

New Zealand Crime and Victims Survey (NZCVS) Cycle Three (2019-20)

Frequently Asked Questions

Cycle 3 (2019-2020) Survey

Have you found anything new with this latest Survey?

The Cycle 3 report found that the number of burglaries fell significantly since the Cycle 1 data collection. Comparing different demographic groups, the analysis reveals that females who are separated or divorced are significantly more likely to be victimised, while males who are married, in a civil union, or in a de facto relationship are significantly less likely to be victimised.

The report provides some new results not included in previous reports. For example, two-thirds of all incidents (66%) happened either in residential areas or online/over the phone. Every 11th incident (9%) resulted in injury. This proportion increases to 21% for interpersonal violence offences, 27% for offences by family members and 51% for non-sexual assaults. Also 9% of incidents resulted in time taken off work by a victim. This proportion increases to 15% for offences by family members and 16% for vehicle offences.

Half of interpersonal violence incidents (50%) are male against female offences. This proportion increases to 70% for offences by family members and to 71% for sexual assault.

New data about public perception of safety shows that more than three-quarters of adults perceive their overall safety as high (8 or more out of 10). This proportion increases to 92% for safety with family members. Older people (aged 65+) and young adults (aged 15–19) perceive themselves to be safer than other age groups. Victims are more concerned about safety than non-victims. Furthermore, victims of multiple crimes are more concerned about their safety than victims of only one crime, and highly victimised people have the highest level of safety concern.

What trends have you found after three years of surveys?

Some trends revealed by the NZCVS are very stable over time. For example, in every NZCVS cycle, the proportion of victimised young people is higher than any other age group.

The results over three cycles show that some groups within New Zealand population face high levels of sexual assault or offences by family members. For example, groups at very high risk of sexual assault included people with diverse sexualities (9%) and young females aged 15-19 (9%). Groups at very high risk of offences by family members included those who were separated (11%) or in single-parent households (9%).

Over three years of surveys, accounting for differences in average age, people with disabilities were significantly more likely to experience crime.

Over three cycles, about 25% of all crime incidents were reported to the Police. Theft/unlawful takes/converts of motor vehicles had the highest likelihood of being reported to the Police (91%) while sexual offences were significantly less likely to be reported (8%).

Many more trends are available from the report.

Are people with diverse sexualities at higher risk of victimisation?

Overall, 37% of people with diverse sexualities were victims of crime. This is more than the New Zealand average of 29% although the difference is not statistically significant. Bisexual people, however, have significantly higher level of victimisation (47%) than the New Zealand average.

What is the difference in findings between the Cycle One 2018 Survey and Cycle Three 2019-2020 Surveys?

For many high-level indicators of crime there was no significantly statistical difference between both surveys. This indicates that we can be very confident in the findings in both 2018 and 2019 Surveys. These consistent findings over two years validate the survey and we are confident it reflects reality.

It also means that now we have over 16,000 responses which is a very valuable resource which can be analysed further. Trends which were indicated in 2018, but could not regarded as statistically sound then, can now be confirmed as we have a bigger sample to work from. We can analyse this data to get a greater detailed insight into crime.

Is your figure that Māori experience more crime due to the New Zealand Crime and Victims Survey interviewing more Māori?

No, the figure that Māori are more likely to be victims of crime (38 percent vs 30 percent) reflects the current New Zealand population. While we interviewed more Māori, the figures have been scaled to reflect their part of the population.

The NZCVS reports reveal that the worst crime and victim statistics are for Māori what further work are you doing to learn more about this?

The research teams at the Ministry of Justice prepared a separate topical report on Māori victimisation, see <https://www.justice.govt.nz/assets/Documents/Publications/Maori-victimisation-report-v2.01-20210329-fin.pdf> . On the operational level the Justice Sector is undertaking constant engagement with iwi Māori to develop solutions which reduce harm for whānau and community.

You mentioned that sexual offences were significantly less likely to be reported to the Police. What are the reasons for this?

The most common reasons for not reporting sexual assault incidents to the Police were “shame/embarrassment/further humiliation” and “fear of reprisals/would make matters worse”.

Additionally, 75% of all victims of sexual assaults over three years were seeing the incidents as “not a crime”. Among those who considered the incident as a crime reporting rate to the Police was almost 3 times higher (22%).

How did the COVID lockdowns affect the Survey?

Survey interviews were suspended from 21 March to 2 July 2020 due to the COVID-19 pandemic. They were paused in Auckland from 12 August to 2 September 2020 during a further outbreak. Interviewing continued later into the year than planned and achieved a lower number of responses than in previous cycles: 7,425 instead of 8,000. Nonetheless, a high response rate of 80% was achieved; similar to the response rate in 2019.

Did the lockdowns affect the accuracy of the Survey?

Interviewing 7,425 people instead of usual 8,000 slightly increased margin of error. However, the lockdowns did not affect the randomness of the survey sample and therefore did not result in any bias in the survey results.

Did the COVID-19 pandemic affect the level of victimisation?

Victimisations recorded by the Police fell substantially in April 2020 compared with previous months, coinciding with the Alert Level 4 lockdown that began in March 2020.

It is not clear to what extent the reduction in Police-recorded victimisations are driven by the pandemic and pandemic response, as opposed to changes in how much crime was reported to the Police. Some types of crime, such as burglaries, might have fallen because people were at home more under some alert levels. On the other hand, the barriers to reporting some types of offending, such as family violence, may have increased under the restrictions.

Because the NZCVS captures both reported and non-reported crime, it offers the possibility to analyse the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on crime. At the overall level, no significant change in victimisation was detected in Cycle 3 compared with the previous cycles, but moving to the offence types level, significant change in victimisation was noticed for burglary. The report attempts to analyse the influence of the COVID-19 pandemic on this change. While some interesting findings were obtained, further research is needed for robust conclusions.

What do you do with the information from the Crime and Victims Survey?

The Crime and Victims Survey provides valuable information and data for the Ministry of Justice, Stats NZ, Ministry of Social Development, Te Puni Kokiri, the Police, Department of Corrections, Oranga Tamariki, and the Ministry for Women. It also provides data to universities and NGOs working in the justice sector.

The New Zealand Crime and Victims Survey:

- Informs policy decisions within the Justice Sector and wider social sector
- Provides information for the Stats NZ's living standards dashboard and to Treasury's wellbeing network. Stats NZ include a few Crime and Victims Survey measures into the list of NZ wellbeing indicators
- Links consented anonymised records with IDI data allowing wider analysis
- Is used in the Ministry of Justice's forecasting models assessing future crime trends
- Allows us to build a consistent time series for "before vs. after" analysis from the second year onwards.

Is there an example of something the justice sector has done in response to previous surveys?

The NZCVS data is widely used by the justice sector. For example, Te Uepū Hāpai I Te Ora, Safe and Effective Justice Advisory Group set up to help guide the transformation of the criminal justice system and create a safer Aotearoa New Zealand, applies the NZCVS data to produce recommendations in its final report "*Turuki! Turuki! Move together!*" (see https://www.safeandeffectivejustice.govt.nz/assets/Uploads/852c1391ff/MOJ1012_Report_Accessibility_AW6.pdf).

The NZCVS data is used to support recommendations of the Chief Victims Advisor to Government in the report "*Te Tangi o te Manawanui. Recommendations for Reform*" (see <https://chiefvictimsadvisor.justice.govt.nz/assets/Documents/Publications/Te-Tangi-Final-PDF.pdf>)

Background

What is New Zealand Crime and Victims Survey?

The New Zealand Crime and Victims Survey is a nationwide, face-to-face annual survey asking 8,000 randomly selected New Zealanders aged 15 years, and over about incidents of crime that they experienced over the last 12 months¹. This includes both incidents reported to the Police and unreported incidents.

Why do we need a Crime and Victims Survey?

There is very little information on the total amount of crime and the number of victims in New Zealand as only a small amount of crime is reported to the Police. The Crime and Victims Survey provides valuable information and data for the Ministry of Justice, Stats NZ, Ministry of Social Development, Te Puni Kokiri, the Police, Department of Corrections,

¹ In Cycle 3 the number of interviews was reduced to 7,425 due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Oranga Tamariki, and the Ministry for Women. It is also of great value to universities and NGOs working in the justice sector.

The New Zealand Crime and Victims Survey:

- Contributes to our understanding of the wellbeing of New Zealanders and provides information for the Stats NZ's living standards dashboard and to Treasury's wellbeing network. Stats NZ include a few Crime and Victims Survey measures into the list of NZ wellbeing indicators
- Shows patterns and changes in crime and victims, allowing a long-term measure of the success of government's policies and interventions
- Informs policy and strategic decisions within the Justice Sector and wider social sector
- Links consented anonymised records with Stats NZ's Integrated Data Infrastructure (IDI) data allowing wider analysis.

Who was asked to take part?

One person from each of the randomly selected households aged 15 or over can be selected to take part in the survey. People did not need to have experienced a crime to answer the questions. Participation in the Survey is voluntary.

How can you ensure that the respondents represent an accurate cross-section of society?

This is ensured through both the sampling and weighting processes. Household and individual weights are applied using the latest census data available to ensure results represent the NZ population.

When did interviews take place?

Face-to-face interviews with participants for the 2019-2020 Cycle Three New Zealand Crime and Victims Survey took place in their homes between October 2019 and November 2020. They were asked about crime and victimisation that had occurred over the last 12 months from the day of the interview.

What questions were asked?

We asked participants if they had any experience of crimes and if so:

- What has happened?
- How it affected them?
- Whether they have told anyone about them?
- How helpful any agencies were?

How were the questions asked?

The interviewers used laptops rather than paper questionnaires.

How did you handle very sensitive questions? For example, someone responding to a question about violence they may have experienced in the house in which they are currently living?

For some sections of the questionnaire, Survey participants entered their responses directly into the computers themselves. This was because the questions were sensitive, and this ensured the interviewer did not see the participant's responses.

How long did interviews take?

Interviews normally took between 20 to 30 minutes.

Is the privacy of participants protected?

The information provided to the interviewer is strictly confidential and protected by the Privacy Act 1993. The interviewer cannot discuss information collected with anyone else. Individual responses will never be identified, and all contact details will be removed from the data set. Only approved researchers can use the data. Participants name, and any identifying details will not be included in the published material and small groups will be either suppressed or aggregated.

What kinds of crime does the New Zealand Crime and Victims Survey not cover?

The New Zealand Crime and Victims Survey covers a range of personal and household offences, but it does not cover:

- Manslaughter and homicide
- Abduction
- Crimes against children (14 years old and under)
- "Victimless crime" (such as drug offences)
- Commercial crime/white-collar crime/crimes against businesses or public-sector agencies
- Crimes against people who do not live in permanent private dwellings
- Crimes against people living in institutions.

Why is homicide not included?

The New Zealand Crime and Victims Survey collects information about personal and household crimes that individuals (and their households) may have experienced. Homicide is out of scope for the Survey since the direct victim is deceased.

Who carried out the survey?

The Ministry of Justice managed the Survey with the help of a range of organisations and contracted providers.

Interviewing and offence coding activities were carried out by CBG Health Research Ltd (trading as: CBG Public Sector Surveying) on behalf of the Ministry of Justice. CBG is an independent, New Zealand-based research company.

An expert criminologist from Victoria University of Wellington, and an expert from the New Zealand Police provided quality assurance advice and support as part of the offence coding processes.

Stats NZ carried out the statistical services, and experts at the Victoria University of Wellington provided quality assurance advice and support at various times throughout the project.

How did you develop the methodology for the Survey?

It was designed by Research and Evaluation staff at the Ministry of Justice and reviewed by Stats NZ and the Police. Thirteen government and NGO organisations were consulted throughout this process.

It has also been reviewed by Victoria University and by international criminology expert, Pat Mayhew OBE, who serves on the UK Statistics Authority's Crime Statistics Advisory Committee and who was director of the Crime and Justice Centre at Victoria University

A pilot survey was held in advance of the main survey to test the methodology.

For details on the methodology please go to: <https://www.justice.govt.nz/justice-sector-policy/research-data/nzcvs/resources-and-results/> .

How different is the New Zealand Crime and Victims Survey from the previous New Zealand Crime and Safety Survey (NZCASS)?

The New Zealand Crime and Victims Survey interviews more people, covers more types of offences, uses offence coding system that is closer to the Police coding approach. Another important difference is the New Zealand Crime and Victims Survey approach to handling situations when people are unable to fill victim forms for all reported incidents as there are too many of them. While NZCASS in these situations relied on statistical imputations (i.e. drawing conclusions based on existing statistical data), the New Zealand Crime and Victims Survey offers group victim forms which allow combining similar incidents.

Can we compare the New Zealand Crime and Safety Survey with the New Zealand Crime and Safety Survey (NZCASS)?

The New Zealand Crime and Victims Survey is a new survey with significant improvements in design compared with its predecessor the New Zealand Crime and Safety Survey (NZCASS). All the above differences make any direct comparison between the NZCVS results and the NZCASS results extremely questionable and potentially misleading, even for the same offence types. The good news is that NZCVS will deliver consistent reports much more often than NZCASS and this will make possible to compare NZCVS results from now on.

What about comparing it with international criminal research?

Any international comparisons are even more difficult due to differences in legislation, coding systems, interview questions, channels used by interviewers (i.e. face to face, phone, online) etc.

What if New Zealand Crime and Victims Survey results conflicts with other data Government agencies are using?

New Zealand Crime and Victims Survey is a unique source of information about victimisation in New Zealand. No other agency is collecting comprehensive data about crime not reported to Police.

What are the limitations of New Zealand Crime and Victims Survey?

The Survey gathers information on a range of personal and household offences that are not captured elsewhere, but it does not report the total amount of crime in New Zealand. This is because the Survey does not cover all groups of the New Zealand population and every type of crime that someone might experience.

How much does the Survey cost?

The Survey annual cost is about \$1.1 million. It is important to remember that the New Zealand Crime and Victims Survey is the only source of information about unreported crime and victimisation. Only 25% of crime is reported to the Police. The New Zealand Crime and Victims Survey findings will be a very valuable resource that will be used frequently by policy analysts, researchers and other staff at a range of government agencies.

How does the cost of the New Zealand Crime and Victims survey compare to other similar surveys?

It is difficult to compare different surveys as each is set up differently with different methodological processes, sample sizes, and resource requirements. However, to provide a rough comparison, the New Zealand General Social Survey conducted by Stats NZ cost around \$1.2 million per iteration in 2010 and 2012 but cost substantially more at \$3.7 million for the first iteration in 2008 due to set up costs. The General Social Survey provides a good comparison to Crime and Victims Survey because it has similar sample size, collection method and questionnaire length.

The New Zealand Crime and Victims Survey is a sample survey. What does this mean?

A sample survey means that not all New Zealanders give information about their experiences. The Survey is not a census of the population. Not all respondents may want to talk about their experiences, remember the incidents that they have experienced, and/or provide accurate information about incidents (deliberately or due to imperfect recall).

What is the confidence level selected for survey reporting?

95 percent. Same as many other social and economic surveys in New Zealand.

Where can I obtain more information about this survey?

- Survey results are available from the Ministry of Justice website:
<https://www.justice.govt.nz/justice-sector-policy/research-data/nzcvs/resources-and-results/>
- Enquiries about the Survey method or feedback from participants in the Survey CBG Public Sector Surveying (CBG) 0800 478 783
- Enquiries about the purpose, results and use of the Survey can be emailed to:
NZCVS@justice.govt.nz