

Friday 27 September 2013

## **Briefing on police statistics relevant to family violence**

### **Official Statistics to be release on 1 October**

Official Statistics for Recorded and Resolved Offences will be published at 10:45am on Tuesday 1st October. These statistics relate to the year ending 30 June 2013.

As previously communicated, Official Statistics for Recorded and Resolved Offences include all offences, irrespective of the context in which they occur (such as family violence). They do not distinguish between these contexts. However, some types of offences are typically more relevant to family violence contexts than others.

The release protocol for Official Statistics precludes us being able to release specific figures to stakeholders prior to their public release. However, we have been publishing a series of statistical indicators every month that show an ongoing trend of crime falling in New Zealand.

One of these indicators is 'Dwelling Assaults', which includes all assaults recorded by Police that occur in Dwellings. Not all family violence occurs in Dwellings, and not all Dwelling Assaults are family violence. However, anecdotally, most Dwelling Assaults are family violence. So, even though it does not paint the complete picture, Dwelling Assaults is one indicator worth tracking to help understand what is happening with family violence.

As shown in the attached chart, numbers of Dwelling Assaults peaked back in 2010, before reducing. This decline now appears to have levelled off.

Any family violence indicators from police need to be treated with caution, because much family violence does not get reported to Police. Trends will therefore be influenced by changes in reporting rates, as well as changes in the incidence of family violence. Nevertheless, with this understanding, they at least provide an indicator of trends in the volume of family violence offending that Police have to deal with.

The Crime Statistics released on Tuesday will also contain other categories of particular relevance to family violence, such as *Males Assaults Female*, and *Breach of Protection Order*. Although detailed figures will be published on [www.stats.govt.nz](http://www.stats.govt.nz), Police will prepare a two-page high level summary of trends in these categories, which we will email you as soon as the figures are made public.

As with Dwelling Assaults, these categories include many instances that are relevant to family violence, but also some that are not. For example, many assaults on children or assaults by males on females are not family violence.

## **Developments in Police statistics**

Police is currently developing a new statistical dataset on victims and offenders. This will enhance the available statistical information relevant to family violence. In particular, it will include:

- demographic attributes of victims, such as their age, gender and ethnicity, and
- the relationship between victims and offenders

The addition of demographic attributes of victims will, for example, allow us to produce statistics on all assaults on children or females, rather than just those classified as *Assaults Child* or *Males Assaults Female*. For example, offences of Grievous Bodily Harm are not included in *Assaults Child* or *Males Assaults Female*. Having demographic attributes of victims in the data will allow us to count all assaults on children and females.

The addition of the relationship between victims and offenders will allow us to isolate which offences - violence or not - occur between family members and, more specifically, family members in specific relationships.

Combining these two enhancements will enable a much richer understanding of victimisation than just a broad label of Family Violence. We will, for example, be able to count sexual abuse of children by their parents, physical assaults between married couples, assaults on the elderly by family members or care givers, and more.

These developments are being made in line with recommendations in the *Review of Crime and Criminal Justice Statistics Report (2009)*, published by Statistics New Zealand.

Police has developed the back-end reporting capability to produce such statistics, and is currently scoping the changes required to the relevant operational IT system (NIA), to ensure the necessary data is recorded.

We expect by the end of 2013 being able to produce experimental statistics containing the demographic attributes of victims.

We hope that before the end of 2014 we will be able to produce experimental statistics containing the relationship between victims and offenders.

Then, during 2015 we plan to begin publishing a new official statistics series on victims and offenders containing all of this rich new information.

These statistics are likely to align closely with the Australian standard for Recorded Crime Victims Statistics, and Recorded Offender Statistics, published by the Australian Bureau of Statistics.

## **New management information reporting in Police**

Police recently developed new reporting to help us manage family violence investigations and risk assessments. Rather than count the incidence of family violence in society, this management reporting tells us about the family violence investigations and risk assessments Police are undertaking.

In particular, we are able to monitor what is happening around the country with ODARA risk assessments, Intimate Partner risk assessments, and Child Risk Factor risk assessments.

This allows us to see what risk factors are being recorded in these assessments. It also enables us to track and manage how long it is taking us to record and validate the risk assessments.

Although it is early days, we believe this reporting is a valuable aid for improving the effectiveness of our response to family violence. In particular, consistent with the Police *Prevention First* strategy, these risk assessments and associated management information reporting are helping us to prevent repeat family violence.

# Dwelling Assaults

