

**SOCIAL
WELLBEING
BOARD**

20 July 2022

Proactive Release

Oral Item

**8 June Social Wellbeing
Committee**

**Authorised by the Minister
for Social Development
and Employment**

Oral Item 8 June Social Wellbeing Committee

Hon Carmel Sepuloni, Minister for Social Development and Employment
July 2022

This document been proactively released as authorised by the Minister for Social Development and Employment at <https://swa.govt.nz/publications/ministers-and-cabinet/>.

This pack contains:

Oral item for the Social Wellbeing Committee meeting 8 June

Some parts of this information release would not be appropriate to release and, if requested, would be withheld under the Official Information Act 1982 (the Act). Where this is the case, the relevant sections of the Act that would apply have been identified. Where information has been withheld, no public interest has been identified that would outweigh the reasons for withholding it.

This is the key to the redaction codes used for this release:

- Section 9(2)(f)(iv): This information is under active consideration. The release of this information at this time would be likely to prejudice the ability of government to consider advice and the wider public interest of effective government would not be served

Creative Commons Licence



This work is licensed under the Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International licence. In essence, you are free to copy, distribute and adapt the work, as long as you attribute the work to the Crown and abide by the other licence terms. Use the wording 'Social Wellbeing Agency' in your attribution, not the Social Wellbeing Agency logo.

To view a copy of this licence, visit creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0.

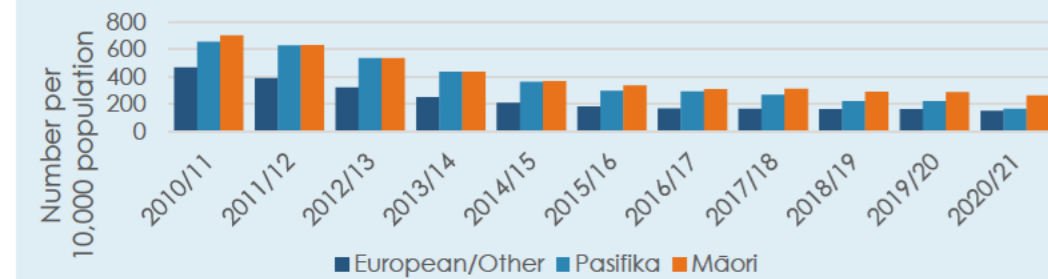
OIA 9(2)(f)(iv)

Evidence brief: Youth offending and gang involvement

Current situation – What we know about current youth offending

Youth offending rates are low....

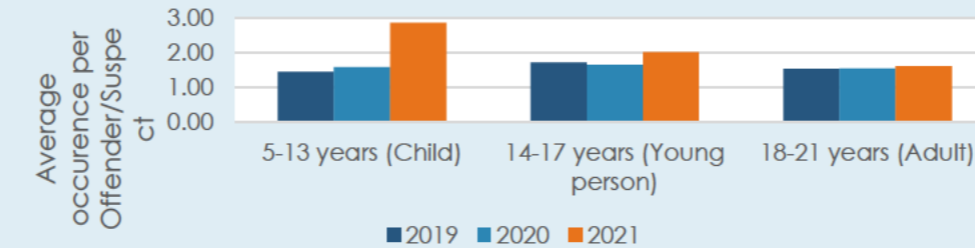
Overall, the recorded youth offending rate is low, and has been decreasing in the last decade. The figure below shows recorded offending rates per 10,000 population for young people aged 14-16, to June 2021.



Source: Ministry of Justice, Youth Justice Indicators Summary Report, December 2021

...but we have seen a recent increase in serious, persistent child offending in Tāmaki Makaurau

However, there has been a recent increase in serious, persistent (and in some cases high profile) offending by a small number of children and young people (particularly by children aged 5-13 years old and in Tāmaki Makaurau). Vehicle-related crime is the most common offence committed by children in Tāmaki Makaurau.



Source: NZ Police Intelligence Report: Ram Raid Offending in Tāmaki Makaurau, 25 February 2022

COVID-19 is likely to have contributed to the increase in youth offending

Responses to COVID-19 have resulted in...

- ↑ Underlying factors linked with youth offending are likely to have been exacerbated by alert levels 3 and 4 (AL3/4). Example factors include childhood trauma, poverty, substance abuse and conduct disorders.
- ↓ Reduced levels of in-person support available during AL3/4 by agencies supporting at-risk youth.
- ↓ Lack of in-person school participation during AL3/4 and decreasing attendance rates.
- ↓ Reduced compliance with lockdown restrictions after the first AL4 period (once young people reconnected with peers).
- ↓ Loss of employment severely impacting families alongside cost-of-living increases.

The current patterns of child and youth offending are not driven by involvement in youth gangs

In June to December 2021, ram raiding was repeatedly above average levels. While young people were associated with a large component of ram raids, only a small number of ram raids have been linked to known youth gangs.

Intervention opportunities – What data and research tells us about young people involved in gangs and intervention opportunities

Young people involved in gangs in their 20s have had multiple points of contact with the State over their life

The Social Wellbeing Agency analysed about 2000 young people in their early 20s who are currently on Corrections' gang member list and used integrated data infrastructure (IDI) to extract what we know about their life course and interactions with the State.

This analysis told us:

- The cohort were significantly more likely to have contact with Oranga Tamariki than the population average, peaking at age 16. ~20% experienced an Oranga Tamariki investigation, and at age 16 almost 30% were in a placement.
- Approximately one third had contact with non-enrolled truancy services at high school, and approximately one quarter experienced alternative education. Almost all had left school with little or low attainment by age 17.
- The cohort were significantly more likely to experience an emergency department admission, make ACC injury claims and require specialist mental health services than the general population. Enrolment with a PHO and GP visits dropped rapidly after age 17.
- While 100% of the cohort had contact with the Police and were reported as offenders one or more times across their lives, over half were also reported victims of crime.

While the picture this paints is negative, it also shows that these young people had multiple points of contact with the State, creating opportunities to intervene and provide better support.

The IDI is managed by Statistics New Zealand for research purposes. These results are not official statistics.

Effectively addressing youth offending and youth gang involvement require similar interventions

Available research shows that protective and resilience factors associated with youth offending are also closely associated with youth gang involvement. These include:

- **Connection and identity**, e.g. to history, communities and identity, with strong whānau/aiga support structures.
- **Community and neighbourhood factors**, e.g. socio-economic wellbeing of the community.
- **Family factors**, e.g. degree of family financial stress, positive parental attitudes and coping mechanisms.
- **School factors**, e.g. degree of commitment to school, attainment.
- **Peer group factors**, e.g. association with peers who engage in positive and constructive activities.
- **Individual factors**, e.g. conduct disorders, early marijuana use, early drinking. Drug use is a risk factor in young people becoming involved in gangs, and to a lesser extent, the attraction of selling drugs and making money.

What works

Universal prevention approaches	<p>Increasing educational retention and attainment is likely to decrease the incidence of offending and offer alternatives to crime. For example: Engagement in Learning Strategy, Before School Checks, Early Childhood Education.</p> <p>Increasing employment opportunities offer an alternative to gang activity.</p> <p>Reducing deprivation and increasing social cohesion: some of the most deprived communities in NZ have higher rates of gang membership.</p>	<p>For example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Engagement in Learning Strategy • Before School Checks
Community and school-level prevention programmes	<p>Strengthening communities: some community-based programmes that support at-risk families and children have shown to be effective.</p> <p>Strengthening schools and ECE: Schools are key in the prevention of, and intervention of, conduct problems. Training helps teachers and parents manage disruptive youth, and as well as teaching students interpersonal skills. ECE programmes are beneficial when they target self-regulation, early cognitive abilities, social skills, and caregivers' warmth, responsiveness, and behavioural management strategies.</p>	<p>For example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Youth Crime Action Plan • Positive Behaviour for Learning • Rangatahi hub
Individual and family prevention programmes	<p>Individual support with high-needs children: children diagnosed with conduct and oppositional/defiant disorders are more likely to engage in future offending behaviour.</p> <p>Whānau support and prevention: combining ECE programmes for children with family support (e.g. parent-management training) is most effective for addressing early conduct issues.</p>	<p>For example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Early intervention gang prevention • Family Start • Functional Family Therapy • Youth Mentoring • Whānau Ora