

FINDINGS FROM THE 2020 SENATE INQUIRY INTO **Effective approaches to prevention, diagnosis and support for** **Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder**

FINDING: The Justice system would better serve the public by ensuring all staff are FASD informed

“Primary symptoms predisposing a person to offending include poor impulse control, a lack of ability to link actions to consequences, poor cognitive flexibility and decision-making and difficulty applying learning from one situation to another. Secondary symptoms including mental illness, inappropriate sexual behaviours and drug and alcohol misuse can result in a person with FASD coming to the attention of police.” (Gilbert + Tobin)

“Even where FASD is diagnosed, findings and recommendations are not always appropriately integrated into the justice system’s response.” (North Australian Aboriginal Justice Agency)

“Due to high levels of suggestibility a prisoner with FASD is more likely to reoffend upon release due to the negative influences and/or negative relationships that are created in prison.” (Legal Aid WA)

“The capacity of the criminal justice system to divert FASD-affected individuals away from corrections and provide FASD responsive rehabilitation to affected prisoners needs to be increased.” (VAADA)

“Rates of FASD are very high for young people in the justice system, which has a high Aboriginal population with one study showing that over a third (36%) of young people in detention had FASD in a detention population that was three-quarters (74%) Aboriginal.” (Central Australian Aboriginal Congress)

Recommendations

“There is a clear need for culturally appropriate, therapeutic secure facilities as an alternative sentencing option for children with complex needs that require intensive support and care.” (Danila Dilba Health Service)

“Frontline officers should receive training about neurodevelopmental disorders and the impact they may have on the behaviour and communication skills of a child or youth.” (The Alcohol and Drug Foundation)

Read the quoted senate submissions here:
https://www.aph.gov.au/Parliamentary_Business/Committees/Senate/Community_Affairs/FetalAlcoholSpectrumDi/Submissions

