

2009 YOUNG PEOPLE IN CUSTODY HEALTH SURVEY FACT SHEET

Key Findings for Young Women

No. of young women surveyed: 42 (12%)

Social determinants:

- 40% of young women had been placed in care before the age of 16 years (25% young men).
- 48% have had a parent in prison (44% young men).
- 36% were attending school prior to custody (38% young men).
- 13% were working in the six months prior to custody (28% young men).
- 26% had been bullied (40% young men) and 60% had bullied others (51% young men).

Mental health:

- 81% had a history of child abuse or trauma (57% young men).
- 5% had a possible intellectual disability (IQ 69 and under) (15% young men).
- 26% scored in the borderline intellectual disability range (IQ 70 to 79) (33% young men).
- 92% were found to have any psychological disorder (86% young men), with conduct disorder (72%), substance abuse (49%), alcohol abuse (54%) or ADHD (49%) the most common.
- 28% had thought about suicide (14% young men) and 23% had ever attempted suicide (8% young men).
- 35% had thought about self-harm (19% young men) and 35% had ever self-harmed (14% young men).

Offending behaviour:

- 83% had reported previous time spent in custody (78% young men).
- The average age of first time in custody was 14.3 years (14.3 years young men).
- On average, young women had previously spent 6 times in custody (5 times young men).

Physical health:

- 50% were overweight or obese (41% young men).
- 24% had a mild to moderate hearing loss (18% young men).
- 30% have ever had asthma (22% young men).
- 33% have had a head injury resulting in unconsciousness (32% young men).
- Poor nutrition is a common risk factor and diet improved while in custody - eating fresh fruit three or more times a week increased from 40% in the community to 95% in custody; and eating vegetables three or more times a week increased from 63% in community to 77% in custody.
- 48% of young people reported currently taking prescribed medications (35% young men).
- 30% of young women had ever been pregnant.

Smoking, alcohol and drugs:

- 98% had ever smoked cigarettes (94% young men) with a mean age of starting smoking at 12 years.
- 68% indicated they currently smoked cigarettes or would smoke on release from custody (43% young men).
- 95% had ever been drunk (93% young men) with an average age first drunk of 13 years.
- 68% reported being drunk at least weekly prior to custody (66% young men).
- 74% of young people identified that their alcohol consumption had caused them problems in the past year (60% young men).
- 84% were found to be risky drinkers (72% young men).
- 98% had ever tried illicit drugs (87% young men), with cannabis (95%) the most common used, followed by ecstasy (50%), and Meth/amphetamines (48%).
- 65% had used an illicit drug at least weekly in the year prior to custody (65% young men).
- 60% reported committing crime to obtain alcohol or drugs (66% young men).
- 74% were intoxicated (on alcohol, drugs or both) at the time of their offence (68% young men).