice placement**'.

**The crossover group were more likely to have been in a youth justice placement than those who were only involved in youth justice.**

At age 17, 33% of the crossover group had been in a youth justice placement in their life to date. Twenty-two percent had been in a youth justice placement in the 12 months prior to turning 17.



The youth justice only group were far less likely to have been in a youth justice placement. Ten percent had been in a youth justice placement in their life to date and seven percent had been in a youth justice placement in the 12 months prior to turning 17.

**The crossover group were more likely to commit an offence in the 12 months before turning 17 than all other groups, including those in the youth justice only group**

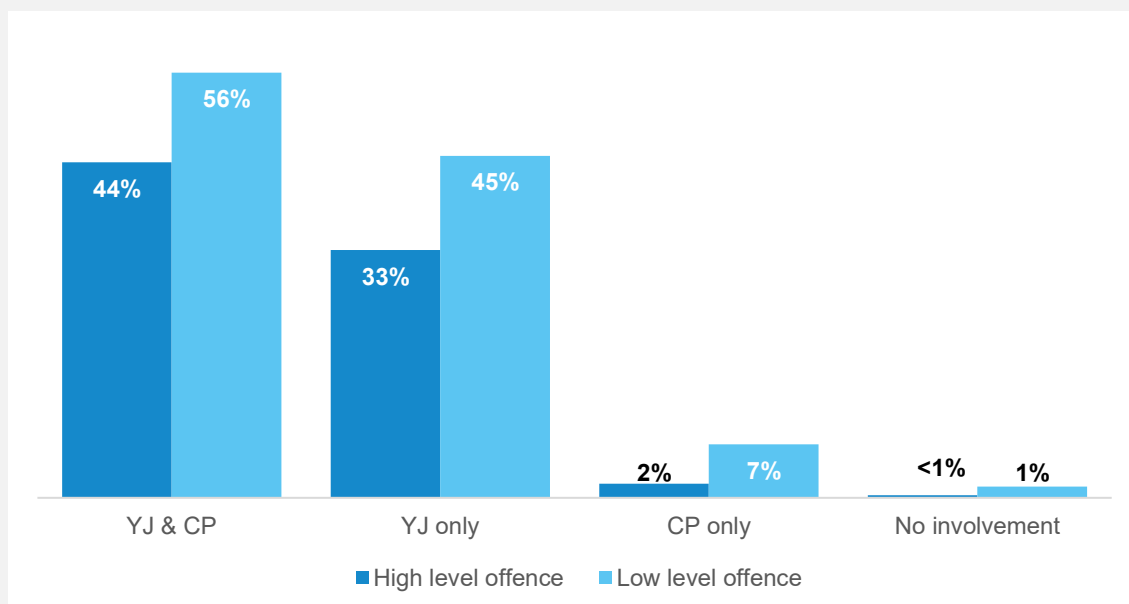
Figure 5 shows the proportion of each group who committed an offence in the year before turning 17. Over half (56%) of young people in the ‘crossover’ group committed a low-level offence in the year before turning 17 compared with 45% of the youth justice only group.

Similarly, 44% of young people in the ‘crossover’ group committed a high-level offence in the year before turning 17 compared with 33% of the youth justice only group.

A young person may be in both the low level and high level offence groups.

The care and protection only group were far less likely to offend than the youth justice groups. However, they were more likely to offend than those without any statutory involvement at all.<sup>8</sup>

Figure 5: Proportion of people in each group who committed an offence in the year before age 17, by seriousness<sup>9</sup> of offence



<sup>8</sup> Not all offending escalates to the level of statutory youth justice involvement with Oranga Tamariki and some is dealt with entirely by Police.

<sup>9</sup> High level offences include offences like aggravated robbery. Low level offences include offences like destruction of property. The seriousness of offences is defined by grouping ANZSOC (Australia and New Zealand Standard Offence Classifications) divisions and subdivisions.

Young people who offend often have parents that have offended. Interestingly, while those in the crossover group were more likely to have had a parent who had been to prison in their lifetime (45%), the care and protection only group had a higher rate of parents who had been to prison (34%) than the youth justice only group (26%). Only 5% of people with no involvement had a parent who had been to prison.

## Care and protection interaction by age 17

This section examines the care and protection interaction of the four groups leading up to their 17<sup>th</sup> birthday.

### Young people in the crossover group are more likely to have a report of concern<sup>10</sup> in the past year or recently been in an out of home placement than other groups

The crossover group was much more likely to have had a report of concern in the 12 months prior to turning 17 (34%) than the other groups. The youth justice only group was only slightly less likely to receive a report of concern in the previous 12 months (18%) than the care and protection only group (20%).

The crossover group was also more likely to have had an out of home care and protection placement than the care and protection only group.

- 26% of the crossover group were in an *out of home placement* in the 12 months prior to turning 17, compared with seven percent of the care and protection only group.
- 64% of the crossover group had *ever been in an out of home placement* before turning 17, compared with 38% of the care and protection only group.

The crossover group was also more likely to have had a sibling in an out of home care and protection placement in the previous year than other groups. They were also more likely to have had a parent who had been in an out of home placement as a child.

Table 4 presents a range of care and protection indicators. The table is highlighted to allow easier comparison of the groups. The red indicates where a group fares worse. The blue indicates where a group is faring better. Based on the highlighting, we see that the crossover group generally fare worse across indicators, followed by the youth justice only and the care and protection only groups. The no involvement group always fares the best.

As an example, take the third indicator - "Parent had a report of concern as a child". The crossover group are highlighted with the darkest red, as a higher proportion of this group had parents who had received a report of concern than the other groups. The no involvement group are highlighted in the darkest blue, because a very low

<sup>10</sup> Reports of concern are received through our call centre from members of the public, family or whānau, the Police, schools, health professionals, or other government or community agencies about the wellbeing of a child or young person. These reports indicate children or young people who may require be unsafe, in danger of harm, or suffering from ill-treatment, abuse or neglect. Reports of concern are assessed by a social worker to decide if further action is required.

proportion of this group had parents who received a report of concern compared to the other groups.

**Table 4: Care and protection indicators at age 17**

Indicator	YJ & CP	YJ only	CP only	No involvement
<b>Reports of concern</b>				
Had a report of concern in the past year	34%	18%	20%	2%
Has ever had a report of concern	99%	75%	100%	16%
Parent had a report of concern as a child	29%	16%	24%	3%
<b>Family group conference/Family whānau agreement</b>				
Parent had a care and protection FGC/FWA as a child	13%	6%	10%	1%
<b>Out of home placements</b>				
Was in an out of home placement in the past year	26%	0%	7%	0%
Has ever been in an out of home placement	64%	0%	38%	0%
Had a sibling in out of home placement in the past year	13%	1%	8%	0%
Had a parent who has been in an out of home placement	5%	2%	4%	0%

## Other wellbeing indicators at age 17

This section contains a range of wellbeing indicators across socioeconomic factors, education, benefit status, health and victimisation.

Overall, these wellbeing indicators show that children and young people involved with youth justice or care and protection deal with a range of complex factors.

The indicators suggest the crossover group generally has poorer wellbeing than other groups. The interaction of low wellbeing across multiple factors may help explain their offending.

### The crossover group are more likely to live in a high socioeconomic deprivation area

Just over half (51%) of the crossover group lived in areas with a high socioeconomic decile of 9 or 10. High proportions of the youth justice and care and protection only groups also lived in these areas while only 18% of those without any statutory involvement lived in a decile 9 or 10 area. In comparison, there is not as stark a difference in the proportions of those living in a decile 7 or 8 area across the four groups.

The crossover group were also far more likely to have changed address in the previous year than the other three groups.

Table 5 presents socioeconomic indicators at age 17 by group. As in table 4, red highlighting indicates a group fares worse than others and blue indicates a group fares better than others.

**Table 5: Socioeconomic wellbeing indicators at age 17**

Indicator	YJ & CP	YJ only	CP only	No involvement
<b>Address changes</b>				
Had residential changes in the last year	62%	44%	40%	16%
<b>Socio economic decile (1-10, whereby 10 is worse)<sup>11</sup></b>				
Socio economic decile 7 or 8	19%	19%	21%	16%
Socio economic decile 9 or 10	51%	46%	43%	18%

### The crossover group appear less engaged in school at age 17 than other groups

Those with statutory involvement with youth justice were less likely to be enrolled in school at age 17 (there was no difference between the proportions of the crossover group and the youth justice only group). However, both groups were more likely to be enrolled in tertiary education (excluding university study), indicating some may have left school to study at a polytechnic or other tertiary institution. Involvement in

<sup>11</sup> Socioeconomic decile is based on the New Zealand Deprivation index (NZDep) which estimates relative socioeconomic deprivation for areas, not people.

youth justice may help facilitate earlier engagement in tertiary studies (e.g., as part of a YJ FGC plan).

There is a clear distinction between those in the crossover group and those in the youth justice only group in terms of truancy. One-third of the crossover group had been truant from school in the year before turning 17, compared with one-quarter of the youth justice only group.

The crossover group was more likely than the youth justice only group to have ever been in alternative education<sup>12</sup> (53% versus 35%) or special education<sup>13</sup> (12% versus 4%) in their life-to-date. Such rates are much higher than those for the care and protection only and no statutory involvement groups.

Table 6 presents education indicators at age 17 by group. As in previous tables, red highlighting indicates a group fares worse than others and blue indicates a group fares better than others.

**Table 6: Education indicators at age 17**

Indicator	YJ & CP	YJ only	CP only	No involvement
<b>Education</b>				
Has ever been in alternative education	53%	35%	10%	1%
Changed schools in the last year	11%	5%	6%	3%
In school over the previous year	30%	30%	61%	86%
Has ever been in special education	12%	4%	6%	1%
Enrolled in tertiary course (excl. bachelor level) over the year	38%	35%	23%	8%
Has been truant from school in the past year	34%	25%	13%	2%

### The crossover group are more likely to have been supported by a benefit

All three statutory involvement groups were more likely to have received a benefit by age 17 or had their parents supported by a benefit than those with no involvement. The crossover group was the most likely with one in five having ever received a benefit themselves. Their parents were also more likely to have been supported by a main benefit recently too.

Housing issues also affect the crossover group more:

- over one quarter were living in social housing at age 17
- seven percent were on the priority A housing register
- 17% had been supported by an accommodation supplement in the previous 12 months.

<sup>12</sup> Alternative education is for students aged 13 to 16 who have become alienated from mainstream education. Many of the students placed in alternative education have been long term truants or have been suspended from one or more schools.

<sup>13</sup> Special education supports students with high or very high needs or hearing or vision impairments. Special education in New Zealand is available for children with physical and/or intellectual impairments; children with hearing or vision difficulties; for children who struggle with learning, communicating, or getting along with others; children who have emotional or behavioural difficulties.

The parents of people in the crossover group were also more likely to be receiving an accommodation supplement, with this being next most prevalent in the care and protection only group.

Table 7 presents benefit and housing indicators at age 17 by group. As in previous tables, red highlighting indicates a group fares worse than others and blue indicates a group fares better than others.

**Table 7: Benefit indicators at age 17**

Indicator	YJ & CP	YJ only	CP only	No involvement
<b>Young person benefit status</b>				
Ever been on a main benefit <sup>14</sup>	19%	12%	11%	2%
Young person received an accommodation supplement in the last year	17%	10%	10%	1%
<b>Parent benefit status</b>				
Parent received jobseeker support in the last year	23%	19%	17%	5%
Parent received sole parent support in the last year	20%	18%	19%	4%
Parent received a supported living payment in the last year	8%	7%	9%	2%
Parent received an accommodation supplement in the last year	57%	47%	54%	16%
<b>Housing status</b>				
Lives in social housing	27%	20%	23%	5%
On priority A public housing register in the last year	7%	4%	4%	1%

### Young people with statutory involvement in youth justice are more likely to have had mental health or substance use treatment by age 17 than others

While those with statutory youth justice involvement were more likely to have received mental health or substance use treatment than the general population, it is important to note this is not an indicator of the prevalence of mental health and substance use issues. Those involved in youth justice may be more likely to receive treatment because these issues have been detected when addressing the drivers of their offending.

The crossover group, however, has the highest rates even when compared to the youth justice only group, with 57% receiving mental health treatment in the last year.

The crossover group population was also more likely to

- be admitted to an emergency department in the previous 12 months (38%, compared with 31% of the youth justice only group)
- have a non-preventable hospitalisation in the previous 12 months (17%, compared with 13% of the youth justice only group).

Table 8 presents health indicators at age 17 by group. As in previous tables, red highlighting indicates a group fares worse than others and blue indicates a group fares better than others.

<sup>14</sup> Main benefits include jobseeker support, sole parent support and supported living payment.

**Table 8: Health indicators at age 17**

Indicator	YJ & CP	YJ only	CP only	No involvement
<b>Health</b>				
Emergency Department admission in the last year	38%	31%	25%	12%
Had non preventable hospitalisation in the last year	17%	13%	12%	6%
Had mental health service provider contact / treatment or received a mental health related prescription in the last year	57%	42%	22%	8%
Had substance usage related provider contact / treatment over the last year	28%	22%	5%	1%

### The crossover group are more likely to have reported victimisation or experienced family violence than others

While all groups with statutory involvement are more likely to have had a family violence incident in their immediate family in the past year than the no involvement group, a much larger proportion of the crossover group experienced a reported family violence incident (52% compared with 34% each for the youth justice only and care and protection only groups).

Table 9 presents family violence and victimisation indicators at age 17 by group. As in previous tables, red highlighting indicates a group fares worse than others and blue indicates a group fares better than others.

**Table 9: Family violence and victimisation indicators at age 17**

Indicator	YJ & CP	YJ only	CP only	No involvement
<b>Family violence and victimisation</b>				
Had reported victimisation in the last year	12%	8%	6%	2%
Had a family violence incident within their immediate family in the last year	52%	34%	34%	4%

# Pathways beyond youth justice

This section presents information about further involvement in the justice system, as well as outcomes in health, education, employment and other areas for the population in the five years after turning 17.

By age 22, young people in the crossover group were more likely than other groups (including the youth justice only group) to

- commit an offence
- receive a community sentence
- receive a prison sentence
- receive more than one prison and/or community sentence

The crossover group also offended at a higher rate than other groups.

The youth justice only group were the second most likely to offend and receive a prison or community sentence, followed by the care and protection only group.

## Involvement in the justice system

### Those with statutory youth justice involvement were more likely to offend as young adults than those without statutory youth justice involvement

The crossover group were more likely to offend than the other groups, including the youth justice only group. Between the ages of 17 and 22

- 85% of the crossover group committed an offence (compared with 80% of the youth justice only group)
- 82% of the crossover group committed a low-level offence (compared with 77% of the youth justice only group)
- 57% committed a high-level offence (compared with 41% of the youth justice only group).

The care and protection only group were far less likely to offend as young adults than those with statutory youth justice involvement. They were however more likely to offend than those without any statutory involvement.

Table 10 presents indicators around offending behaviour between the ages of 17 and 21. The table is highlighted to allow easier comparison of the groups. The red indicates where a group fares worse. The blue indicates where a group is faring better. Based on the highlighting, we see that the crossover group fare worse across indicators, followed by the youth justice only and the care and protection only groups. The no involvement group always fares the best.



**Table 10: Offending indicators from age 17 to 21**

Indicator	YJ & CP	YJ only	CP only	No involvement
Involved in Low level seriousness offence(s) over the period	82%	77%	40%	17%
Involved in High level seriousness offence(s) over the period	57%	41%	14%	3%
Involved in offence(s) over the period	85%	80%	42%	18%

As well as having a higher likelihood of offending, the crossover group offended more often than other groups. Between the ages of 17 and 21 the crossover group committed an average of 6.8 offences overall (compared with 4.5 for the youth justice only group)

Figure 6 presents the average number of offences committed per person between the ages of 17 and 21 by group. The graph also breaks the average down by the severity of the offence.

**Figure 6: Average number of offences committed per person between the ages of 17 and 21**



**Those with statutory youth justice involvement were more likely to go on to correctional involvement than those without statutory youth justice involvement**

People in the crossover group were the most likely to receive a prison sentence.

- Almost one-quarter (24%, 1,176) of the crossover group received a prison sentence by the age of 22
- 11% (711) of the youth justice only group received a prison sentence by age 22.

The crossover group were slightly more likely to receive a community sentence than the youth justice only group.

- 39% (1,926) of the crossover group received a community sentence by age 22

- 37% (2,361) of the youth justice only group received a community sentence by age 22.

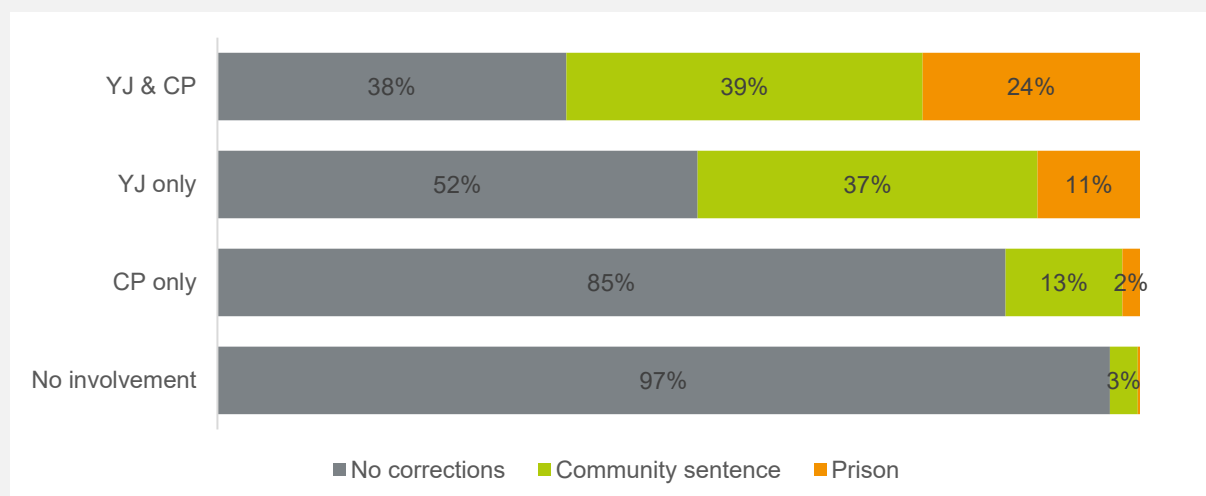
In comparison, the care and protection only group were far less likely to receive a prison (2%, 264) or community sentence (13%, 1,743).

The vast majority (85%, 11,763) of the care and protection only group did not receive a corrections sentence by the age of 22. They were, however, more likely to receive a corrections sentence than people who had no statutory involvement with either the youth justice or care and protection system.

Although people who have statutory involvement in youth justice are more likely to receive a corrections sentence by the age of 22, there is a large proportion who do not. Thirty-eight percent (1,877) of people in the crossover group and 52% (3,333) in the youth justice only group had not received a corrections sentence by the age of 22.

Figure 7 shows the proportion of each group by their highest level of corrections involvement by age 22. The grey bars represent people who did not receive a prison or community sentence. The green bars represent people whose most serious sentence was a community sentence. The orange bars represent people whose most serious sentence was imprisonment.

**Figure 7: Proportion of people in each group by the most serious corrections sentence they received between the ages of 17 and 21**



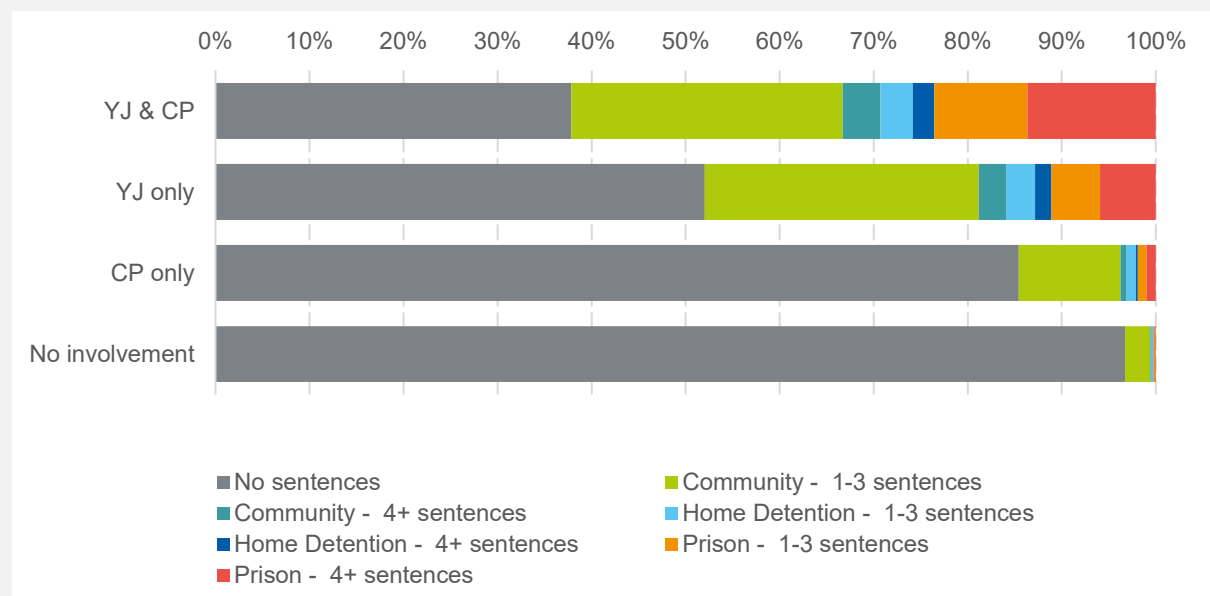
**Those with statutory youth justice involvement were more likely to receive more than one corrections sentence by the age of 22 than those without statutory youth justice involvement**

People in the crossover group who received a sentence were more likely to have received four or more sentences (of any type) and have prison as their most serious sentence compared to those with youth justice involvement only.

In comparison, people involved in care and protection who received a corrections sentence were more likely to receive three or fewer sentences and have a community sentence as their most serious sentence.

Figure 8 breaks down the proportion of people in each group by the most serious sentence received and the number of sentences (of any type) received.

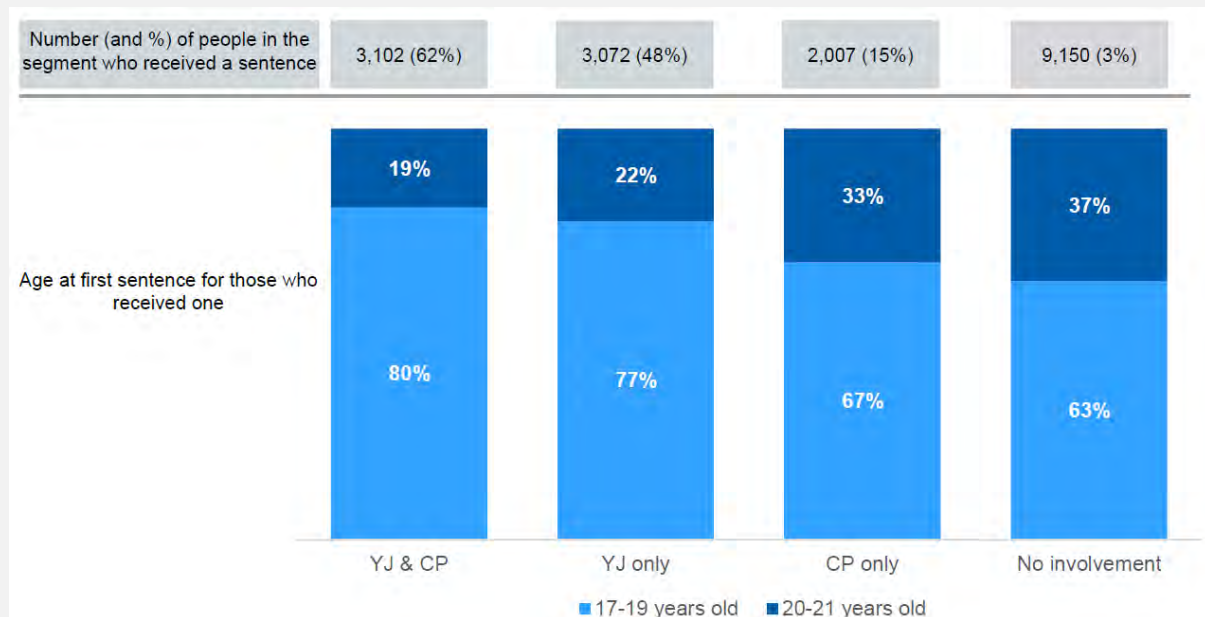
**Figure 8: Proportion of people in each group by the most serious corrections sentence received and the number of sentences (of any type) received between the ages of 17 and 21**



## Those with statutory youth justice involvement were more likely to receive their first corrections sentence in the adult court at a younger age than those without statutory youth justice involvement

Most people who went on to receive a corrections sentence as an adult received one by the age of 19 (Figure 9). Those with prior youth justice involvement were more likely to receive a sentence earlier (1,533 or 80% of the crossover group and 1,797 or 77% of the youth justice only group).

Figure 9: Proportion of people in each group by age at first corrections sentence for those that received a corrections sentence



## Other wellbeing indicators between ages 17 and 21

Overall, those in the crossover group fare worse than the other three groups. This shows there are a range of complex factors that have contributed and continue to contribute to their involvement in the justice system.

### The crossover group are much more likely to have been on a benefit for more than half of their early adult life

Forty-seven percent<sup>15</sup> of the crossover group have been supported by a benefit for at least half of their early adult life. The proportion of early adult life spent on benefit gives us an indication of which groups are more likely to have long-term benefit receipt and the findings here suggest this may be an issue for the crossover group compared to other groups. This may be influenced by the circumstances leading to their care and protection interactions given that the care and protection only group is the next most prevalent at 38% followed by the youth justice only group at only 26%.

<sup>15</sup> 47% has been calculated by adding the proportion of adult lifetime (ages 18-21) supported by main benefit – 75%+ and the proportion of adult lifetime (ages 18-21) supported by main benefit – 50-75%.

Table 11 presents a range of benefit and housing wellbeing indicators. As in previous tables, red highlighting indicates a group fares worse than others and blue indicates a group fares better than others.

**Table 11: Benefit and social housing indicators from age 17-21**

Indicator	YJ & CP	YJ only	CP only	No involvement
<b>Benefit status</b>				
Received a main benefit for some/all of the period	89%	73%	75%	27%
Proportion of adult lifetime (ages 18-21) supported by main benefit - 75%+	22%	10%	18%	2%
Proportion of adult lifetime (ages 18-21) supported by main benefit - 50-75%	25%	16%	20%	4%
Lived in social housing for some/all of the period	31%	22%	26%	7%

### The crossover group are less engaged in education in their early adult life

The crossover group have the lowest engagement in bachelor level tertiary education and employment in their early adult life along with lower achievement in at least secondary school qualifications. Those with only youth justice involvement are second lowest, followed by the care and protection only group.

Interestingly, the reverse was the case for those enrolled in non-bachelor level tertiary courses similar to what was observed at age 17 for these groups. Involvement in the system may have helped facilitate further engagement in these tertiary studies.

Table 12 presents a range of education and employment indicators for the groups from ages 17 to 21. As in previous tables, red highlighting indicates a group fares worse than others and blue indicates a group fares better than others.

**Table 12: Education indicators from age 17 to 21**

Indicator	YJ & CP	YJ only	CP only	No involvement
<b>Education and employment</b>				
Enrolled in tertiary course at least some of the time - non-bachelor level	65%	63%	61%	43%
Enrolled in tertiary course for at least some of the time - bachelor level	1%	4%	11%	45%
Highest level qualification is NCEA level 2+ or NZQA equivalent	38%	48%	60%	86%
In employment, education and/or training at least some of this time	92%	96%	96%	99%
Not in employment, education and/or training at least some of the time	93%	87%	82%	54%

## The crossover group were more likely to receive mental health or substance use treatment in their early adult life

As mentioned previously - while those with statutory youth justice involvement are more likely to have received mental health or substance usage treatment than the general population, it is important to note this is not an indicator of the prevalence of mental health and substance usage issues. Those involved in the youth justice system may be more likely to receive treatment because these issues have been detected when addressing the drivers of their offending. Subsequently they are also more likely to have treatment in early adulthood.

Table 13 presents health indicators, including hospitalisations, for the groups at ages 17 to 21. As in previous tables, red highlighting indicates a group fares worse than others and blue indicates a group fares better than others.

**Table 13: Health indicators from age 17 to 21**

Indicator	YJ & CP	YJ only	CP only	No involvement
<b>Health</b>				
Had ED contact(s) over the period	77%	73%	68%	47%
Had hospitalisation over the period	57%	48%	54%	32%
Had mental health service provider contact / treatment over the period	67%	50%	36%	14%
Had substance usage related provider contact / treatment over the period	52%	37%	17%	6%

# Conclusion

Discussion around the outcomes of people who are involved in youth justice often focus on whether people flow from the youth justice onto the adult justice system.

This report explored the pathways young people take through the justice system along with an examination of available wellbeing indicators and outcomes before, during and after their involvement with youth justice.

The crossover group are the most vulnerable, followed by the youth justice only group and then the care and protection group. Their wellbeing appears worse than other groups at each point examined. The crossover group is also most likely to receive a prison sentence in early adulthood.

Young people involved in youth justice deal with a range of complex factors and often have contact with many government agencies years before entering youth justice. This suggests there is an opportunity for early cross-agency support which could prevent involvement with youth justice.

# Appendix

## Additional data about corrections sentences received between the ages of 17 and 21

Table 14: Number and proportion of people in each group by the most serious corrections sentence they received between the ages of 17 and 21

Most serious sentence	YJ & CP		YJ only		CP only		No involvement	
Prison	1,176	24%	711	11%	264	2%	714	0.3%
Community sentence <sup>16</sup>	1,926	39%	2,361	37%	1,743	13%	8,436	3%
No sentences	1,887	38%	3,333	52%	11,763	85%	269,778	97%

Table 15: Number of people in each group by the most serious sentence received and the total number of corrections sentences (of any type) received between the ages of 17 and 21

Most serious sentence	Total number of corrections sentences (of any type)	YJ & CP	YJ only	CP only	No involvement
Prison	4+	675	381	132	237
	1-3	495	330	129	468
Home Detention	4+	108	111	18	102
	1-3	201	189	84	213
Community	4+	168	192	144	597
	1-3	1,440	1,863	1,491	7,518
No sentences		1,881	3,327	11,766	269,775
Total		4,968	6,393	13,764	278,910

<sup>16</sup> Community sentences are managed by the Department of Corrections and include Home Detention, Community Detention, Intensive Supervision, Supervision, and Community Work.



## Interpreting statistics in this report

All the statistics in this report are from the Children’s Wellbeing Model (unless otherwise stated).

The wellbeing model draws together data on service usage and other indications of need across the social sector into one place, where it is used to form a data-driven view of the apparent wellbeing of each child and young person.

A wellbeing construct recognises that a child’s life can be influenced by their family/whānau/carer environment and their community/hāpu/iwi. It also recognises that wellbeing can mean different things for different people. Many different existing frameworks from across the sector and internationally have been used in the development of this wellbeing construct.

Our wellbeing construct uses five domains, defined below. This structure is broadly hierarchical, providing direction as to which needs require urgent attention compared to those which may require a more measured, long-term response.

- Safety – children and young people are loved, safe and nurtured
- Security – children and young people have what they need
- Wellness – children and young people are happy and healthy
- Development – children and young people are learning and developing
- Connectedness – children and young people are connected and contributing

The wellbeing model is based on what we can currently see in the IDI and will continue to develop, change and improve over time, particularly as we work to more closely align the model to the Child and Youth Wellbeing Strategy. At the moment the model is able to measure the first four domains outlined above. More work and consultation is needed to develop measurement that best speaks to the connectedness domain.

## Service usage as a proxy for need

The majority of administrative data available in the IDI measures service provision, rather than directly measuring the needs of children and their families. In these cases, the model uses proxy indicators for the underlying wellbeing elements we would ideally include. These indicators are not perfect proxies. It’s important to keep this in mind when interpreting the results in this report.