

# The kids who fall through the gaps

The Boy Nobody Wants to Know (*News*, 6/6) has brought to light an ugly truth about the flaws in our youth service system. It seems a child's level of need must fit neatly into prescribed bureaucratic constraints, otherwise no one knows what to do with them.

Leading the Youth Partnership Project for Save the Children, I have heard time and again of young people who are considered "too complex" for one service, but "not severe enough" for another.

These children have challenges which exceed the responsibilities of any one agency or service. Chances are that if a young person is at risk of entering the justice system, they have already faced challenges with education, family support, health, housing and more. These are the children who fall through the gaps. The most vulnerable children in our communities face shared problems, which demand a shared solution.

Since 2014, the Youth Partnership Project has collaborated with a broad cross-sector of community services and government agencies including police, education, justice, and child protection and family support, thinking big and testing local to

find youth justice solutions we know can create a better future for all West Australian youth.

But this award-winning program will end in the coming months if further funding isn't granted. Despite costing so little when compared with the likely alternative outcomes for these young people — this innovative solution is at risk of falling through the same gaps in the system as the young people we support.

**Rebecca Clarkson**

Save the Children manager for place-based strategies, WA

The West Australian

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## THE BOY NOBODY WANTS TO KNOW

Government willing to let 10-year-old go to jail because he's too dangerous for foster system

Last week's West.