Karen Bevan, Director of Social Justice, the research and advocacy arm of UnitingCare Children, Young People and Families:

“Today the NSW Attorney General, Greg Smith, tabled the Law Reform Commission’s final report on Bail in NSW, and the Government should now act immediately to reform bail provisions for children and young people.

“There have been widespread calls to reform the Bail Act in recent years and the current review by the Law Reform Commission has been going on for over a year. This final report was more than six months late and we still have no clear indication how the Government will reform bail.

“The Attorney General has acknowledged the adverse impact the current Bail Act has on children and young people. On average, almost half the daily population of juvenile justice centres are there because they are held on remand. The reality is that over 80 per cent of these young people held on remand do not receive a custodial sentence.

“The statistics are clear that the children and young people who are exposed to the juvenile justice system are highly vulnerable and experiencing severe disadvantage. Further delays to reform the Bail Act will expose more vulnerable children and young people needlessly to the juvenile justice system.

“We need immediate action on reforming bail for young people. We need separate bail provisions for young people and adults in recognition of the unique needs of young people who come into contact with the juvenile justice system.

“We welcome the Law Reform Commission’s recommendations that will ensure greater consideration of the needs of young people, including those with cognitive or mental health impairment and Aboriginal people.

“The recommendation that Section 22a not apply to young people is a positive move that will reduce the number of children and young people in detention.

“However, we would have liked to have seen the Law Reform Commission recommend a separate Bail Act for children and adults in recognition of the differing needs.”

For further information, please call Emma Napoli on (02) 9768 6818/ 0412 201 023 or email enapoli@burnside.org.au

About UnitingCare CYPF
UnitingCare Children, Young People and Families (UnitingCare CYPF) is a service group of UnitingCare NSW.ACT. The service group is comprised of UnitingCare...
Burnside, UnitingCare Unifam Counselling and Mediation, UnitingCare Disability, UnitingCare Children’s Services and UnitingCare Institute of Family Practice. Together these organisations form one of the largest providers of services to support children and families in NSW.

The needs of disadvantaged children, young people and families guide the way UnitingCare CYPF serves its communities. Through our strong advocacy for social justice and quality programs in prevention, early intervention, child protection, community development and early childhood education and care, UnitingCare CYPF works to create a just and safe society.

In all our work, UnitingCare CYPF builds on people’s strengths and maximises their opportunities to make positive changes.

In 2010/2011, UnitingCare CYPF provided services to 32,318 people.