

New Zealand Police Definitions

An important note on interpreting the data

The majority of data in the summaries has been drawn from administrative and service data. As such, they are dependent on reporting and recording practices and cannot be used as indicators of the incidence of family violence in the population. In addition, they cannot be used to comment on trends in the occurrence of family violence over time. Sexual and family violence are often not reported to authorities and so can be very hard to measure from administrative data. Further, the data provided is often provisional (subject to change if new information is gathered) and drawn from dynamic operational databases.

For the data extracted from the Statistics New Zealand website, the numbers do not add up to the total because the original (Statistics New Zealand) data are rounded to base 3.

Introduction

In 2005, the police moved from the Law Enforcement System to the National Intelligence Application as a platform for recording activity. To acknowledge the impact of this database change, and because there is now a sufficient time series from this point, in 2015 we chose to use 2005 as the start year for the presentation of police data. To keep the tables in a manageable size, a ten year data series has been presented. Therefore, for the 2017 data summaries, the data series will start at 2007.

Police data for recorded family violence should not be used to make inferences about trends in the incidence of family violence over time. International and local evidence suggests that only a small proportion of all family violence is reported to the police.¹ From a survey of a representative sample of New Zealand women, Fanslow & Robinson have reported that only 12.8% of women spoke to the police about violence they experienced.²

Variable reporting practices also make it difficult to interpret data. The New Zealand Police National Statistics Manager has informed the New Zealand Family Violence Clearinghouse that as police have given increasing focus to family violence over recent years, it is likely that a greater proportion of offences have been recognised and recorded as related to family violence.³ As such, it is difficult to establish the extent to which changes in reporting, recording and/or changes in the number of incidents contributes to the differences seen.

In June 2014, police modified the National Intelligence Application to ensure all required victim data, including Relationship of Offender to Victim data are recorded more consistently.⁴ They have changed the crime statistic systems and improved the statistical counting rules⁵. Owing to these changes, the Apprehensions and Recorded Offences data, previously available on the Statistics New Zealand website (NZ.Stat) are available up to the year of 2014. These tables have been replaced by the monthly *Recorded Crime Victim Statistics* and the *Recorded Crime Offender Statistics*, and are no longer up-dated.⁶

Family Violence

From December 2012, police began reporting family violence data from a new data set. The new data set counts offences based on when the investigations are *entered* into NIA (the old data set was based on when the investigation occurred). As the data sets are based on different counting rules they are not comparable. Information on how to interpret these figures can be found on the police website at:

<http://www.police.govt.nz/sites/default/files/resources/guide-to-statistics-produced-by-nzpolice.pdf>

Family Violence Investigations: When an officer attends an occurrence that they consider might have had some form of family violence, they must record it as a Family Violence Investigation. A given Family Violence Investigation may relate to one or more offences and/or non-offence incidents. Many factors influence police decisions to undertake Family Violence Investigations and these change over time. Because police choose to undertake Family Violence Investigations, these statistics are not suitable for use as proxy indicators of demand volumes or of the prevalence



of family violence in society, as patterns in the data will be misleading for such purposes. However, they are suitable for characterising the Family Violence Investigations police choose to undertake (i.e. outputs). These include Family Violence Investigations where at least one offence was recorded as these are not counts of recorded offences. Alternatively the occurrence may not have involved any offences: this is a Family Violence Investigation with no offence recorded.

FVIRs - Family Violence Investigation Reports: FVIRs are completed by police when they attend an occurrence that appears to be a family violence situation.

Police Safety Orders: As Police Safety Orders were introduced in July 2010, current data available on their use will reflect changing police practice and the embedding of a new tool.

Police Safety Orders were implemented to provide a tool for the police to diffuse a highly charged situation. They *“can be issued and served at the scene in situations where there is insufficient evidence to make an arrest, but where there are reasonable grounds to believe that such an order is necessary to ensure the immediate safety of a person at risk.”* At the time of issuing the PSO, police can detain a person for up to two hours, and this person is expected to have no contact with the person at risk for up to 5 days.⁷

Relationships

The following relationship definitions were extracted from the New Zealand Police Homicide Victims Report.⁸

Couple: includes married, de facto, civil union, separated, divorced, and boy/girlfriend not living together. This does not take into account age, gender or sexual relationship.

Parent: where the victim was a biological, adoptive or foster parent of the offender. It also includes the de facto partner of the offender’s biological parent, if the victim and offender live together, or have lived together when the offender was a child.

Child: where the victim was a biological, adoptive or foster child of the offender. It also includes the biological child of the de facto partner, if the victim and offender live



together, or have lived together when the victim was a child. As child refers to the relationship, not the age of the victim, it can include adults.

Other family: includes siblings, grandparents, grandchildren, aunts, uncles and cousins. It excludes friends of the victim/offender's parents who may be referred to as uncle/aunt.

Not family but linked to family: 'Not family but linked to family' is defined as the victim and offender not being 'Family', but each having one of the above four relationships to a third person. For example, this would include a victim who is killed by her spouse's ex-spouse. It would also include a victim who is the new boy/girl friend of the offender's mother/father.

Not family – other: 'Not family - other' includes both victims who know their killer and those to whom the killer is a stranger.

Terminology

ANZSOC - Australian and New Zealand Standard Offence Classification: In July 2009, Statistics New Zealand and the New Zealand Police began using the ANZSOC.⁹ The introduction of this classification scheme will mean that future comparisons between different justice sector agencies, across Australia and New Zealand, will be easier. However this change may have influenced the reporting of data and therefore data should not be compared over time.

Apprehension: The term 'apprehension' refers to when police determine who committed an offence and inform that person of such. For each apprehension, police record how they dealt with the offender. One offender may be apprehended for multiple offences, or multiple offenders may be apprehended for one offence. Apprehension statistics give the number of offender apprehensions during a calendar year and indicate how such apprehensions were resolved. Statistics in these tables represent the numbers of apprehensions but not the number of offenders. Apprehensions do not count distinct individuals, as a person apprehended for multiple offences will be counted multiple times in the data. Apprehensions recorded in the data summaries are generally those where the arrest occurred at the initial attendance of the police at the incident. Apprehensions that occur following



further investigation are not always updated in NIA. Other apprehension categories include:

Dealt with by the police: The offender has been found to have a mental health issue or is in custody, so no further action is taken other than to document the offence.

Apprehensions resulting in other: Used for a variety of reasons such as the alleged offender being deceased, the mental health condition of the alleged offender, and the offender already being in custody for a more serious offence.

Proceeding: (PRO) The first type of legal action (court or non-court) initiated by police against a person as a result of an investigation of an offence(s). If multiple proceedings are taken against an alleged offender on one day, this is the method of proceeding for the most serious offence for which an alleged offender is proceeded against by court and non-court action.¹⁰

Homicide Victims Report: The homicide victims report is released to coincide with calendar year Official Statistics for recorded crime in New Zealand. As there are fewer than 100 homicides in New Zealand each year, it is possible to produce a report containing comprehensive statistics about victims. However, it is important to note that the data in each homicide victims report comes from a dynamic database. The data provided for 2011 and 2012 are provisional, as many of these homicide investigations are continuing, and police records continue to be updated. To have consistent terminology in the data summaries, the phrase 'culpable death/victim of homicide' used in the Homicide Victim Report has been replaced with 'homicide death.' The New Zealand Police statistics manager confirmed that these terms are used synonymously.¹¹

Occurrence: An event that can have multiple offences against the law, or may have none.

Offence: Breaches of the New Zealand law recorded by police. This includes offences specified in the Crimes Act 1961 and other legislation, such as the Summary Offences Act 1981, Local Government Act 2002, etc.¹²



Recorded offence: An incident that is reported to or detected by police where police believe an offence is likely to have been committed is counted as a Recorded Offence.

Resolved offence: When one or more offenders have been apprehended.

Prosecution: When a police officer charges an offender for an offence.

Charge: Action taken against the offender for the offence in court.

Offences

Assault: Crimes of interpersonal violence. Includes aggravated assault, common assault and other crimes of interpersonal violence described in sections 188-204 of the Crimes Act 1961. These are described in the annual crime statistics as *Serious Assault Resulting in Injury; Serious Assault Not Resulting in Injury; Common Assault; and Other Acts Intended to Cause Injury*.¹³ Not all assaults are specifically related to family violence.

Assault on Child: The act of intentionally applying or attempting to apply force to the person of another, directly or indirectly, or threatening by any act or gesture to apply such force to the person of another,¹⁴ by an adult on a child under 14 years. Assaults on Child offences are likely to be significantly under-reported to police. If a person is apprehended for assaulting a child, but another type of offence is considered more appropriate (for example, *Injuring with Intent* (section 189)), then that offence is usually recorded instead of an Assault on Child offence.

Male Assaults Female: The act of intentionally applying or attempting to apply force to the person of another, directly or indirectly, or threatening by any act or gesture to apply such force to the person of another,¹⁴ by a male on a female. Not all Male Assaults Female offences are family violence. Male



Assaults Female is a crime under the Crimes Act 1961 and is most often used with family violence-related assaults. However, until 2005, many were not coded as family violence. With an increasing focus on family violence, more Male Assaults Female offences are now recorded as family violence. The latest figures show that 93% of all Male Assaults Female offences are now coded as family violence.¹¹ As with Assault on a Child offences, if another type of offence is considered more appropriate then this offence will be recorded instead of Male Assaults Female.

Breach of Protection Orders: (BPO) Includes offences such as Contravening a Protection Order, and Failing to Comply with a Protection Order. Protection Orders are granted under the Domestic Violence Act 1995.

Culpable homicide: (CH) A death where the killer(s) is (are) liable for *murder*, *manslaughter* or *infanticide*. The New Zealand Police use the terms *culpable homicide* and *culpable death* interchangeably. For consistency we have used only the term *culpable homicide* in the data summaries.

Sexual offences: Police do not generally publish statistics on sexual assault victims. However, most sexual assault offences identify the gender and age band of victims. The attached tables give breakdowns by gender and age band based on such description. Sexual offences where no victim gender or age is specified are excluded. Therefore, caution is advised when interpreting these data.

Although all violent offences are thought to be under-reported to the police, sexual offences are substantially more likely to be under-reported. Changes in public education and awareness of violence may also influence the likelihood of reporting. As highlighted above, crime data in New Zealand is published using the ANZSOC scheme, and includes groupings such as aggravated sexual assault; non-aggravated sexual assault; and other non-assaultive sexual offences.¹³ These offences are defined in the Crimes Act 1961 as sexual violation (including rape), attempted sexual violation, indecent assault, incest and other offences described in sections 127 to 144.



Child pornography: Offences in the Child Pornography offences group were introduced during the 2013/2014 fiscal year. The 'Child Exploitation' offence element distinguishes these offences from other offences under the same sections of the Films Videos & Publications Classification Act 1993. Before the 'Child Exploitation' offence element was introduced (on 17 June 2014) such Child Pornography offences were included in ANZSOC group 1323, Censorship offences.¹⁵

Recorded Crime Victims Dataset

The victim population is the measure that counts a person or organisation once within each criminal incident for each Australian and New Zealand Standard Offence Classification (ANZSOC) division in which they are recorded as being a victim of an offence.

A criminal incident consists of one or more offences (and their related victims and offenders) that are committed by the same person or organisation or groups of persons or organisations and if:

- they are part of actions committed simultaneously or in sequence over a short period of time at the same place
- they are part of interrelated actions, that is, where one action leads to the other or where one is the consequence of the other(s); or
- they involve the same action(s) repeated over a long period of time against the same victim(s) and only come to the attention of police at one point in time.¹⁶

It is important to note that the Recorded Crime Victims Dataset does not include Breaches of Protection Orders. For these offences the 'victim' is the Family Court.

The Relationship of Offender to Victim represents the relationship from the perspective of the victim, and at the time of the offence, not at the date of apprehension or proceeding. So, Parent assaults child is recorded as 'Parent'. The



outcome of investigation shows the status of a police investigation at a set time. Data are recorded 7, 30, 90, and 180 days after the date the offence is reported or becomes known to police.¹⁷ The offences included in the data summaries are those where the outcome of the investigation is recorded as a 'victimisation' at 180 days after the offence.

Recorded Crime Offenders (Proceedings) Statistics

This collection counts proceedings against alleged offenders recorded by NZ Police, except for the following offences: offences that Police are able to deal with by issuing an infringement notice, such as liquor ban breaches and many traffic offences; offences that come under the authority of agencies other than NZ Police, such as Customs, WorkSafe NZ, Inland Revenue, ACC, Ministry for Primary Industries.

'Proceedings' are a legal action initiated against an alleged offender for an offence(s). Police proceedings represent a count for each separate occasion on which police initiate a legal action against an offender. Each proceeding is classified to a principal offence and principal method of proceeding. It does not represent a count of offences.

The proceeding population is the measure involving counting a person once on each day they are proceeded against by police in the reference period, whether by court or non-court action.¹⁰



References

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