

JUSTICE HEALTH PROFILE

Justice Health is a statutory health corporation constituted under the NSW Health Services Act 1997. Justice Health cares for over 30,000 inmates and detainees annually, a health community that is unique in NSW.

Justice Health is responsible for providing health services to adults in:

- 32 Correctional Centres
- 7 Periodic Detention Centres
- 1 Transitional Centre
- 10 Police Cell Complexes
- 21 Local Court Complexes
- Adult Drug Court
- Connections Program
- Statewide Community Forensic Mental Health Service
- Compulsory Drug Treatment Program
- Mental Health Screening Units
- Long Bay Hospital
- The Forensic Hospital.

Justice Health is responsible for providing health services to adolescents in:

- 9 Juvenile Justice Centres
- 1 Juvenile Correctional Centre
- Youth Drug & Alcohol Court
- Community Integration Team is operational in 11 sites Statewide
- Adolescent Court & Community Team is operational across 7 children's courts.

Justice Health has over 1,462 employees (1,056 FTE) working at over 80 locations in metropolitan and regional NSW. Nursing staff, general practitioners, psychiatrists, dentists, medical specialists, allied health professionals and administrative staff work together to deliver quality health services.

The challenges facing Justice Health include:

- Continuity of care for patients coming into contact with the criminal justice system
- Co-morbid management of increased presentation of mental health, drug and alcohol for both adults and young people
- Management of chronic care for patients
- An increasing patient population
- Sufficient numbers of appropriately skilled staff for the Forensic Hospital.

JUSTICE HEALTH POPULATION

The Corrective Services NSW (CSNSW) 2009 Inmate Census shows that the daily average number of inmates and detainees in the NSW correctional system was 10,368 in full-time custody.

Health service delivery in custodial settings is influenced by a range of factors, many of which are outside the control of the health sector. There is an acknowledged need for custodial systems that ensure safety and security of the inmate population. The model of health service delivery to inmates in NSW involves two separate organisations with responsibility for security and health care respectively. There is growing recognition nationally and internationally that this model provides the best outcomes for patient care. In NSW, Justice Health has established effective working relationships with NSW Juvenile Justice and CSNSW at all levels of both organisations to ensure the delivery of safe and effective health care. The quality of these relationships and the outcomes they deliver is demonstrated by the fact that the model of care in place in NSW continues to be replicated by both other jurisdictions within Australia as well as internationally.

ADULT INMATE PROFILE

People in custody generally have a poor health status characterised by general neglect, substance abuse and mental illness. Justice Health fulfils a valuable role in improving the health status of this group while also minimising the health consequences of incarceration on individuals, their families and the general community.

The window of opportunity for Justice Health to provide healthcare to individuals can be brief, with:

- 30% staying less than 6 months
- 16% staying 6 – 12 months
- 18% staying 1 – 2 years
- 36% longer than 2 years.

Furthermore, inmates rarely complete their entire sentence within the same correctional centre. There are approximately 165,000 inmate movements between correctional centres, police cells and courts annually, further challenging the continuity of healthcare.

The CSNSW 2009 Inmate Census shows the following:

- 92.3% of inmates are male
- 21.6% of male inmates and 29.4% of female inmates are Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander, compared with just over 2% of the general community in NSW
- The incarceration rate of Indigenous offenders is 16 times higher than Non-Indigenous people.

The 2009 NSW Inmate Health Survey: Key Findings Report shows that the inmate population has the following characteristics:

Table 1: Key findings from 2009 NSW Inmate Health Survey

	MALES	FEMALES
% not finished year 10	49	39
% unemployed in the six months prior to incarceration	50	67
% had a parent in prison	18	17
% history of juvenile detention	42	21
% previously incarcerated	64	46
% ever had asthma	26	40
% ever had heart problems	19	24
% current smokers	75	79
% drank alcohol at risky levels in the year before prison	62	38
% ever had used drugs	86	78
% ever had injected drugs	40	50
% Hepatitis C positive	28	45
% ever had mental health treatment	47	54
% ever had depression	33	45
% ever attempted suicide	19	27
% head injury resulting in unconsciousness	52	35

THE JUVENILE JUSTICE SYSTEM

The Adolescent Health stream of Justice Health provides healthcare to a daily average of 480¹ young people in Juvenile Justice Centres and the Juvenile Correctional Centre at Kariong. There are approximately 5,063 new admissions a year.

The Young People in Custody Health Survey 2009/10 identifies that young people in custody have the following characteristics:

- Identify as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander in custody (48%)
- IQ as extremely low and borderline (79 and under) (46%)
- Childhood abuse and trauma (60%)
- Parent ever in prison (45%)
- Ever placed in care before the age of 16 years (27%)
- Homeless prior to custody (6%)
- Average age left school (14.4 years).

Health of young people in custody:

- Mental health diagnosis (87%)
- Overweight or obese (42%)
- Abnormal ear canal – one or both (40%)
- Hepatitis C antibody positive (2%)
- Hepatitis B core antibody positive (2%)
- Decayed teeth (57%).
- Health behaviours of young people in custody:
 - Had ever been drunk (95%)
 - Had ever used illicit drugs (87%)
 - Had ever had sex (95%)
 - Have at least one tattoo (32%).

Juvenile offenders are predominantly aged between 10 and 17. Depending on the security and risk level of a detainee, they can be transferred into the adult correctional system when they turn 18 years old.

Juvenile clients commonly report experiences of neglect, physical, emotional or sexual abuse. This is particularly the case with young women. Many detainees report experiencing significant relationship problems in their families leading to periods of homelessness. A large number of detainees leave school before completing year 8. Due to their educational deficits and poor self-esteem, most have limited employment choices and report feeling powerless and socially isolated with many abusing alcohol and drugs.

¹ Source: Client Information Management System. Period 1st July 2009 – 30th June 2010