

An outcome evaluation of the NSW Youth Action Meetings pilot program

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SUMMARY

CRIME AND JUSTICE BULLETIN
NUMBER 273 | APRIL 2026

BACKGROUND

Between 2020 and 2021, the NSW Police Force piloted the Youth Action Meetings (YAMs) program in two NSW locations.

In each site, coordinators identified 10–17 year olds who were at risk of offending, escalating offending, or crime victimisation, and who faced multiple safety, welfare, or wellbeing concerns.

Monthly police-led meetings brought together multiple government and non-government agencies to share information, build a holistic view of each young person's needs and strengths, and to develop tailored case plans with specific actions to be reviewed monthly.

The program aimed to streamline and strengthen service responses; address safety, welfare, or wellbeing concerns; and to reduce offending and crime victimisation.

To assess the effectiveness of the program, we matched and compared 143 YAMs participants with 622 similar young people from non-program areas. In the year following program referral, we examined differences in:

- Child protection risk of significant harm (RoSH) reporting,
- Mental health service use,
- School enrolment,
- Missing person reporting,
- Proven offending, and
- Police-recorded crime victimisation.

KEYWORDS

Children, juveniles and young people

Policing

Multiagency

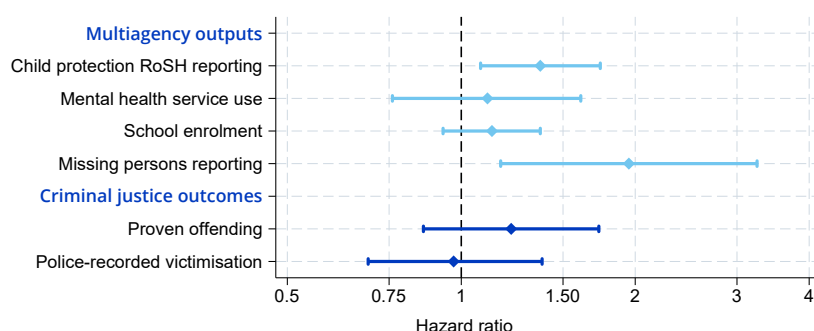
Recidivism

Human services

Evaluation reports

KEY FINDINGS

Figure 1. Association between YAMs participation and the prevalence of multiagency outputs and criminal justice outcomes within one year



Note. Associations are expressed as hazard ratios (HR). A HR of one is interpreted as no difference. A HR over one is interpreted as the output/outcome occurring sooner. Error bars are depicted in blue, and to the 95% confidence interval associated with the estimates. Where error bars cross the dashed line at HR=1, estimates were not statistically significant. Only results for RoSH and missing person reporting were statistically significant.

Figure 1 shows the relative difference in the multiagency outputs and criminal justice outcomes experienced by YAMs pilot program participants in the year following program referral.

In this time, YAMs participants were 37% more likely to have a RoSH report and nearly twice as likely to have a missing person report recorded. These associations likely represent increased rates of detection and service responsiveness, rather than altered need amongst program participants. These differences in RoSH and missing person reporting mainly came from a single pilot site, which implemented the program more consistently and with greater alignment with the intended program model.

In the year following program referral, no significant differences were observed for school enrolment, mental health service usage, proven offending or police-recorded crime victimisation.

CONCLUSION

Participation in the YAMs pilot program was not significantly associated with changes in proven criminal offences or police-recorded crime victimisation. In the pilot site with higher implementation fidelity, YAMs participation was associated with significant changes in multiagency service responses.