

Patterns in Police Apprehensions in New Zealand 2005/06 to 2008/09

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Preface

Patterns in Police Apprehensions in New Zealand 2005/06 to 2008/09 uses official New Zealand police apprehension statistics between the 2005/06 and 2008/09 police fiscal years to explore three aspects of police apprehensions.

Within the criminal justice system, the New Zealand Police provide the crucial first response to crime, after which offenders are filtered through the courts and, ultimately, the prison system. The initial police phase of the criminal justice system impacts upon the lives of many New Zealanders. It is important to have a clear understanding of this area, both in terms of the people affected and the resources expended.

The first aspect of police apprehensions describes the offences that make up the apprehensions environment, looking at offence composition and trends. The second aspect of this report looks at the differences in resolution type, such as prosecution or warning/caution, between each type of offence, and investigates the relationship between offence seriousness and resolution type. Finally, the third aspect of this report looks at the demographic variables of age and gender in relation to the type of offence. As well as using raw volumes, the report also incorporates the Ministry of Justice seriousness scale to shed new light on the intensity of offences being committed, who is committing them, and how they are being dealt with.



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Executive summary

Introduction

The aim of this report is to describe and analyse patterns in the apprehension of offenders in New Zealand from 2005/06 to 2008/09. *Patterns in Police Apprehensions in New Zealand 2005/06 to 2008/09* uses official New Zealand police apprehension statistics to explore the composition of and trends in offence types, how they are being dealt with, and who is committing them.

Data

Police statistics on apprehensions¹ comprise the demographic characteristics of offenders, what offences they were apprehended for, and the initial method by which they were dealt with. This report focuses on recent trends by looking at four years of data between the 2005/06 and 2008/09 fiscal years. Some factors to be kept in mind when interpreting the data include:

- the counting rules (such as being apprehension-based,² not offender-based)
- not all crime comes to the attention of police
- the data are sourced from an administrative data system (which is not built for statistical purposes).

The report has eight chapters which analyse apprehensions (chapters 5–12). The first (chapter 5) provides a summary of all offence categories, and the subsequent chapters focus on one of the seven offence categories, split into a number of more detailed offence classes.

Methodology

The first component of this report explores patterns and trends in offence composition of police apprehensions. Overall volumes are important in their own right, and so offences are analysed by offence category. To determine the intensity of offending, a 'gravity score' is produced by multiplying the Ministry of Justice seriousness score of each offence by its volume. The report also looked to identify whether trends in police apprehensions reflect trends in overall recorded crime, as well as changes in the resolution rate (ie the proportion of recorded crime solved).

The second component of this report looks at the resolution type used to deal with offenders, such as prosecution, or warning/caution. It looks at the differences in resolution type between each type of offence, and investigates the relationship between offence seriousness (as defined by the Ministry of Justice seriousness scale) and resolution type (particularly the warning/caution rate). Whether the response is

¹ New Zealand Police recorded crime and apprehension data can be accessed on Statistics NZ's [Table Builder](#), available on [www.stats.govt.nz](#).

² Police apprehensions count multiple offenders who commit one offence multiple times, and multiple offences committed by one offender are also counted multiple times.

proportionate to the seriousness of the offence is also considered here. Analysis on resolutions was restricted to adults (17 years and older).

The final component of this report relates to the demographic characteristics of apprehended offenders. Age, particularly the transition from the teenage years to adulthood; and sex, in regard to the gender gap in crime, has historically been subject to much attention and research, and central to the explanation of criminal behaviour. This report identifies some patterns in the relationship between these demographic variables and the type of offence.

Main results by offence category

Similar to recorded crime, apprehensions only reflect those offences that are brought to the attention of police, and more specifically, those offences for which there was an apprehension.

Overall picture

- There were large increases in apprehensions for the antisocial (29 percent), violence (28 percent), and drugs (22 percent) categories from 2005/06 to 2008/09. These changes corresponded with increases in recorded crime and the resolution rate.
- When taking into account offence seriousness and volume (the gravity score), apprehensions for the violence category occupied the greatest proportion (38 percent) of all offence categories.
- The overall warning/caution rate was 13 percent, ranging from 21 percent for property damage/abuse offences, to 6 percent for dishonesty offences.
- The ratio of male:female offending was 4:1, percentage-wise being closest for dishonesty offences (26 percent female) and furthest for sexual offences (2 percent female).
- The apprehension rate decreased sharply with increasing age, from 17 years of age onwards.

Violence category

- Over the four years covered by the report, there were large increases in apprehensions for violence offences, particularly 'other serious assaults' (44 percent), 'grievous assaults' (36 percent), and 'minor assaults' (29 percent). There was also a decrease in 'homicide' apprehensions (18 percent).
- The warning/caution rate varied by offence class, from 32 percent for 'minor assaults', to 2 percent for 'grievous assaults', reflecting differences in the seriousness of these offences.
- Female involvement in violent offending ranged from 32 percent for 'minor assaults' to 14 percent for 'robbery', indicating that females commit less serious, and fewer, violence offences than males.
- The violence category had one of the highest median ages of all offence categories, at 27 years, yet this contrasted with a steep decrease in the average seriousness of offending from 16 years of age onwards.

Sexual category

- 'Indecent assault' (31 percent) and 'sexual violation' (30 percent) were the two largest offence classes by volume for sexual offence apprehensions.
- 'Sexual violation', which includes rape, is the most serious offence class within the sexual offence category, and accounted for 78 percent of total sexual offence apprehensions in terms of gravity scores.
- The most notable characteristic of the sexual offence category was that the vast majority are committed by males (98 percent).
- The median age for the sexual offence category (32 years of age) was the highest of all offence categories.

Drugs category

- For drugs apprehensions, 'possession/use of cannabis' was by far the largest offence class, with a volume share of 40 percent.
- Increases in apprehensions for 'possession/use' (18 percent increase) and 'dealing/trafficking' (105 percent increase) of cannabis contributed most to the 22 percent increase in the drugs category.
- The median age varied by offence class, from 23 years for 'possession and use of cannabis', to 35 years for 'manufacture and cultivation of non-cannabis' drugs. The median age for cannabis offences was generally lower than non-cannabis offences.
- The average seriousness of apprehensions for drugs offending rose steeply from 10 years of age to 50 years of age.

Antisocial category

- Apprehensions for 'behaviour offences' (39 percent) and 'alcohol offences' (25 percent) were the two main offence classes within the antisocial category, by volume.
- Many offences within the antisocial category are dealt with through the Summary Offences Act 1981, and therefore have low gravity scores.
- There was a high median age (35 years) associated with 'family offences'.

Dishonesty category

- 'Theft' (48 percent) and 'burglary' (21 percent) contributed the greatest share to overall volumes of apprehensions for dishonesty offences.
- 'Burglary' occupied the greatest share of apprehensions in terms of gravity score, at 66 percent.
- Dishonesty offence classes typically had high prosecution rates, for example 'burglary' (88 percent), 'receiving' (94 percent), and 'fraud' (88 percent).
- 'Shoplifting' (48 percent female) and 'fraud' (39 percent female) had the closest gender gap not only in the dishonesty category, but also in all offence categories.

Property damage/abuse category

- 'Wilful damage of property' (51 percent) and 'trespass offences' under the Trespass Act 1980 (28 percent), were responsible for the largest proportion of property damage/abuse apprehensions.
- The high average seriousness associated with 'arson' and 'Arms Act offences' means these offences accounted for 59 percent and 26 percent, respectively, of the total property damage/abuse gravity score.
- The warning/caution rate for the property damage/abuse category of 21 percent was the highest of all offence categories.
- The low median age for arson offences, and high seriousness associated with these offences, indicates why the average seriousness was so high between the ages of 10 and 15 years.

Administrative category

- The major offence class of the administrative offence category, 'failure to answer bail', comprised an average 66 percent of all administrative apprehensions between 2005/06 and 2008/09.
- Despite its high volume, the significance of 'failure to answer bail' apprehensions was reduced when offence seriousness was taken into account, especially when compared with 'other against justice' offences.
- 'Failure to answer bail' offences had one of the highest prosecution rates of all offence classes, despite a low average seriousness.

Discussion and conclusion

The objective of the first component of this analytical report was to describe the characteristics of police apprehensions using overall volumes integrated with the seriousness of offending. The offence categories of interest change depending on the type of measure used. In terms of volume, the offence classes of theft, burglary, wilful damage, serious and minor assaults, alcohol, and behaviour offences occupy the greatest share of total offending. In terms of the gravity score, grievous assaults, robbery, burglary, and sexual violation occupy the greatest share.

There was also substantial change from 2005/06 to 2008/09, where the offence classes 'other serious assaults', 'minor assaults', 'intimidations and threats', 'behaviour offences', and 'alcohol offences' accounted for around half the 12 percent increase in total volumes. The offence classes of grievous and other serious assaults, robbery, dealing and trafficking drugs, and burglary accounted for an even larger proportion of the 13 percent increase in gravity score.

In general, in most offence categories and classes, an increase in apprehensions was consistent with an increase in recorded crime, as well as a small increase in the resolution rate. Other factors, such as a change in the total population or numbers of police, can have an impact on changes in apprehensions. It is also important to consider the context of offence categories, which reflect the complex interaction between offence severity, offence complexity, police priority, and the willingness of public reporting.

The results of the second component of this report indicate that resolution type varied relative to the type of offence class under analysis, both between and within offence categories. Although complex, there was a relationship between offence seriousness and resolution type. The report generally showed offences with a low average seriousness were more likely to be dealt with by warning/caution than offences with high average seriousness. It is evident police use their discretion in determining resolution type, where the vast majority of low- to mid-seriousness offences had a warning/caution element to them. This indicates police take into account a host of aggravating and mitigating factors when determining resolution type.

In every offence category and class of this report, the younger age groups were more likely to be apprehended than older age groups. Despite this, there were still variations in the patterns, with different age of onset, peaks, and subsequent decreases based on different offences. These patterns reflect the opportunity structures available for certain groups, where, for example, younger age groups are less likely to be involved in relationship-related offences such as breaches of protection orders, as they are less involved in adult relationships. Clear patterns were also reflected in gender distributions, where there was a far lower rate of offending for females than males. In general, males committed more serious crimes than females, particularly within the violence and dishonesty offence categories.

More in-depth studies could reinforce or validate the patterns identified in this report, such as analysis of resolution types by demographic group, analysis of offender histories with administrative data, and analysis of alternative measures of offence seriousness.

1 Introduction

The criminal justice system is society's fundamental instrument for dealing with crime, delivering justice, and preventing future offending. Within this system, the New Zealand Police are mandated to provide the crucial first response to crime, and thus contribute to determining who goes through this system. The criminal justice system then filters offenders through the courts and, ultimately, the prison system. The initial police phase of the criminal justice system impacts on the lives of many New Zealanders. It is important to have a clear understanding of this area, both in terms of the people affected and the resources expended. The aim of this report is to describe and analyse the recent trends and patterns in the apprehension of offenders in New Zealand.

This report analyses three components of the initial phase of the criminal justice system – otherwise known as the apprehension of offenders.

- **Component 1: The overall picture:** The first component investigates the volume, trends, and intensity of the different types of offences progressing through to the criminal justice system. This creates the basis for determining what offences are creating the greatest workload on the criminal justice system.
- **Component 2: Analysis of resolution type:** The resolution type used to deal with offenders is the subject of the second component of this report. The police and Police Prosecution Service (PPS) determine the resolution type for apprehensions based on a number of factors including offence seriousness and public interest. The discretionary judgment of the officer is critical in deciding which resolution type to use. Whether the response is proportionate to the seriousness of the crime, and the degree to which it varies across offence types, are considered here.
- **Component 3: Demographics and apprehensions:** The final component of this report relates to the demographic characteristics of apprehended offenders. Age, particularly the transition from the teenage years to adulthood; and sex, in regard to the gender gap in crime, has historically been subject to much attention and research, and central to the explanation of criminal behaviour. This report identifies patterns in these demographic variables relating to the type of offence in the New Zealand context.

The report uses official police apprehension data to explore these components. Police apprehension statistics provide one of the most valuable measures of offending in New Zealand. As is the case with all administrative data, patterns can be affected by a number of different factors. As aggregate crime rates are regularly cited in the media and fuel debate in many circles, it is important to understand these factors and ensure the data is not taken at face value. Chapters 3 and 4 discuss the nature and limitations of the data, and the methodology employed.

This report follows on from other Statistics New Zealand reports on crime in New Zealand (Statistics New Zealand, 2001 and 2006), which looked at trends in recorded crime, and reasons for those trends. It complements other statistical reports of crime such as the Ministry of Justice conviction and sentencing reports and child and youth offending reports, and the Department of Corrections offender volumes reports.

This report is structured into thirteen chapters. This chapter introduces the research topic and scope of the report. Chapters 2 to 4 describe and review the relevant literature, and outline the data sources and methodology. Later, the methodology is applied to an overarching offence chapter. Each of the subsequent seven chapters then looks at a specific offence category, split into a number of more detailed offence classes. The categories are:

- violence
- sexual
- drugs
- antisocial
- dishonesty
- property damage/abuse
- administrative.

The last chapter presents the final conclusions of this report and considers recommendations for future analysis.

Scope

This report limits analysis of resolution type to adult offenders (17 years and over). There are a number of reasons for this. First, children (aged 10–13 years) and young people (aged 14–16 years) are dealt with through the Children, Young Persons, and their Families Act 1988. There are different objectives and factors to consider in dealing with children compared with adults. In particular the Act states that, “unless the public interest requires otherwise, criminal proceedings should not be instituted against a child or young person if there is an alternative means of dealing with the matter.” Consequently, demographic-specific resolutions such as family group conferences are outside the scope of this analysis.

Secondly, there is a good body of work about the youth age group. For example, the 2009 Ministry of Justice report *Child and youth offending statistics in New Zealand: 1992 to 2007* provides statistical monitoring of police resolutions. In 2004 a comprehensive report based on achieving effective outcomes in youth justice was published, offering insight into methods with which police dealt with youth in New Zealand (Maxwell et al, 2004).

This report is restricted to trends in four years of data, drawn from the 2005/06 to 2008/09 fiscal years (ending 30 June). There are consistency issues with police apprehensions data over longer periods of time. More information on the comparability of this data can be found in chapter 3 of this report.

Although of importance, geographic comparisons are outside the scope of this report, but could be the subject of a future report. Analysis of ethnicity is also out of scope due to quality issues associated with these data. Police ethnicity data is “...in principle based on self-reported ethnicity, but in practice the police may record ethnicity based on police impressions...” (Statistics NZ, 2009, p 46). This could introduce bias to any analysis of police ethnicity data. Work currently under way in the justice sector, however, will provide a more reliable measure in the future (for more information, see Statistics NZ, 2009). Information on traffic offending is also excluded from the report as traffic

information is kept on a separate data system from the apprehensions data (Ministry of Justice, 2009).

Finally, this report is not a study about arrest decisions. Arrest is different from the definition of apprehension as used in this report (although, for example, it may have been used in the lead up to prosecution). Regardless, arrest is not part of the official apprehensions data used in this report. This analysis is better seen as the process after arrest. A discussion of what exactly the police apprehension statistics used in this report measure can be found in chapter 3.

2 Key agencies, processes, and concepts

This chapter reviews and defines key agencies, processes, and concepts relevant to this report. The chapter is not exhaustive, but rather aims to give a flavour of some of the major research findings and consensus around the concepts and issues discussed in this report.

The police

Since the passage of the Police Force Act in 1886, the New Zealand Police has been the agency formally tasked with dealing with crime in New Zealand. To understand the police role in the apprehension of offenders, it is important to understand the place and purpose of police in New Zealand. The police have mandated responsibility for keeping the peace, maintaining public safety, law enforcement, crime prevention, community support and reassurance, national security, and emergency management (Policing Act, 2008). Police often respond to matters not with formal arrest, cautioning, and prosecution but by seeking "... citizen compliance and order maintenance by such methods as simply making their presence or interest known to potential troublemakers, stopping and questioning them, persuading, advising, commanding, or threatening them, or referring problems to other agencies." (Committee to Review Research on Police Policy and Practices, 2004, p163).

Despite having no specific formal powers and statutory basis, police involvement with the prosecution and wider resolution process arises from their mandate to address crime, and the state power to use force (Ohlin & Remington, 1993; New Zealand Police, 2006). In other words, the formal powers given to police puts them in the best position to collate the evidence required for the prosecution of an offence, which is why the police prosecute the majority of offences in New Zealand. Because police are often operating at the street and community level, they are in the best position to dispense 'on the spot' justice through warnings and cautions, where appropriate (Goldstein, 1960).

The Police Prosecution Service

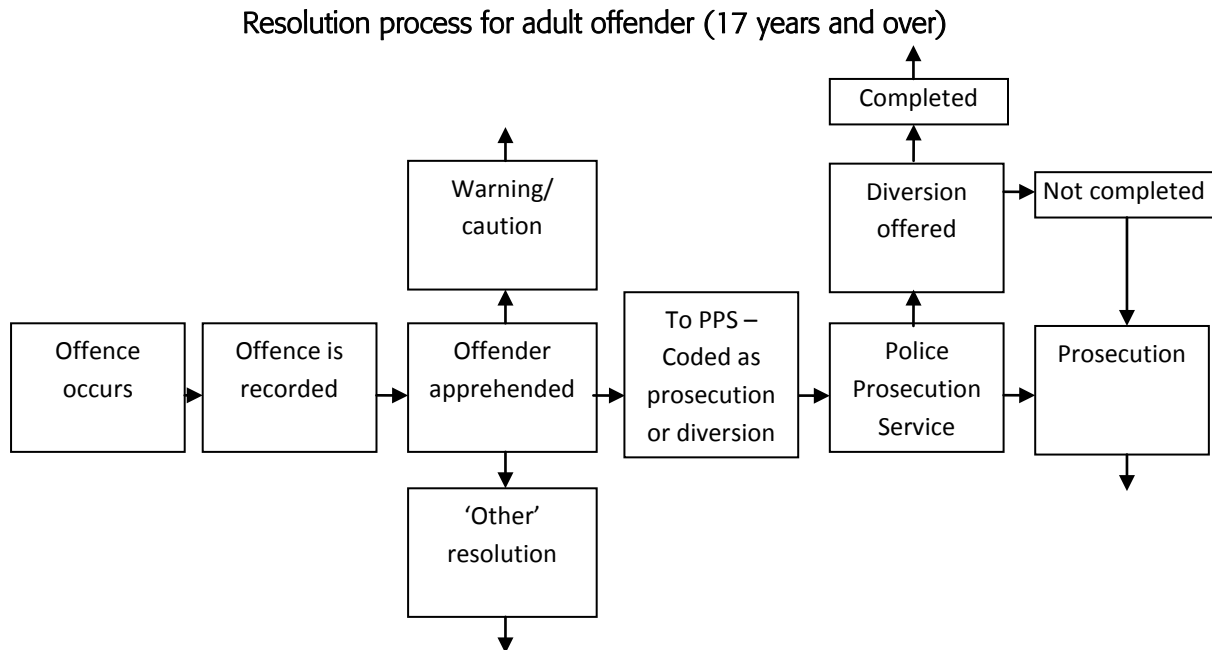
The Police Prosecution Service (PPS) was established in 1999 and essentially "decides how to deal with cases once a prosecution has been commenced" (New Zealand Police 2009b, p8). Despite being structured to be administratively separate from the police, the PPS is not fully independent, reporting to the commissioner (New Zealand Law Commission, 2004; New Zealand Police, 2009b).

The investigating police officer generally takes centre stage in the decision to charge, selection of charges, and the provisional course of action. Cases are then supplied to the police prosecutor who is responsible for providing advice, reviewing the case and performing legal tests of its evidential sufficiency and public interest (New Zealand Law Commission, 2004). The investigating officer then resumes control over the case for the post-charge process.

The resolution process

The objective of this section is to define the main aspects of the resolution process. The police decision on how to proceed against an offender is the outcome of a complex process. Figure 2.1 provides a simplified diagram of the possible pathways and options available to an officer and the police prosecution service.

Figure 2.1



As figure 2.1 shows, once an officer has investigated an offence, and apprehended an alleged offender, the officer has a number of options to choose from in order to proceed. The officer in the first instance may decide a warning or caution may suffice, and that is where the process ends. Where diversion or prosecution is necessary, the case officer would charge the alleged offender with the offence and 'lay an information' (the formal commencement of charges). This information would then be sworn before a court registrar, before being sent through to the investigating officer's supervisor. The PPS then receives the case before the first court appearance. Once the decision is made, the defendant would then go to an initial court appearance (Law Commission, 2005).

Resolution types

There have been a number of studies on different aspects of police resolution methods for dealing with apprehended offenders. As mentioned earlier, the effects of the Children, Young Persons, and their Families (CYFS) Act introduced in 1989 on police action has been well researched in New Zealand (Lynch, 2008; Maxwell et al, 2004). Similar legislative changes in youth justice have been researched overseas, such as in Canada (Schulenberg, 2006; Carrington & Schulenberg, 2008).

Police decision-making and practice has also been explored in relation to domestic violence (Rowe, 2007; Garner & Maxwell, 2009), the reclassification of cannabis (Warburton et.al, 2005), and ethnicity (Department of Corrections, 2007).

Diversion from prosecution, and final warnings, have also come under analysis, in both the United Kingdom (Sanders, 1988; Hillyard & Gordon, 1999; Fox, Dhimi, & Mantle, 2006) and New Zealand (New Zealand Law Commission, 2004 and 2005; Stenning, 2008).

Prosecution

Prosecution is the act of formally proceeding against an alleged offender for an offence. Prosecution opens the gate for legal court proceedings to determine whether the offender committed the offence based on admissible evidence.

Throughout the resolution process, the decision to prosecute is based on a number of guidelines (see Crown Law Office, 2010). The criteria used in this process are more comprehensive than just taking into account the seriousness of offence. There are two tests to consider. The first is determining the strength of the evidential basis. This involves considering whether:

- the evidence supports the charge, and the charge reflects the seriousness of offending
- the evidence is suitable to withstand court proceedings.

The second test is whether it is in the public interest to prosecute. Whether or not a case is judged to be in the public interest to prosecute can be determined by a number of factors, including: the seriousness of the offence, the age or mental health of the offender, and the complainant not being willing to proceed with the charges.

Although the charging officer will generally take these considerations into account when deciding how to proceed with an offender, the formal legal tests described above are the responsibility of the Police Prosecution Service. Using these guidelines, each prosecution is evaluated individually, taking a potentially large number of factors into account. Controlling for all these factors in research is difficult.

The PPS may drop charges the police have processed through to them and, on first impression, this may seem inefficient. Yet each aspect of the criminal justice system, whether police, justice, or corrections, has its own function and mandate. In this view, evidential requirements will have wider boundaries for police in making apprehensions, than they have for the PPS in regard to prosecution (Gottfredson & Gottfredson, 1988; Law Commission, 2005; Stenning, 2008).

This logic, however, runs contrary to the theory of prosecution momentum, which suggests prosecutors will generally accept prosecutions based on the time and work put into making a case by an investigating police officer (New Zealand Law Commission, 2005; Bridges et al, 1996; Sanders, 1988). These decisions mean the nature of the statistics can change based on where in the process they are collected. In other words, the data collected before the PPS process could be significantly different, in terms of resolutions and charges, from data collected after the PPS process.

Police adult diversion

The police adult diversion scheme was introduced to ensure first time offenders are not stigmatised by being processed through the criminal justice system and convicted for minor offences. The scheme gives the criminal justice system an opportunity to focus on more serious offenders and offences as the public interest requires (Gottfredson & Gottfredson, 1988).

Eligible offenders are usually offered diversion around the time of their first court appearance. Cases are adjourned, and offenders are then given a window in which to complete the diversion conditions agreed upon. Conditions can range from apologies, to reparation, counselling, and services to the community (New Zealand Police, 2009a). If the offender does not complete the diversion conditions, prosecution may be commenced.

Suitability for diversion is based on two criteria. The offender-based criteria should take into account issues such as this being a first offence for the offender, any special circumstances in the offence, and the offender accepting responsibility. The second, offence-based criteria links in with the prosecution guidelines, where the offence category is not serious and the public interest would not be compromised. A number of other aggravating and mitigating factors may also be taken into account (New Zealand Police, 2009a).

Warnings and cautions

Two informal actions are available to police officers when dealing with minor offences. Cautions are the more informal of the two and administered at an officer's discretion. Written warnings are the more formal of the two. However, they both serve the same purpose, in that they reduce the workload in the criminal justice system. Offenders are not stigmatised with a conviction, or criminal record, and nor are there penalties associated with them. As these resolutions are given with minimal time delay, they are an appropriate measure of police discretion, providing officers with the flexibility to deal with minor issues (New Zealand Law Commission, 2004).

Other resolutions

There are often other factors which prevent processing an offender in a traditional way. They may include the mental health of the offender, the alleged offender being deceased, or the offender already being in custody for a more serious offence. In this report, these resolutions are grouped into the category of 'other'.

Concepts

Discretion

Discretion is a broad concept (Nickels, 2007), which has been described as the "art of suiting action to particular circumstances" (Lord Scarman, 1981). Like the United Kingdom and Australia, New Zealand is a common law country. In basic terms, common law works on the grounds that discretion is used formally and informally throughout all stages of the criminal justice system (Warburton et al, 2005). Discretion begins, for example, with the victim's decision to report an offence to the police (or not), and continues through to Parole Board decisions to release individuals from prison (or not).

Discretionary action is particularly evident in frontline policing, from deciding whether to record an offence, to deciding whether to arrest a suspect, and to the act of prosecuting that suspect. The concept of discretion has been the subject of much debate in police literature (see Gottfredson & Gottfredson, 1988; Sanders, 1988; Gelsthorpe & Padfield, 2003; Nickels, 2007).

The use of discretion by the police is necessary due to a number of factors including: finite resources (it is not practical for officers to strictly enforce the law for all offences,

and there are grounds to focus on serious offences); interpretational latitude (many laws are ambiguous); legitimacy (police need to balance applying the law and maintaining public approval, with showing compassion); and efficiency (Terrill & Paoline, 2007; Fox, Dhami, & Mantle, 2006; Rowe, 2007; Reisig, Bratton, & Gertz, 2007).

This discretion is not unrestricted, and as seen above, the decisions police make are subject to guidelines and training to ensure as much consistency as possible (Crown Law Office, 2010). Overseas research shows, however, that due to the complexity of this process, inconsistencies may occur. Like most guidelines, they are broad, open to interpretation, and may only reduce the risk of inconsistency (Ohlin & Remington, 1993; Sanders, 1988; Stenning, 2008).

Proportionality

One of the enduring principles of a criminal justice system is the concept of proportionality. Proportionality relates to whether the punishment of the offender fits the crime – in other words, offenders should receive fairness and ‘just deserts’ in their penalties.

The concept of proportionality is most often applied to the courts. However, as the criminal justice process begins with the police, it is important to consider whether the initial response is proportionate to the crime. What constitutes a ‘proportionate response’ is open to interpretation, and is perhaps quite troublesome (Begaric & McConvill, 2005). In the police context, a proportionate response implies that less serious offences are more likely to be dealt with by way of warning and caution. Carrington and Schulenberg (2008) conducted similar work looking at youth apprehension data in Canada.

Different policy, practice, and other factors can affect proportionality as the major principle guiding the decisions affecting offenders (Lovegrove, 2000). For example, any increase or decrease in the rate of prosecution could simply reflect a change in repeat offending – offenders are more likely to be prosecuted if they have repeatedly committed an offence (Crown Law Office, 2010). In this case, the principle of proportionality is tempered to ensure penalties imposed on offenders befit their actions (Warner, 1992). Although the justice system is underpinned by this concept of ‘just deserts’, alternative, and at times conflicting, goals such as rehabilitation and crime reduction can be sought (Lovegrove, 2000).

Demographic characteristics and crime

Gender and age are two of the most important and contentious variables in the explanation of criminal behaviour. This section provides only a brief summary of these variables and consequently does not discuss the full range of arguments relating to these variables.

Males commit more offences than females in nearly every area, and this ‘gender gap’ has been the subject of much attention. Arguments as to why males commit more offences than females are many (see South & Messner, 2000). As Steffensmeier & Allan (1996) argue, the difference in offending between males and females can be considered in terms of a number of criteria, including biological factors, organisation of gender, motivation for crime, criminal opportunities, and context for offending. The less frequent involvement of females in crime could be due to females undergoing a much closer socialising and monitoring process in childhood than males. It has also been

argued that changes in this socialisation process are resulting in gender convergence (Hirschi & Gottfredson, 1983; Stolzenberg & D'Allesio, 2004; Smith, 2005).

As with gender, age is another significant correlate of criminal offending. The observation that crime peaks in youth and rapidly decreases with advancing age is well known. Hirschi and Gottfredson (1983), in a well cited argument, hypothesise that this pattern is invariant across time, location, and other variables. As with gender, explanations for the age-crime relationship are numerous, although consensus is lacking.

At the onset, it is important to reinforce that the data contained in this report reflects police apprehensions, rather than overall crime. The official figures could reflect the social response to young people and their place in society (for example, being more visible). There is cause to suggest that much unreported crime, such as fraud, is committed by older offenders, where older offenders are more skilful in evading capture. Despite this, self-report survey data from the United Kingdom has shown that younger age groups do commit more crime (Budd, Sharp, & Mayhew, 2005).

Other arguments for the high involvement of youth in crime include increased physical ability and testosterone levels, more thrill seeking and risky behaviour, more sources of reinforcement (such as group peer pressure), a lack of cognitive development, dependant status (such as living with parents) lessening the cost of criminal activity, and lesser requirements to conform to social rules (Steffensmeier et al, 1989; Marvell & Moody, 1991). Desistance from crime has proved a popular theory explaining the age curve, on the grounds that with ageing come changing 'social roles and opportunities' (such as marriage or entering the labour force) – in other words, people 'grow out of' crime (Smith, 2005).

3 Data used in this report

This report uses New Zealand Police recorded crime and apprehension statistics (fiscal year),³ the Ministry of Justice seriousness scale, and Statistics New Zealand population estimates. A discussion of the methods, limitations, and justifications for using this data follows.

New Zealand Police apprehension statistics

Police statistics on apprehensions include the demographic characteristics of offenders, what offences they committed, and how they were dealt with initially. The statistics represent the number of apprehensions and not the number of offences. They do not provide a count of distinct individuals. One person apprehended for multiple offences is counted multiple times in the data, and offences for which there are multiple offenders apprehended are counted multiple times.

The apprehensions dataset is sourced from the police operational system and is captured at the close-off date for the reporting period (ie a snapshot). The police operational system, called the National Intelligence Application (NIA), is a dynamic data system used primarily for record keeping purposes. Using this data for statistical purposes leads to some trade-offs between operational needs (such as internal reporting and case management), and the type of data recording required for statistical purposes (Statistics New Zealand, 2009). As the apprehensions dataset is a snapshot of a dynamic system, it may fail to reflect changes to the data once the snapshot has taken place, such as charges being added or removed, updates on the details of offenders, and so on. NIA replaced the Law Enforcement System in June 2005 (Statistics New Zealand, 2006). Axist Consulting (2005) produced a report which identified discontinuities in the change-over between the two systems. For this reason data collected before 2005 is not used in this report.

Although the dataset covers a number of factors in the apprehension decision, some other factors are not included, such as suspect behaviour, available evidence, and policy changes (Garner & Maxwell, 2009; Terrill & Paoline, 2007).

A key shortcoming of the data in the context of this report is that it generally reflects the charging officer's initial decision, rather than the final resolution method for offences. This places limitations on using apprehension data in this report's analysis, including:

- Police adult diversion – Referral for police adult diversion is primarily the role of the Police Prosecution Service, and as apprehension statistics are generally captured before PPS input, the diversion statistics will represent a significant undercount of total diversion.
- Prosecutions – Police prosecution statistics only represent the initial, rather than final decision to proceed against an offender. Charges added or removed at a later stage of the process will not be recorded.

³ New Zealand Police recorded crime and apprehension data can be accessed on Statistics NZ's [Table Builder](#), available on www.stats.govt.nz.

The significant undercount of total diversion mentioned above led to a decision to combine the police adult diversion statistics with the prosecution statistics. Although there are other diversion measures available through the New Zealand Police NIA, these are inappropriate for official statistics use due to a lack of data quality checking. The impact of diversion on the prosecution figures therefore needs to be considered here. The available evidence suggests diversion is skewed towards the younger age groups. Therefore prosecution rates for young populations in this report may be overestimated, as they might ultimately have been dealt with by diversion.

The New Zealand Police measure of gender used in this report is a by-product of the context in which it is collected. By definition, it reflects more the Statistics New Zealand concept of sex rather than gender; sex being the biological distinction between males and females. In practice, officers take down information based on physical appearance. This creates problems in classifying transsexual and transgender people. Despite these limitations, the police measure is used for the concept of gender in this report.

New Zealand Police recorded crime statistics

New Zealand Police recorded crime statistics provide a picture of the incidence of different offences, whether they were resolved, and changes over time at the national and sub-national level (police district and area).

The recorded crime statistics are subject to many of the limitations of the apprehension statistics, such as being sourced from the same operational system. Recorded crime statistics also do not represent a total count of crime, but only those reported to, and detected by, the police.

Recorded crime statistics are not directly comparable with apprehensions statistics. There are different counting rules for recorded crime and apprehensions. The recorded crime statistics give a count of offences, whereas the apprehension statistics give a count of apprehensions. For example, one offence committed by multiple offenders will be counted once in the recorded crime statistics, but multiple times in the apprehensions statistics.

Ministry of Justice seriousness scale

A seriousness scale applies relative weights to offences to account for the difference in the seriousness of offences. The scale used in this report is based on the Ministry of Justice scale developed in 1991. Seriousness scores are determined by multiplying the average number of days of imprisonment imposed on every offender convicted of a particular offence, by the proportion of those offenders convicted who received an imprisonment for that offence. For example, if between 2000 and 2004 there were 100 cases of offenders convicted of a particular offence, and 50 of these cases resulted in a custodial sentence, and the average length of the custodial sentences imposed on these offenders was 30 days, then the seriousness score for this offence is $(30 \times 50/100)$, or 15 (Ministry of Justice, 2008). In addition:

- non-imprisonable offences are assigned a seriousness score of zero
- offences not occurring in the time period will receive a score of zero
- imprisonable offences where offenders are not imprisoned will score zero.

The seriousness scale used in this report should be seen more as a proxy measure rather than an authoritative view of offence seriousness. This scale is based on the court's view of offence seriousness and may not concord with either the police operational or public views (Schulenberg, 2006). It is a reflection of the sentencing practices of the time, and sentencing practices may change while the underlying crime levels remain stable. The decision to prosecute, divert, or caution an offender is also not always based primarily on offence seriousness. Seriousness is aggregated by offence, so does not take into account differences in sentencing decisions by age or gender.

This report uses the 2005 version of the Ministry of Justice seriousness scale, yet uses fiscal police apprehension data from 2005/06 to 2008/09. Often police will add or change offences as legislation changes. Any offence codes added after 2005 are not assigned an offence score, meaning the data is incomplete. Caveats have been put in place where there are significant volumes missing. As 99.05 percent of all offences have a seriousness score assigned to them, this is a minor issue.⁴ Chapter 4 provides an in-depth discussion about how the scale is used in this report.

Population estimates and projections

Statistics NZ population estimates are used in this report. The estimates used are based on 30 June 'mean year ended' estimates for the years 2006 to 2009. Population estimates are disaggregated by sex and single year of age where necessary.

The estimated resident population of New Zealand is an estimate of all people who usually live in New Zealand at a given date. It includes all residents present in New Zealand and counted by the census, residents who are temporarily overseas (who are not included in the census), and an adjustment for residents missed or counted more than once by the census (net census undercount). Visitors from elsewhere in New Zealand and from overseas are excluded (Statistics NZ, 2009).

⁴ This primarily impacts on the wilful damage offence class, where graffiti offences do not have an assigned seriousness score (accounting for 72% of the missing volume). Graffiti offences are dealt with under the Summary Offences Act, and therefore would have a low average seriousness score, having minimal impact on the data.

4 Methodology

Summary of methodology

This report draws on four years' police apprehension data, from the 2005/06 to 2008/09 fiscal years. It uses a modified version of the New Zealand Police offence classification.

Component 1: The overall picture

To describe the environment of police apprehensions, overall volumes of apprehensions by offence category or class were charted against time. These results were compared with a 'gravity score', determined by multiplying the Ministry of Justice seriousness score of each offence by its volume. A secondary objective of these figures was to determine how much change had occurred from 2005/06 to 2008/09.

The report examines to what degree trends in police apprehensions related to trends in overall recorded crime, as well as changes in the resolution rate (ie the proportion of recorded crime solved).

Component 2: Analysis of resolution type

The proportion of warnings/cautions to prosecutions was identified for each offence category/class used in this report. The relationship between offence seriousness (as defined by the Ministry of Justice seriousness scale), and resolution type was analysed, where it was suspected that those offences with a high warning/caution rate would have a low average offence seriousness score.

Component 3: Demographics and apprehensions

Apprehension proportions for males and females were charted over time to determine differences between offence types, by both overall volumes and gravity scores. The 'offending profile' looks at differences in the distribution of offences committed by males and females.

Apprehension rates (per 1,000) for single years of age (10 years of age to 89 years) were charted and compared with the average seriousness of offences committed by each age. The median age for each offence class was analysed by the total population and gender.

As discussed, the report draws on four years' police apprehension data, from the fiscal years 2005/06 to 2008/09. Police apprehension data was used to compile offence information, resolution type information, and demographic information. Some of the data is presented as an average over the four years rather than a specific year.

The report has eight analysis chapters. The first (chapter 5), summarises all offence categories. The subsequent chapters (chapters 6 to 12) focus on one of the seven offence categories, split into a number of more detailed offence classes.

This chapter refers to figures and tables in chapter 5 as examples. The same sequence of figures and tables is used throughout the analysis (ie figure 5.1 is the same as figure 6.1, and so on).

Offence classification

In general, this report uses the police offence classification seen in Statistics NZ's Table Builder.⁵ The police offence classification consists of four levels (category, class, type, and code) with each level representing a more detailed offence (for example, violence (category); homicide (class); murder (type); murder (firearm) (code)). This offence classification was modified in this report. In particular, the offence category drugs/antisocial was split into two separate drug and antisocial chapters, and the property damage and property abuse categories were merged.

The second level offence 'class' classification was also modified to (a) provide a conceptually more appropriate classification, and (b) rationalise the classification where necessary, in terms of seriousness, frequency, and general importance. In some cases, diverse low volume offences were merged into 'other' categories, as it was not practical to analyse these offences individually. The offence classes within the drugs chapter were based on the Australian Standard Offence Classification (Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2008). The classification used in this report can be found in appendix 1.

Component 1: The overall picture

To characterise the environment of police apprehensions over the period of the report, overall volumes of apprehensions by offence category or class were charted against time (for example, figure 5.1).

Although this information is important in its own right, it gives no sense of change in the underlying mix of offences, nor the intensity of offending. Therefore it is useful to consider a seriousness scale (chapter 3), rather than volumes or rates. Overall crime rates take no account of the seriousness or intensity of offences, where, for example, disorder offences are given the same weight as homicide offences. A 'gravity score' is determined by multiplying the Ministry of Justice seriousness⁶ score of each offence by its volume, and aggregating it up to offence class and category (in other words, the incidence multiplied by its severity). A similar type of analysis has recently been applied in Canada (Statistics Canada, 2009). This data is charted by offence category or class over time (for example, figure 5.2).

The example below shows how a hypothetical violence category is calculated, based on three categories of minor assaults, serious assaults, and grievous assaults. Gravity scores for the offence categories and classes of this report are often calculated from a much larger number of offence codes.

⁵ New Zealand Police recorded crime and apprehension data can be accessed on Statistics NZ's [Table Builder](#) available on www.stats.govt.nz.

⁶ Seriousness scores are determined by multiplying the average number of days of imprisonment imposed on every offender convicted of a particular offence, by the proportion of those offenders convicted who received an imprisonment for that offence. For example, if between 2000 and 2004 there were 100 cases of offenders convicted of a particular offence, and 50 of these cases resulted in a custodial sentence, and the average length of the custodial sentences imposed on these offenders was 30 days, then the seriousness score for this offence is $(30 \times 50/100)$, or 15 (Ministry of Justice, 2008).

Table 4.1

Hypothetical example to calculate gravity score				
Offence class	Seriousness score	Volume	Seriousness*volume= gravity score	Average seriousness
Minor assaults	2	10	20	
Serious assaults	5	5	25	
Grievous assaults	10	2	20	
Violence category		17	65	65/17=3.82

A secondary objective of these figures, limited by the short time series, is to determine how much change occurred between 2005/06 and 2008/09, by both overall volume and gravity score.

Link between recorded crime and apprehensions

As reflected in chapter 2, data on police apprehensions reflects one point of the criminal justice process. In order to give trends and patterns in police apprehensions context, it is important to investigate the relationship between recorded crime and apprehensions. The relationship between recorded crime and apprehensions is complex,⁷ and this report does not go into the intricacies of that relationship. This report seeks to identify to what degree trends in police apprehensions relate to trends in overall recorded crime, as well as changes in the resolution rate (ie the proportion of recorded crime solved).

Investigation into the relationship between recorded crime and apprehensions gives important information around the context of different offences. Trends in some offences are primarily driven by the reporting practices of victims and witnesses to the police, while other offences are primarily driven by proactive police detection. It is important to distinguish this context, as trends in apprehensions can reflect change in police practice, prioritising, and available resources as much as change in actual crime. Trends in offending may also reflect the likelihood with which they are resolved (Pare et al, 2007; Jang et al, 2008). For example, violence offences are typically more likely to be resolved than dishonesty offences due to the strength of the evidence, and the face-to-face contact between offender and victim.

Decomposition approach

This report presents results based on aggregate offence categories and offence classes. However, each of these offence categories and classes is made up of a large and often disparate number of underlying offence codes. The number of offence codes making up each category or class varies. Often trends in a category or class may be driven by only one or two offence codes, whereas others may be pushed and pulled by many offence codes. This report applies weights based on offence volume (decomposition) to determine which low level offence codes are driving the make-up of, and changes in, aggregate categories.

⁷ For instance, research in this area has looked at the saturation or overload effect – that is, an increase in recorded crime reduces the capacity of law enforcement to deal with this crime, hence lowering their efficiency (Roberts, 2008; Jang et al, 2008; Pare et al, 2007). Research has also looked at the deterrence effect – that is, an increase in the resolution rate acts to deter criminals from crime, due to an increased risk of being caught (Chamlin, 1988 and 1991; D’Allesio & Stolzenberg, 1998).

Component 2: Analysis of resolution type

The second component analyses each type of resolution, that is prosecutions, and warnings and cautions, in the context of different offences. The first objective of this component (and table 5.1, for example) is to determine the proportion of warnings/cautions to prosecutions, for each offence category/class used in this report.

The second objective of this component is to identify the relationship between offence seriousness (as defined by the Ministry of Justice seriousness scale), and resolution type. Specifically, those offences with a high warning/caution rate might reasonably be expected to have a low average seriousness score. Of course, this is dependent on whether the use of warnings and cautions aligns appropriately with the Ministry of Justice seriousness scale (discussed below). Patterns evident from this method are central to the concept of proportionality discussed in chapter 2.

Alignment between police warning/caution rate and Ministry of Justice seriousness scale

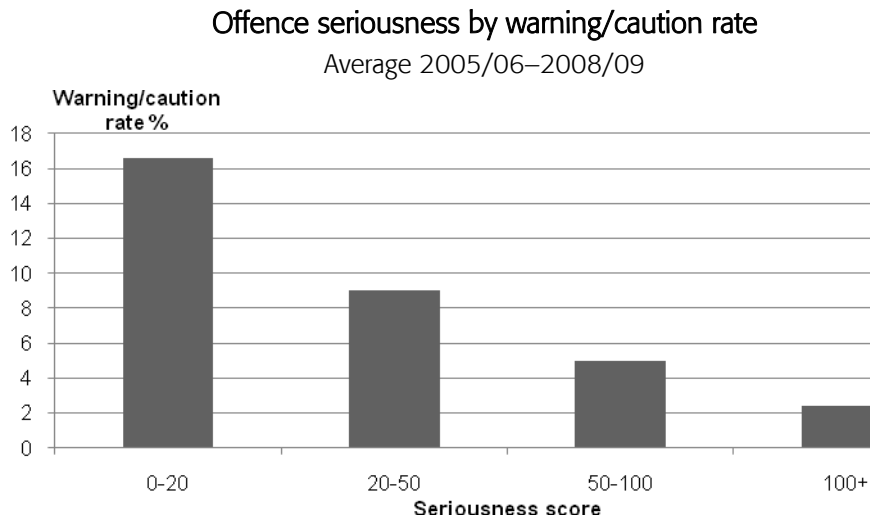
To investigate whether offence seriousness aligns with the warning/caution rate, the warning/caution rates for each offence class were compared with the associated Ministry of Justice seriousness score. The definition for the alignment between the warning/caution rate and offence seriousness was left as quite flexible. The overall warning/caution rate was 13 percent. Any offence class with a warning/caution rate under 5 percent and an average seriousness score under 50 was flagged. Similarly, any offence class over 5 percent and over 50 was also flagged.

Of particular interest were the extreme outliers, and those that shared a common theme (for example, if they are all of one offence type). The average seriousness for each offence was disaggregated by warning/caution and prosecution as well as the total, as this helps indicate whether the mix of offences determines resolution type. Offence codes were also analysed using a similar methodology to that above, where high volume offence codes (>50) were individually compared using the same criteria as above. Those offence codes without a seriousness score were excluded from this analysis.

Overall, 93 eligible offence codes out of 380 were flagged for further investigation. These generally fell under the offence classes identified with the same criteria. The offence classes and codes are discussed under the relevant offence category chapters in this report.

Figure 4.1 shows, at least on an aggregate level, that the majority of warnings and cautions are given for low serious offences, and in general, are an appropriate means with which to investigate the data. It is important to note, however, that this relationship is complex, and certainly not linear. Some offences are resolved using criteria different than the court definition of seriousness (the Ministry of Justice seriousness scale). As the Ministry of Justice seriousness scale itself is based on administrative data, it is possible some offences are given a higher or lower seriousness score than would normally be expected due to some external factors (for example, low volumes, or a lenient judge). It should be noted a seriousness score with different weights could produce somewhat different results. It was decided not to modify the scale as it was already based on robust court data. However, these possible biases should be recognised when interpreting the data.

Figure 4.1



Source: New Zealand Police Apprehension Data: Ministry of Justice Seriousness Scale

Component 3: Demographics and apprehensions

The third component relates to demographics and apprehensions. This report takes two demographic variables into account – age and sex. To analyse the gender gap in crime, apprehension proportions for males and females were charted over time. Of interest are the types of offences where the gender gap is closest, and the types of offences where the gender gap is widest. The 'gravity score' described above is disaggregated by gender to help determine which gender is committing the most serious offences. The 'offending profile' (for example, table 5.2), looks at differences in the distribution of offences committed by males and females.

To analyse the age distribution, for each overall offence category, the apprehension rate (per 1,000) for single years of age (10 years of age to 89 years) is charted (for example, figure 5.4). Charting by single year of age gives an interesting insight into the changes in offending over the 'life course', introduced in chapter 2, and helps determine whether patterns differ by offence type. These rates are compared with the average seriousness of offences committed by each age. The average seriousness only focuses on the ages of 10 to 60 years as figures for those above 60 years of age are difficult to interpret due to low rates of offending in older age groups. An average seriousness over the 60+ age group is used instead. The median age for each offence class is also analysed, by the total population, and by gender (for example, table 5.3).

This report uses mean year ended population estimates outlined in chapter 3 to produce age-specific rates. These rates are calculated by dividing the number of apprehensions for that specific year by its corresponding population estimate. Rates are expressed as per 1,000 of that population.

5 The overall apprehensions picture

Like recorded crime, apprehensions only reflect those offences that are brought to the attention of police, and more specifically, those offences for which there was an apprehension.

Overall patterns

Summary of findings

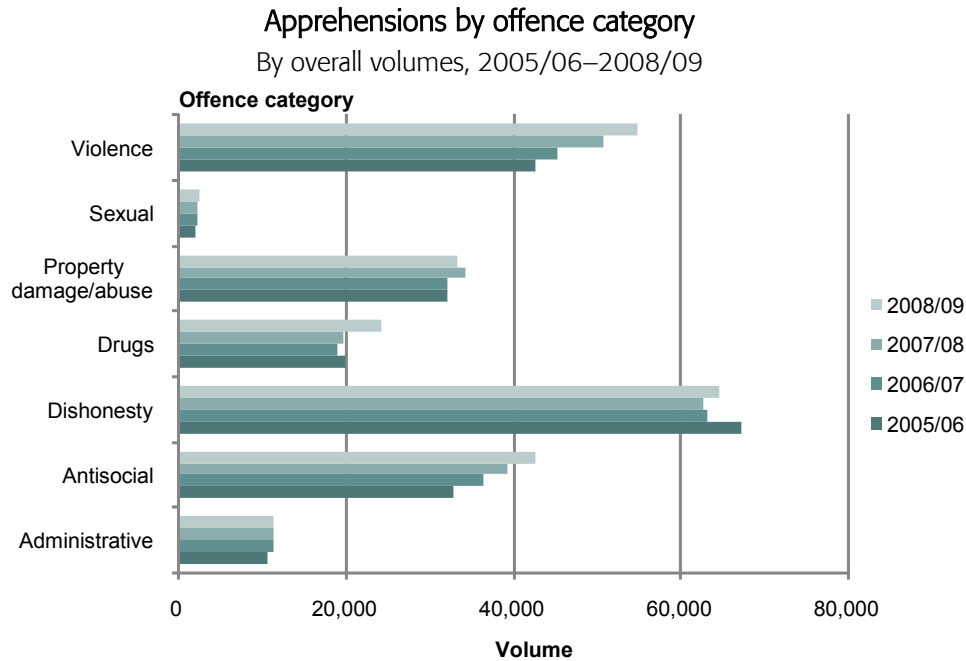
- There were large increases in apprehensions for the antisocial (29 percent), violence (28 percent), and drugs (22 percent) categories from 2005/06 to 2008/09. These changes corresponded with increases in recorded crime and the resolution rate.
- When taking into account offence seriousness and volume (the gravity score), apprehensions for the violence category occupied the greatest proportion (38 percent) of all offence categories.
- The overall warning/caution rate was 13 percent, ranging from 21 percent for property damage/abuse offences, to 6 percent for dishonesty offences.
- The ratio of male:female offending was 4:1, percentage-wise being closest for dishonesty offences (26 percent female) and furthest for sexual offences (2 percent female).
- The apprehension rate decreased sharply with increasing age, from 17 years of age onwards.

Figure 5.1 shows the offence categories dishonesty (30 percent), violence (22 percent), and antisocial (17 percent), on average, contributed the greatest volumes of apprehensions between 2005/06 and 2008/09. In terms of volume, over these four years, apprehensions increased the most for antisocial (29 percent increase), violence (28 percent increase), and drugs (22 percent increase) categories.

The apprehension patterns described above seemed to be related to two findings. Firstly, in general, these changes corresponded with changes in the recorded crime rate. Recorded crime increases in antisocial (26 percent), violence (24 percent), and drugs (20 percent) offences were similar to increases in volumes of apprehensions. Secondly, there were also small increases in the resolution rate⁸ over this period, such as the violence category (81 percent to 83 percent).

⁸ Percentage of recorded crime resolved.

Figure 5.1

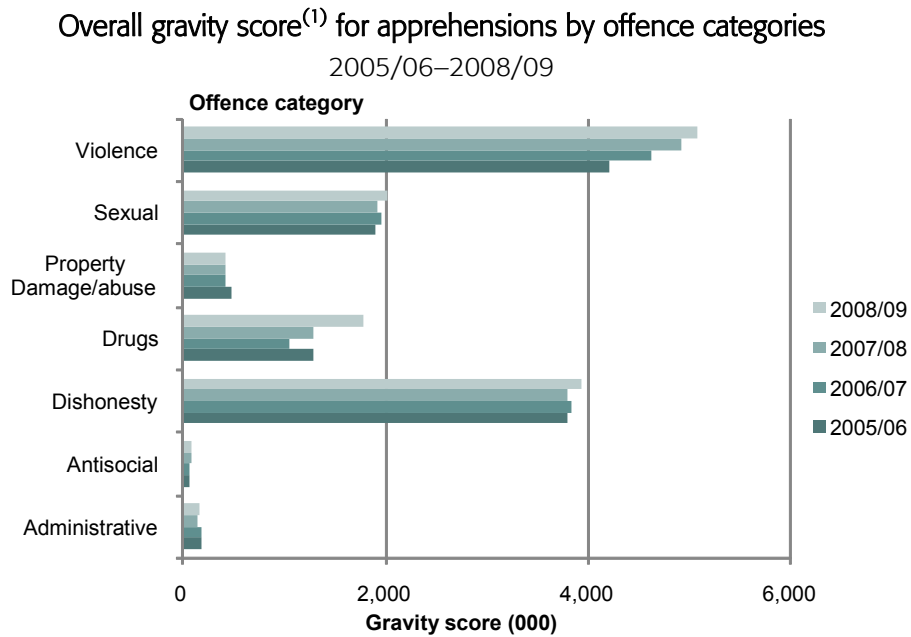


Source: New Zealand Police Apprehension Data

When taking into account both volume and seriousness, the calculated gravity scores presented in figure 5.2 show violence (38 percent) and dishonesty (31 percent) contribute the greatest share of all offence categories. Here, it is of value to compare volume shares (figure 5.1) with gravity score shares (figure 5.2). When taking into account volume (figure 5.1), the sexual offence category is minimally represented with a 1 percent share of apprehensions. However, when taking into account its gravity score, this category rises to 16 percent (figure 5.2).

Drugs (39 percent) and violence (21 percent) recorded large increases in their gravity scores between 2005/06 and 2008/09. The property damage/abuse category changes from a 3 percent increase when taking into account volume, to a 15 percent decrease when taking into account gravity. Despite the changes in the underlying categories, the overall increase in the gravity scores is only slightly higher over the four years when compared with overall volumes (a 12.8 percent increase compared with a 12.3 percent increase).

Figure 5.2



1. The sum of the seriousness scores of all offences that make up an offence class, where each score is based on the Ministry of Justice seriousness scale (which uses average number of days imprisoned and proportion of people imprisoned). Refer to chapter 4 (p 29).

Source: New Zealand Police Apprehension Data; Ministry of Justice Seriousness Scale

Resolution types

Table 5.1 shows administrative (91 percent), dishonesty (86 percent), and drugs (84 percent) offences have the highest prosecution rates, although these patterns rely on the mix of offences within these categories. This feature is discussed in depth in the relevant chapters.

By contrast, property damage/abuse (21 percent), violence (16 percent), and antisocial (15 percent) offences have the highest warning and caution rates, but again these findings are discussed later in the respective chapters.

Analysis of these high level offence categories also highlights the importance of the mix of offences. In general, the average seriousness for warnings and cautions is much lower than the average seriousness of prosecutions. This indicates each offence category is made up of offences differing in seriousness and in the likelihood of being dealt with by warning or caution.

Table 5.1

Overall apprehension categories by resolution type and average seriousness
Annual average, 2005/06–2008/09

Offence category	Resolution type			Average seriousness score ⁽¹⁾		
	Prosecution	Warning / caution	Other	Prosecution	Warning / caution	Total
	Percent ⁽²⁾			Score		
Property damage/abuse	73	21	6	13	6	11
Violence	77	16	7	110	13	92
Antisocial	81	15	4	2	2	2
Drugs	84	14	2	79	12	69
Sexual	81	10	9	932	435	921
Dishonesty	86	6	7	62	30	62
Administrative	91	4	5	12	11	13
Total	81	13	6	63	14	58

1. The average seriousness score of all offences that make up an offence class, where each score is based on the Ministry of Justice seriousness scale (which uses average number of days imprisoned and proportion of people imprisoned). Refer to chapter 4 (p 29).

2. Percentages may not add to 100 percent due to rounding.

Source: New Zealand Police Apprehension Data; Ministry of Justice Seriousness Scale

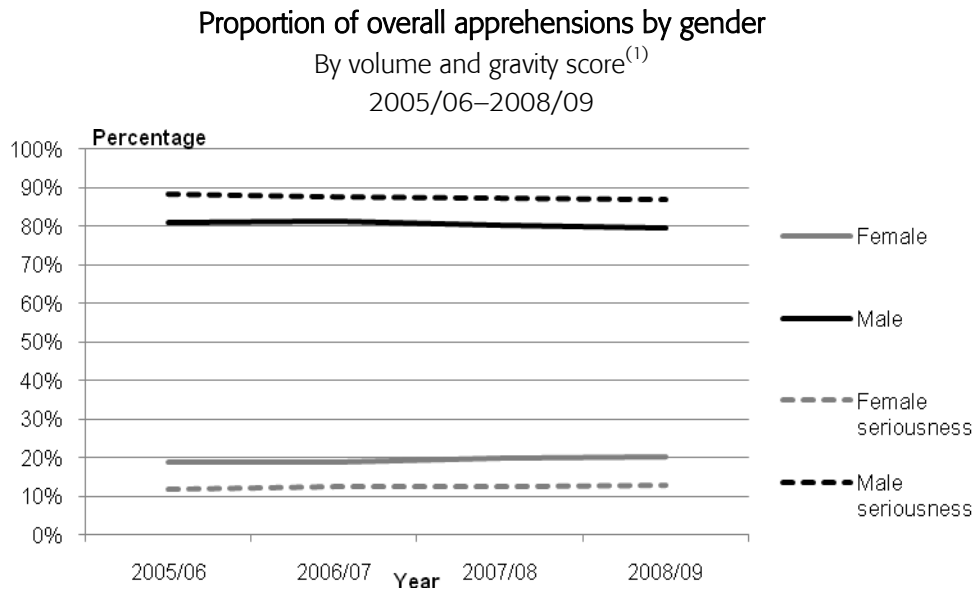
Demographics

Figure 5.3 indicates the ratio of male/female offending is 4:1, or, more accurately, males commit 81 percent of all offences for which there was an apprehension compared with 19 percent for females. Percentage-wise, this 'gender gap' is closest for dishonesty (26 percent female), and greatest for sexual offences (2 percent female).

These figures are reflected in table 5.2, where males have higher proportions in the violence (23 percent) and antisocial categories (18 percent), whereas females have a much higher offending profile in the dishonesty category (39 percent).

The overall offence share for males increases from 81 percent to 88 percent when taking into account gravity scores, indicating males commit more serious crimes as well (figure 5.3). These patterns remained relatively stable over the four-year period.

Figure 5.3



1. The sum of the seriousness scores of all offences that make up an offence class, where each score is based on the Ministry of Justice seriousness scale (which uses average number of days imprisoned and proportion of people imprisoned). Refer to chapter 4 (p 29).

Source: New Zealand Police Apprehension Data; Ministry of Justice Seriousness Scale

Table 5.2

Offending profile of males and females

By offence category
Average, 2005/06–2008/09

Offence category	Gender		
	Male	Female	All
	Percent ⁽¹⁾		
Administrative	5	6	5
Antisocial	18	14	17
Dishonesty	27	39	30
Drugs	10	9	9
Property damage/abuse	16	12	15
Sexual	1	0	1
Violence	23	20	22
Total	100	100	100

1. Percentages may not add to 100 percent due to rounding.

Source: New Zealand Police Apprehension Data

The age distribution in figure 5.4 shows the onset, or uptake, of offending begins around the age of 10 years and rapidly increases up to 17 years of age, where the apprehension rate peaks. There is then a sharp decrease from the age of 17 years onwards.

The median age of apprehensions across all offences is 22 years, ranging from 19 years for dishonesty to 32 years for the sexual offences category (table 5.3). The median age for females is the same as for males (22 years). This differs slightly by offence category, where the median age for females is two years higher than for males for property

damage/abuse and drugs, but two years younger for violence. Figure 5.4 also shows there is some variability in the average seriousness by age, which is dissected in the offence category chapters.

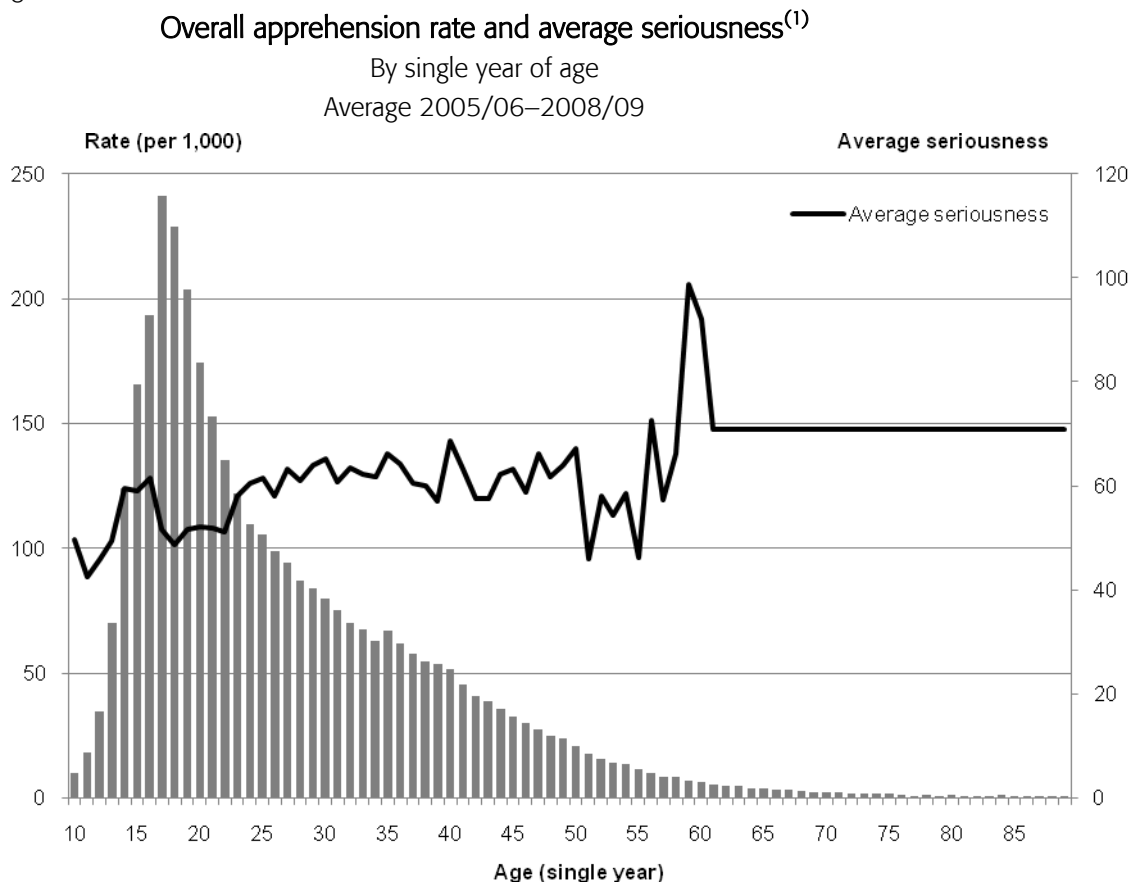
Table 5.3

Median age distribution for apprehensions
Offence category, by gender
Average, 2005/06–2008/09

Offence class	Gender		
	Male	Female	Total
Administrative	23	24	24
Antisocial	23	22	23
Dishonesty	19	20	19
Drugs	26	28	26
Property damage/abuse	20	22	20
Sexual	33	23	32
Violence	27	25	27
Total	22	22	22

Source: New Zealand Police Apprehension Data

Figure 5.4



1. The average seriousness score of all offences that make up an offence class, where each score is based on the Ministry of Justice seriousness scale (which uses average number of days imprisoned and proportion of people imprisoned). Refer to chapter 4 (p 29).

Source: New Zealand Police Apprehension Data; Ministry of Justice Seriousness Scale

6 Apprehensions for violence offences

Summary of findings

- Over the four years covered by the report, there were large increases in apprehensions for violence offences, particularly 'other serious assaults' (44 percent), 'grievous assaults' (36 percent), and 'minor assaults' (29 percent). There was also a decrease in 'homicide' apprehensions (by 18 percent decrease).
- The warning/caution rate varied by offence class, from 32 percent for 'minor assaults', to 2 percent for 'grievous assaults', reflecting differences in the seriousness of these offences.
- Female involvement in violent offending ranged from 32 percent for 'minor assaults' to 14 percent for 'robbery', indicating that females commit less serious, and fewer, violence offences than males.
- The violence category had one of the highest median ages of all offence categories, at 27 years, yet this contrasted with a steep decrease in the average seriousness of offending from 16 years of age onwards.

Overall patterns

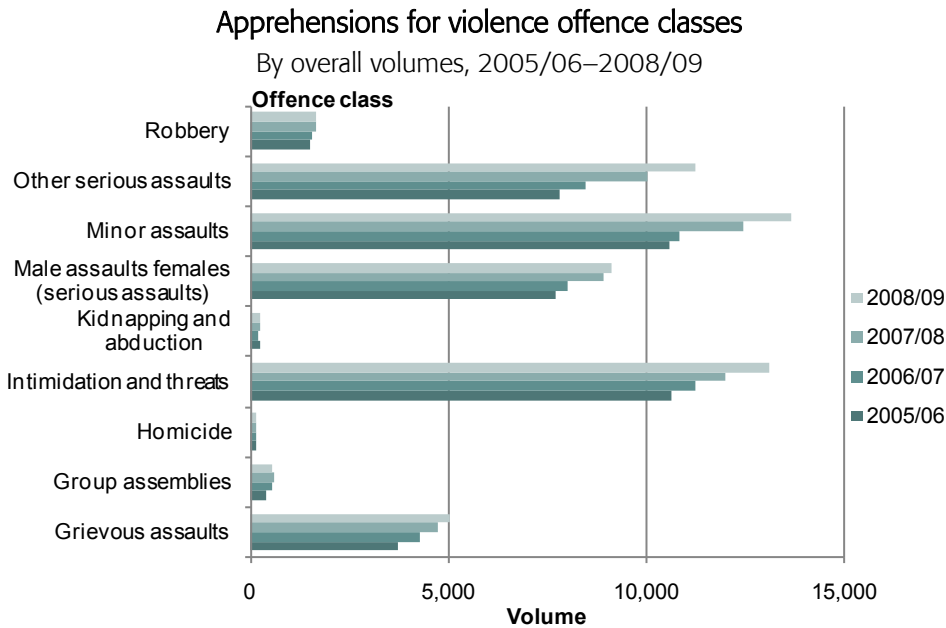
Figure 6.1 shows that, on average between 2005/06 and 2008/09, 'intimidation and threats' (24 percent), 'minor assaults' (25 percent), 'other serious assaults' (19 percent), and 'male assaults female (serious assaults)' (17 percent), were the four main offence classes by volume in the violence category. 'Intimidations and threats' contain a raft of different offences varying in severity, from 'threatening to kill' and 'cruelty to a child', to 'possession of a weapon'. The 'minor assaults' class is driven by 'common assault', administered through the Summary Offences Act 1981. Both the 'serious assaults' classes are administered through the Crimes Act 1961.⁹

Between 2005/06 and 2008/09 there were large increases in apprehensions for many violence offence classes, particularly 'other serious assaults' (44 percent increase); 'grievous assaults', (36 percent increase); and 'minor assaults' (29 percent increase). 'Homicide' was the only offence class to register a fall over this time (18 percent decrease). These changes resulted in a 28 percent increase in overall apprehensions for the violence offence category.

The 28 percent increase in violence apprehensions from 2005/06 to 2008/09 was possibly a result of a combination of changes in recorded crime and the resolution rate. The offence class 'other serious assaults' had a 38 percent increase in recorded crime and 3 percent increase in resolution rate. 'Grievous assaults' had a 33 percent increase in recorded crime and a 2 percent increase in resolution rate. 'Minor assaults' had a 24 percent increase in recorded crime and a 2 percent increase in resolution rate. Finally, 'homicide' had a 12 percent decrease in recorded crime.

⁹ Offences dealt with under the Summary Offences Act 1981 are generally less serious than offences dealt with under the Crimes Act 1961.

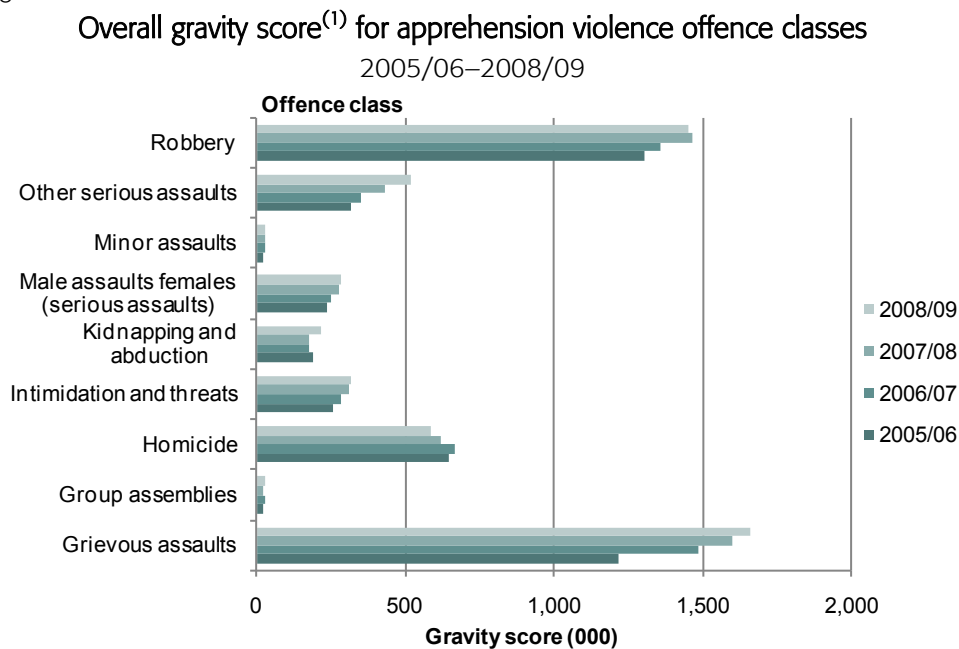
Figure 6.1



Source: New Zealand Police Apprehension Data

When offence seriousness is taken into account, the picture of the violence category changes considerably. In terms of seriousness and volume combined, the distribution was spread most between grievous assaults (32 percent), robbery (30 percent), and homicide (13 percent) (see figure 6.2). The 21 percent rise in the overall gravity score for the violence category was primarily due to an increase in grievous assaults, and smaller increases in every other offence class other than homicide.

Figure 6.2



1. The sum of the seriousness scores of all offences that make up an offence class, where each score is based on the Ministry of Justice seriousness scale (which uses average number of days imprisoned and proportion of people imprisoned). Refer to chapter 4 (p 29).

Source: New Zealand Police Apprehension Data; Ministry of Justice Seriousness Scale.

Resolution types

There were large variations in seriousness between violence offence classes, which was evident in the use of resolution types (table 6.1). Whereas around one-third of minor assaults and one-fifth of 'intimidation and threats' were dealt with by way of warning/caution, only 1 percent of robbery and 2 percent of grievous assaults were dealt with in this way. The offence class 'male assaults female (serious assaults)' had a relatively low warning/caution rate despite a low average seriousness. The offences 'threatens to kill or cause grievous bodily harm' had a high warning/caution rate despite a relatively high average seriousness, whereas minor and serious assaults on police officers had a low warning/caution rate despite a low average seriousness.

Table 6.1

Violence offence classes by resolution type and average seriousness

Average 2005/06–2008/09

Offence class	Resolution type			Average seriousness score ⁽¹⁾		
	Prosecution	Warning/ caution	Other	Prosecution	Warning/ caution	Total
	Percent ⁽²⁾			Score		
Group assemblies	57	37	6	64	24	47
Minor assaults	59	32	9	3	2	2
Intimidation and threats	71	22	7	29	13	25
Other serious assaults	83	11	6	47	19	43
Male assaults female (serious assaults)	89	4	7	31	31	31
Kidnapping and abduction	92	3	5	830	752	824
Grievous assaults	94	2	4	340	139	335
Robbery	94	1	6	877	694	873
Homicide	90	0	10	4,413	0	4,546
Total	77	16	7	110	13	92

1. The average seriousness score of all offences that make up an offence class, where each score is based on the Ministry of Justice seriousness scale (which uses average number of days imprisoned and proportion of people imprisoned). Refer to chapter 4 (p 29).

2. Percentages may not add to 100 percent due to rounding.

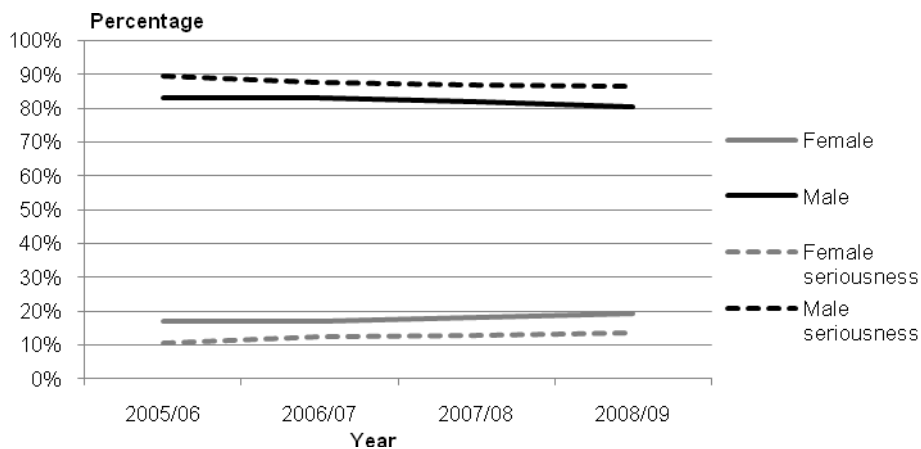
Source: New Zealand Police Apprehension Data; Ministry of Justice Seriousness Scale

Demographics

Female involvement in the violence category was generally highest for the least serious violence offence classes and was lower among the more serious violence offence classes. For example, females were involved in around 32 percent of all minor assaults, one of the highest proportions for all offence classes. This contrasted with 14 percent female involvement in all robberies. Figure 6.3 reveals males committed more serious, as well as more, violence offences. Females contributed, on average, only 12 percent of violence offences when taking into account gravity scores, compared with 18 percent when taking into account overall volumes.

Figure 6.3

Proportion of overall violence offence apprehensions by gender
By volume and gravity score⁽¹⁾
From 2005/06–2008/09



1. The sum of the seriousness scores of all offences that make up an offence class, where each score is based on the Ministry of Justice seriousness scale (which uses average number of days imprisoned and proportion of people imprisoned). Refer to chapter 4 (p 29).

Source: New Zealand Police Apprehension Data; Ministry of Justice Seriousness Scale

Table 6.2

Violence offending profile of males and females

By offence class
Average 2005/06–2008/09

Offence class	Gender		
	Male	Female	All
	Percent ⁽¹⁾		
Grievous assaults	9	8	9
Group assemblies	1	1	1
Homicide	0	0	0
Intimidation and threats	26	17	24
Kidnapping and abduction	1	0	0
Male assaults female (serious assaults)	21	0	17
Minor assaults	20	45	25
Other serious assaults	18	26	19
Robbery	3	3	3
Total	100	100	100

1. Percentages may not add to 100 percent due to rounding.

Source: New Zealand Police Apprehension Data

Figure 6.4 shows the age of onset of violence offending was fairly consistent with the overall age of onset of offending. There was, however, a much less pronounced peak in offending compared with other offence categories, and a slower rate of decline. The older age distribution was reflected in the median age of 27 years, five years above the overall median (table 6.3). The median age by offence class did not deviate by much, with the exception of robbery (median age of 18). 'Male assaults female' (serious assaults) had the highest median age (31 years).

The median age of offending for males was two years older than females in the violence category. Homicide and group assemblies had the largest discrepancies, although due to the low numbers, both these findings were arguably minor.

The average seriousness of the violence category peaked at the age of 16 years, where there was a noticeable decline in the average seriousness of violence offences by age, falling rapidly by around one-third between the ages of 17 and 22 years, and then falling more steadily from there (see figure 6.4). This was in large part due to the low median age of robbery offenders – a high seriousness offence.

Table 6.3

Median age distribution for violence apprehensions by offence class

By age and gender
Average 2005/06–2008/09

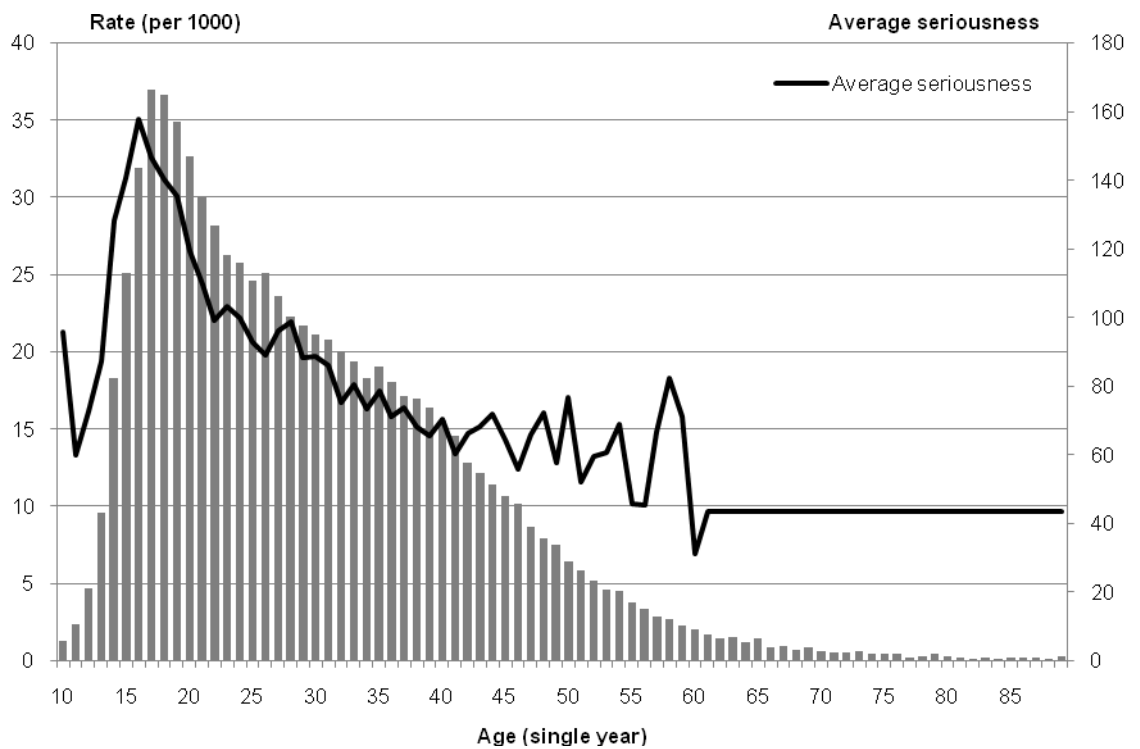
Offence class	Gender		
	Male	Female	Total
Age (years)			
Grievous assaults	26	27	26
Group assemblies	26	34	28
Homicide	27	30	28
Intimidation and threats	27	26	27
Kidnapping and abduction	27	26	27
Male assaults female (serious assaults)	31	31	31
Minor assaults	26	25	26
Other serious assaults	26	26	26
Robbery	18	16	18
Total	27	25	27

Source: New Zealand Police Apprehension Data

Figure 6.4

Violence offence apprehension rates and average seriousness¹

By single year of age
Average 2005/06–2008/09



1. The average seriousness score of all offences that make up an offence class, where each score is based on the Ministry of Justice seriousness scale (which uses average number of days imprisoned and proportion of people imprisoned). Refer to chapter 4 (p 29).

Source: New Zealand Police Apprehension Data; Ministry of Justice Seriousness Scale

7 Apprehensions for sexual offences

Summary of findings

- 'Indecent assault' (31 percent) and 'sexual violation' (30 percent) were the two largest offence classes by volume for sexual offence apprehensions.
- 'Sexual violation', which includes rape, is the most serious offence class within the sexual offence category, and accounted for 78 percent of total sexual offence apprehensions in terms of gravity scores.
- The most notable characteristic of the sexual offence category was that the vast majority are committed by males (98 percent).
- The median age for the sexual offence category (32 years) was the highest of all offence categories.

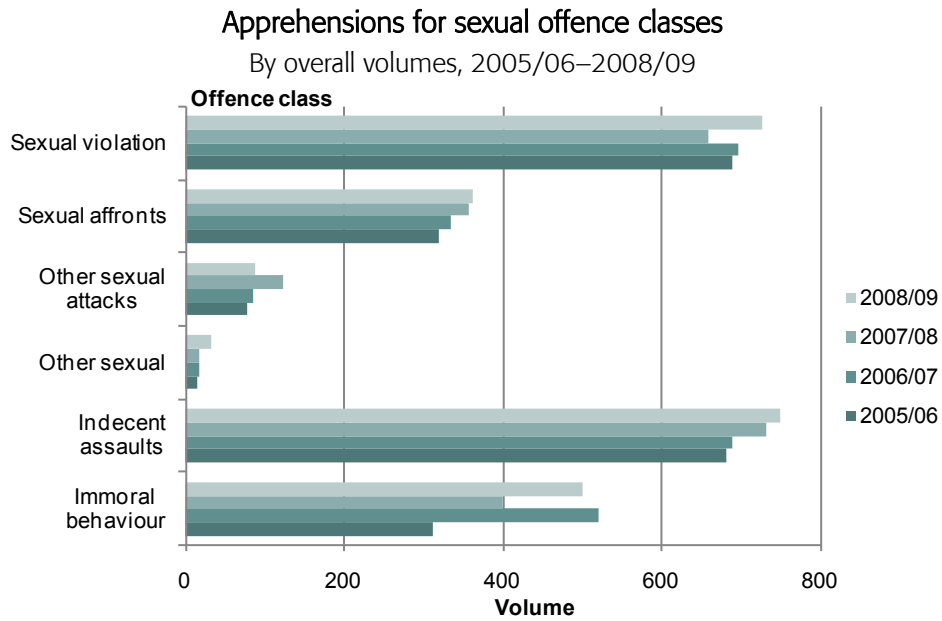
Overall patterns

Figure 7.1 shows 'indecent assault' (31 percent) was the largest class of the sexual offence category, followed closely by 'sexual violation' (30 percent). Indecent assault generally covers all cases of minor, non-consensual sexual contact. Sexual violation, on the other hand, is synonymous with the more widely used term of rape. The two other large sexual offence classes are immoral behaviour (19 percent) and sexual affronts (15 percent). Immoral behaviour is a wide ranging offence class which primarily deals with exploitative (ie not forced) sexual intercourse, and offences under the Prostitution Reform Act 2003. Sexual affronts could otherwise be called crimes against decency.

Apprehensions for sexual offences recorded a 17 percent increase between 2005/06 and 2008/09, with all offence classes increasing. The most substantial classes driving this 17 percent increase were immoral behaviour (60 percent increase) and indecent assault (10 percent increase). The 60 percent increase in apprehensions for immoral behaviour was largely due to an increase in apprehensions for possession of objectionable publications, and non-consensual intimate visual recordings.

The large increase in immoral behaviour apprehensions was reflected in a 53 percent increase in recorded crime and a substantial increase in the resolution rate (71 percent to 75 percent). The increase in indecent assaults was the result of a large increase in the resolution rate (58 percent to 66 percent), and despite a small 3 percent decrease in the overall volume of recorded crime.

Figure 7.1

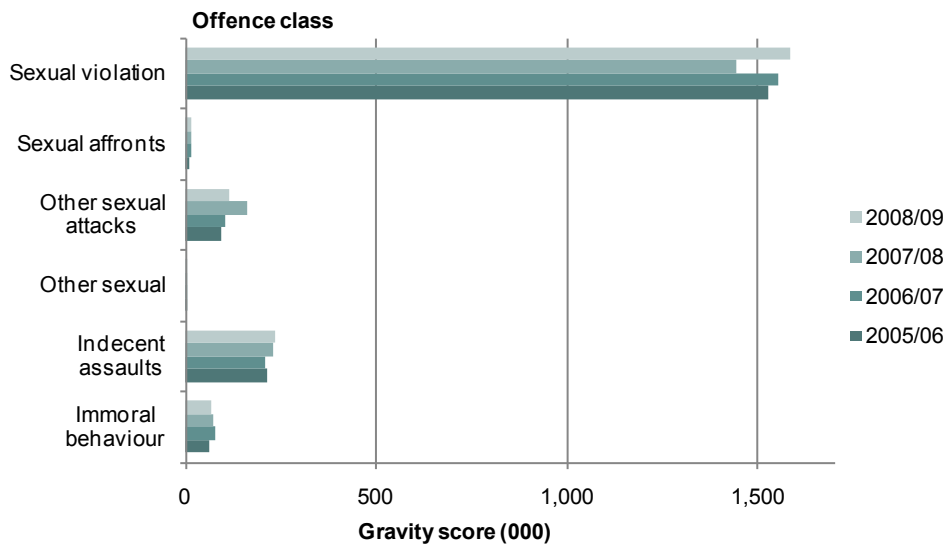


Source: New Zealand Police Apprehension Data

Figure 7.2 shows, when taking into account seriousness, the sexual violation offence class was the largest sexual offence class, accounting for 78 percent of all apprehensions for sexual offences. The reason that the seriousness score associated with sexual violation offences is so high is that the Crimes Act 1961 recommends that an imprisonment term should be given for any convictions of rape, and that these crimes have a maximum imprisonment penalty second only to homicide offences. The 6 percent rise in the gravity score of sexual offences between 2005/06 and 2008/09 was primarily attributable to a rise in sexual violation, and smaller increases in ‘other sexual attacks’ and ‘indecent assaults’.

Figure 7.2

Overall gravity score⁽¹⁾ for sexual offence apprehension classes
2005/06–2008/09



1. The sum of the seriousness scores of all offences that make up an offence class, where each score is based on the Ministry of Justice seriousness scale (which uses average number of days imprisoned and proportion of people imprisoned). Refer to chapter 4 (p 29).

Source: New Zealand Police Apprehension Data; Ministry of Justice Seriousness Scale.

Resolution types

Due to the high seriousness of the sexual offence category, there was a lower warning/caution rate (10 percent) than the total rate for all offences (13 percent) (table 7.1). The warning/caution rate was highest for the 'sexual affronts' offence class (14 percent). The 'immoral behaviour' offence class (13 percent), and 'indecent assaults' offence class (12 percent), had relatively high warning/caution rates despite high average seriousness for these offences.

Table 7.1

Sexual offence classes by resolution type and average seriousness

Average, 2005/06–2008/09

Offence class	Resolution type			Average seriousness score ⁽¹⁾		
	Prosecution	Warning/caution	Other	Prosecution	Warning/caution	Total
	Percent ⁽²⁾			Score		
Sexual affronts	79	14	6	35	30	34
Immoral behaviour	80	13	7	256	146	246
Other sexual	78	13	9	528	7	516
Indecent assaults	79	12	9	303	272	299
Other sexual attacks	89	4	7	1,225	1,261	1,249
Sexual violation	84	3	13	2,191	2,134	2,225
Total	81	10	9	932	435	921

1. The average seriousness score of all offences that make up an offence class, where each score is based on the Ministry of Justice seriousness scale (which uses average number of days imprisoned and proportion of people imprisoned). Refer to chapter 4 (p 29).

2. Percentages may not add to 100 percent due to rounding.

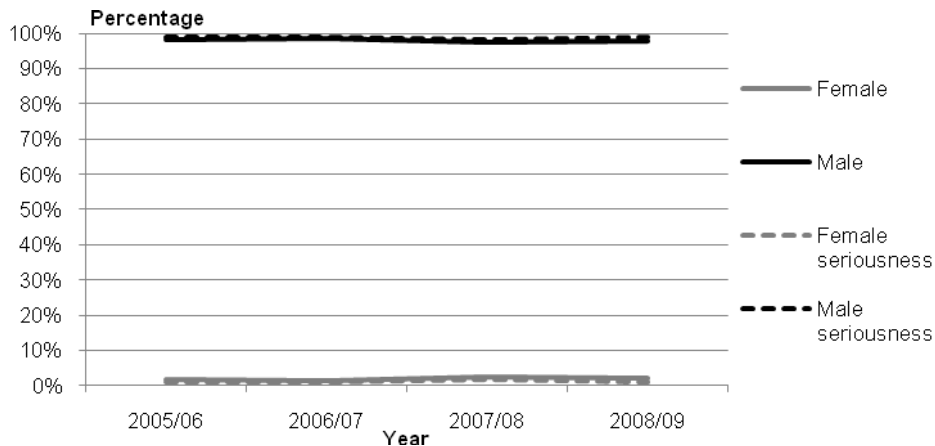
Source: New Zealand Police Apprehension Data; Ministry of Justice Seriousness Scale

Demographics

The most notable characteristic regarding sexual offences was that the overwhelming majority were committed by males (an average of 98 percent). There was a far greater gender gap in sexual offences than any other category of crime. As the proportion of female offenders was already extremely low by volume, the proportion based on gravity score was very similar (figure 7.3).

Figure 7.3

Proportion of overall sexual offence apprehensions by gender
By volume and gravity score⁽¹⁾
2005/06–2008/09



1. The sum of the seriousness scores of all offences that make up an offence class, where each score is based on the Ministry of Justice seriousness scale (which uses average number of days imprisoned and proportion of people imprisoned). Refer to chapter 4 (p 29).

Source: New Zealand Police Apprehension Data; Ministry of Justice Seriousness Scale

Table 7.2

Sexual offending profile of males and females

By offence class
Average 2005/06–2008/09

Offence class	Gender		
	Male	Female	All
	Percent		
Immoral behaviour	18	42	19
Indecent assaults	31	16	31
Other sexual	1	2	1
Other sexual attacks	4	13	4
Sexual affronts	15	11	15
Sexual violation	30	15	30
Total	100	100	100

1. Percentages may not add to 100 percent due to rounding.

Source: New Zealand Police Apprehension Data

The sexual offence category had the greatest equality in age distribution of all the offence categories (figure 7.4). The median age for sexual offences was the highest of all offence categories (32 years). This varied from 29 years for 'other sexual attacks' to 34 years for 'indecent assaults' and 'immoral behaviour' (table 7.4). There was no clear relationship between age and the average seriousness of offending using this methodology.

Table 7.3

Median age distribution for sexual apprehensions by offence class

By age and gender

Average, 2005/06–2008/09

Offence class	Gender		
	Male	Female	Total
	Age (years)		
Immoral behaviour	35	21	34
Indecent assaults	34	19	34
Other sexual	33	33	33
Other sexual attacks	29	31	29
Sexual affronts	33	23	33
Sexual violation	31	23	31
Total	33	23	32

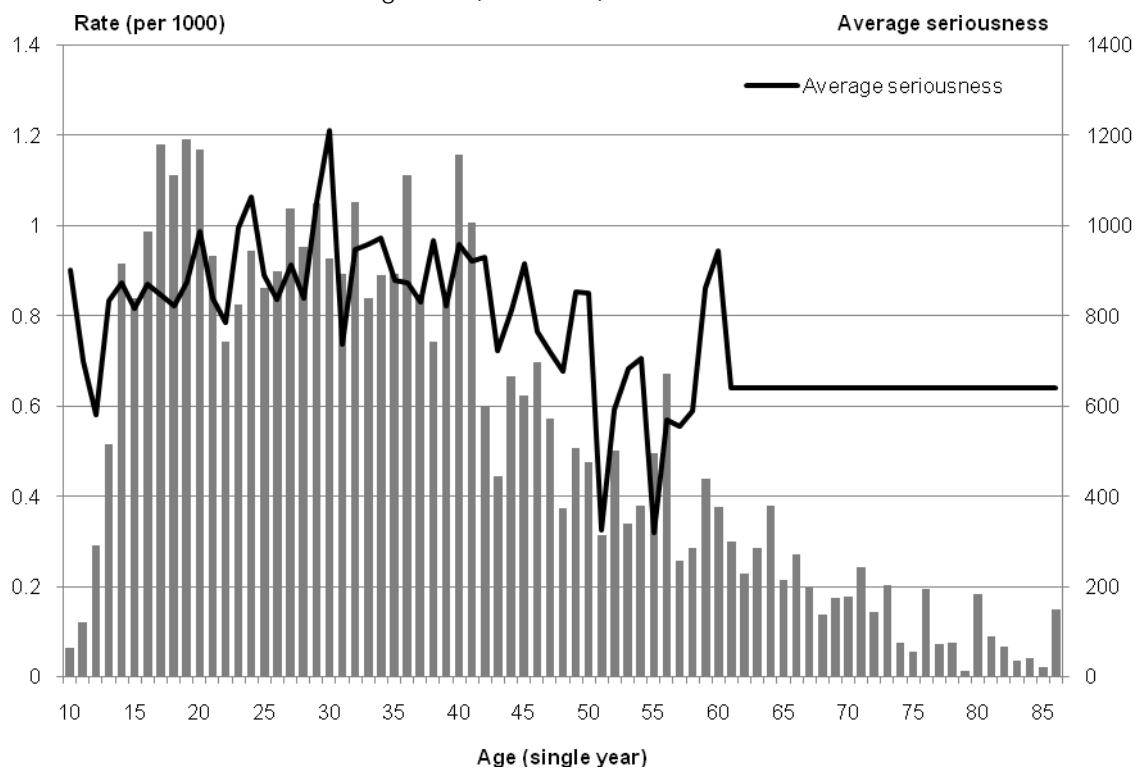
Source: New Zealand Police Apprehension Data

Figure 7.4

Sexual offence apprehension rates and average seriousness⁽¹⁾

By single year of age

Average 2005/06–2008/09



1. The average seriousness score of all offences that make up an offence class, where each score is based on the Ministry of Justice seriousness scale (which uses average number of days imprisoned and proportion of people imprisoned). Refer to chapter 4 (p 29).

Source: New Zealand Police Apprehension Data; Ministry of Justice Seriousness Scale

8 Apprehensions for drugs offences

Summary of findings

- For drugs apprehensions, 'possession and/or use of cannabis' was by far the largest offence class, with a volume share of 40 percent.
- Increases in apprehensions for possession and/ or use (18 percent increase) and dealing/trafficking (105 percent increase) of cannabis contributed most to the 22 percent increase in the drugs category.
- The median age varied by offence class, from 23 years for possession and/or use of cannabis, to 35 years for 'manufacture and cultivation of non-cannabis drugs'. The median age for cannabis offences was generally lower than for non-cannabis offences.
- From 10 to 50 years of age there was a steep rise in the average seriousness of drugs offending.

Overall patterns

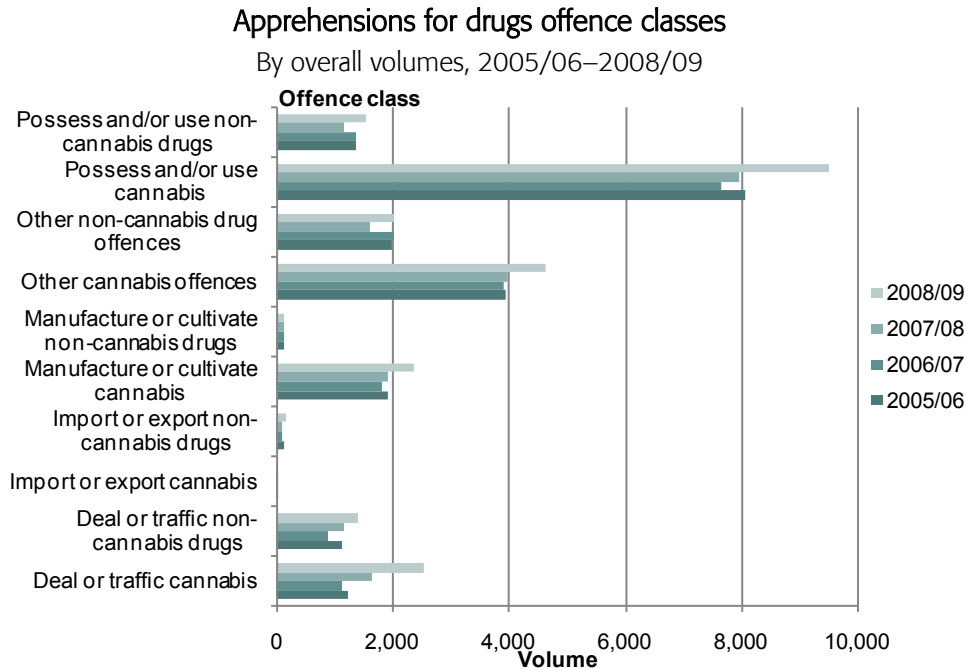
This chapter classifies drugs offences based on the Australian Standard Offence Classification (ASOC).¹⁰ ASOC classifies drugs offences by type of drug activity. This report also disaggregates by cannabis and non-cannabis drugs. Amongst these offence classes, 'importing and exporting drugs' relates to illegal drugs being imported to or exported from New Zealand. 'Dealing or trafficking in drugs' relates to the supply or purchase of illegal drugs. 'Manufacturing or cultivating drugs' relates to manufacturing controlled substances, or the growing of plants used to make illegal drugs. 'Possession and/or use of drugs' relates to possession and/or use of non-commercial quantities of illegal drugs. Finally, the 'other illegal drugs offences' include offences such as possession of syringes used for drugs (Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2008).

Figure 8.1 shows that, within the drugs category, possession/use of cannabis was by far the largest offence class, with a volume share of 40 percent. The offence class 'other cannabis', driven by possession of a needle/syringe, was the second largest class, with 20 percent. Increases in apprehensions for possession/use (18 percent increase) and dealing/trafficking (105 percent increase) of cannabis contributed most to the 22 percent increase in the drugs category.

The 22 percent increase in apprehensions for drugs offences was also reflected in changes in recorded crime, which showed a 20 percent increase. More specifically, dealing and trafficking in cannabis had a 91 percent increase in recorded crime and 4 percent increase in resolution rate, and possession and use of cannabis had a 14 percent increase in recorded crime and 2 percent increase in resolution rate.

¹⁰ This is an unofficial classification. The justice sector will move to an official classification based on the Australian Standard Offence Classification in July 2010.

Figure 8.1

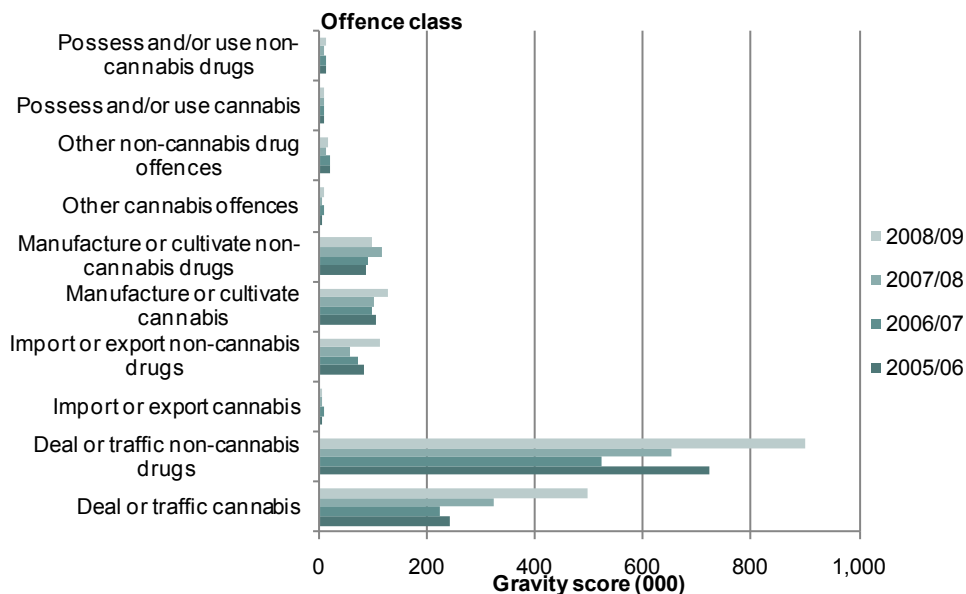


Source: New Zealand Police Apprehension Data

Figure 8.2

Overall gravity score⁽¹⁾ for drugs offence apprehensions classes

2005/06–2008/09



1. The sum of the seriousness scores of all offences that make up an offence class, where each score is based on the Ministry of Justice seriousness scale (which uses average number of days imprisoned and proportion of people imprisoned). Refer to chapter 4 (p 29).

Source: New Zealand Police Apprehension Data; Ministry of Justice Seriousness Scale.

When taking into account gravity scores, figure 8.2 shows dealing and trafficking easily contribute the greatest share of apprehensions for drugs offences, particularly non-cannabis offences (52 percent), but also cannabis offences (24 percent). Manufacturing and cultivation occupy the next greatest share when taking into account gravity (cannabis 8 percent, non-cannabis 7 percent).

The 39 percent increase in the gravity score of drugs apprehensions is due primarily to a 106 percent increase in dealing/trafficking in cannabis and a 24 percent increase in dealing/trafficking in non-cannabis drugs.

Resolution type

Table 8.1 shows 'possession/use of cannabis' (21 percent) and 'other cannabis' (21 percent) have the highest warning/caution rates of all classes within the drugs category, and this reflects their low average seriousness. The import and export of cannabis and non-cannabis drugs, despite a high average seriousness, also have a relatively high warning/caution rate (16 percent and 12 percent, respectively).¹¹ In contrast, although the offence classes 'other non-cannabis drugs' and 'possession/use for non-cannabis' have a low average seriousness, they also have a lower than expected warning/caution rate (6 percent and 4 percent, respectively).

Table 8.1

Drugs offence classes by resolution type and average seriousness

Average, 2005/06–2008/09

Offence class	Resolution type			Average seriousness score ⁽¹⁾		
	Prosecution	Warning/ caution	Other	Prosecution	Warning/ caution	Total
	Percent ⁽²⁾			Score		
Possess and/or use cannabis	77	21	1	1	1	1
Other cannabis offences	78	21	2	1	2	2
Import or export cannabis	81	16	3	194	196	195
Import or export non-cannabis drugs	86	12	2	703	613	691
Manufacture or cultivate cannabis	90	9	1	55	48	54
Other non-cannabis drugs offences	91	6	3	8	12	8
Possess and/or use non-cannabis drugs	92	4	4	7	11	7
Manufacture or cultivate non-cannabis drugs	96	2	2	769	244	753
Deal or traffic in cannabis	97	1	1	196	196	196
Deal or traffic in non-cannabis drugs	97	1	2	619	372	618
Total	84	14	2	79	12	69

1 The average seriousness score of all offences that make up an offence class, where each score is based on the Ministry of Justice seriousness scale (which uses average number of days imprisoned and proportion of people imprisoned). Refer to chapter 4 (p 29).

2. Percentages may not add to 100 percent due to rounding.

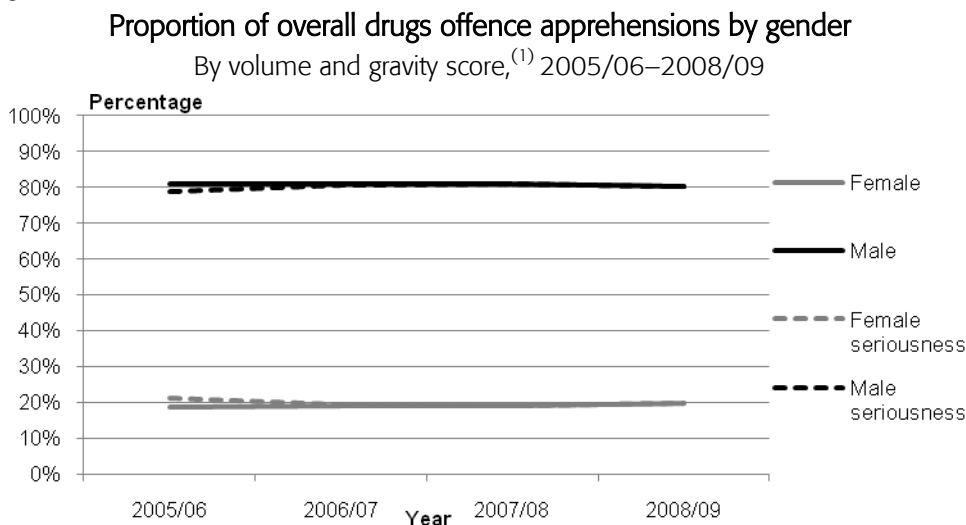
Source: New Zealand Police Apprehension Data; Ministry of Justice Seriousness Scale

¹¹ Although, as seen in figure 8.1, these offences have small numbers.

Demographics

Figure 8.3 shows the female proportion of apprehensions for the drugs category (19 percent female) is very similar to the female proportion of apprehensions for all offences (19 percent female). This varies by the offence class under analysis, from 17 percent female for 'possession and/or use of cannabis' to 27 percent female for 'other non-cannabis' offences. The patterns in male and female offending do not differ when taking into account gravity score. There are subtle differences in the offending profile of males compared with females (table 8.2). Most notably, males are more inclined to be apprehended for possession and use of cannabis than females.

Figure 8.3



1. The sum of the seriousness scores of all offences that make up an offence class, where each score is based on the Ministry of Justice seriousness scale (which uses average number of days imprisoned and proportion of people imprisoned). Refer to chapter 4 (p 29).

Source: New Zealand Police Apprehension Data; Ministry of Justice Seriousness Scale

Table 8.2

Drugs offending profile of males and females

By offence class

Average 2005/06–2008/09

Offence class	Gender		
	Male	Female	All
	Percent ⁽¹⁾		
Deal or traffic cannabis	8	8	8
Deal or traffic non-cannabis drugs	5	6	5
Import or export cannabis	0	0	0
Import or export non-cannabis drugs	1	1	1
Manufacture or cultivate cannabis	10	9	10
Manufacture or cultivate non-cannabis drugs	1	1	1
Other cannabis offences	20	19	20
Other non-cannabis drugs offences	8	13	9
Possess and/or use cannabis	41	35	40
Possess and/or use non-cannabis drugs	6	8	7
Total	100	100	100

1. Percentages may not add to 100 percent due to rounding.

Source: New Zealand Police Apprehension Data

The age of onset for the drugs category is later than for most other offence categories. Like the violence category, the peak age is less pronounced, as reflected in a high median age of 26 years (figure 8.4). The median age varies by drugs offence class, from 23 years for possession and use of cannabis, to 35 years for manufacture and cultivation of non-cannabis drugs. Table 8.3 also indicates that the median age for cannabis offences is generally lower than for non-cannabis offences. The median age for females (28 years) is two years higher than for males (26 years). In contrast to the violence offence category, however, where average seriousness generally decreases with advancing age, figure 8.4 shows a steep rise in the average seriousness of drugs offending by age, from the age of 10 to 50 years. The higher median age in the drugs category for 'manufacturing and/or cultivation' compared with 'possession and/or use' can indicate the lack of skills younger people may have in manufacturing drugs. As manufacturing/cultivation has a higher seriousness than possession/use, this could explain the increase in average seriousness with advancing age.

Table 8.3

Median age distribution for drugs apprehensions by offence class

By age and gender

Average 2005/06–2008/09

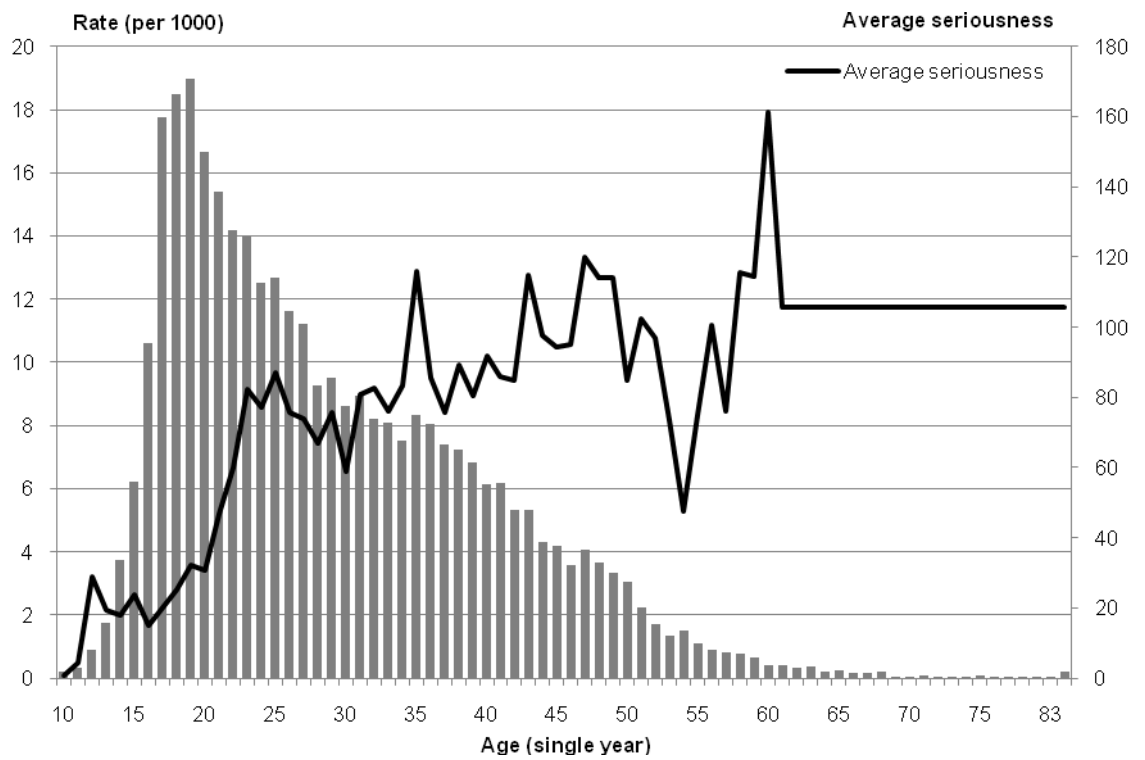
Offence class	Gender		
	Male	Female	Total
	Age (years)		
Deal or traffic cannabis	27	35	28
Deal or traffic non-cannabis drugs	34	32	33
Import or export cannabis	28	28	28
Import or export non-cannabis drugs	25	26	25
Manufacture or cultivate cannabis	33	33	33
Manufacture or cultivate non-cannabis drugs	36	31	35
Other cannabis offences	22	25	22
Other non-cannabis drugs offences	31	28	30
Possess and/or use cannabis	23	25	23
Possess and/or use non-cannabis drugs	31	29	30
Total	26	28	26

Source: New Zealand Police Apprehension Data

Figure 8.4

Drugs offence apprehension rates and average seriousness⁽¹⁾

By single year of age
Average 2005/06–2008/09



1. The average seriousness score of all offences that make up an offence class, where each score is based on the Ministry of Justice seriousness scale (which uses average number of days imprisoned and proportion of people imprisoned). Refer to chapter 4 (p 29).

Source: New Zealand Police Apprehension Data; Ministry of Justice Seriousness Scale

9 Apprehensions for antisocial offences

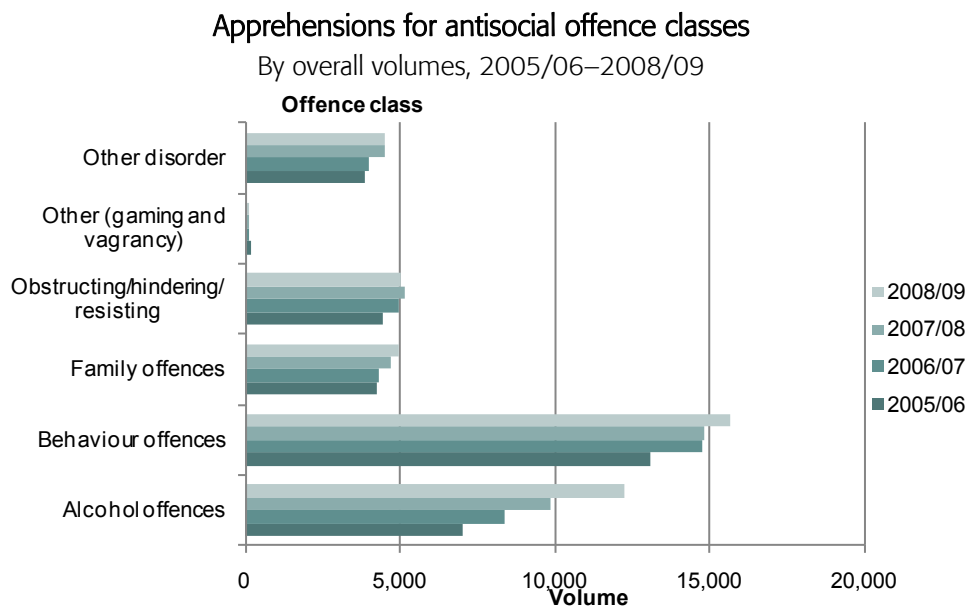
Summary of findings

- Apprehensions for 'behaviour offences' (39 percent) and 'alcohol offences' (25 percent) are the two main offence classes within the antisocial category by volume.
- Most offences within the antisocial category are dealt with through the Summary Offences Act 1981, and therefore have low gravity scores.
- There is a high median age associated with family offences (35 years).

Overall patterns

Figure 9.1 shows 'behaviour' offences (39 percent) and 'alcohol offences' (25 percent) are the two main offence classes within the antisocial category by volume. The behaviour offence class is primarily driven by 'disorderly behaviour' administered under the Summary Offences Act 1981. 'Alcohol offences' are propelled by 'breaches of liquor bans'. The other main offence classes are 'obstructing, hindering, or resisting' (13 percent), 'family offences' (12 percent), and 'other disorder' (11 percent). 'Family offences' consist of such offences as contravening protection orders and leaving children unsupervised; the offence class 'other disorder' is driven by offences such as 'fighting in a public place' and 'offending language'; and 'obstructing, hindering, resisting' relates to obstructing or resisting police.

Figure 9.1



Source: New Zealand Police Apprehension Data

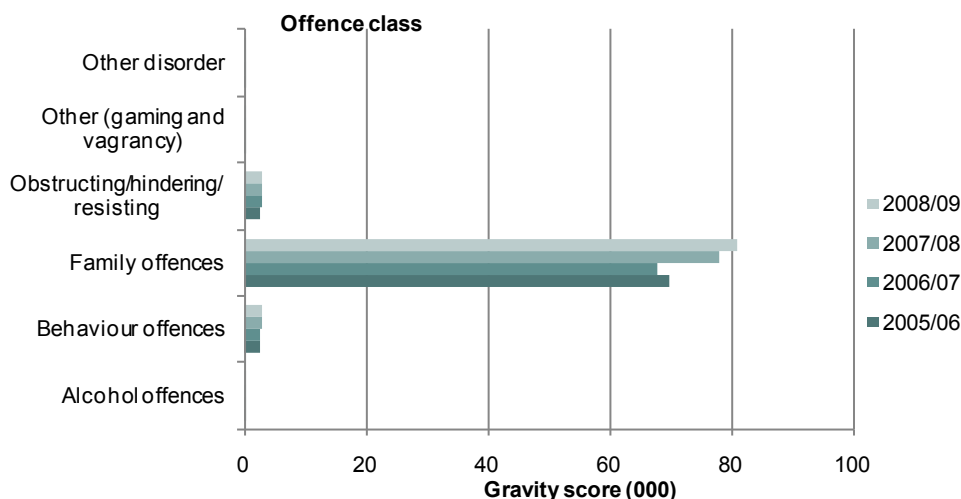
Figure 9.1 also indicates there are two main contributors to the 29 percent increase in apprehensions for the antisocial offence category from 2005/06 to 2008/09: 'alcohol offences' (74 percent), and 'behaviour offences' (19 percent).

The large increase in alcohol offence apprehensions corresponded with a 69 percent increase in recorded crime and 2 percent increase in the resolution rate. The 19 percent increase in apprehensions in the behaviour offence class corresponded with a 17 percent increase in recorded crime.

The majority of antisocial offences are administered by legislation other than the Crimes Act 1961. Generally, they are non-imprisonable offences and have low associated seriousness scores (see figure 9.2). For example, the alcohol offence class, which is driven by breaches of liquor bans (which are non-imprisonable), is attributed a low overall seriousness. Furthermore, breaches to liquor bans are often dealt with as an infringement rather than offence, in which case they would not show up in the statistics of this report. Family offences, driven by breaches to protection orders, occupy by far the greatest share by gravity score, with 93 percent.

Figure 9.2

Overall gravity score⁽¹⁾ for antisocial offence apprehension classes
2005/06–2008/09



1. The sum of the seriousness scores of all offences that make up an offence class, where each score is based on the Ministry of Justice seriousness scale (which uses average number of days imprisoned and proportion of people imprisoned). Refer to chapter 4 (p 29).

Source: New Zealand Police Apprehension Data; Ministry of Justice Seriousness Scale.

Resolution types

The low seriousness attributed to the majority of antisocial offences should indicate a high proportion are dealt with by warnings and cautions. On the whole, this is reflected in table 9.1. Other disorder (26 percent), behaviour offences (17 percent), family offences (17 percent), and alcohol offences (15 percent) all have a higher warning/caution proportion than the overall proportion (13 percent). The ‘obstructing, hindering, or resisting’ offence class is the only class to contradict this pattern, with a warning/caution rate of only 2 percent, despite a low average seriousness

Table 9.1

Antisocial offence classes by resolution type and average seriousness

Average, 2005/06–2008/09

Offence class	Resolution type			Average seriousness score ⁽¹⁾		
	Prosecution	Warning/ caution	Other	Prosecution	Warning/ caution	Total
	Percent ⁽²⁾			Score		
Other disorder	70	26	4	0	0	0
Behaviour offences	80	17	3	0	0	0
Family offences	74	17	9	17	15	16
Alcohol offences	83	15	2	0	0	0
Other (gaming and vagrancy)	92	5	3	0	0	0
Obstructing/hindering/resisting	95	2	3	1	1	1
Total	81	15	4	2	2	2

1 The average seriousness score of all offences that make up an offence class, where each score is based on the Ministry of Justice seriousness scale (which uses average number of days imprisoned and proportion of people imprisoned). Refer to chapter 4 (p 29).

2. Percentages may not add to 100 percent due to rounding.

Source: New Zealand Police Apprehension Data; Ministry of Justice Seriousness Scale

Demographics

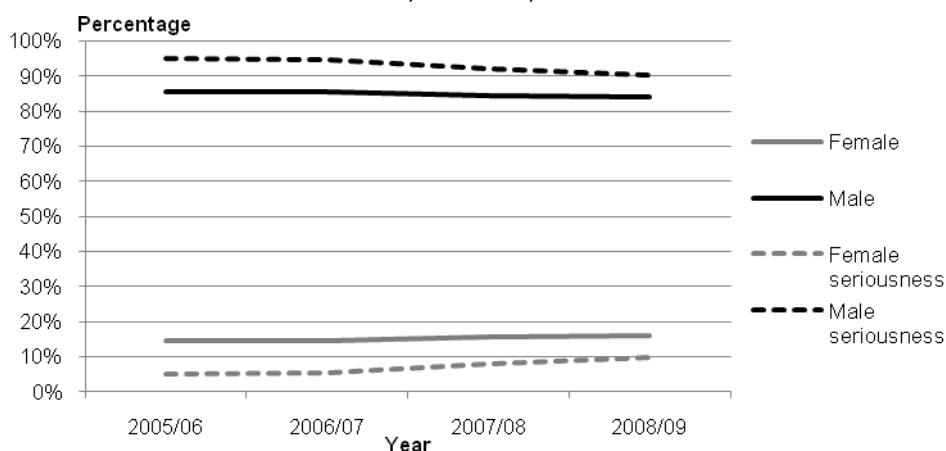
Figure 9.3 shows the gender gap for offence classes within the antisocial category is relatively large, with females committing around 15 percent of all offences (compared with 19 percent overall). The 'obstructing/hindering/resisting' offence class shows a closing in this gap, with the proportion for females standing at 20 percent. Conversely, the gap is wider for family offences, with males committing the vast majority of offences (93 percent). This should not be a surprise, as most protection orders are placed on males. As family offences are the most serious offence class within the antisocial category, and males commit the majority of family offences, the gender gap widens to 93 percent male when taking into account the gravity score.

Figure 9.3

Proportion of overall antisocial offence apprehensions by gender

By volume and gravity score⁽¹⁾

2005/06–2008/09



1. The sum of the seriousness scores of all offences that make up an offence class, where each score is based on the Ministry of Justice seriousness scale (which uses average number of days imprisoned and proportion of people imprisoned). Refer to chapter 4 (p 29).

Source: New Zealand Police Apprehension Data; Ministry of Justice Seriousness Scale

Table 9.2

Antisocial offending profile of males and females

By offence class

Average 2005/06–2008/09

Offence class	Gender		
	Male	Female	All
	Percent ⁽¹⁾		
Alcohol offences	25	26	25
Behaviour offences	39	38	39
Family offences	13	6	12
Obstructing/hindering/resisting	12	17	13
Other (gaming and vagrancy)	0	0	0
Other disorder	11	13	11
Total	100	100	100

1 Percentages may not add to 100 percent due to rounding.

Source: New Zealand Police Apprehension Data

The age curve for antisocial offence apprehension rates has a unique distribution (figure 9.4). Although the age of onset is later than other offences, the peak is more pronounced relative to other offences. Table 9.3 shows the median age for females (22 years) is one year lower than for males (23 years), in the antisocial category. The average seriousness is driven by the distribution of family offences. Given the high median age for family offences (35 years), the average seriousness peaks a lot later than other offence categories. It should be noted that the significance of this pattern is arguably small compared with other offence categories, due to the low base rate of the average seriousness for antisocial offences

Table 9.3

Median age distribution for antisocial apprehensions by offence class

By age and gender

Average 2005/06–2008/09

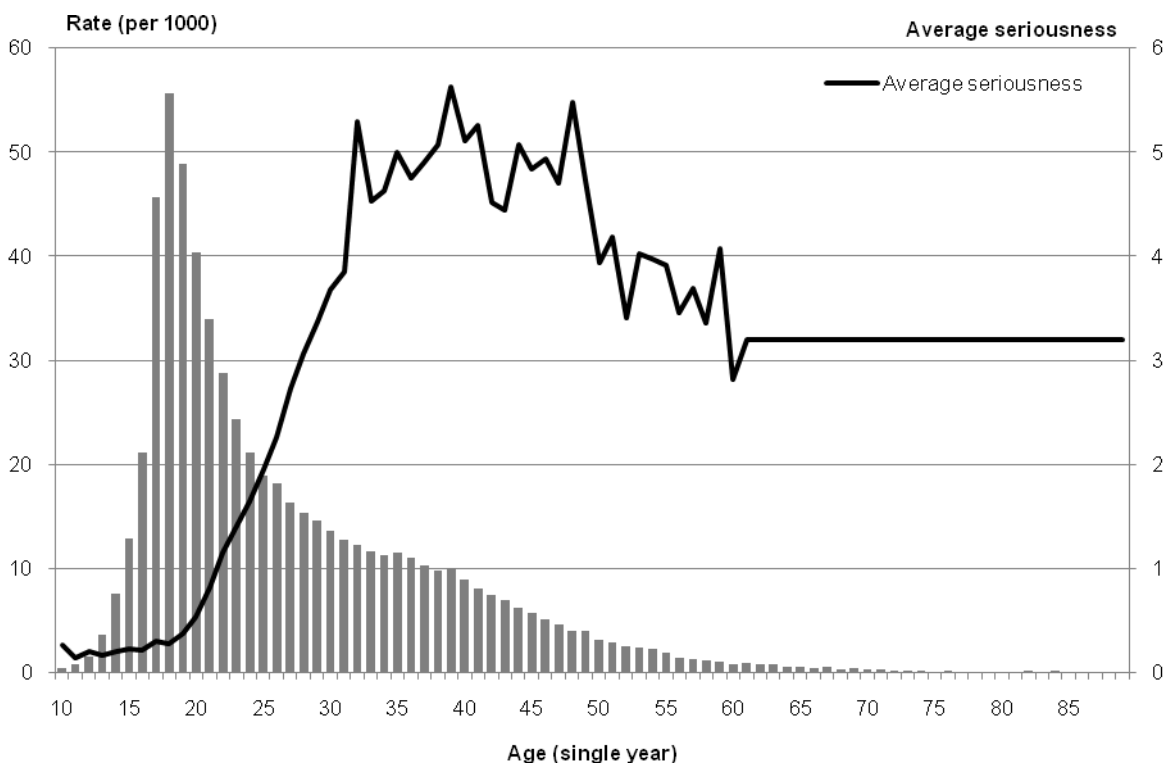
Offence class	Gender		
	Male	Female	Total
	Age (years)		
Alcohol offences	21	20	20
Behaviour offences	21	23	22
Family offences	35	34	35
Obstructing/hindering/resisting	24	24	24
Other (gaming and vagrancy)	19	22	19
Other disorder	21	21	21
Total	23	22	23

Source: New Zealand Police Apprehension Data

Figure 9.4

Antisocial offence apprehension rates and average seriousness⁽¹⁾

By single year of age
Average 2005/06–2008/09



1. The average seriousness score of all offences that make up an offence class, where each score is based on the Ministry of Justice seriousness scale (which uses average number of days imprisoned and proportion of people imprisoned). Refer to chapter 4 (p 29).

Source: New Zealand Police Apprehension Data; Ministry of Justice Seriousness Scale

10 Apprehensions for dishonesty offences

Summary of findings

- 'Theft' (48 percent) and 'burglary' (21 percent) contributed the greatest share to overall volumes for of apprehensions dishonesty offences.
- 'Burglary' occupied the greatest share of apprehensions in terms of gravity score, at 66 percent.
- Dishonesty offence classes typically had high prosecution rates, for example 'burglary' (88 percent), 'receiving' (94 percent), and 'fraud' (88 percent).
- 'Shoplifting' (48 percent female) and 'fraud' (39 percent female) had the closest gender gap not only in the dishonesty category, but also in all offence categories.

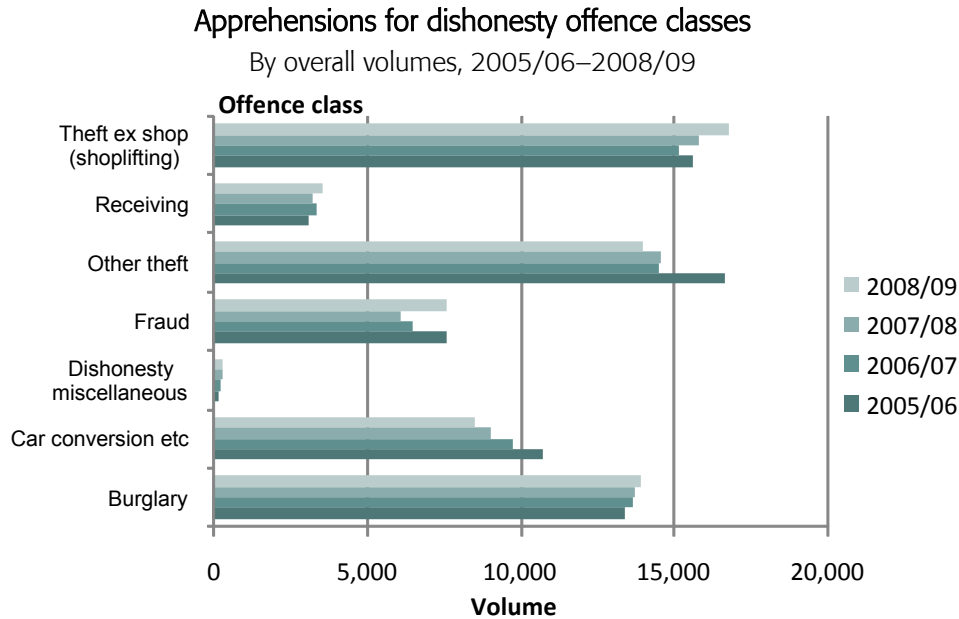
Overall patterns

Within the dishonesty category, as shown in figure 10.1, theft contributes the most by volume, accounting for 48 percent of all apprehensions in this offence category on average over the four-year period 2005/06 to 2008/09. Approximately half of the theft class, or 25 percent of the total, is made up of 'theft ex shop (shoplifting)' offences. Burglary (21 percent), car conversion (15 percent), and fraud (11 percent) make up the other major classes.

The dishonesty offence category decreased by 4 percent over the period from 2005/06 to 2008/09. There were bigger changes within the specific offence classes. A 14 percent rise in the 'receiving' offence class was driven by increases in property receiving. In contrast, car conversion recorded a 21 percent decrease, due to a fall in 'unlawful taking and interference with motor vehicles'. The offence class 'other theft' recorded a 16 percent decrease, driven by reductions in 'thefts of car'.

Dishonesty offences contributed the largest proportion of offences within apprehension statistics. This was due more to the quantity of overall recorded crime in this offence category rather than a high resolution rate. The 4 percent increase in burglary apprehensions was not actually reflected in recorded crime (where there was a 6 percent decrease) or the resolution rate (where there was no change). The 14 percent rise in apprehensions for the 'receiving' class was influenced by an 11 percent increase in recorded crime and 1 percent increase in the resolution rate. The 21 percent decrease in apprehension for car conversion was the result of a 13 percent decrease in recorded crime and 2 percent decrease in the resolution rate.

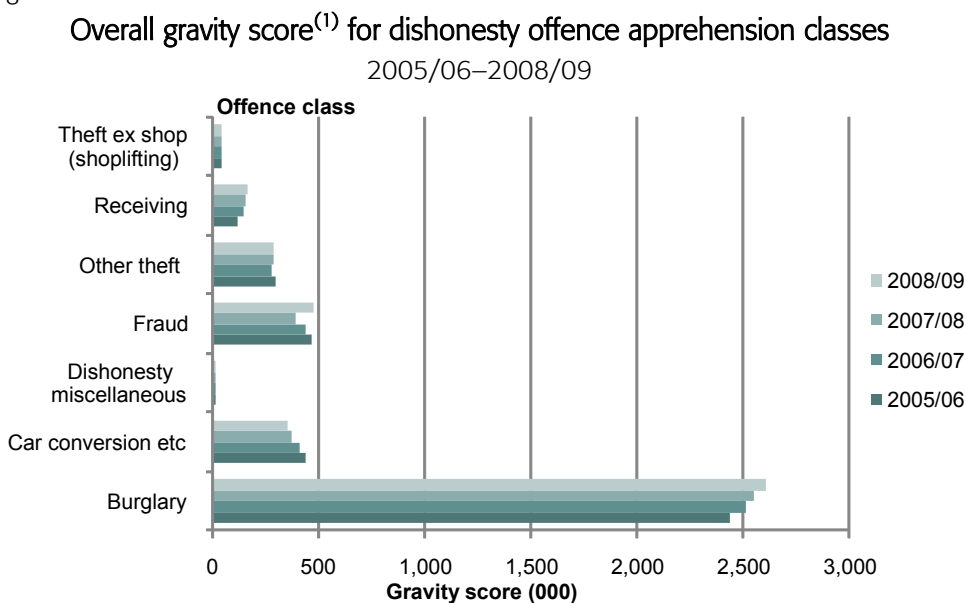
Figure 10.1



Source: New Zealand Police Apprehension Data

Taking into account seriousness and volume, burglary was the largest offence class within the dishonesty category, accounting for 66 percent of the total gravity score (figure 10.2). Fraud (11 percent) and car conversion (10 percent) were the other major contributors to the overall gravity score. Although by volume there was only a 4 percent decrease in dishonesty, when taking into account the change in gravity score there was a 3 percent increase. This was primarily due to a 7 percent increase in burglary, and incremental increases in most other classes, other than decreases in car conversion and other theft. The increase in burglary was due to increases in high-end burglary (ie \$500 to \$5,000 and over).

Figure 10.2



1. The sum of the seriousness scores of all offences that make up an offence class, where each score is based on the Ministry of Justice seriousness scale (which uses average number of days imprisoned and proportion of people imprisoned). Refer to chapter 4 (p 29).

Source: New Zealand Police Apprehension Data; Ministry of Justice Seriousness Scale.

Resolution type

Table 10.1 demonstrates that the seriousness of burglary was reflected in the number of apprehensions prosecuted (88 percent compared with only 2 percent dealt with by warning/caution). In fact, the dishonesty category was ranked second only to administrative offences in its prosecution rate (86 percent), and had the second lowest warning/caution rate (6 percent). This was reflected in the high prosecution rate for other dishonesty offence classes, such as receiving (94 percent), shoplifting (88 percent), and fraud (88 percent). The warning/caution rate for receiving (3 percent) and car conversion (3 percent) was lower than expected when taking into account their relatively low average seriousness.

Table 10.1

Dishonesty offence classes by resolution type and average seriousness

Average, 2005/06–2008/09

Offence class	Resolution type			Average seriousness score ⁽¹⁾		
	Prosecution	Warning/ caution	Other	Prosecution	Warning/ caution	Total
	Percent ⁽²⁾			Score		
Dishonesty miscellaneous	64	28	8	46	44	45
Other theft	81	10	9	22	14	21
Theft ex shop (shoplifting)	88	9	2	3	2	3
Fraud	88	5	8	61	62	64
Car conversion etc	86	3	10	42	45	43
Receiving	94	3	2	43	139	46
Burglary	88	2	11	194	179	194
Total	86	6	7	62	30	62

1. The average seriousness score of all offences that make up an offence class, where each score is based on the Ministry of Justice seriousness scale (which uses average number of days imprisoned and proportion of people imprisoned). Refer to chapter 4 (p 29).

2. Percentages may not add to 100 percent due to rounding.

Source: New Zealand Police Apprehension Data; Ministry of Justice Seriousness Scale

Demographics

Gender patterns for dishonesty varied depending on the specific offence class under investigation. Car conversion and burglary had a wider gender gap than the overall gender gap, with a male:female ratio of around 9:1. The gender gap for shoplifting (47 percent female) and fraud (38 percent female) was not only the closest in the dishonesty category, but closest overall as well.

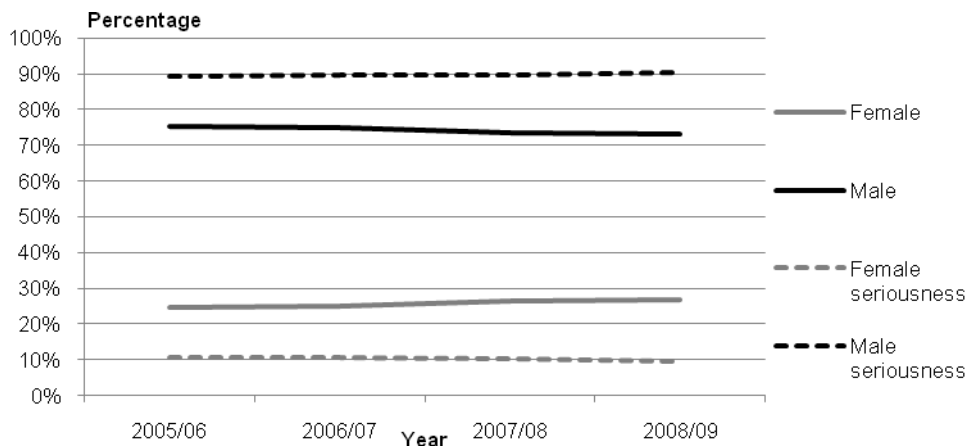
Table 10.2 demonstrates that males were much more predisposed to burglary than females, whereas shoplifting and fraud offences were committed by a high proportion of females. Figure 10.3 shows there was quite a large increase when comparing the proportions of overall volumes with gravity scores by gender, with males moving from 74 percent of all dishonesty apprehensions, to 90 percent.

Figure 10.3

Proportion of overall dishonesty offence apprehensions by gender

By volume and gravity score⁽¹⁾

From 2005/06–2008/09



1. The sum of the seriousness scores of all offences that make up an offence class, where each score is based on the Ministry of Justice seriousness scale (which uses average number of days imprisoned and proportion of people imprisoned). Refer to chapter 4 (p 29).

Source: New Zealand Police Apprehension Data; Ministry of Justice Seriousness Scale

Table 10.2

Dishonesty offending profile of males and females

By offence class

Average, 2005/06–2008/09

Offence class	Gender		
	Male	Female	All
	Percent ⁽¹⁾		
Burglary	26	9	21
Car conversion etc	17	7	15
Dishonesty miscellaneous	0	1	0
Fraud	9	16	11
Other theft	25	18	23
Receiving	5	4	5
Theft ex shop (shoplifting)	17	45	25
Total	100	100	100

1. Percentages may not add to 100 percent due to rounding.

Source: New Zealand Police Apprehension Data

The age distribution of figure 10.4 shows dishonesty offences were committed primarily by younger age groups, with the earliest age of onset of, and an earlier peak than, any other offence category. This was reflected in the young median age of 19 years. The median age varied by offence class, from 18 years for car conversion to 26 years for fraud. Overall, the median age for females (20 years) was one year older than for males (19 years). Although the dishonesty apprehension rate peaked relatively early, the average seriousness kept increasing to around 25 years, where it was relatively stable up until the age of 37 years, when the average seriousness declined with increasing age

Table 10.3

Median age distribution for dishonesty apprehensions by offence class

By age and gender
Average 2005/06–2008/09

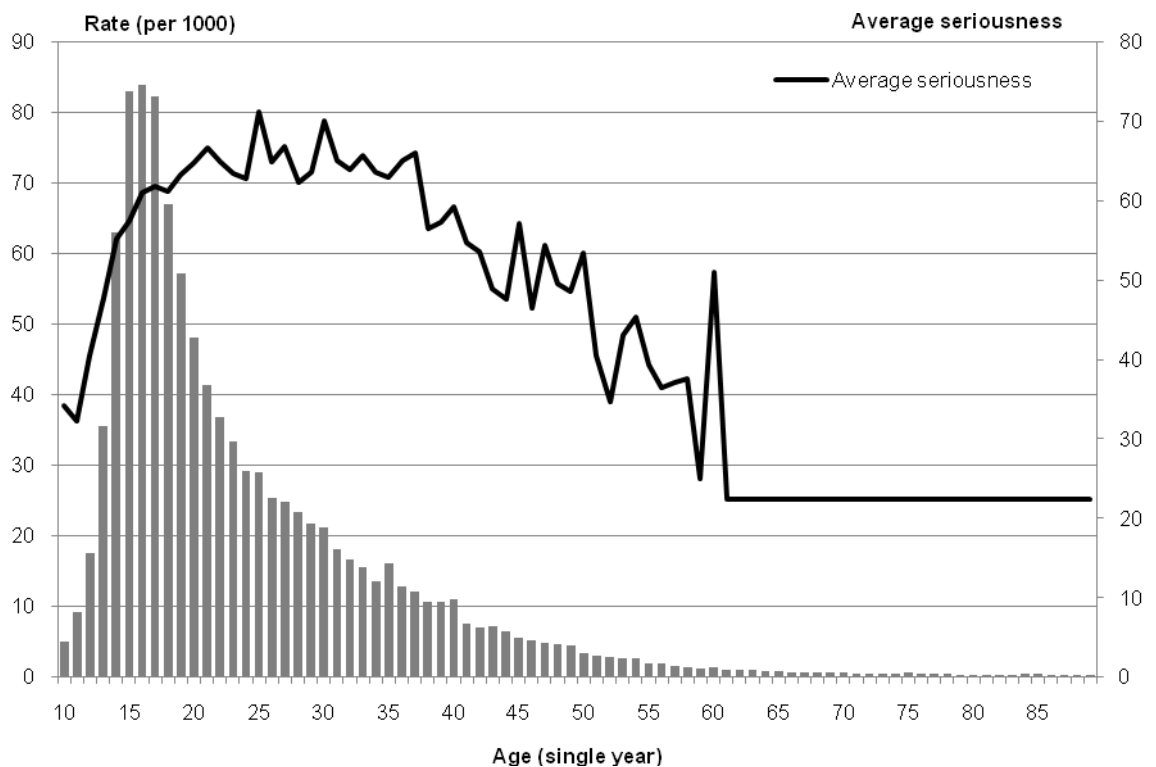
Offence class	Gender		
	Male	Female	Total
Burglary	18	17	18
Car conversion etc	18	17	18
Dishonesty miscellaneous	25	26	25
Fraud	26	26	26
Other theft	19	20	19
Receiving	23	24	23
Theft ex shop (shoplifting)	20	18	19
Total	19	20	19

Source: New Zealand Police Apprehension Data

Figure 10.4

Dishonesty offence apprehension rates and average seriousness⁽¹⁾

By single year of age
Average 2005/06–2008/09



1. The average seriousness score of all offences that make up an offence class, where each score is based on the Ministry of Justice seriousness scale (which uses average number of days imprisoned and proportion of people imprisoned). Refer to chapter 4 (p 29).

Source: New Zealand Police Apprehension Data; Ministry of Justice Seriousness Scale

11 Apprehensions for property damage/abuse offences

Summary of findings

- 'Wilful damage of property' (51 percent) and 'trespass offences' under the Trespass Act 1980 (28 percent), were responsible for the largest proportion of property damage/abuse apprehensions.
- The high average seriousness associated with 'arson' and 'Arms Act' offences means these offences accounted for 59 percent and 26 percent, respectively, of the total property damage/abuse gravity score.
- The warning/caution rate for the property damage/abuse category of 21 percent was the highest of all offence categories.
- The low median age for arson offences, and high seriousness associated with these offences, indicates why the average seriousness was so high between the ages of 10 and 15 years.

Overall patterns

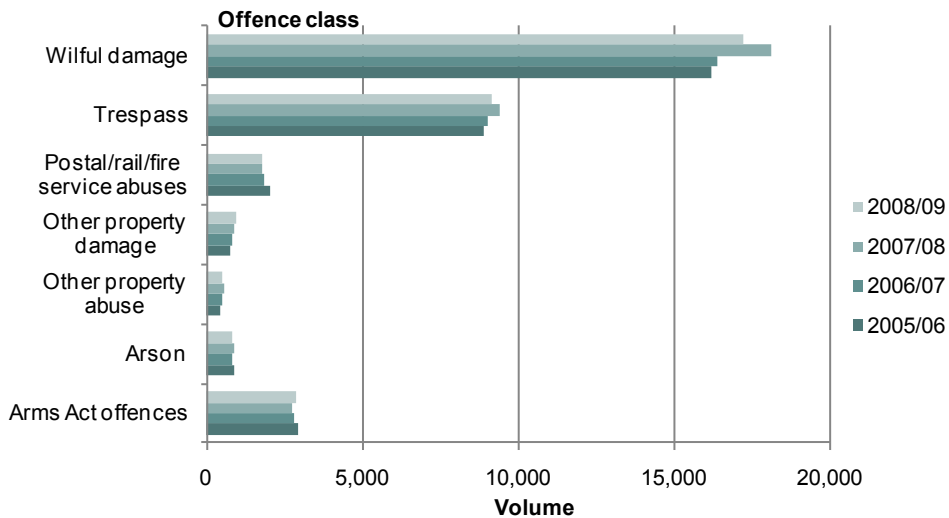
Figure 11.1 shows 'wilful damage' was by far the largest class by volume, responsible for 51 percent of all property damage/abuse apprehensions from 2005/06 to 2008/09. Trespass offences under the Trespass Act 1980 constituted the second largest proportion of property damage/abuse offences, accounting for 28 percent of the volume of all property damage/abuse apprehensions. Offences under the Arms Act 1983 were the third most numerous, accounting for 9 percent, and 'postal/rail/fire services abuses' contributed the fourth largest proportion of 6 percent. 'Postal/rail/fire services abuses' were driven primarily by 'breaches of the Telecommunications Act 2001', including such offences as 'offensive use of telephone devices'.

There was a 3 percent increase in apprehensions for property damage/abuse between 2005/06 and 2008/09 which was influenced by a net 9 percent increase in recorded crime and a 2 percent decrease in the resolution rate (43 percent to 41 percent).

Figure 11.1

Apprehensions for property damage/abuse offence classes

By overall volumes, 2005/06–2008/09



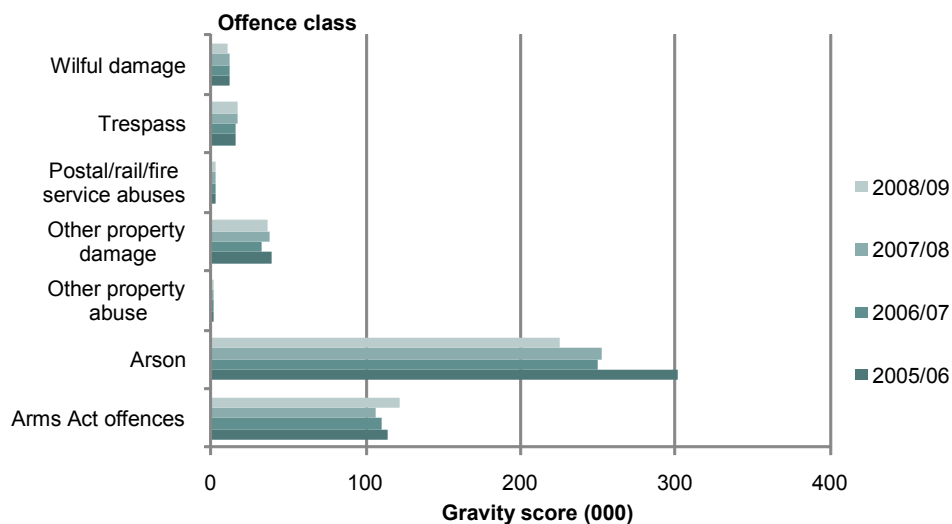
Source: New Zealand Police Apprehension Data

Figure 11.2 shows the average seriousness associated with arson and Arms Act offences made these offences the most substantial offences under the property damage/abuse category, accounting for 59 percent and 26 percent of the total gravity score, respectively. These contrasted with wilful damage and trespass offences, which accounted for 3 percent and 4 percent, respectively.

Figure 11.2

Overall gravity score¹ for property damage/abuse apprehension offence classes

2005/06–2008/09



1. The sum of the seriousness scores of all offences that make up an offence class, where each score is based on the Ministry of Justice seriousness scale (which uses average number of days imprisoned and proportion of people imprisoned). Refer to chapter 4 (p 29).

Source: New Zealand Police Apprehension Data; Ministry of Justice Seriousness Scale.

Resolution types

The property damage/abuse category had, on average, the second lowest average seriousness of any offence category. This was reflected in the warning/caution rate, which was the highest of all offence categories at 21 percent. 'Postal/rail/fire services abuses' had the highest warning/caution rate of all offence classes in this category, at 59 percent (table 11.1).

The offence classes 'other property abuse', including offences such as breaches to the Litter Act 1979, Wild Animal Control Act 1977, and Animal Welfare Act 1999 (27 percent), 'trespass' (25 percent), and 'Arms Act' offences (20 percent), all had a higher warning/caution rate than the overall warning/caution rate of 13 percent. Even though the 'arson' offence class had the lowest warning/caution rate of this category (6 percent), it was still relatively high considering the high average seriousness of the offence class.

Table 11.1

Property damage/abuse offence classes by resolution type and average seriousness

Average 2005/06–2008/09

Offence class	Resolution type			Average seriousness score ⁽¹⁾		
	Prosecution	Warning/ caution	Other	Prosecution	Warning/ caution	Total
	Percent ⁽²⁾			Score		
Postal/rail/fire service abuses	30	59	10	1	2	1
Other property abuse	69	27	4	1	1	1
Trespass	68	25	7	2	2	2
Arms Act offences	77	20	2	48	28	43
Wilful damage	80	14	6	1	1	1
Other property damage	84	8	8	47	23	45
Arson	89	6	6	275	389	283
Total	73	21	6	13	6	11

1 The average seriousness score of all offences that make up an offence class, where each score is based on the Ministry of Justice seriousness scale (which uses average number of days imprisoned and proportion of people imprisoned). Refer to chapter 4 (p 29).

2. Percentages may not add to 100 percent due to rounding.

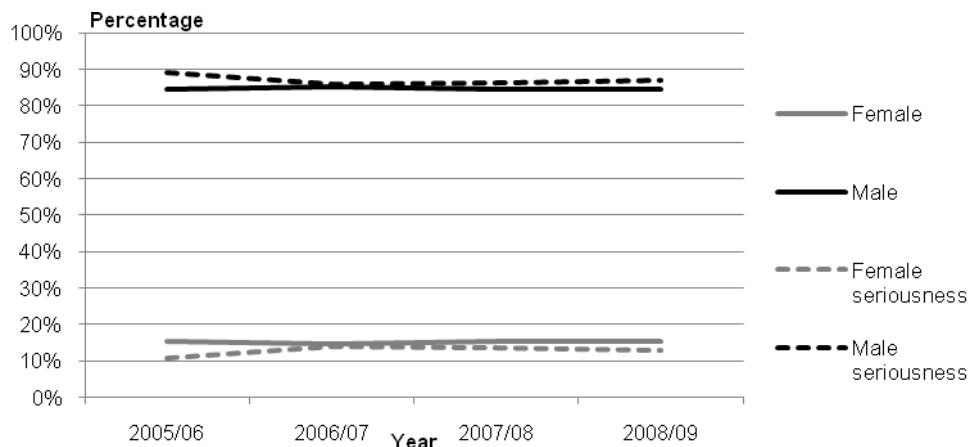
Source: New Zealand Police Apprehension Data; Ministry of Justice Seriousness Scale

Demographics

Females committed 15 percent of all property damage/abuse offences, and this pattern was similar when taking into account gravity scores (figure 11.3). Gender patterns differed depending on the property damage/abuse offence class under analysis. For example, on average from 2005/06 to 2008/09, 33 percent of all 'postal/rail/fire services abuse' offences were committed by females, whereas only 6 percent of all 'Arms Act' offences were committed by females.

Figure 11.3

Proportion of overall property damage/abuse offence apprehensions by gender
 By volume and gravity score⁽¹⁾
 2005/06–2008/09



1. The sum of the seriousness scores of all offences that make up an offence class, where each score is based on the Ministry of Justice seriousness scale (which uses average number of days imprisoned and proportion of people imprisoned). Refer to chapter 4 (p 29).

Source: New Zealand Police Apprehension Data; Ministry of Justice Seriousness Scale

Table 11.2

Property damage/abuse offending profile of males and females
 By offence class
 Average, 2005/06–2008/09

Offence class	Gender		
	Male	Female	All
	Percent ⁽¹⁾		
Arms Act offences	9	4	9
Arson	3	2	3
Other property abuse	2	1	1
Other property damage	3	1	3
Postal/rail/fire service abuses	4	12	6
Trespass	27	33	28
Wilful damage	52	46	51
Total	100	100	100

1 Percentages may not add to 100 percent due to rounding.

Source: New Zealand Police Apprehension Data

Figure 11.4 shows property damage/abuse was heavily skewed towards the young age groups. The median age for property damage/abuse offences was 20 years, compared with the overall median age of 25 years for all offence categories (table 11.3). This varied from 16 years of age for arson offences, to 28 years for postal/rail/fire services abuses. The low median age for arson offences, and high seriousness associated with these offences, could indicate why the average seriousness was so high between the ages of 10 and 15 years. From 15 years of age onwards, the pattern was reasonably stable for average seriousness (figure 11.4).

Table 11.3

Median age distribution for property damage/abuse apprehensions by offence class

By age and gender

Average 2005/06–2008/09

Offence class	Gender		
	Male	Female	Total
	Age (years)		
Arms Act offences	22	25	22
Arson	16	15	16
Other property abuse	21	22	21
Other property damage	19	24	19
Postal/rail/fire service abuses	29	27	28
Trespass	22	25	23
Wilful damage	18	20	18
Total	20	22	20

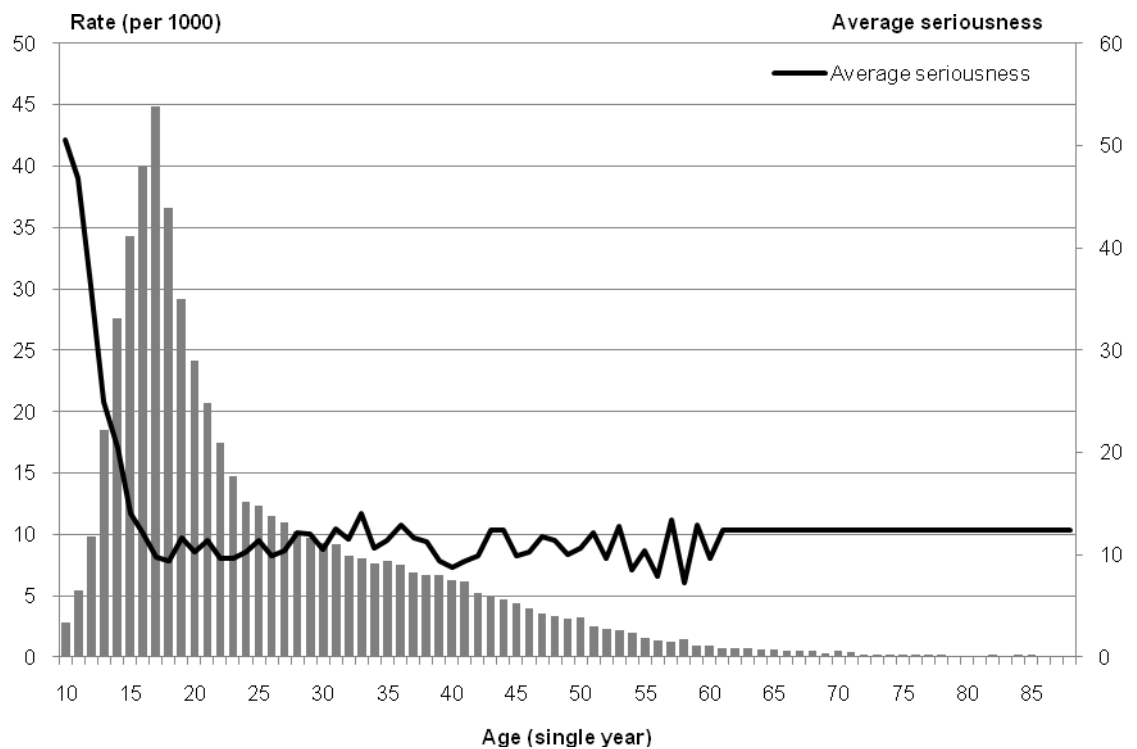
Source: New Zealand Police Apprehension Data

Figure 11.4

Property damage/abuse offence apprehension rates and average seriousness⁽¹⁾

By single year of age

Average 2005/06–2008/09



1. The average seriousness score of all offences that make up an offence class, where each score is based on the Ministry of Justice seriousness scale (which uses average number of days imprisoned and proportion of people imprisoned). Refer to chapter 4 (p 29).

Source: New Zealand Police Apprehension Data; Ministry of Justice Seriousness Scale

12 Apprehensions for administrative offences

Summary of findings

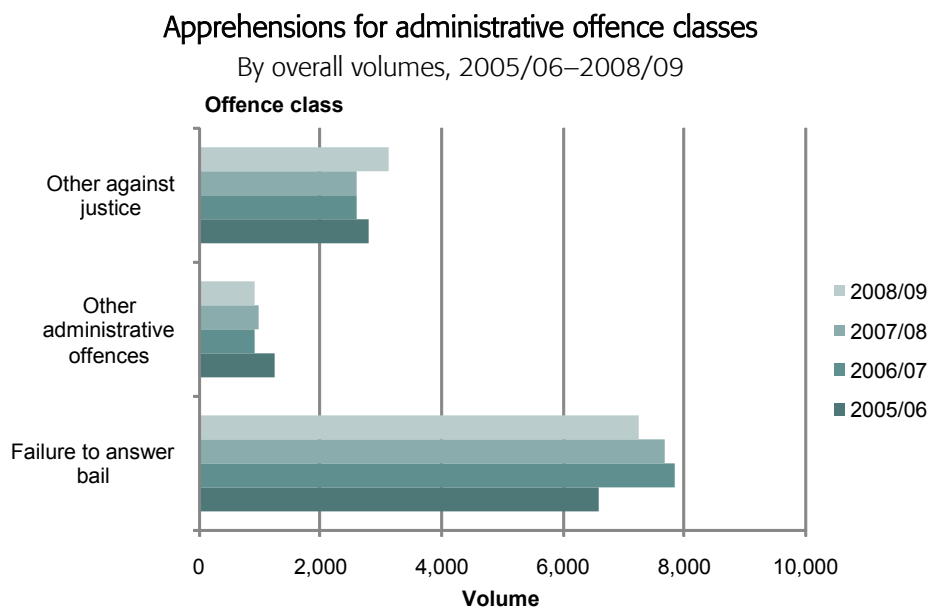
- The major offence class of the administrative offence category, 'failure to answer bail', comprised an average 66 percent of all administrative apprehensions between 2005/06 and 2008/09.
- Despite its high volume, the significance of 'failure to answer bail' apprehensions was reduced when offence seriousness was taken into account, especially when compared with 'other against justice' offences.
- 'Failure to answer bail' offences had one of the highest prosecution rates, despite a low average seriousness.

Overall patterns

Figure 12.1 shows 'Failure to answer bail' (for example, offenders not showing up at court on time) was quite easily the largest contributor to the administrative offence category, supplying on average 66 percent of total volume from 2005/06 to 2008/09. The remaining two offence classes that make up the administrative offence category are diverse, containing breaches for an assortment of acts such as the Immigration Act 1987 and Dog Control Act 1996.

Other than for 'failure to answer bail', it was difficult to provide an overall story for the administrative offence category, primarily because of the disparate elements of the 'other' classes. Apprehensions for 'failure to answer bail' fluctuated over the last four years, with the net effect of a 10 percent increase from 2005/06 to 2008/09. Trends in 'failure to answer bail' reflected an 11 percent increase in recorded crime and a 2 percent decrease in the resolution rate.

Figure 12.1

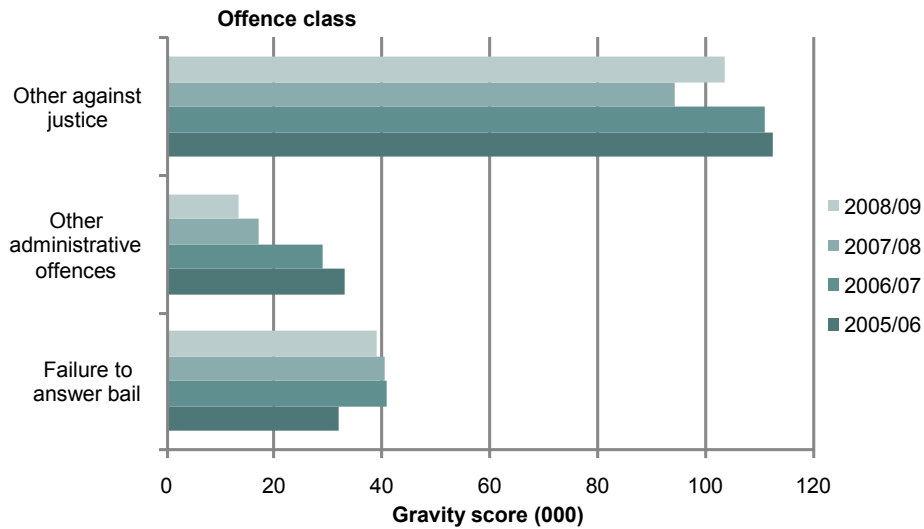


Source: New Zealand Police Apprehension Data

Despite the high volume of ‘failure to answer bail’ offences, the low offence seriousness attributed to this class reduced its share when taking into account the gravity score (figure 12.2). This contrasted with the offence class ‘other against justice’, with low volume but high seriousness.

Figure 12.2

Overall gravity score⁽¹⁾ for apprehension administrative offence classes
2005/06–2008/09



1. The sum of the seriousness scores of all offences that make up an offence class, where each score is based on the Ministry of Justice seriousness scale (which uses average number of days imprisoned and proportion of people imprisoned). Refer to chapter 4 (p 29).

Source: New Zealand Police Apprehension Data; Ministry of Justice Seriousness Scale.

Resolution type

Table 12.1 shows failure to answer bail offences had a low overall seriousness compared with other offences, but had one of the highest prosecution rates of all offence classes (96 percent). This is generally due to the context in which offenders are apprehended, that is, they are generally court-ordered, offering little discretion, and requiring that a prosecution be commenced in order for bail conditions to be reviewed

Table 12.1

Administrative offence classes by resolution type and average seriousness

Average, 2005/06–2008/09

Offence class	Resolution type			Average seriousness score ⁽¹⁾		
	Prosecution	Warning/ caution	Other	Prosecution	Warning/ caution	Total
	Percent ⁽²⁾			Score		
Other administrative offences	68	12	19	22	3	27
Other against justice	87	9	4	35	16	33
Failure to answer bail	96	1	4	5	6	5
Total	91	4	5	12	11	11

1 The average seriousness score of all offences that make up an offence class, where each score is based on the Ministry of Justice seriousness scale (which uses average number of days imprisoned and proportion of people imprisoned). Refer to chapter 4 (p 29).

2. Percentages may not add to 100 percent due to rounding.

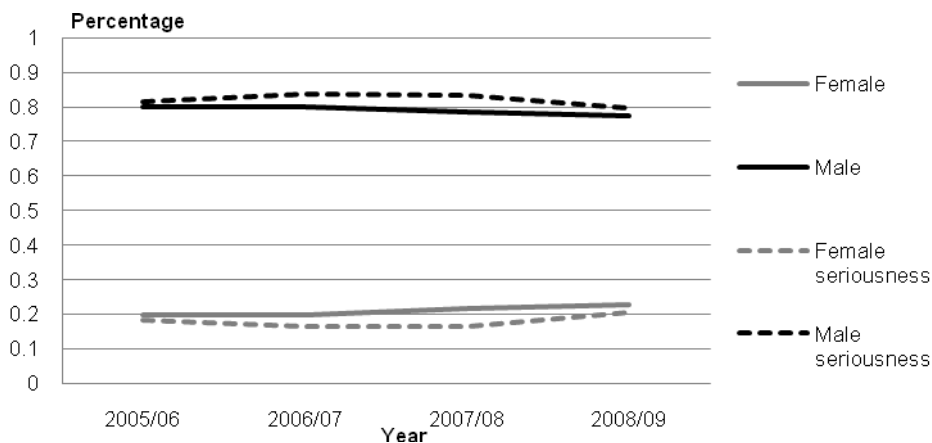
Source: New Zealand Police Apprehension Data; Ministry of Justice Seriousness Scale

Demographics

Figure 12.3 shows the gender pattern for administrative offences followed the expected pattern of around 4:1, and the trend over the four-year period was stable. The gender gap increased slightly when taking into account the gravity scores.

Figure 12.3

Proportion of overall administrative offence apprehensions by gender
By volume and gravity score⁽¹⁾
2005/06–2008/09



1. The sum of the seriousness scores of all offences that make up an offence class, where each score is based on the Ministry of Justice seriousness scale (which uses average number of days imprisoned and proportion of people imprisoned). Refer to chapter 4 (p 29).

Source: New Zealand Police Apprehension Data; Ministry of Justice Seriousness Scale

Table 12.2

Administrative offending profile of males and females
By offence class
Average, 2005/06–2008/09

Offence class	Gender		
	Male	Female	All
	Percent ⁽¹⁾		
Failure to answer bail	67	63	66
Other administrative offences	9	9	9
Other against justice	24	29	25
Total	100	100	100

1. Percentages may not add to 100 percent due to rounding.

Source: New Zealand Police Apprehension Data

Figure 12.4 shows the seriousness of offending across age was relatively stable. Table 12.3 shows the overall median ages for gender were quite similar, although the median age for 'other administrative offences' was four years higher for females than males (32 years compared with 28 years). The jump in the average seriousness of offending between the ages of 14 and 16 years is due to a high proportion of 'escaping lawful custody' (a high seriousness offence) relative to failure to answer bail offences.

Table 12.3

Median age distribution for administrative apprehensions by offence class

By age and gender
Average 2005/06 to 2008/09

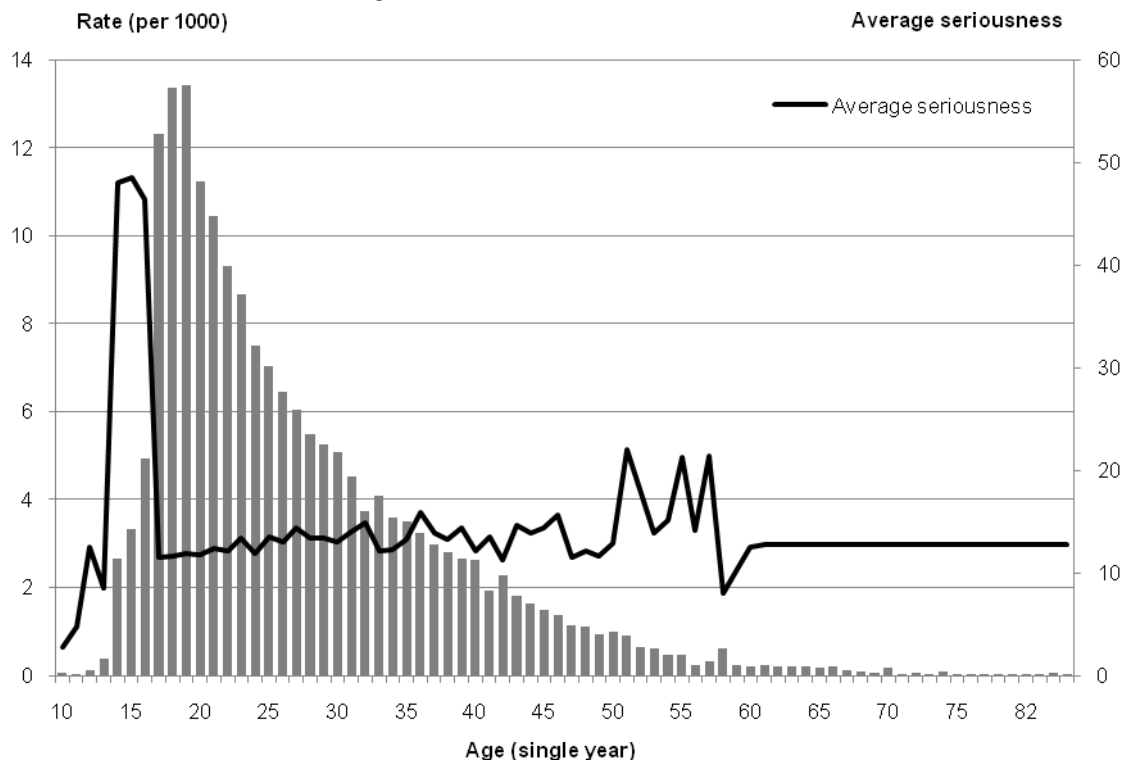
Offence class	Gender		
	Male	Female	Overall
Failure to answer bail	24	24	24
Other administrative offences	28	32	28
Other against justice	21	22	21
Total	23	24	24

Source: New Zealand Police Apprehension Data

Figure 12.4

Administrative offence apprehension rates and average seriousness⁽¹⁾

By single year of age
Average 2005/06–2008/09



1. The average seriousness score of all offences that make up an offence class, where each score is based on the Ministry of Justice seriousness scale (which uses average number of days imprisoned and proportion of people imprisoned). Refer to chapter 4 (p 29).

Source: New Zealand Police Apprehension Data; Ministry of Justice Seriousness Scale

13 Discussion and conclusion

Patterns in Police Apprehensions in New Zealand 2005/06 to 2008/09 has sought to characterise the apprehensions environment in New Zealand over a four-year period. This report used police apprehensions data to analyse three different components of police apprehensions from the 2005/06 to the 2008/09 fiscal years. The first component was to characterise the offences that make up this environment, looking at offence composition and trends over the period of this report. The second component of this report was to analyse the resolution type across various offence types. Finally, the third component of this report was to look at the demographic variables of age and gender in relation to the type of offence. As well as using raw volumes, the report also incorporates the Ministry of Justice seriousness scale to determine the intensity of offences being committed, who is committing them, and how they are being dealt with.

Statistics on apprehensions only contain information on offences where the police have determined a person is responsible for having committed an offence. The majority of the data presented in this report reflects New Zealand Police apprehensions. Caution should be observed in drawing conclusions about actual crime patterns from this data. Further information about the data can be found in chapters 2, 3, and 4 in the report.

Component 1: The overall picture

This report explores patterns and trends in the offence composition of police apprehensions by looking at outright volumes, and also by incorporating the Ministry of Justice seriousness scale to determine the intensity of offending. The report applies a decomposition approach to determine which underlying offence codes are driving changes in aggregate categories, and explores the effects trends in recorded crime and the resolution rate have on trends in police apprehensions.

Based on volume, the following offence categories supplied the greatest share of police apprehensions:

- dishonesty (particularly the offence classes of theft and burglary)
- violence (particularly the offence classes of serious and minor assaults)
- antisocial (particularly the offence classes of alcohol and behaviour offences).

The offence categories and classes of interest change when taking into account offence seriousness and offence frequency, and calculating a gravity score. Based on the gravity score, the following offence categories supplied the greatest share:

- violence (particularly the offence classes of grievous assaults and robbery)
- dishonesty (particularly the offence class of burglary)
- sexual offences (particularly the offence class of sexual violation).

Due to the short time series, this report focused on presenting a snapshot of information rather than trends. Despite this short time series, the empirical evidence presented for the four years between 2005/06 and 2008/09 also reflects a shifting environment, which requires flexibility in responding to different types of offences. From a raw volume perspective, increases in apprehensions for the following offence

categories contributed the majority of the 12 percent increase in apprehensions between 2005/06 and 2008/09:

- antisocial offences (driven by alcohol and behaviour offence classes)
- violence offences (driven by increases in serious and minor assaults, and intimidations and threats).

When calculating the gravity score, increases in apprehensions for the following offence categories contributed the majority of the 13 percent increase in the gravity score:

- violence (driven by grievous assaults, other serious assaults, and robbery)
- drugs (driven by dealing/trafficking)
- dishonesty (driven by burglary).

The patterns described above, and throughout this report, show that despite the variety of offences for which New Zealand police apprehend offenders, overall volumes of apprehensions are driven by a small number of high volume offences. It was possible to identify these offences by delving deeper than the most aggregate offence categories. Perhaps the most important conclusion to be gleaned from this component was the difficulty in summarising aggregate indexes into one arbitrary index. Trends in offending need to be analysed by the type of offending driving the change.

The police apprehension environment was also affected by a number of complex interactions between actual crime, the recorded crime rate, and the resolution rate. In general, this report gives evidence to suggest trends in police apprehensions were heavily affected by changes in the overall recorded crime rate, and changes in the resolution rate. In most offence categories and classes, an increase in apprehensions was generally reflected in an increase in recorded crime, as well as a small increase in the resolution rate.

The data presented in this component was also a reflection of a complex interaction between offence severity, offence complexity, police priority and resources, the willingness of public reporting, and the level of public confidence in police. In general, those violence offences reported to the police had high resolution rates, due in part to the seriousness of offending, but also the face-to-face contact between victim and offender. In contrast, dishonesty offences such as burglary and theft have a higher reporting probability from the public, often due to requirements of insurance claims.

However, often there is no clear evidence to identify the offender, and hence, dishonesty offences generally suffer from a low resolution rate. Furthermore, there is what can be termed victimless crime. The drugs offences outlined in chapter 8 are good examples of victimless crimes. These figures are generally a product of proactive police activities and strategies, and hence are reliant on the amount of resources invested in their detection. These offences consequently have a high resolution rate, often catching offenders in the act. All these should be considered when interpreting the nature of the trends in this report.

Finally, although detailed analysis is beyond the scope of this report, the effects of other factors on the apprehension rate should be considered. Changes in the population (including age and gender population structure), police numbers, and wider changes in general policy can affect trends in apprehensions and recorded crime.

Over the four-year time period of this report, the New Zealand population increased by 3 percent, from 4,164,900 to 4,292,400. Over the same period, there were large increases in police numbers, from 7,763 sworn officers to 8,776 – a 13 percent increase (New Zealand Police, 2006b; 2009c). An increase in the total population means there are more people to commit and report offences, and an increase in sworn officers means there are more police to detect and respond to these offences. Both of these changes could contribute to the increase in recorded crime and police apprehensions.

Component 2: Analysis of resolution type

The second component of this report was to analyse each resolution type for adults (prosecutions and warnings/cautions) in the context of different offences, to determine where and why resolutions differ by offence type and severity.

What is clear from this report is that the type of resolution is largely dependent on the type of offence under analysis. The dishonesty offence category had a high prosecution rate of 86 percent, compared with that of property damage/abuse (73 percent). Overall however, it was important to drill deeper than the aggregate offence categories, and look at the more specific offence classes of this report. These more specific offence classes generally varied in type of resolution, for example where the violence category warning/caution rate, varied from 32 percent for minor assaults to 2 percent for grievous assaults.

This report set out to determine whether it was offence seriousness that dictated what resolution type was used. The average seriousness of each offence category or class, based on the Ministry of Justice seriousness scale, was compared with the warning/caution rate. It was expected that a lower average seriousness for an offence would result in a higher warning/caution rate. For most offence categories, there seemed to be a relationship, although complex. The report generally showed offences with a low average seriousness were more likely to be dealt with by warning/caution than offences with high average seriousness (ie a proportionate response). Minor assaults were more likely to be dealt with by warning/caution than grievous assaults, possession/use of cannabis was more likely to be dealt with by warning/caution than dealing/trafficking in cannabis, and theft was more likely to be dealt with by warning/caution than burglary.

There were also exceptions, however, which contradicted the above pattern. Administrative offences, for example, despite their low seriousness, had one of the highest prosecution rates. Minor offences involving police (such as resisting police and minor assaults against police officers) had higher prosecution rates than expected. These exceptions reinforce that the context of certain offence classes should be considered.

It was also evident that most low- to medium-level serious offences had a warning/caution element to them. These patterns could indicate the importance of considering the individual circumstances of offending. Of all offence codes with a frequency of 50 or more and with an average seriousness of 100 or less, around 80 percent had a warning/caution rate of at least 5 percent, and the majority had a warning/caution rate of at least 1 percent. In other words, under the right circumstances, a warning/caution can be administered for most offence codes.

These patterns reflect the discretionary element of police work outlined in chapter 2 of this report. The police are not restricted to using warnings in offences of low seriousness, but rather, take into account a host of other aggravating and mitigating variables. Resolutions can be tailored based on varying context surrounding the same offence – that is, not all offences are equal simply because they belong to the same classification.

There are objectives other than proportionality here, explaining why some offences follow given resolution types regardless of offence seriousness as assigned by courts. The concept of proportionality can make way for other strategic goals such as the reduction of crime, the keeping of social order, or implementing a policy to ‘crack down’ on a particular offence.

Component 3: Demographics and apprehensions

One key argument, by Hirchi and Gottfredson (1983), outlined in chapter 2 of this report, was that the age distribution of crime did not vary across offence types. The evidence in this report suggests this is true to an extent – in every offence category and class under analysis in this report, it was the young who were apprehended for the majority of offending. Despite this, there is enough deviation across offence types to be of interest.

The age of onset for apprehensions begins earlier for offence categories such as the dishonesty or property damage/abuse category, compared with the drugs category. There is a less pronounced peak of offending for the sexual and violence categories compared with the antisocial or dishonesty categories. The violence and sexual categories consequently have a more even spread in their age distribution compared with other offence categories.

In many senses, these patterns reflect the opportunity structures for different age groups. The male assaults females (serious assaults) offence class for example, is often a reflection of intimate partner violence. The higher median age for this offence class suggests younger people are less likely to be in a relationship¹², and therefore less likely to execute this offence. This is consistent with the higher median age for the family offences class (such as breaches of protection orders) – again suggesting younger age groups are less likely to be in a position to require a protection order. The higher median age in the drug category for manufacturing compared with possession or use can indicate the lack of skills younger people may have in manufacturing drugs.

The variation in the age distribution of different offences consequently leads to variability in the average seriousness of offending by age. Of particular note was the decrease in the average seriousness of the violence category from the age of 17 years onwards. In contrast, the drugs category had a striking increase in the average seriousness of offending with age, and the average seriousness for the dishonesty category peaked between the ages of 26 and 37 years. Trends in the average seriousness are generally influenced by a small number of offences. For example, the high average seriousness in

¹² According to the 2006 Census of Population and Dwellings, only 5 percent of 17 year olds were partnered. This increases to 43 percent for 24-year-olds.

the violence category for the younger age group could be the result of the low median age for robbery in this category (a high seriousness offence).

Finally, the significance of the age distributions of this report is driven by the degree the patterns reflect shifts in the uptake of offending (ie prevalence) and shifts in the frequency of offending (ie incidence). Although police apprehensions are an incidence-based measure, it is important to consider the extent to which changes in prevalence impact on the age curve. Does the age curve reflect a small number of offenders committing a large amount of offending, a large number of offenders committing a small amount of offending, or a combination of both? The extent to which the curve can be explained by changes in incidence and prevalence cannot be determined by the data presented in this report, but is an important question nonetheless.

This report shows several clear patterns regarding gender differences in apprehensions. Although having a far lower rate of offending than males, females tend to be involved in minor violence offences more than serious violence offences, but in contrast, are more likely to be involved in more serious drugs offences rather than minor drugs offences. Females are also heavily involved in minor dishonesty offences such as shoplifting and fraud, whereas males are more likely to be involved in more serious dishonesty offences such as burglary.

These gender patterns are reflected in the seriousness of offending for males and females. In the violence, sexual, antisocial, and dishonesty categories, the proportional share for males increased when taking into account seriousness of offending.

Future directions

This report provides a descriptive overview of patterns of police apprehensions in New Zealand in the four-year period from 2005/06 to 2008/09. In this sense, the methodology of the report is restricted by the limited number of variables under analysis. The patterns identified with apprehensions data could be affected by a number of wider contextual factors. The lack of comprehensive data arguably makes the findings of this report somewhat speculative, although elements of theories can be picked up through careful analysis of the data.

The analysis in this report is also guided by the structure of the offence classification used. Definitions of what constitutes violence or property abuse may differ from the concept used in this report. The classification used in this report was chosen as the most 'fit for purpose' for its objectives.

Offence seriousness is a fluid and complex concept, one that should not be rigidly defined by that used in this report. Therefore it may be beneficial to explore alternative means of calculating offence seriousness.

Although the analysis of resolution type in this report is limited, there is scope to expand this analysis in the future. For instance, differences in resolution type by gender, age, and geographic location could produce interesting insights. This work could include analysis of youth justice interventions such as family group conferences, and it may be useful to consider Ministry of Justice court data in this analysis. Similarly, specifying in which part of the apprehensions process (chapter 3, p25) police prosecutions, and particularly diversions, are being captured would be beneficial to the overall understanding of police apprehension data. Therefore a more in-depth evaluation of

police apprehension data, complementing the anecdotal evidence currently available, would be of value.

Finally, the review of crime and criminal justice statistics (Statistics NZ, 2009) recommended that offenders and offending across their life course using justice sector administrative data (such as the data in this report) should be researched. This would complement and build on the analysis of the age distribution of offending in this report.

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Appendix 1 Offence classifications and codes

The following list gives the modified police offence classification used in this report. Where offence classes have been modified, the offences are listed to show how they differ. These are generally listed at the third, 'offence type' level, unless where specified. The offences that make up all other offence classes can be found on [Statistics NZ website](#).

Offence category	Offence code
Violence	
Homicide	
Kidnapping and abduction	
Robbery	
Grievous assaults	
Assaults male on female (serious assaults)	1540
Other serious assaults	1510–1530, 1550–1590
Minor assaults	
Group assemblies	
Intimidation and threats	
Sexual	
Sexual affronts	2210–2230
Other sexual	2510–2530, 2710–2740
Other sexual attacks	2610–2620, 2640, 2680–2690
Indecent assaults	2630
Immoral behaviour	2910–2990
Sexual violation	2650–2670

Offence category	Offence code
Drugs	
Deal or traffic in drugs (cannabis only)	3230, 3240, 3291
Deal or traffic in drugs (non-cannabis)	3130, 3140, 3190, 5930, 5940, 5990
Import or export drugs (cannabis only)	3210
Import or export drugs (non-cannabis)	3110, 5910
Manufacture or cultivate drugs (cannabis only)	3120, 3170, 5920
Manufacture or cultivate drugs (non-cannabis)	3220, 3270
Other drugs (cannabis only) offences	3280
Other drugs (non-cannabis) offences	3180, 5954, 5980
Possess and/or use drugs (cannabis only)	3250, 3260
Possess and/or use drugs (non-cannabis)	3150, 3160, 5950, 5960
Antisocial	
Alcohol offences	3910 - 3980
Behaviour offences	3530
Family offences	3810–3860
Obstructing/hindering/resisting police	3510
Other (gaming and vagrancy)	410–3480, 5810–5830, 3614–3620
Other disorder	3540–3570
Dishonesty	
Burglary	
Car conversion etc	
Other theft	4310, 4330–4390
Receiving	
Fraud	
Dishonesty miscellaneous	
Theft ex shop (shoplifting)	4320
Property damage/abuse	
Arson	5110
Wilful damage	5120–5130, 5145
Other property damage	5141–5144, 5151–5152, 5210–5230
Trespass	6110–6130
Other property abuse	6220–6240, 6310–6390
Postal/rail/fire service abuses	6520-6570
Arms Act offences	6810–6870

Offence category	Offence code
Administrative	
Failure to answer bail	7190
Other against justice	4998, 7110–7180
Other administrative offences	7210–7220, 7310–7380, 7410–7440, 7510–7530, 7610–7660, 6910, 7940–7980