



New Zealand Crime and Victims Survey Released

The latest New Zealand Crime and Victims Survey (NZCVS) has found just under a third of adults have been the victims of personal and household crime.

The NZCVS, released today by the Ministry of Justice, is based on interviews with randomly selected people between November 2021 and November 2022. It shows 31 percent of New Zealanders experienced crime over 12 months before the interview.

“The proportion of adults experiencing crime is consistent with previous years,” said Ministry of Justice General Manager Sector Insights Rebecca Parish.

“However, we have found that these victims experienced more incidents of crime, with the rise driven by an increase in the number of deception and fraud offences, such as credit card fraud.”

“The NZCVS provides the best estimate of a wide range of personal and household offences both reported and unreported. It records personal offences where the person being surveyed was the victim of the crime, regardless of whether the offence was reported to the police.”

“It’s important to note that commercial and retail crime, crimes against businesses including ramraids, and murder and manslaughter, are not covered by the NZCVS. However, if an individual experiences interpersonal violence in their workplace this would still be covered in the survey.”

Overall, the NZCVS found that New Zealanders experienced 2.47 million incidents of crime in the 12 month period.

Over the same period the number of fraud and deception offences grew from 288,000 to 510,000.

The proportion of adults who experienced fraud and deception in the period increased from six percent to ten percent.

“We also know that, consistent with previous years, fraud and cybercrime have the lowest reporting rates,” Ms Parish says.

“Reasons for not reporting a crime vary. Overall, the most common reason that people give for not reporting is that they think the incident is too trivial to be worth reporting (45%).”

The NZCVS also showed that a small group of people, just four percent of adults, experience the majority of crime, 56 percent of all incidents.

“It’s important to remember that behind every statistic is a person and their personal experience. We’re now conducting further research to understand more about this group, and to inform policies that will better support these victims,” Ms Parish said.

The most common crimes experienced were fraud and deception, burglaries (288,000 offences experienced by 10 percent of households), and physical offences including physical assault and robbery.

Due to COVID-19 limitations, the latest NZCVS involved fewer interviews (5,326) and resulted in a lower response rate (71 percent) compared to previous years.

Therefore, caution is needed when interpreting some results.

Other key findings

- People who identify as LGBT+, people who are separated from a partner or spouse, and Māori were significantly more likely to experience at least one crime. These trends are consistent with the previous years.
- Compared with the previous survey, the prevalence of sexual assault in the most recent survey decreased slightly. In 2022, 81,000 adults (two percent of respondents) experienced at least one sexual assault compared with 84,000 adults (2.1 percent of respondents) in 2021.
- The number of adults who experienced personal violence has decreased slightly (six percent down from seven percent). But those six percent who experienced personal violence experienced more offences (29 offences per 100 adults, up from 19 offences per 100 adults a year ago). The same demographic groups (people who identify as LGBT+, people who are separated from a partner or spouse, and Māori) were significantly more likely to experience at least one incident of interpersonal violence.

Impact of COVID-19 report

The Ministry of Justice has also released a report which examines the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on crime and victimisation. The report compares data collected for the NZCVS before the first nationwide lockdown (1 March 2018 to 21 March 2020) with further data collected between 3 July 2020 –14 November 2022.

Key findings included:

- The rate of overall crime and victimisation remained stable at 30 percent.
- The proportion of households or adults that experienced a burglary decreased significantly from 12 percent to nine percent.
- The proportion of adults who experienced fraud and deception rose from six percent to eight percent.

“With the NZCVS now in its fifth year, this comparative analysis is the kind of work we are now able to undertake. These trends are most likely linked to changes in behaviour after the COVID-19 pandemic started, such as more people working remotely and shopping online. This has been the case overseas with similar findings,” Ms Parish says.

About the New Zealand Crime and Victims Survey (NZCVS)

- The NZCVS is based on nationwide, face-to-face interviews with people about their experiences of crime over the previous 12 months.
- The NZCVS is the most comprehensive source of data on adult victims of crime in New Zealand.
- Only about a quarter of crime is reported to the Police; so the NZCVS provides data on the nature and volume of crime.
- There are now five years of data, which represents almost 35,000 interviews since data was first collected in March 2018.