

# Family violence still significant problem in New Zealand

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Family violence is still a significant problem in New Zealand, according to the latest data summaries released by the NZ Family Violence Clearinghouse.

The third annual data updates were released today by the NZFVC that is based at the University of Auckland.

Amongst other data, the summaries show that between 2007 and 2013:

- 56 per cent of 176 female homicide victims were killed by a family member. Of those killed by a family member, 66 per cent were killed by a partner or ex-partner.
- 25 per cent of 300 male [homicide victims](#) were killed by a family member. Of those killed by a family member, 30 per cent were killed by a partner or ex-partner.

The data has been collected by government agencies, services and surveys.

"These figures show that [family violence](#) remains an important issue affecting a significant number of New Zealanders," says Pauline Gulliver, Research Fellow at the Clearinghouse.

Between 2005 and 2013 the number of sexual offences against adults reported to Police increased from 1187 to 1848.

The number of reported sexual offences against children increased from 1278 to 2071 in the same period.

"The Police attribute this increase to improved reporting," says Ms Gulliver. "However, we believe that further work is required to understand the causes of this increase. Is it also because the Police have improved their handling of historic abuse claims? Are advocates in the community providing more support to encourage people to come forward?"

During 2013:

- 95,080 family violence investigations were conducted by the Police. Offences were recorded at 37,880 of these.
- 12,490 Police Safety Orders (PSOs) were issued
- There were 5025 recorded breaches of Protection Orders and 3835 convictions for "Breach of Protection Order and Non-Molestation Order" were prosecuted.

"While the number of PSOs being issued has increased every year since they were introduced in 2010, over the same period there has been a reduction in the number of applications for Protection Orders" says Ms Gulliver. "There has also been an increase in the number of family violence investigations with no offence recorded."

"We believe that it is important to understand if PSOs are being issued appropriately. We need to know why there has been a reduction in Protection Order applications and increase in family violence investigations with no offences recorded during this time. Are victims of family violence being adequately protected?"

Ms Gulliver says that while data such as this is useful, "If we really want

to understand the level of violence that is happening in the community, we need community-based surveys, such as the Violence Against Women survey conducted in 2003."

"Government agency data is useful, however, for furthering our understanding of how agencies are responding to family violence," she says.

Provided by University of Auckland

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