



New Zealand  
Crime and Victims **survey**

**HELP CREATE SAFER COMMUNITIES**

# Victims' trust and confidence in the criminal justice system

May 2021

Results drawn from Cycle 2 (2018/19) of the  
New Zealand Crime and Victims Survey

## Disclaimer

1. This report contains only information about people aged 15 years and above. The survey does not cover children younger than 15 years of age.
2. While all care and diligence has been taken in processing, analysing and extracting data and information for this publication, the Ministry of Justice gives no warranty that it is error free and will not be liable for any loss or damage suffered by the use directly, or indirectly, of the information in this publication.
3. This report contains highly aggregated data. No identifiable personal data is included in the report.
4. Estimates measured in percentages are rounded to the nearest integer, except when it is deemed important to show more detail.

## Suggested citation

Ministry of Justice. 2021. *New Zealand Crime and Victims Survey. Victims' trust and confidence in the criminal justice system*. Wellington: Ministry of Justice.

## Crown copyright © 2021



This work is licensed under the Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 New Zealand licence. You are free to copy, distribute, and adapt the work, as long as you attribute the work to New Zealand Ministry of Justice and abide by the other licence terms. Please note you may not use any departmental or governmental emblem, logo, or coat of arms in any way that infringes any provision of the Flags, Emblems, and Names Protection Act 1981. Use the wording "New Zealand Ministry of Justice" in your attribution, not the New Zealand Ministry of Justice logo.

# Acknowledgements

The Ministry of Justice acknowledges and thanks the following people and organisations for their valuable contribution to this work.

## Survey participants

We would like to thank the 8,038 New Zealanders who gave their time to take part in the survey and share their stories.

## Service provider

We appreciate the work of CBG Health Research Ltd. Their interviewing and data management services made this survey possible.

## Peer reviewers

We thank reviewers for their valuable feedback on this report. The reviewers were Dr Elaine Mossman and Judy Paulin (independent social researchers); Professor Ian Lambie (University of Auckland and Chief Science Advisor for the Justice Sector); Susan Campbell (NZ Police); Tia Narvaez and colleagues (Joint Venture for Family Violence and Sexual Violence); and Sarah Tapper, Pam Southey, and Rebecca Lancashire (Ministry of Justice).

*NZCVS Project Team*

# Executive summary

Public trust and confidence underpin the ability of the criminal justice system to deliver a fair and safe Aotearoa that upholds the wellbeing of its people. When the public have trust and confidence in the criminal justice system, those affected by crime are more likely to report it. They are also more likely to assist with investigations and provide evidence in court. This enables criminal justice agencies to support individuals, families and whānau affected by crime and to promote safer communities for all New Zealanders. Because these outcomes depend heavily on victims choosing to engage with the criminal justice system, maintaining their trust and confidence is essential.

The New Zealand Crime and Victims Survey (NZCVS) shows that most adult New Zealanders have trust and confidence in the criminal justice system (Ministry of Justice 2020c). However, the survey reveals that those who have been a victim of crime in the previous 12 months have comparatively poorer perceptions. Strengthening the trust and confidence of victims in the criminal justice system has the potential to increase reporting of crime (Laxminarayan 2015) and the participation of victims in justice processes (Hough and Roberts 2005).

In order to better understand this pattern, this report looks at differences in views of the criminal justice system for victims of different types of crime. This includes confidence in the system overall, and perceptions of different parts of the criminal justice system. Because direct contacts with the criminal justice system influence perceptions (Gau 2010; Myhill and Bradford 2012), the report also looks at the types of contact victims have had in the previous 12 months.

The analysis uses data from the 2018/19 NZCVS. The survey collected information from more than 8,000 New Zealand adults about their experiences over the previous 12 months. A one-off module in the 2018/19 survey included questions on trust and confidence in the criminal justice system.

The analysis shows that victims of some types of crime have comparatively lower trust and confidence in the criminal justice system. This is most notable for victims of interpersonal violence.<sup>1</sup> Compared with the overall adult population, victims of interpersonal violence:

- are less likely to have confidence that the criminal justice system as a whole is effective
- have comparatively lower trust in the Police, juries, criminal lawyers, and groups that support victims<sup>2</sup>
- are less likely to agree that most people in New Zealand are treated fairly by the Police, judges, juries, criminal lawyers, the Parole Board, and groups that support victims
- are less likely to say they would call the Police to report a crime or incident that they witnessed.

---

<sup>1</sup> Interpersonal violence includes sexual assault; other assault; harassment and threatening behaviour; robbery; and property damage (when the victim knew the offender before the incident).

<sup>2</sup> Groups that provide services to victims include organisations such as Women's Refuge, Rape Crisis and Victim Support.

The same patterns are true for those harmed by offences by family members<sup>3</sup> or by sexual assault.

A further key finding is that victims of all offence types tend to have positive perceptions of the Police and groups that provide services for victims. However, their perceptions of judges, juries, criminal lawyers and the Parole Board are relatively poorer.

The analysis also shows that victims of crime are more likely than average to have had some types of contact with the criminal justice system in the previous 12 months. This is especially true for victims of interpersonal violence. Though it is expected that victims would have more contact with the criminal justice system because some experiences are reported to the Police, this pattern does not only apply to situations when they are in the role of a victim. For example, victims of interpersonal violence are more likely than average to have been in a vehicle stopped by the Police (eg, at traffic stops or alcohol check points).

The Ministry of Justice aims to strengthen public trust and confidence in the justice system (Ministry of Justice 2020d). The results of this report show that improving the trust and confidence of victims of interpersonal violence should be a priority. The need for this is underscored by the fact that interpersonal violence causes significant harm, and a large proportion of it is not reported to the Police (Ministry of Justice 2020a).

Improving the trust and confidence of victims of interpersonal violence will require a criminal justice system that is more responsive to their needs. The measures presented in this report provide a baseline for improvement. Collecting and reporting this information in future can help to track the progress of the sector's work to enhance the criminal justice system for victims.

This report also reveals that victims have contact with the system in a range of situations, not only in the role of a victim. How they are treated in all contacts with the criminal justice system has the potential to affect their perceptions. Understanding the drivers of perceptions of different parts of the criminal justice system could inform strategies of justice sector agencies to build trust and confidence.

---

<sup>3</sup> Offences by family members include violent interpersonal offences, and damage to motor vehicles, when the offender was a family or whānau member.

# Contents

<b>Acknowledgements .....</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Executive summary .....</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>About this report.....</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>2 Introduction.....</b>	<b>13</b>
<b>3 Results.....</b>	<b>16</b>
3.1 Victims of interpersonal violence have relatively low trust and confidence in the criminal justice system .....	16
3.2 Victims of sexual assault and offences by family members have relatively negative perceptions of the criminal justice system .....	20
3.3 Victims of interpersonal violence are more likely to have had contact with the criminal justice system .....	23
<b>4 Discussion.....</b>	<b>26</b>
<b>References .....</b>	<b>29</b>
<b>Appendix A: Data and methods .....</b>	<b>33</b>
A.1 About the NZCVS.....	33
A.2 Analysis .....	34
A.3 Weighting.....	38
A.4 Uncertainty of estimates.....	38
A.5 Rounding .....	38
A.6 Comparison of estimates by victim groups .....	39
<b>Appendix B: Other NZCVS reports and future reporting.....</b>	<b>40</b>

## List of figures

Figure 3.1	Percentage of adults who are completely/fairly confident that the criminal justice system as a whole is effective, by victimisation (broad offence groups) .....	17
Figure 3.2	Percentage of adults who would be very likely to call the Police to report a crime or incident they witnessed, by victimisation in the previous 12 months.....	20
Figure 3.3	Percentage of adults who are completely/fairly confident that the criminal justice system as a whole is effective, by victimisation in the previous 12 months.....	21
Figure 3.4	Percentage of adults who would be very likely to call the Police to report a crime or incident they witnessed, by victimisation in the previous 12 months.....	23

## List of tables

Table 3.1	Percentage of adults who have high or very high trust in different parts of the criminal justice system, by victimisation in the previous 12 months .....	18
Table 3.2	Percentage of adults who agree or strongly agree that most people in New Zealand are treated fairly by different parts of the criminal justice system, by victimisation in the previous 12 months .....	19
Table 3.3	Percentage of adults who have high or very high trust in different parts of the criminal justice system, by victimisation in the previous 12 months .....	22
Table 3.4	Percentage of adults who agree or strongly agree that most people in New Zealand are treated fairly by different parts of the criminal justice system, by victimisation in the previous 12 months .....	22
Table 3.5	Percentage of adults who had contact with the criminal justice system in the previous 12 months, by victimisation in the previous 12 months .....	25
Table 3.6	Experiences with the criminal justice system, by victimisation in the previous 12 months .....	25
Table A.1	Scope of crimes/offences covered in the NZCVS .....	34
Table A.2	Broad offence grouping .....	34
Table A.3	Difference between interpersonal violence and offences by family members ..	35
Table A.4	Survey questions used in analysis .....	36

# About this report

## 1.1 Limitations

This report does not explain how victimisation, contact with the criminal justice system, and trust and confidence are related to each other. This is because the data does not allow comparison of individuals' perceptions before and after they experienced a crime. Therefore, conclusions cannot be drawn on the impact of victimisation or contact with the system on trust and confidence. Rather, measures presented in this report act as a baseline to monitor future performance.

When analysing the contact individuals had with the criminal justice system, it is not possible to link whether contacts are directly related to victimisation reported in the survey. Hence, it is not possible to draw conclusions on the impact of victimisation on contact with the criminal justice system. This also means that we cannot tell whether the difference in victims' views of the criminal justice system is driven by experiences they had with the system as a result of being victimised. Furthermore, some types of contact with the criminal justice system might be underreported because they are not specified in the survey question that collects this information.

Some of the estimates in this report are subject to high uncertainty. In graphs, confidence intervals are displayed to show the range in which estimates are likely to lie. In tables, estimates with high uncertainty that should be treated with caution are flagged.

## 1.2 The NZCVS

The NZCVS is a household survey that collects information on crime experienced by New Zealand adults aged 15 and older. This analysis uses the 2018/19 (Cycle 2) sample of the survey, which was collected from October 2018 to September 2019. The sample covers 8,038 adult respondents.

Households are randomly selected to participate in the survey. A response rate of 81% makes the sample highly representative of the New Zealand adult population. Survey responses are also weighted by age group, sex and ethnicity to reflect the population.

Victimisation in the NZCVS is measured according to experiences of crime, regardless of whether the crime was reported to the Police. This is important given that 75% of crime is not reported to the Police (Ministry of Justice 2020a). Therefore, the analysis of victims' perceptions of the criminal justice system goes beyond those victims who came into contact with the Police or justice services.

The NZCVS includes an in-depth module on a different topic each cycle. In the 2018/19 cycle, the topic was social wellbeing and perceptions of the criminal justice system.<sup>4</sup>

---

<sup>4</sup> Key results from this module were reported on in 2020 (Ministry of Justice, 2020c).

Information on perceptions of the criminal justice system used in this analysis come from this in-depth module.

## 1.3 Key terms and definitions



**Use of the term “victim”**

We acknowledge that some people who have been harmed by crime do not like being referred to as a “victim” (Chief Victims Advisor to Government 2019c; Te Uepū Hāpai i te Ora – Safe and Effective Justice Advisory Group 2019b). While some feel the term accurately describes their experience, some prefer to be referred to as “survivors”, and some wish for no label at all.

We use the term “victim” in this report because it is consistent with legislation and recognisable for our audiences, including criminal justice agency personnel. We hope that through future consultation with those who have been harmed by crime, we can find a better solution to recognise and respect their needs.

**All New Zealand adults**

All adults who usually reside in New Zealand, aged 15 and over.<sup>5</sup> This includes victims and non-victims.

**Victims of any offence**

Adults who have been a victim of one or more crimes measured in the New Zealand Crime and Victims Survey (NZCVS) in the previous 12 months. Some analysis breaks this group down into the following broad offence types:

- vehicle offences
- burglary
- fraud and cybercrime
- theft and damage
- trespass
- interpersonal violence.

**Victims of interpersonal violence**

Adults who have been the victim of one or more of the following offences in the previous 12 months:

- sexual assault
- other assault

<sup>5</sup> The survey targets the usually resident, non-institutionalised, civilian population of New Zealand aged 15 and over. Those living in care facilities, prisons, army barracks, boarding schools and other similar institutions or non-private dwellings are excluded from the sampling and interviewing process.

- harassment and threatening behaviour
- robbery
- property damage (when the victim knew the offender before the incident).

Some victims of interpersonal violence may also have experienced other types of crime.

### **Victims of an offence by family member**

Adults who have been the victim of one or more interpersonal violence offences, or damage to motor vehicles, in the previous 12 months, where the offender was a family or whānau member.<sup>6</sup>

Some victims of offences by a family member may also have experienced other types of crime.

Victims of offences by family members are a subset of all adult victims of family violence. This is because the offences included in the measure do not cover all behaviours that may be considered family violence, such as economic abuse.

## **1.4 Interpreting results**

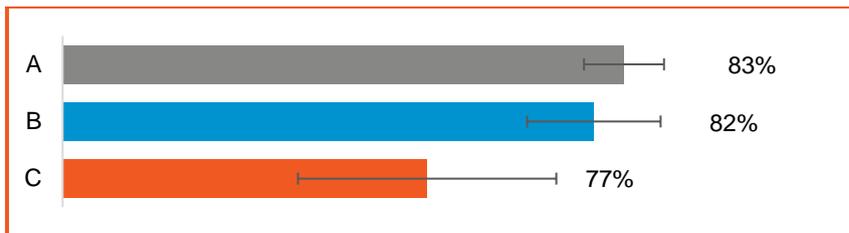
The NZCVS is a sample survey. This means that a sample of areas, households and people are selected from the New Zealand adult population using a set process. Because of this, the estimates from the survey might be different to the true figures for the New Zealand population. This uncertainty, or **sampling error**, depends on both sample size and variance. Although estimates based on a larger sample size generally have less sampling error, this is not always the case.

**Confidence intervals** are used to show how reliable estimates are. They indicate the range of values above and below the estimate, between which the actual value is likely to fall.<sup>7</sup> This range that estimates are likely to fall within is called the **margin of error**.

Confidence intervals are displayed as bars around estimates in **graphs** in this report. For example, in the graph on page 10, the confidence intervals around each of the estimates illustrate the range in which the true values are likely to fall. While the estimate for Group A is 83%, the confidence interval reflects that it is likely to fall between 82% and 85%. The estimate for Group C has a wider confidence interval than Group A, which means there is more uncertainty around it (it is likely to fall between 73% and 81%).

<sup>6</sup> Family members include a current partner (husband, wife, partner, boyfriend or girlfriend), ex-partner (previous husband, wife, partner, boyfriend or girlfriend), or other family member (parent or step-parent; parent's partner, boyfriend or girlfriend; son or daughter including in-laws; sibling or step-sibling; other family members including extended family).

<sup>7</sup> Ninety-five percent confidence intervals are used, which means that we can be 95% confident that the true figure lies within the confidence interval provided.



Confidence intervals for estimates in **tables** within this report are not shown, but any estimates subject to high uncertainty are indicated. The margins of error around all estimates are available in the data tables that accompany this report.

**Statistical significance** describes whether differences in estimates for different population groups are meaningful. One estimate is described as statistically significantly different from another when their confidence intervals do not overlap. On the other hand, when the confidence intervals of two estimates do overlap, the difference between the estimates is described as not statistically significant. This is a more conservative approach than a formal statistical test.<sup>8</sup>

Colour coding used to indicate statistical significance in graphs is described below. See Appendix A for more information on data and methods.

In the graph above, the estimates for Group A and Group B have confidence intervals that are overlapping. This means that the estimates are described as not statistically significant. The confidence intervals around estimates for Group A and Group C are not overlapping, so the difference between them is statistically significant.

### Colour coding in graphs

The following colour scheme is used to highlight statistical significance of differences of estimates for groups from the total population.

	<b>All New Zealand adults</b> (victims and non-victims)
	<b>No statistically significant difference</b> from the New Zealand average (at 95% confidence level)
	<b>Statistically significant difference</b> from the New Zealand average (at 95% confidence level)

Note: Statistical testing is based on overlapping confidence intervals and not formal tests, as described in Appendix A.

The **measures of trust and confidence** analysed in this report are derived from survey questions. The questions and possible answers are summarised in Table A.4 in Appendix A.

<sup>8</sup> Using a formal statistical test, when confidence intervals for two estimates overlap, it is likely (but not definite) that the difference between the estimates is not statistically significant.

Most of the questions use a five-point rating scale.<sup>9</sup> The analysis focuses on the highest two answer options for each of these questions. For example, the percentage of adults who are *completely or fairly* confident in the effectiveness of the criminal justice system is discussed. Focusing on one combined category allows confidence intervals to be presented in graphs throughout the report. Results for other answer options are provided in the data tables accompanying this report.

---

<sup>9</sup> The exception is for likelihood of calling the Police to report a crime or incident. This question has a four-point answer scale, and the first option (*very likely*) is analysed.

## 2 Introduction

For victims to be willing to assist the Police and prosecutors, they must have confidence in the overall justice system and a sense of trust in the professionals who are part of it (Hough and Roberts 2005). However, a large proportion of crime is not dealt with in the criminal justice system. The New Zealand Crime and Victims Survey (NZCVS) estimates that 75% of all victimisations – and 94% of sexual assaults – are not reported to the Police in New Zealand (Ministry of Justice 2020a). Some offending that comes to the attention of the Police may go unresolved if those affected do not wish to engage with investigation and justice processes.

For many people affected by family violence and sexual violence, low expectations of the criminal justice system are a barrier to them seeking help (Backbone Collective 2020; Chief Victims Advisor to Government 2019a, 2019b; Law Commission 2015; Wilson et al 2019). Upholding the trust and confidence of victims is therefore critical for the criminal justice system to be able to provide access to justice and support to individuals, families, whānau and communities affected by crime. It also helps the criminal justice system to address offending, leading to safer communities. In turn, the public are more likely to trust and have confidence in a criminal justice system that promotes a safe and fair New Zealand.

Other surveys show that recent victims of crime in New Zealand have lower trust and confidence in our criminal justice system than non-victims (Chief Victims Advisor to Government 2019c; Colmar Brunton 2014, 2016). Surveys in the United Kingdom and Europe have revealed similar patterns (Jackson et al 2011; Jansson 2015; Smith 2010). The 2020 NZCVS report *Social wellbeing and perceptions of the criminal justice system* supports this narrative (Ministry of Justice, 2020c).<sup>10</sup> It shows that trust and confidence is comparatively low for individuals who have experienced more than one crime over the previous 12 months.

Victimisation has been linked to lower levels of trust and confidence in the criminal justice system in multiple studies (Berthelot et al 2018; Corbacho et al 2015; Hawdon et al 2003; Hough et al 2013; Jackson and Bradford 2009; Pazzona 2019; Singer et al 2019). However, some research suggests that victimisation has no effect once contact with the Police is accounted for (Jansson 2015; Myhill and Beak 2008). Other studies find victimisation is not related to lower levels of trust and confidence when prior victimisation (Bradford and Myhill 2015) or perceptions of community disorder (Jackson and Bradford 2009) are accounted for.

Victims of crime have a range of experiences, yet few studies have compared the perceptions of victims of different types of crime (Laxminarayan et al 2013). Berthelot and colleagues (2018) made a distinction between violent and non-violent victimisation in a study from the United States. Surprisingly, they found a negative effect of non-violent victimisation

---

<sup>10</sup> Refer to Figures 4.3, 4.5, 4.12, 4.13, and 4.18 in the report, available at <https://www.justice.govt.nz/assets/Documents/Publications/7NykrBSocial-Wellbeing-and-Perceptions-of-the-Criminal-Justice-System-Report.pdf>

on trust and confidence but little to no effect of violent victimisation.<sup>11</sup> Murphy and Barkworth (2014) found that in Australia, victims of sexual assault and physical assault were less likely to perceive the Police as procedurally fair than victims of burglary or vehicle theft.<sup>12</sup> They also found that victims of physical assault were less willing to report crime to the Police than victims of burglary or vehicle theft.

This report looks at the trust and confidence that victims of different types of crime have in the criminal justice system. This report also analyses some of the types of contact victims have had with the criminal justice system and their perceptions of the service they received. The findings shed light on where there is the greatest need to strengthen trust and confidence in the criminal justice system. They also provide a baseline for improvement.

The analysis uses a sample of 8,038 adults from the 2018/19 NZCVS (Cycle 2). Trust and confidence in the criminal justice system is summarised for victims of the following broad offence types compared with New Zealand adults overall:

- vehicle offences
- burglary
- fraud and cybercrime
- theft and damage
- trespass
- interpersonal violence.<sup>13</sup>

The focus then shifts to victims of interpersonal violence, and within this group, those harmed by sexual assault and by offences by family members.

Trust and confidence in the criminal justice system are driven by perceptions that it is effective (Gravitas 2016) and that it is fair (Bradford et al 2009; Tyler and Fagan 2008). The following measures relating to trust and confidence in the criminal justice system are assessed in this analysis:

- confidence that the criminal justice system as a whole is effective
- the level of trust in different parts of the criminal justice system
- agreement that different parts of the criminal justice system treat most people in New Zealand fairly
- likelihood of calling the Police to report a crime or incident that was witnessed.

---

<sup>11</sup> However, the authors are unable to provide a rationale for this finding in previous literature. They used regression models with a large number of variables that are likely to be correlated. They used a sample size of 1,560.

<sup>12</sup> The sample size for this study was 1,204, with an adjusted response rate of 65%.

<sup>13</sup> The individual offences that make up these broad offence groupings are summarised in Table A.2 in Appendix A.

The parts of the system considered are the Police, judges, juries, criminal lawyers, the Parole Board, and groups that provide services to victims.<sup>14</sup> Groups that provide services to victims include organisations such as Women’s Refuge, Rape Crisis and Victim Support.

---

<sup>14</sup> While information is available on perceptions of probation officers and the prison service, this report focuses on the parts of the system most relevant to victims.

## 3 Results

This chapter begins by summarising trust and confidence in the criminal justice system for victims of six broad offence types, compared with New Zealand adults overall. The focus then moves to victims of interpersonal violence, and within this group, those harmed by sexual assault and offences by family members.

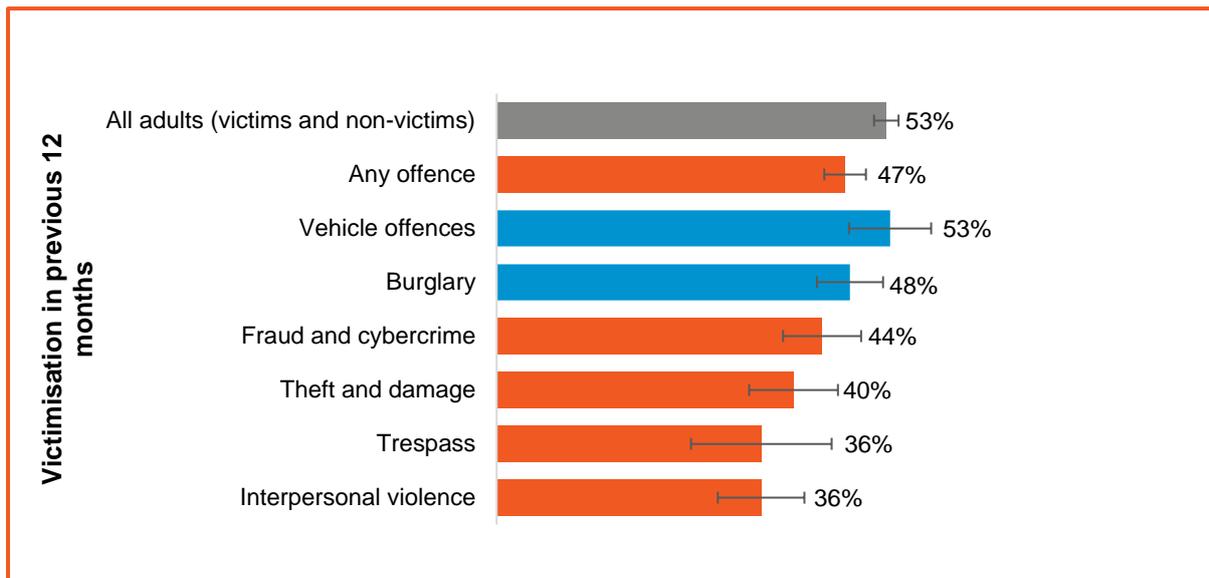
### 3.1 Victims of interpersonal violence have relatively low trust and confidence in the criminal justice system

In this section, we show that perceptions held by victims of burglary are not significantly different from those of New Zealand adults overall on any of the measures relating to trust and confidence. Victims of trespass; fraud and cybercrime; theft and damage; and vehicle offences have significantly lower levels of trust and confidence on some, but not all, measures. Victims of interpersonal violence have significantly lower levels of trust and confidence on almost all measures.

#### Confidence in the effectiveness of the criminal justice system

The first question assessed is “How confident are you that the criminal justice system as a whole is effective?” This is an indicator of how well the overall system is perceived to be achieving its purpose.

Figure 3.1 shows the percentage of adults who are completely or fairly confident in the effectiveness of the criminal justice system, for victims of different offence types. Fifty-three percent of all adults are completely or fairly confident it is effective. Victims in general (47%) have a significantly lower level of confidence, but this varies for victims of different offence types. Victims of vehicle offences (53%) and burglary (48%) have a similar level of confidence to adults overall, while victims of the other four offence types have significantly lower levels of confidence. The differences are strongest for victims of interpersonal violence (36%) and trespass (36%) offences.



**Figure 3.1** Percentage of adults who are completely/fairly confident that the criminal justice system as a whole is effective, by victimisation (broad offence groups)

## Perceptions of different parts of the criminal justice system

Two questions about different parts of the criminal justice system are assessed in this section. The first is “What’s your level of trust in... [each part of the criminal justice system]?” Trust in agencies reflects people’s expectations that they would be treated reasonably and fairly (Bradford et al 2009).

The second question is “How much do you agree or disagree that people in New Zealand are treated fairly by... [each part of the criminal justice system]?” This question considers whether people think the agencies treat all New Zealanders equally. Perceptions of fairness are linked to both trust and confidence in the criminal justice system (Bradford et al 2009).

Table 3.1 shows the percentage of adults who have high or very high trust in different parts of the system, by victimisation. For all groups, trust is highest in groups that provide services for victims, followed by the Police. Trust is relatively lower in judges, juries, criminal lawyers and the Parole Board. This pattern is in keeping with international and previous New Zealand studies (Indermaur and Roberts 2009; Paulin et al 2003; Smith 2010). This pattern is true for victims in general and of each offence type.

Results that are significantly different from all adults in Table 3.1 are in bold and italics. For victims of interpersonal violence, levels of trust follow a similar pattern as other groups, with trust highest in groups that provide services for victims and then the Police. However, compared with adults overall, victims of interpersonal violence have significantly lower levels of trust in the Police, juries, criminal lawyers, and groups that provide services for victims.

Victims of theft and damage are the only other victim group with significantly lower levels of trust than adults overall in any part of the criminal justice system, and only with respect to the Police.

**Table 3.1 Percentage of adults who have high or very high trust in different parts of the criminal justice system, by victimisation in the previous 12 months**

Victimisation in previous 12 months	Groups that provide services for victims	Police	Judges	Juries	Criminal lawyers	Parole Board
All adults (victims and non-victims)	80%	76%	57%	51%	44%	39%
Any offence	78%	<b>71%</b>	56%	48%	41%	37%
Trespass	87%	75%	52%‡	47%‡	34%#	38%#
Vehicle offences	76%	72%	60%	48%	46%	36%
Burglary	79%	71%	56%	49%	42%	39%
Fraud and cybercrime	79%	70%	56%	46%	41%	37%
Theft and damage	73%	<b>65%</b>	53%	45%	36%	31%
Interpersonal violence	<b>72%</b>	<b>59%</b>	49%	<b>41%</b>	<b>34%</b>	32%

Note: Results in bold and italics are statistically significantly different from all adults at the 95% level.

# Percentage has a margin of error between 10 and 20 percentage points and should be used with caution.

‡ The numerator and/or denominator of the ratio estimate has a relative standard error between 20% and 50%, so this estimate should be used with caution.

There are similar patterns in perceptions of how fairly the different criminal justice institutions treat people in New Zealand (Table 3.2). Half or more of all adults agree or strongly agree that people are treated fairly by each part of the system, with the exception of the Parole Board (49%). The same pattern is true for victims of interpersonal violence, but similar to above, levels of agreement are significantly lower than for all adults.

For other victim groups, perceptions of fairness of the parts of the system are, for the most part, not significantly different from adults overall. There are two exceptions: victims of vehicle offences have significantly poorer perceptions of fairness of the Police than all adults, as do victims of theft and damage.

**Table 3.2 Percentage of adults who agree or strongly agree that most people in New Zealand are treated fairly by different parts of the criminal justice system, by victimisation in the previous 12 months**

Victimisation in previous 12 months	Groups that provide services for victims	Police	Judges	Juries	Criminal lawyers	Parole Board
All adults (victims and non-victims)	83%	69%	61%	58%	53%	49%
Any offence	82%	63%	58%	54%	49%	44%
Burglary	84%	66%	61%	58%	49%	48%
Trespass	87%	65%	58% <sup>‡</sup>	51% <sup>#</sup>	53% <sup>#</sup>	45% <sup>#</sup>
Fraud and cybercrime	83%	64%	59%	54%	50%	45%
Vehicle offences	84%	<b>60%</b>	60%	52%	53%	46%
Theft and damage	81%	<b>57%</b>	56%	53%	44%	41%
Interpersonal violence	<b>77%</b>	<b>56%</b>	<b>51%</b>	<b>50%</b>	<b>41%</b>	<b>39%</b>

Note: Results in bold and italics are statistically significantly different from all adults at the 95% level.

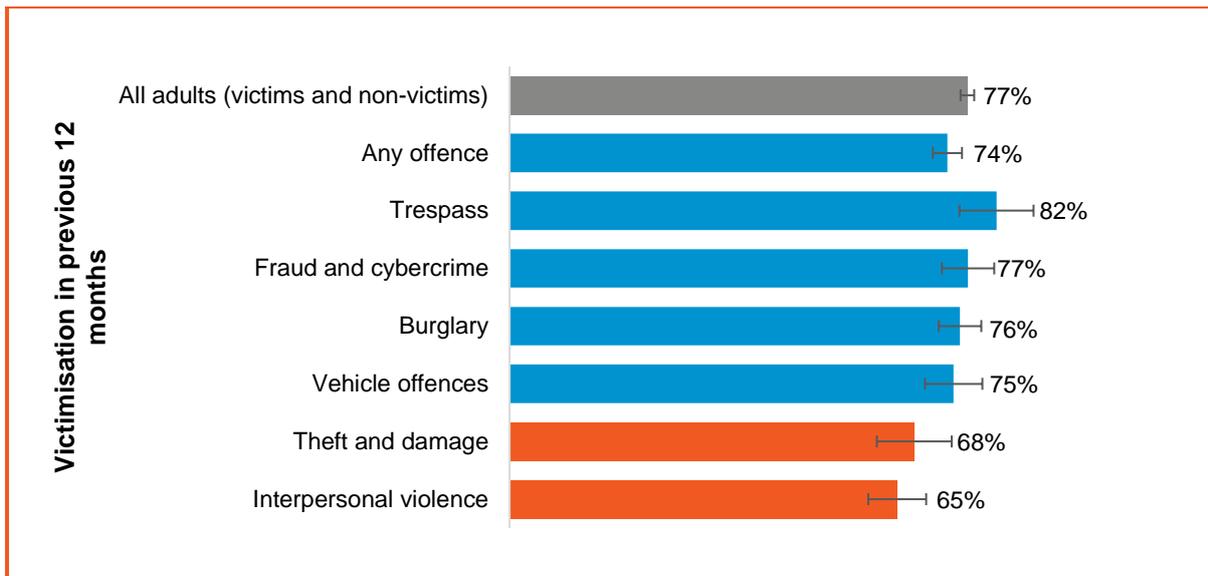
# Percentage has a margin of error between 10 and 20 percentage points and should be used with caution.

‡ The numerator and/or denominator of the ratio estimate has a relative standard error between 20% and 50%, so this estimate should be used with caution.

## Likelihood of calling the Police to report a crime or incident

The final question assessed is “If a situation occurred, how likely would you be to call the Police to report a crime or incident you witnessed?” This question reflects people’s stated intentions but does not necessarily reflect how they would truly act if a situation occurred.

Most adults (77%) say they would be very likely to call the Police to report a crime or incident they witnessed, if a situation occurred (Figure 3.2). Although victims of theft and damage (68%) and interpersonal violence (65%) are significantly less likely to say they would call the Police than the average adult, more than half say they would (68% and 65%, respectively). Victims of the other offence types, and victims overall, are about as likely as the average adult to say they would call the Police.



**Figure 3.2 Percentage of adults who would be very likely to call the Police to report a crime or incident they witnessed, by victimisation in the previous 12 months**

The rates of intentions to call the Police about a crime or incident are notably higher than actual reporting rates of crime. The NZCVS estimates that only 25% of all victimisations are reported to the Police (Ministry of Justice 2020a). This includes reporting by the victim themselves and when the Police found out in another way.

While the low level of reporting of crime to the Police may reflect that victims have low trust and confidence in the criminal justice system, there are many other possible explanations. For example, the NZCVS has shown that about a third of offences are not recognised as a crime by the person who experienced it – and as many as 65% of interpersonal violence offences and 85% of sexual assaults (Ministry of Justice 2020a). The survey also reveals that victims often say they did not report an incident to the Police because what happened was too trivial, there was no loss or damage, or it was not worth reporting. Finally, more than half of interviews for the survey were undertaken before the introduction of a non-emergency reporting channel (105) by NZ Police in May 2019, intended to increase reporting rates.

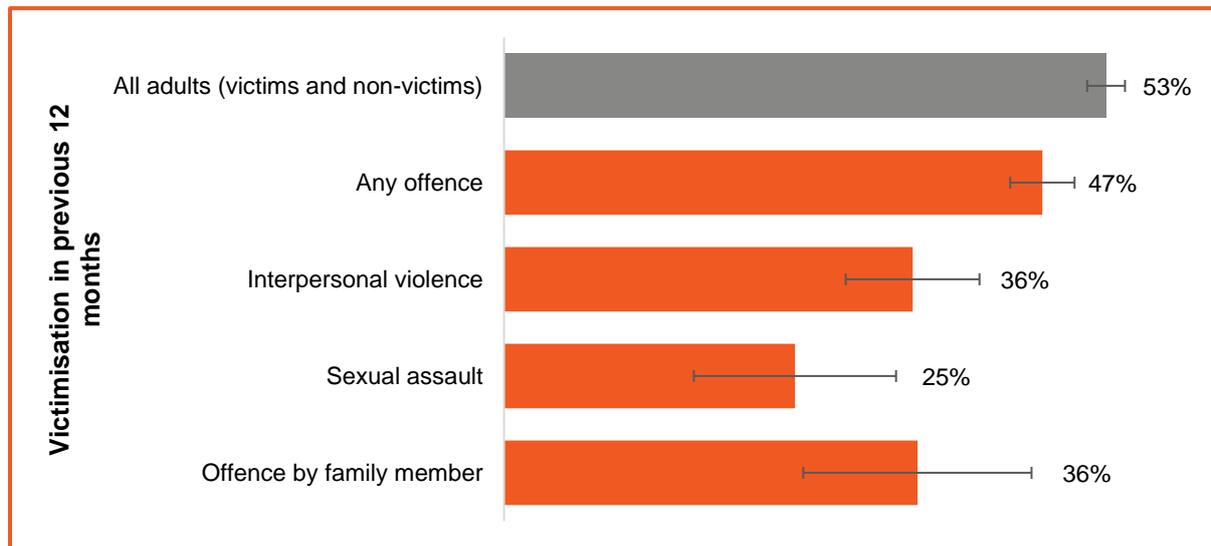
## 3.2 Victims of sexual assault and offences by family members have relatively negative perceptions of the criminal justice system

This section looks at measures of trust and confidence for victims of sexual assault and victims of offences by family members.<sup>15</sup>

Victims of sexual assault (25%) are less than half as likely as adults overall (53%) to be completely or fairly confident in the effectiveness of the criminal justice system (Figure 3.3).

<sup>15</sup> Note that offences by family members include interpersonal violence offences, and damage to motor vehicles, where the offender is a family member. Because this includes sexual assaults, some respondents can be in both groups.

Victims of offences by family members (36%) are also less likely to be as confident in the effectiveness of the criminal justice system as adults overall. The differences from the overall population are statistically significant.



**Figure 3.3 Percentage of adults who are completely/fairly confident that the criminal justice system as a whole is effective, by victimisation in the previous 12 months**

There are some significant differences, relative to adults overall, in how victims of sexual assault and victims of offences by family members perceive different parts of the criminal justice system (Table 3.3 and Table 3.4).

Compared with all adults, both victims of sexual assault and victims of offences by family members have significantly lower levels of trust in the Police and in the Parole Board. Victims of sexual assault also have significantly lower levels of trust in judges, juries and criminal lawyers. This means that victims of sexual assault have significantly lower levels of trust in each part of the criminal justice system, except for groups that provide services for victims.

Both victims of sexual assault and victims of offences by family members are significantly less likely than all adults to agree or strongly agree that the Police and judges treat most people fairly (Table 3.4). Victims of offences by family members are also less likely than all adults to agree that most people are treated fairly by juries.

Neither victims of sexual assault nor victims of offences by family members have significantly different perceptions of groups that provide services for victims.

Many of the estimates in Table 3.4 and Table 3.5 are subject to large uncertainty and should be interpreted with caution. Uncertainty increases in small sample sizes, and the number of respondents in the survey sample who experienced sexual assault or offences by family members is relatively small. Estimates that should be interpreted with caution are as indicated in the table notes.

**Table 3.3 Percentage of adults who have high or very high trust in different parts of the criminal justice system, by victimisation in the previous 12 months**

Victimisation in previous 12 months	Groups that provide services for victims	Police	Judges	Juries	Criminal lawyers	Parole Board
All adults (victims and non-victims)	80%	76%	57%	51%	44%	39%
Any offence	78%	<b>71%</b>	56%	47%	41%	37%
Interpersonal violence	<b>72%</b>	<b>59%</b>	49%	<b>41%</b>	<b>34%</b>	32%
Sexual assault	72%	<b>56%</b>	<b>40%<sup>#</sup></b>	<b>35%</b>	<b>29%</b>	<b>26%</b>
Offence by family member	72% <sup>‡</sup>	<b>59%</b>	49% <sup>#</sup>	39% <sup>#</sup>	31% <sup>#</sup>	<b>24%<sup>‡</sup></b>

Note: Results in bold and italics are statistically significantly different from all adults at the 95% level.

# Percentage has a margin of error between 10 and 20 percentage points and should be used with caution.

‡ The numerator and/or denominator of the ratio estimate has a relative standard error between 20% and 50%, so this estimate should be used with caution.

**Table 3.4 Percentage of adults who agree or strongly agree that most people in New Zealand are treated fairly by different parts of the criminal justice system, by victimisation in the previous 12 months**

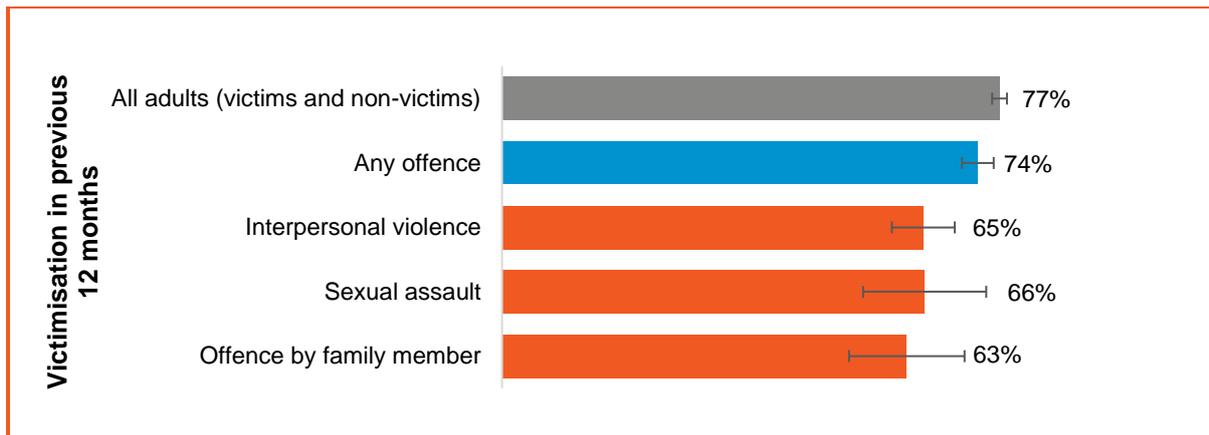
Victimisation in previous 12 months	Groups that provide services for victims	Police	Judges	Juries	Criminal lawyers	Parole Board
All adults (victims and non-victims)	83%	69%	61%	58%	53%	49%
Any offence	82%	<b>63%</b>	58%	54%	49%	44%
Interpersonal violence	<b>77%</b>	<b>56%</b>	<b>51%</b>	<b>50%</b>	<b>41%</b>	<b>39%</b>
Sexual assault	79%	<b>54%</b>	<b>47%</b>	51% <sup>#</sup>	41% <sup>#</sup>	40% <sup>#</sup>
Offence by family member	80%	<b>52%</b>	<b>48%<sup>#</sup></b>	<b>43%<sup>#</sup></b>	40% <sup>‡</sup>	37% <sup>#</sup>

Note: Results in bold and italics are statistically significantly different from all adults at the 95% level.

# Percentage has a margin of error between 10 and 20 percentage points and should be used with caution.

‡ The numerator and/or denominator of the ratio estimate has a relative standard error between 20% and 50%, so this estimate should be used with caution.

Figure 3.4 shows likelihood of calling the Police to report a crime or incident, by victimisation. Victims of sexual assault (66%) and offences by a family member (63%) are also somewhat, but significantly, less likely than adults overall (77%) to say they would call the Police.



**Figure 3.4** Percentage of adults who would be very likely to call the Police to report a crime or incident they witnessed, by victimisation in the previous 12 months

### 3.3 Victims of interpersonal violence are more likely to have had contact with the criminal justice system

Direct contact with the criminal justice system is one factor that could influence people's views of the criminal justice system (Gau 2010; Myhill and Bradford 2012). Some evidence suggests that negative experiences tend to have a stronger impact on perceptions than do positive ones (Gravitas 2016; Miller et al 2004; Myhill and Beak 2008; Rosenbaum et al 2005; Skogan 2006).

Victims could be expected to have more contact with the criminal justice system than other adults because of their experience of crime. For those victims who do have contact with the system, a number of recent reports have established that their experiences are often difficult (Boyer et al 2018; Chief Victims Advisor to Government 2019a; Hargrave 2019; Law Commission 2015). However, as noted already, the NZCVS shows that 75% of all offences and 76% of incidents of interpersonal violence are not reported to the Police (Ministry of Justice 2020a).<sup>16</sup> Underreporting of sexual violence is a particular problem, with 94% of incidents not reported to the Police.

This section assesses answers to the survey question "In the past 12 months, have **you** had contact with, or experience with, the criminal justice system in any way?" Respondents could select from the following types of contact:

- Police contact, paid fines or received compensation
  - Been in a vehicle stopped by Police (eg traffic stops or alcohol check points)
  - Paid a fine
  - Received reparation (compensation)

<sup>16</sup> These statistics are based on pooled data from Cycle 1 (2018) and Cycle 2 (2018/19) of the NZCVS.

- Attended court or tribunal
  - As a witness or support person
  - As a victim
  - As a defendant
  - Because of a summons for jury service
- Other contact
  - Worked in the criminal justice system
  - Attended restorative justice conference for a criminal offence (not including youth justice conferences)
  - Other – please specify
- None of these

Although respondents could specify “other” types of contact, these might be underreported because they were not prompted.

Table 3.5 shows that victims of interpersonal violence (60%) are more likely than New Zealand adults overall (37%) to have had contact with the criminal justice system. They are also significantly more likely to have had contact with the system than victims of any offence type (50%). Sample sizes were too small for reliable analysis of experiences of the criminal justice system for victims of offences by family members or victims of sexual assault.

It is not possible to tell whether the contact that victims had with the criminal justice system is related to their victimisation in the previous 12 months. For example, victims of interpersonal violence are more likely than average to have attended court or a tribunal as a victim during the previous 12 months. But it is not known whether this attendance was in relation to the violence they reported in the survey. They might have attended in relation to a non-violent offence, or an offence that happened more than 12 months earlier.

Furthermore, victims are more likely than adults overall to have been in a vehicle stopped by the Police, to have paid a fine, or to have attended court as a witness or support person. Notably, these are situations when they are not necessarily in the role of a victim. Victims of interpersonal violence are especially more likely, compared with adults overall, to have had these types of contact.<sup>17</sup>

---

<sup>17</sup> While victims of interpersonal violence appear more likely to have had these forms of contact than victims overall, the difference is only statistically significant for being in a vehicle stopped by the Police.

**Table 3.5 Percentage of adults who had contact with the criminal justice system in the previous 12 months, by victimisation in the previous 12 months**

Contact with the criminal justice system	All adults (victims and non-victims)	Victim of any offence	Victim of interpersonal violence
Any contact	37%	<b>50%</b>	<b>60%<sup>^</sup></b>
Been in a vehicle stopped by Police	21%	<b>24%</b>	<b>32%<sup>^</sup></b>
Paid a fine	12%	<b>16%</b>	<b>17%</b>
Attended court or a tribunal	8%	<b>14%</b>	<b>18%</b>
– as a witness or support person	3%	<b>5%</b>	<b>6%</b>
– as a victim	3%	<b>6%</b>	<b>10%</b>
– as a defendant	1%	2%	§
– because of summons for jury service	2%	3%	§
Received reparation (compensation)	0%	§	§
Worked in the criminal justice system	2%	2%	§
Attended restorative justice conference*	0%	1%	§
Other	6%	<b>12%</b>	<b>13%</b>

Note: Results in bold and italics are statistically significant different from all adults at the 95% level.

\* Not including for youth justice conferences.

<sup>^</sup> Statistically significantly different from victims of any offence at the 95% level.

§ The estimate is suppressed because the numerator or denominator has a relative standard error of 50% or higher, which is too unreliable for general use.

Victims of interpersonal violence who had contact with the criminal justice system (55%) (regardless of the reason) were slightly, but significantly, less likely to view their experience as positive or very positive than all adults who had contact (66%) (Table 3.6). Though overall levels were high, they were also comparatively less likely to report that they were treated fairly by the system (81% compared to 89%). There are no such significant differences for victims of any offence type.

**Table 3.6 Experiences with the criminal justice system, by victimisation in the previous 12 months**

Experience with the criminal justice system	All adults (victims and non-victims)	Victims of any offence type	Victims of interpersonal violence
Positive/very positive	66%	64%	<b>55%</b>
Treated fairly	89%	87%	<b>81%</b>

Note: Results in bold and italics are statistically significantly different from all adults at the 95% level.

## 4 Discussion

This report shows that victims of interpersonal violence have relatively lower trust and confidence in the criminal justice system than adults overall. Within this group, similar patterns are established for those who experienced offences by family members or sexual assault, despite small sample sizes. There is some evidence of the same pattern for victims of other types of crime, but this is much less prominent across different measures.

The Ministry of Justice has set a goal of strengthening public trust and confidence in the justice system (Ministry of Justice, 2020d). The results of this report highlight that improving the trust and confidence of victims of interpersonal violence should be a priority. Achieving this would have the potential to increase reporting of interpersonal violence (Laxminarayan 2015). It can also lead to victims being more willing to assist in investigations and prosecution (Hough and Roberts 2005). These outcomes, in turn, would increase opportunities to provide victims with the support services they need, and to hold offenders to account and address their offending behaviour. The need to improve our criminal justice system for victims has been highlighted in several recent reports (Chief Victims Advisor to Government 2019a, 2019b, 2019c; Hargrave 2019). Survey results also indicate that New Zealanders support putting victims' interests at the heart of the justice system (Hāpaitia te Oranga Tangata – Safe and Effective Justice 2020).

Victims of family violence and sexual violence endure some of the most difficult experiences with the criminal justice system (Law Commission 2015; Te Uepū Hāpai i te Ora – Safe and Effective Justice Advisory Group 2019a). Making the system more responsive to the needs of victims has the potential to lead to higher reporting rates of crime. This has been demonstrated, for example, by the Integrated Safety Response pilot, a multi-agency programme focused on the safety of families and whānau. There is evidence that victims supported by the programme were more likely to report further family violence episodes (Mossman et al 2019).

Another key finding of the current report is that, although significantly less than adults overall (76%), most victims of interpersonal violence (70%) have high or very high trust in groups that provide services for victims. Though less than average, it is encouraging that most victims still have trust in these groups. Also, more than half of victims of interpersonal violence have high or very high trust in the Police. However, their levels of trust are comparatively lower in judges, juries, criminal lawyers and the Parole Board. This pattern is true for victims of each different offence type and for the overall population. The same patterns are true when it comes to perceptions that these parts of the criminal justice system treat people fairly.

Relatively low trust and confidence in judges, juries, criminal lawyers and the Parole Board may reflect that these parts of the system are less visible (Indermaur and Roberts 2009). A previous New Zealand study found a strong positive correlation between an individual's perceived knowledge of components of the criminal justice system and their trust and confidence in that part of the system (Colmar Brunton 2013). It could also be that compared

with the Police, these parts of the system are portrayed more negatively by the media or they are less aligned with people's values (Indermaur and Roberts 2009).

A further finding in the present report is that victims of interpersonal violence are more likely to have had contact with the criminal justice system in the previous 12 months than all adults. While it is expected that victims would have more contact with the criminal justice system because of their experience of crime, they also have relatively high rates of contact in some situations when they are not in the role of a victim. For example, victims of interpersonal violence are more likely than average to have been in a vehicle stopped by the Police. They are also somewhat, but significantly, less likely to perceive their contact with the criminal justice system as positive or fair.

How someone is treated in any situation may affect their perceptions of the criminal justice system. Making sure experiences are positive and seen as fair is important for building trust and confidence (Gau 2010; Myhill and Bradford 2012). Negative experiences can be particularly damaging (Miller et al 2004; Myhill and Beak 2008; Rosenbaum et al 2005; Skogan 2006) even when among other positive experiences (Gravitas 2016).

More research on how New Zealanders form their perceptions of the criminal justice system could support agencies to promote the trust and confidence of victims of interpersonal violence. Some evidence exists on how New Zealanders get information about crime (Colmar Brunton 2016; Hāpaitia te Oranga Tangata – Safe and Effective Justice 2020). Although there is some knowledge of the drivers of New Zealanders' perceptions of the Police (Daniels-Shpall 2019; Gravitas 2016), there is less understanding of how New Zealanders form their perceptions of other parts of the criminal justice system. Further research using the NZCVS could analyse the impact of victimisation and contact with the criminal justice system on perceptions, after accounting for other factors.

The current study could be extended by looking at the relationship between victims' trust and confidence in the criminal justice system and whether they report crime to the Police. Analysis that takes into account people's past experiences will also become possible when the data is linked to the Stats NZ Integrated Data Infrastructure (IDI).<sup>18</sup> For example, researchers could study whether people's views of the criminal justice system are influenced by the interactions they have had with it over their lifetime.

The Government has acknowledged the need to transform the justice system and victims' experiences. A number of recent reports have envisioned what that transformation might look like (Chief Victims Advisor to Government 2019c; Ināia Tonu Nei 2019; Te Uepū Hāpai i te Ora – Safe and Effective Justice Advisory Group 2019a, 2019b). A major initiative responding to the need for change is the Joint Venture of the Social Wellbeing Board, which brings together 10 public sector agencies to address family violence and sexual violence. Justice sector agencies have also formed a Victims Leadership Group to provide senior leadership and a cross-agency approach to improving the experience of victims in the criminal justice system. The District Court has also responded to the need for change,

---

<sup>18</sup> The Stats NZ IDI is a research database that links information from government agencies, surveys and non-governmental organisations. At the time of writing, the integration of the in-depth module from Cycle 2 of the NZCVS into the IDI is underway. The core survey is already integrated.

announcing it will move to a new model – Te Ao Mārama – that will improve the court for all users (Taumaunu 2020).

As the criminal justice system responds, collecting and reporting data on relevant outcomes is critical for showing whether efforts make any difference. Including questions on trust and confidence in future cycles of the NZCVS could enable monitoring of the perceptions of victims over time. Along with monitoring crime reporting rates, this would show whether the solutions that are implemented result in any difference in what victims think of the criminal justice system.

Repeating questions on trust and confidence in the NZCVS would also build on the existing sample size available for research on this topic. A larger sample size could support our understanding of the perceptions of different parts of the population, such as Māori victims of crime.

## Conclusion

The analysis in this report shows that victims of interpersonal violence have relatively lower levels of trust and confidence in the criminal justice system, compared with all adults. These results highlight the need to improve the criminal justice system for victims, especially those harmed by interpersonal violence. Justice sector agencies have recognised that the experience of victims in the criminal justice system needs to improve (Justice Sector Leadership Board 2020). Monitoring the measures used in this report over time can show whether efforts to enhance the criminal justice system make a difference to what victims think of it.

Justice sector agencies also need to recognise that many victims of interpersonal violence have contact with the criminal justice system in situations other than when they are in the role of a victim. For example, this analysis shows that one third were in a vehicle stopped by Police during the last 12 months, significantly more than the average adult. All contacts victims have with the criminal justice system have the potential to influence their perceptions of it. Agencies need to make sure that efforts to build the trust and confidence of victims are not countered because they have other negative experiences with the system.

An encouraging result of this report is that most victims of interpersonal violence have positive attitudes towards the Police and groups that provide services for victims. Their perceptions of judges, juries, criminal lawyers and the Parole Board are relatively less positive. This pattern is also true for victims of other types of crime and for the overall adult population. More understanding of how people form their views of different parts of the system could support strategies for building public trust and confidence in justice sector agencies.

# References

- Backbone Collective. 2020. *Victim-survivor perspectives on longer-term support after experiencing violence and abuse*.  
<https://static1.squarespace.com/static/57d898ef8419c2ef50f63405/t/5f29217f4f222031501a82c5/1596531111262/Victim+Survivor+Perspectives+on+Longer+Term+Support+Backbone+report+for+MSD+2020+FINAL.pdf>
- Berthelot, E, McNeal, B & Baldwin, J. 2018. Relationships between agency-specific contact, victimization type, and trust and confidence in the police and courts. *American Journal of Criminal Justice* 43(4): 768–791. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s12103-018-9434-x>
- Boyer, T, Allison, S & Creagh, H. 2018. *Improving the justice response to victims of sexual violence: Victims' experiences*. Gravitas Research and Strategy Limited.  
<https://www.justice.govt.nz/assets/Documents/Publications/Improving-the-justice-response-to-victims-of-sexual-violence-victims-experiences.pdf>
- Bradford, B & Myhill, A. 2015. Triggers of change to public confidence in the police and criminal justice system: Findings from the Crime Survey for England and Wales panel experiment. *Criminology & Criminal Justice* 15(1): 23–43.  
<https://doi.org/10.1177/1748895814521825>
- Bradford, B, Jackson, J, Hough, M & Farrall, S. 2009. Trust and confidence in criminal justice: A review of the British research literature. In *Review of need: Indicators of public confidence in criminal justice*. A Jokinen, E Ruuskanen, M Yordanova, D Markov & M Ilcheva (eds). <http://dx.doi.org/10.2139/ssrn.1303567>
- Chief Victims Advisor to Government. 2019a. *Strengthening the criminal justice system for victims: Survey report*. Hāpaitia te Oranga Tangata.  
<https://chiefvictimsadvisor.justice.govt.nz/assets/Documents/Publications/8dhfd3-Criminal-Justice-Victims-Survey-report.pdf>
- Chief Victims Advisor to Government. 2019b. *Strengthening the criminal justice system for victims: Workshop playback report*. Hāpaitia te Oranga Tangata.  
<https://chiefvictimsadvisor.justice.govt.nz/assets/Documents/Publications/6dhhd38-Criminal-Justice-Victims-workshop-playback-report.pdf>
- Chief Victims Advisor to Government. 2019c. *Te Tangi o te Manawanui: Recommendations for reform*. <https://www.beehive.govt.nz/sites/default/files/2019-12/Te%20Tangi%20o%20te%20Manawanui.pdf>
- Colmar Brunton. 2013. *Public perceptions of crime – survey report*.  
[https://thehub.swa.govt.nz/assets/documents/42866\\_public-perceptions-of-crime\\_0.pdf](https://thehub.swa.govt.nz/assets/documents/42866_public-perceptions-of-crime_0.pdf)
- Colmar Brunton. 2014. *Public perceptions of crime and the criminal justice survey – 2014*. Colmar Brunton. <https://www.justice.govt.nz/assets/Documents/Publications/Public-perceptions-of-crime-and-the-criminal-justice-system-survey-2014-results.pdf>

- Colmar Brunton. 2016. *Public perceptions of crime 2016 – survey report*.  
<https://www.justice.govt.nz/assets/Documents/Publications/20161130-Final-PPS-report.pdf>
- Corbacho, A, Philipp, J & Ruiz-Vega, M. 2015. Crime and erosion of trust: Evidence for Latin America. *World Development* 70: 400-415.  
<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.worlddev.2014.04.013>
- Daniels-Shpall, A. 2019. *Strategies for (re)building community trust: A review of practices in the New Zealand police*. Fullbright New Zealand. <https://www.fulbright.org.nz/wp-content/uploads/2019/07/A-Daniels-Shpall-AxfordFellow2019-Report-JULY2019.pdf>
- Gau, J. M. (2010). A longitudinal analysis of citizens' attitudes about police. *Policing: An International Journal*, 33(2), 236-252. <https://doi.org/10.1108/13639511011044867>
- Gravitas. 2016. *Developing understanding of the drivers of trust and confidence in the police*. Unpublished report commissioned by New Zealand Police.
- Hāpaitia te Oranga Tangata – Safe and Effective Justice. 2020. *2019 public survey of attitudes toward the justice system*.  
<https://safeandeffectivejustice.govt.nz/assets/Research-Evidence-Files/bcc5d4f5d9/2019-survey-attitudes-justice-system.pdf>
- Hargrave, P. 2019. *Victims' voices: The justice needs and experiences of New Zealand serious crime victims*. Research report. Victim Support.  
[https://www.researchgate.net/publication/336868107\\_Victims'\\_Voices\\_The\\_Justice\\_Needs\\_and\\_Experiences\\_of\\_New\\_Zealand\\_Serious\\_Crime\\_Victims](https://www.researchgate.net/publication/336868107_Victims'_Voices_The_Justice_Needs_and_Experiences_of_New_Zealand_Serious_Crime_Victims)
- Hawdon, J, Ryan, J & Griffin, S. 2003. Policing tactics and perceptions of police legitimacy. *Police Quarterly*, 6(4), 469-491. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1098611103253503>
- Hough, M & Roberts, J. 2005. *Understanding public attitudes to criminal justice*. McGraw-Hill Education.
- Hough, M, Bradford, B, Jackson, J & Roberts, J. 2013. *Attitudes to sentencing and trust in justice: Exploring trends from the crime survey for England and Wales*. Ministry of Justice. <https://eprints.bbk.ac.uk/id/eprint/5195/1/5195.pdf>
- Ināia Tonu Nei. 2019. *Ināia Tonu Nei – Hui Māori report*.  
<https://www.justice.govt.nz/assets/Documents/Publications/d8s653-Inaia-Tonu-Nei-Hui-Maori-English-version.pdf%20>
- Indermaur, D & Roberts, L. 2009. *Confidence in the criminal justice system* (Report No. 387). Australian Institute of Criminology.  
<https://apo.org.au/sites/default/files/resource-files/2009-11/apo-nid19764.pdf>
- Jackson, J & Bradford, B. 2009. Crime, policing and social order: On the expressive nature of public confidence in reporting. *The British Journal of Sociology* 60(3): 493-521.  
<https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1468-4446.2009.01253.x>
- Jackson, J, Pooler, T, Hohl, K, Kuja, J, Bradford, B & Hough, M. 2011. *Trust in justice: Topline results from round 5 of the European Social Survey*. European Social Survey. [http://eprints.lse.ac.uk/41680/1/Trust%20in%20justice\(Isero\).pdf](http://eprints.lse.ac.uk/41680/1/Trust%20in%20justice(Isero).pdf)

- Jansson, K. 2015. *Public confidence in the criminal justice system – Findings from the Crime Survey for England and Wales (2013/14)*. Ministry of Justice.  
[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/449444/public-confidence.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/449444/public-confidence.pdf)
- Justice Sector Leadership Board. 2020. *Justice sector briefing for incoming ministers*.  
<https://www.beehive.govt.nz/sites/default/files/2020-12/Justice%20Sector.pdf>
- Law Commission. 2015. *The justice response to victims of sexual violence: Criminal trials and alternative processes* (Report No. 136).  
<https://www.lawcom.govt.nz/sites/default/files/projectAvailableFormats/NZLC-R136-The-Justice-Response-to-Victims-of-Sexual-Violence.pdf>
- Laxminarayan, M. 2015. Enhancing trust in the legal system through victims' rights mechanisms. *International Review of Victimology* 21(3): 273-286.  
<https://doi.org/10.1177/0269758015591721>
- Laxminarayan, M, Bosmans, M, Porter, R & Sosa, L. 2013. Victim satisfaction with criminal justice: A systematic review. *Victims & Offenders* 8(2): 119-147.  
<https://doi.org/10.1080/15564886.2012.763198>
- Miller, J, Davis, R C, Henderson, N J, Markovic, J & Ortiz, C W. 2004. *Public opinions of the police: The influence of friends, family and news media*. Vera Institute of Justice.
- Ministry of Justice. 2020a. *New Zealand Crime and Victims Survey. Key findings. Cycle 2 (October 2018 – September 2019)*.  
<https://www.justice.govt.nz/assets/Documents/Publications/NZCVS-Y2-core-report-for-release-.pdf>
- Ministry of Justice. 2020b. *New Zealand Crime and Victims Survey. Methodology report. Cycle 2 (October 2018 – September 2019)*.  
<https://www.justice.govt.nz/assets/Documents/Publications/NZCVS-2018-19-Methodology-Report-Year-2-fin.pdf>
- Ministry of Justice. 2020c. *New Zealand Crime and Victims Survey. Social wellbeing and perceptions of the criminal justice system. Cycle 2 (October 2018 – September 2019)*. <https://www.justice.govt.nz/assets/Documents/Publications/Social-Wellbeing-and-Perceptions-of-the-Criminal-Justice-System-Report.pdf>
- Ministry of Justice. 2020d. *Te Tāhū o te Ture: Statement of Intent 2019 to 2024*. Ministry of Justice. <https://www.justice.govt.nz/assets/Documents/Publications/2019-to-2024-Ministry-of-Justice-statement-of-intent.pdf>
- Mossman, E, Wehipeihana, N & Bealing, M. 2019. *Evaluation of the family violence Integrated Response pilot: Phase II – Years 2 and 3*. <https://library.nzfvc.org.nz/cgi-bin/koha/opac-detail.pl?biblionumber=6409>
- Murphy, K & Barkworth, J. 2014. Victim willingness to report crime to police: Does procedural justice or outcome matter most? *Victims & Offenders* 9(2): 178-204.  
<https://doi.org/10.1080/15564886.2013.872744>
- Myhill, A & Beak, K. 2008. *Public confidence in the police*. National Police Improvement Agency. <http://library.college.police.uk/docs/npia/public-confidence-in-the-police.pdf>

- Myhill, A & Bradford, B. 2012. Can police enhance public confidence by improving quality of service? Results from two surveys in England and Wales. *Policing and Society* 33(2): 397-425. <https://doi.org/10.1080/10439463.2011.641551>
- Paulin, J, Searle, W & Knaggs, T. 2003. *Attitudes to crime and punishment: A New Zealand study*. Ministry of Justice.  
<https://www.justice.govt.nz/assets/Documents/Publications/attitudes-crime-punishment.pdf>
- Pazzona, M. 2019. Do victims of crime trust less but participate more in social organizations? *Economics of Government* 21: 49-73. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10101-019-00227-1>
- Rosenbaum, D P, Schuck, A M, Costello, S K, Hawkins, D F & Ring, M K. 2005. Attitudes toward the police: The effects of direct and vicarious experience. *Police Quarterly* 8(3): 343-365. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1098611104271085>
- Singer, A, Chouhy, C, Lehmann, J, Walzak, M & Biglin, S. 2019. Victimization, fear of crime, and trust in criminal justice institutions: A cross-national analysis. *Crime & Delinquency* 65(6): 822-844. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0011128718787513>
- Skogan, W G. 2006. Asymmetry in the impact of encounters with police. *Policing & Society* 16(2): 99-126. <https://doi.org/10.1080/10439460600662098>
- Smith, D. 2010. *Public confidence in the criminal justice system: Findings from the British Crime Survey 2002/03 to 2007/08*. Ministry of Justice.  
<http://www.justice.gov.uk/downloads/publications/research-and-analysis/moj-research/confidence-cjs-british-crime-survey.pdf>
- Taumaunu, H. 2020. *Norris Ward McKinnon Annual Lecture 2020 – Mai te pō ki te ao mārama*. <https://www.districtcourts.govt.nz/assets/Uploads/Publications/2020/Norris-Ward-McKinnon-Annual-Lecture-2020-Mai-te-Po-ki-te-Ao-Marama.pdf>
- Te Uepū Hāpai i te Ora – Safe and Effective Justice Advisory Group. 2019a. *He Waka Roimata: Transforming our criminal justice system*.  
[https://www.safeandeffectivejustice.govt.nz/assets/Uploads/fa55462d44/teuepureport\\_hewakaroimata.pdf](https://www.safeandeffectivejustice.govt.nz/assets/Uploads/fa55462d44/teuepureport_hewakaroimata.pdf)
- Te Uepū Hāpai i te Ora – Safe and Effective Justice Advisory Group. 2019b. *Turuki! Turuki! Transforming our criminal justice system*.  
<https://safeandeffectivejustice.govt.nz/assets/Uploads/28ce04fd87/Turuki-Turuki-Report-Interactive.pdf>
- Tyler, T R & Fagan, J. 2008. Legitimacy and cooperation: Why do people help the police fight crime in their communities? *Ohio State Journal of Criminal Law* 6: 231-276.  
[https://heinonline.org/HOL/Page?handle=hein.journals/osjcl6&div=11&g\\_sent=1&cas\\_a\\_token=&collection=journals](https://heinonline.org/HOL/Page?handle=hein.journals/osjcl6&div=11&g_sent=1&cas_a_token=&collection=journals)
- Wilson, D, Mikahere-Hall, A, Sherwood, J, Cootes, K & Jackson, D. 2019. *E Tū Wāhine, E Tū Whānau: Wāhine Māori keeping safe in unsafe relationships*. Auckland: Taupua Waiora Māori Research Centre.  
[https://niphmhr.aut.ac.nz/\\_\\_data/assets/pdf\\_file/0011/330302/REPORT\\_E-Tu-Wahine,-E-Tu-Whanau-Wahine-Maori-keeping-safe-in-unsafe-relationships.pdf](https://niphmhr.aut.ac.nz/__data/assets/pdf_file/0011/330302/REPORT_E-Tu-Wahine,-E-Tu-Whanau-Wahine-Maori-keeping-safe-in-unsafe-relationships.pdf)

# Appendix A: Data and methods

## A.1 About the NZCVS

The NZCVS is a nationwide, face-to-face, annual, random-sample survey asking New Zealand adults living in private dwellings and aged 15 and over about incidents of crime they experienced in New Zealand over the previous 12 months. This includes both incidents reported to the Police and unreported incidents.

The second cycle of the NZCVS was undertaken between October 2018 and September 2019 and achieved 8,038 interviews. The response rate was 80%, which means that the survey results are representative.

While the NZCVS delivers the best estimate available about a wide range of personal and household offences that are not captured elsewhere, it still does not report the total amount of crime in New Zealand. This is because the NZCVS is a sample survey<sup>19</sup> subject to sample errors; also, it does not cover every type of crime that someone might experience (see Table A.1).

The NZCVS is a new survey with some significant improvements in design compared with its predecessors such as the New Zealand Crime and Safety Survey (NZCASS). In particular, the NZCVS:

- has a larger annual sample
- uses a different approach to coding offences that is more consistent with the Police approach
- applies a much lower level of data imputations
- covers additional offence types (such as fraud, cybercrime and trespass)
- employs a different approach for collecting data from highly victimised people (allowing similar incidents to be reported as a group).<sup>20</sup>

These differences mean that direct comparison of NZCVS results with its predecessor NZCASS is potentially misleading, even within similar offence types. More detail about how the NZCVS was conducted in 2018 can be found in the NZCVS Cycle 2 methodology report (Ministry of Justice 2020b).

---

<sup>19</sup> A sample survey means that not every New Zealander gives information about their experiences; it is not a census of the population. Also, 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).

<sup>20</sup> Partial list.

**Table A.1 Scope of crimes/offences covered in the NZCVS**

Scope	Description
<b>Covered in the NZCVS</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>personal offences, either reported to the Police or not, where the respondent was the victim of the crime</li> <li>household offences, either reported to the Police or not, where the respondent's household was offended</li> </ul>
<b>Not covered in the NZCVS</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>manslaughter and murder</li> <li>abduction</li> <li>crimes against children (14 years old and under)</li> <li>"victimless crime" (such as drug offences)</li> <li>commercial crime/white-collar crime/crimes against businesses or public-sector agencies</li> <li>crimes against people who do not live in permanent private dwellings</li> <li>crimes against people living in institutions*</li> </ul>

\* Those living in care facilities, prisons, army barracks, boarding schools and other similar institutions or non-private dwellings are excluded from the NZCVS sampling and interviewing process.

## A.2 Analysis

The first stage of analysis explores views and experiences of the criminal justice system for victims of different crimes. The broad offence grouping used is summarised in Table A.2.

**Table A.2 Broad offence grouping**

Individual offence types	Broad offence grouping	
Fraud and deception	Fraud and cybercrime offences	
Cybercrime		
Sexual assault	Violent interpersonal offences*	
Harassment and threatening behaviour		
Other assault		
Robbery		
Property damage (personal)		
Property damage (household)		
Theft (except motor vehicles – personal)		Theft and damage offences†
Theft (except motor vehicles – household)		
Unlawful takes/converts/interferes with bicycle		
Burglary	Burglary	
Trespass	Trespass	

Individual offence types	Broad offence grouping
Theft of/unlawful takes/converts motor vehicle	Vehicle offences
Theft (from motor vehicle)	
Unlawful interference/getting into motor vehicle	
Damage to motor vehicles	

\* “Violent interpersonal offences” is a group combining sexual assault; other assault; harassment and threatening behaviour; robbery; and damage of personal or household property if the offender is known to the victim.

† “Theft and damage offences” is a group combining theft (except motor vehicle theft); damage of household and personal property if the offender is unknown to the victim; and unlawful takes, converts or interference with bicycle.

The second stage of analysis examines perceptions and experiences of the criminal justice system for victims of:

- all offences (listed in Table A.2)
- interpersonal violence
- sexual assault
- offences by family members.

Interpersonal violence and offences by family members include the same offence types, but in some different scenarios (Table A.3). Offences by family members also includes damage to motor vehicles, which is not included in interpersonal violence.

**Table A.3 Difference between interpersonal violence and offences by family members**

Offence type	Interpersonal violence	Offences by family members
Sexual assault	All incidents	All incidents where the offender was a family member
Harassment and threatening behaviour		
Property damage (personal)		
Other assault		
Robbery	All incidents where the victim knew the offender before the incident happened	
Theft (except motor vehicles – personal)		
Property damage (household)		
Damage to motor vehicles	Not included	

Information on how information on offences is collected in the NZCVS is available in the NZCVS Cycle 2 methodology report (Ministry of Justice 2020b).

The analysis focuses on responses to the survey questions listed in Table A.4.

**Table A.4 Survey questions used in analysis**

Topic	Question	Answer options
<b>Overall confidence in the criminal justice system</b>	Thinking about all the different parts of the criminal justice system, how confident are you that the criminal justice system as a whole is effective?	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Completely confident</li> <li>2. Fairly confident</li> <li>3. Neutral</li> <li>4. Not very confident</li> <li>5. Not at all confident</li> </ol>
<b>Trust in different parts of the criminal justice system</b>	Thinking about all the different parts of the criminal justice system, overall, what's your level of trust in... <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• the Police</li> <li>• judges</li> <li>• juries</li> <li>• criminal lawyers</li> <li>• the Parole Board</li> <li>• groups that provide services for victims, such as Women's Refuge, Rape Crisis, Victim Support?*</li> </ul>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Very high</li> <li>2. High</li> <li>3. Neither high, nor low</li> <li>4. Low</li> <li>5. Very low</li> </ol>
<b>Perceived fairness of different parts of the criminal justice system</b>	How much do you agree or disagree that people in New Zealand are treated fairly by... <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• the Police</li> <li>• judges</li> <li>• juries</li> <li>• criminal lawyers</li> <li>• the Parole Board</li> <li>• groups that provide services for victims, such as Women's Refuge, Rape Crisis, Victim Support?</li> </ul>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Strongly agree</li> <li>2. Agree</li> <li>3. Neither agree nor disagree</li> <li>4. Disagree</li> <li>5. Strongly disagree</li> </ol>

Topic	Question	Answer options
<b>Likelihood of calling the Police to report or crime or incident witnessed</b>	If a situation occurred, how likely would you be to call the Police to report a crime or incident you witnessed?	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Very likely</li> <li>2. Somewhat likely</li> <li>3. Not likely</li> <li>4. Not likely at all</li> </ol>
<b>Contact with the criminal justice system</b>	In the past 12 months, have <b>you</b> had contact with, or experience with, the criminal justice system in any way?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Police contact, paid fines or received compensation <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Been in a vehicle stopped by Police (eg, traffic stops or alcohol check points)</li> <li>– Paid a fine</li> <li>– Received reparation (compensation)</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Attended court or tribunal <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– As a witness or support person</li> <li>– As a victim</li> <li>– As a defendant</li> <li>– Because of a summons for jury service</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Other contact <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Worked in the criminal justice system</li> <li>– Attended restorative justice conference for a criminal offence (not including youth justice conferences)</li> <li>– Other – please specify</li> </ul> </li> <li>• None of these</li> </ul>

\* While information is available on perceptions of probation officers and the prison service, this report focuses on the parts of the system most relevant to victims.

Answer categories are combined in the results presented in this report. For example, we report on the percentage of adults who are *completely or fairly* confident in the criminal justice system, had *high or very high* trust in each part, and *agree or strongly agree* that each part is fair. Results for other answer options are provided in the data tables accompanying this report.

## A.3 Weighting

All estimates are calculated using person weights to adjust for differences between the survey sample and the New Zealand adult population.<sup>21</sup> The weighting methodology is described in the NZCVS Cycle 2 methodology report (Ministry of Justice 2020b).

## A.4 Uncertainty of estimates

Because the NZCVS is a sample survey, it is subject to sampling error. Calculation of standard errors of the estimates is described in the NZCVS Cycle 2 methodology report (Ministry of Justice 2020b). Confidence intervals are constructed from the standard errors at the 95% level. Confidence intervals are provided as lines on graphs where suitable.

All observations and graphs in the report are based on data tables available from the separate Excel document located on the Ministry of Justice website (see <https://www.justice.govt.nz/justice-sector-policy/research-data/nzcvs/resources-and-results>). The margins of error around estimates are provided in those tables.

Some estimates should be used with caution due to high margin of error. This is clearly stated in relevant spreadsheets. As a rule, caution is advised with all percentage estimates with the margin of error between 10 and 20 percentage points. All estimates with a margin of error higher than 20 percentage points are either suppressed or aggregated. They are also suppressed or aggregated if their underlying numerators or denominators have a relative sample error of more than 50%.

## A.5 Rounding

Percentage estimates are rounded to the nearest integer. Percentages have been calculated from the unrounded figures, so calculations using rounded figures may differ from those published.

---

<sup>21</sup> Person weights are used even for analysis of individuals who experienced a household offence (eg, burglary), rather than household weights. This is because all outcome variables in this report are at the person level (eg, how much they trust the criminal justice system).

## A.6 Comparison of estimates by victim groups

No formal statistical tests are used to compare estimates across groups in this report. The margins of error for all responses are provided in the data tables that accompany this report. Where appropriate, confidence intervals (at the 95% level) are provided in graphs. When confidence intervals of two estimates are not overlapping, it can be concluded that there is a statistically significant difference. However, when the intervals do overlap, the difference is unlikely to be statistically significant.

These patterns are highlighted using the colour scheme summarised in the “**Error! Reference source not found.**” section. The colour scheme is used to indicate differences between groups of victims of different offence types from New Zealand adults overall. In tables, statistically significant differences are indicated in bold and italicised.

# Appendix B: Other NZCVS reports and future reporting

A number of resources are already available on the Ministry of Justice website to help access the results from the NZCVS, interpret findings, and understand the research.

The technical aspects of the research are discussed in detail in the methodology report available from <https://www.justice.govt.nz/justice-sector-policy/research-data/nzcvs/resources-and-results/>

The NZCVS Cycle 2 (2018/19) core report (the most comprehensive, full size report) is available from <https://www.justice.govt.nz/justice-sector-policy/research-data/nzcvs/resources-and-results/>.

Other products from NZCVS Cycle 1 (2018) and Cycle 2 (2018/19) are available from the same page, including topline reports, key findings, infographics and data tables.

NZCVS data (only those records obtaining respondents' consent) is now incorporated in the Stats NZ Integrated Data Infrastructure (<https://www.stats.govt.nz/integrated-data/integrated-data-infrastructure/>).

An in-depth module report on social wellbeing and perceptions of the criminal justice system from Cycle 2 (2018/19) is available at <https://www.justice.govt.nz/assets/Documents/Publications/Social-Wellbeing-and-Perceptions-of-the-Criminal-Justice-System-Report.pdf>.

An overview of important findings from the NZCVS Cycle 1 (2018) is available at <https://www.justice.govt.nz/assets/Documents/Publications/NZCVS-topical-report-Important-findings-Cycle-1-2018-v1.1-fin.pdf>

A topical report focused on highly victimised people from Cycle 1 (2018) is available at <https://www.justice.govt.nz/assets/Documents/Publications/HZTYUY-NZCVS-topical-report-2018-Highly-Victimised.pdf>.

A topical report focused on offences against adults by family members from Cycle 1 (2018) is available at <https://www.justice.govt.nz/assets/Documents/Publications/9ZU3Q-NZCVS-topical-report-Offences-by-family-members-Cycle-1-2018.pdf>.

A topical report on Māori victimisation in Aotearoa New Zealand using Cycle 1–2 (2018–2018/19) is available at <https://www.justice.govt.nz/assets/Documents/Publications/Maori-victimisation-report-v2.01-20210329-fin.pdf>.

Additional documents are also available from <https://www.justice.govt.nz/justice-sector-policy/research-data/nzcvs/resources-and-results/>.

If you have any feedback or questions about NZCVS results, please email us on [nzcvs@justice.govt.nz](mailto:nzcvs@justice.govt.nz).

**Ministry of Justice**  
**Tāhū o te Ture**  
**justice.govt.nz**  
info@justice.govt.nz  
0800 COURTS  
0800 268 787  
National Office  
Justice Centre | 19 Aitken St  
DX SX10088 | Wellington | New Zealand

