



Youth Policing – Where Prevention Starts

YOUTH POLICING PLAN **2012** » **2015**





Commissioner's Foreword

I am pleased to introduce the national Youth Policing Plan 2012-2015, our blueprint for policing children and young people.¹ It describes how we will increase the protection and safety of children and young people and reduce their presence in the criminal justice system.

Youth are one of New Zealand Police's five operational priorities. The Youth Policing Plan supports the Prevention First operating strategy, putting prevention at the forefront of what we do.

An evidence-based approach, delivered in partnership with community, iwi, non-government and Government organisations, is essential if we are to help children and young people. No single factor can be said to 'cause' youth crime. Rather, a number of risk factors interact in the lives of some children and young people, while protective factors are absent.² Impacting on those factors in a positive way helps prevent crime, making youth and our communities safer. This plan describes what we will do to ensure we interact positively with the young people and communities we serve.

Maori youth are over-represented in the youth justice system. This consistent trend provides a challenge we must keep at the front of our minds when opportunities arise to deal with offending outside the youth justice system. This plan has a focus on early intervention to stop childhood offending becoming a lifelong issue. It provides an opportunity to identify and assess risk, and respond effectively to reduce youth crime and victimisation.

The focus on youth is an exciting opportunity to roll up our sleeves and have a real impact on the offending and victimisation of a vulnerable part of our community. The investment and energy provided now will pay dividends in future years.

I hope you will take up the challenge.

Peter Marshall MNZM
Commissioner of Police

¹ In this plan, children and young people are referred to in the context of the Children, Young Persons and Their Families Act 1989 (a child is 0 – 13 years and a young person is 14 – 16 years).

² Youth Crime: Offender Based Approaches to Reduction Research Report 4 Sheffield Hallam University.

YOUTH POLICING – WHERE PREVENTION STARTS

AIM

To reduce youth offending and victimisation

New Zealand Police aim to reduce youth offending and victimisation by focusing on:

》 PREVENTION

Prevention of first time offending, re-offending, victimisation and re-victimisation

》 INTERVENTION

Response to repeat offending and victimisation to prevent life course offending

》 CAPABILITY/CAPACITY

Skilled Police staff who are trained and resourced to do their jobs effectively, supported by capable leadership and supervision

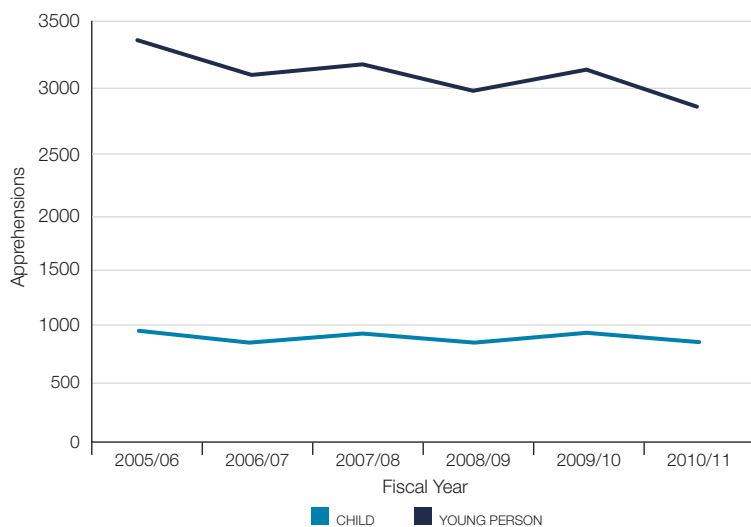
》 PARTNERSHIPS

Working effectively with iwi, partner agencies and the community to achieve shared outcomes

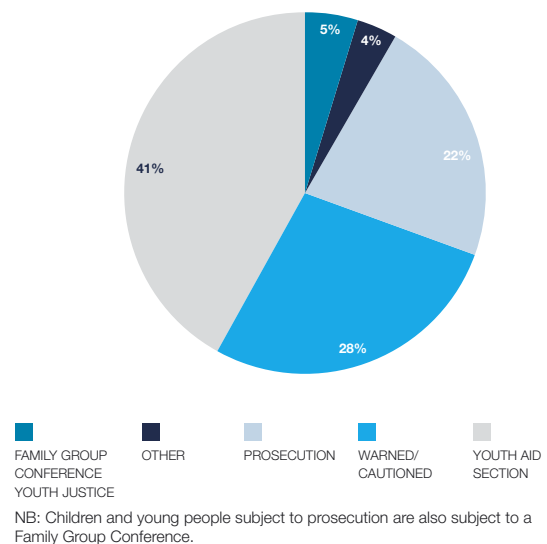
Youth in Context

- ▶ The most common offence committed by children and young people over the past six years is 'theft' which occurs at twice the rate of any other offence.
- ▶ Apprehensions of children and young people have decreased over the last six years with the biggest reduction being people aged between 14 and 16 years and those identifying as Caucasian.
- ▶ Apprehensions of Maori children and young people have decreased at a lesser rate than Caucasian children and young people.
- ▶ The majority of youth apprehensions are dealt with through alternative means to prosecution.
- ▶ There has been an upward trend in violence with female youth accounting for a greater proportion of that growth.
- ▶ Youth violence represents a smaller proportion of total offending than adults. In 2010/11, violence comprised 11% of total offending by children and young people compared with 19% by adults.

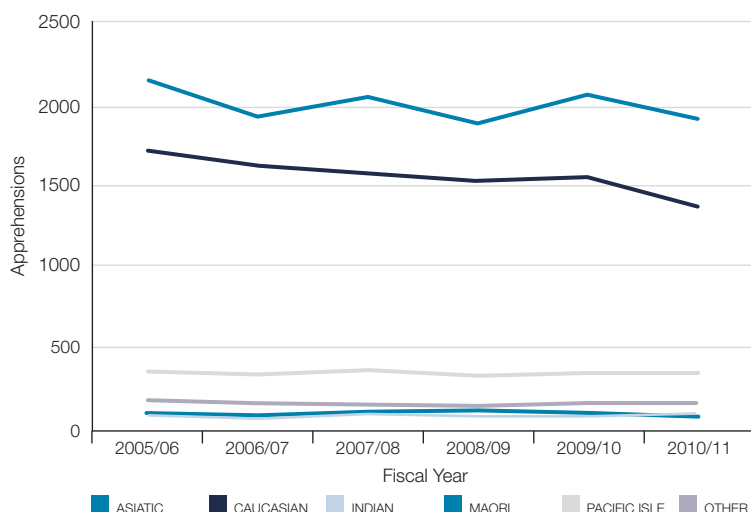
Children and Young Persons Apprehensions



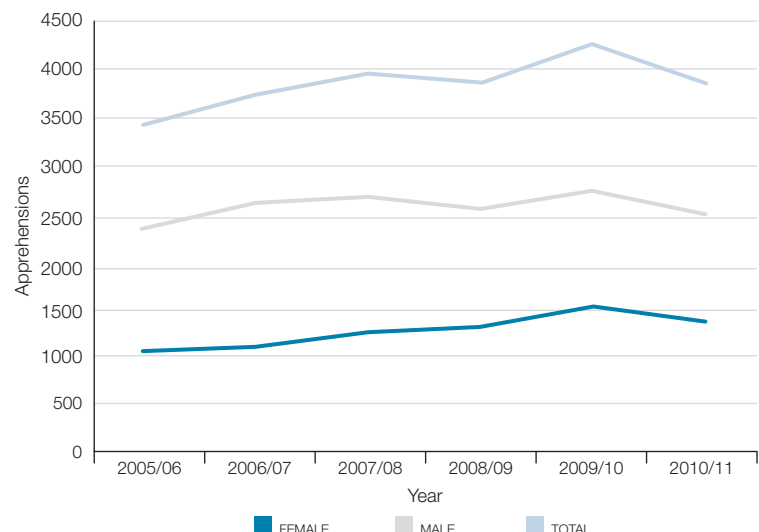
Children and Young Persons 2010/11 Resolution Statistics



Children and Young Persons Apprehensions by Ethnicity



Children and Young Persons Acts Intended to Cause Injury



Opportunities and Challenges

Policing when children and young people are involved provides its own unique set of challenges, but many of these are shared with other areas of policing. It is vital to acknowledge the potential barriers to success and look for solutions within the context in which we work.

Opportunities

- › As one of Police's five operational priorities, there is a clearly stated organisational commitment to youth policing and an opportunity to raise the profile of the value of the prevention work carried out by Youth Services.
- › Identifying where Police can work in closer partnership with iwi at a local and national level will enable Police to support iwi in preventing and addressing Maori youth offending.
- › Using evidence-based and tested approaches provides a strong rationale and greater chance of success in reducing youth offending and victimisation.
- › Closer connection with Intelligence will provide more evidence-based decision-making at a local and national level.
- › With the employment of Child Case Managers, Police can focus on early intervention with child offenders, which statistically provides a greater chance of success in reducing future offending.
- › The development of guidelines and tools will assist equitable decision-making across Police.
- › Police want to deliver efficient value for money services. Working together across social and justice sectors with non-government agencies and the community provide excellent opportunities to share resources, information, experience and skills.

Challenges

- › Developing responses relevant to Maori within the Youth justice system.
- › Any changes to legislation will potentially mean realignment of resources.
- › Police have a heavy reliance on sector partners to carry out their duties effectively. There is a reciprocal responsibility and an interdependence on each other for shared outcomes.
- › Ongoing fiscal constraints within the justice and social sectors.
- › Maintaining the strategic focus on youth prevention activities as a priority part of the business, in the face of competing resource demands.



How will we respond to children and young people?

Key Principles

Prevention First

Police work to divert children and young people away from criminal behaviour and reduce the likelihood of re-offending. Youth Education programmes/services use evidence-based responses to prevent children and young people from becoming offenders or victims of crime and enhance community reassurance. Police identify those most at risk of harm and take appropriate action to reduce/remove risk.

Early Intervention

Children and young people are dealt with as soon as possible following any incident in accordance with the requirements of the Children, Young Persons and Their Families Act 1989. Lengthy delays are avoided. A timely risk assessment and response ensures the child or young person recognises the link between their behaviour and any consequences, and their needs are addressed. Early intervention ensures greater success and reduces victimisation.

Respect and Trust

Police model respect to children and young people in the way we speak, engage and behave. Positive interactions and activities between Police and youth build trust with young people, families, community groups and schools. Positive activities encourage and help children and young people to take a constructive role in society. Police respond appropriately to the culture of the children, young people and their families, in particular Maori youth.

Working Together

Police work in partnership with iwi, government, non-government, and community groups to reduce offending by children and young people and assist in keeping them safe. All Police members play a role in reducing youth offending and victimisation.

Research shows that children and young people are MORE at risk of offending and victimisation if they:

- ▶ Have a mental health condition
- ▶ Abuse alcohol and drugs
- ▶ Are from low socio-economic background
- ▶ Have a conduct disorder
- ▶ Are disconnected from family and/or community
- ▶ Come from single parent families
- ▶ Witness family violence and/or live in a family where intimate partner violence occurs
- ▶ Have close affiliation with anti-social peers
- ▶ Have poor parental supervision and discipline
- ▶ Are disengaged with education, training or employment
- ▶ Have low achievement in primary school
- ▶ Have a learning disability
- ▶ Have been in the custody of Child Youth and Family
- ▶ Have a lack of positive male role models

Research shows that children and young people are LESS at risk of offending and victimisation if they:

- ▶ Are actively engaged in education, training or employment
- ▶ Have a sense of self-worth
- ▶ Have recognition and praise for positive behaviour
- ▶ Have stable, warm, affectionate relationships with one or more parents
- ▶ Have positive and pro-social friends
- ▶ Have strong connections to local community (eg sport/cultural activities)
- ▶ Have healthy boundaries and standards set by parents, teachers and the community
- ▶ Have positive role models

NZ Police is serious about reducing Maori offending. That's why we are starting with youth. This plan enables districts to focus on increasing their prevention activities and response to Maori offending in the following ways.

What we know:	What we are doing:
<ul style="list-style-type: none">› Maori are over-represented in all areas of the youth justice system. The rate of Maori youth offending is decreasing at a lesser rate than Caucasian youth	<ul style="list-style-type: none">› Joint initiatives with iwi tailored to Maori youth needs› Conducting research into any disparity in resolution for Maori youth (and other ethnicities) to understand drivers of disparity› Developing a decision-making model that ensures consistency and is cognisant of Maori needs
<ul style="list-style-type: none">› Maori often offend at a younger age than other ethnicities	<ul style="list-style-type: none">› Increased focus on early intervention with Maori children by working collaboratively with community partners› More flexibility for districts to tailor school education programmes to Maori needs
<ul style="list-style-type: none">› Police Alternative Action works in reducing Maori offending	<ul style="list-style-type: none">› Increased use and improved quality of Alternative Action to reduce entry into the Youth justice system



Prevention

Prevention of first time offending, re-offending, victimisation and re-victimisation.

We will:

- › Initiate measures to enhance trust and confidence in Police by youth.
- › Identify and appropriately respond to risks associated with children and young people offending.
- › Ensure youth issues are addressed through the tasking and co-ordination process.

How:

- › Work with iwi to prevent Maori youth offending.
- › Increase engagement between Intelligence and Youth Services.
- › Develop community initiatives to address local issues.
- › Provide effective, relevant and targeted Police education interventions and services to the compulsory education sector.
- › Identify and respond to youth risk factors.



Intervention

Response to repeat offending and victimisation to prevent life course offending.

We will:

- › Provide appropriate, timely and effective responses to children and young people who offend, and their victims.
- › Wherever possible and appropriate, divert children and young people away from the formal youth justice system.

How:

- › Include victim input in interventions.
- › Prioritise and report on child offenders.
- › Focus on reduction in serious offending by youth.
- › Comply with legislation, policy and operational guidelines.
- › Increase the use of Alternative Actions and reduce Youth Court volume.
- › Report youth offenders and incidents to Youth Services with a sense of urgency.





Capability/Capacity

Skilled Police staff who are trained and resourced to do their jobs effectively, supported by capable leadership and supervision.

We will:

- › Provide competent leadership and supervision to staff dealing with children and young people.
- › Provide reliable data to assist in decision-making with youth issues.
- › Ensure frontline staff and their supervisors are skilled in dealing with children and young people in accordance with the Children, Young Persons and Their Families Act 1989.

How:

- › Improve reliability of child and youth data.
- › Improve consistency in decision-making.
- › Improve ICT information and support systems for youth offending and victimisation.
- › Improve organisational training in relation to dealing with children and young people.
- › Ensure appropriate district co-ordination and leadership in relation to the Police response to youth.

Partnerships

Working effectively with iwi, partner agencies and the community to achieve shared outcomes.

We will:

- › Work with key community groups engaging with children and young people to reduce offending and victimisation and enhance community reassurance.
- › Work in partnership with iwi and Maori communities to reduce offending by young Maori.
- › Work in partnership with Government and non-government organisations to deliver services to children and young people.

How:

- › Develop working relationships and youth initiatives in partnership with local iwi.
- › Work collaboratively across the Government and compulsory education sectors (for example supporting the development of cross-sector performance indicators).
- › Share information, assess and respond to risk in collaboration with Child Youth and Family.
- › Utilise the skills, experience and resources provided by non-government organisations and the community.

**“Mama ke te tohutohu tamariki,
i te whakatika pakeke.”**

**“It’s better to train up a child
than to try and repair an adult.”**

Achievement of the Youth Policing Plan will be measured through activities outlined in the Youth Policing Control Strategy. The Control Strategy will be reviewed and refreshed annually to ensure the Youth Policing Plan is delivered on and achieved.





The tohu on the front cover and above symbolises the intent of Police to work with all New Zealanders towards a safer community. The tohu together with the whakatauaiki below speak of leadership, commitment, focus, strength, unity and progression within the challenge of today's reality.

E tū ki te kei o te waka

Kia pākia koe e nga ngaru o te wa

Stand at the stern of the waka

and feel the spray of the future biting at your face

