



EVIDENCE CENTRE
TE POKAPŪ TAUNAKITANGA

REOFFENDING PATTERNS FOLLOWING CASES WHERE YOUTH WERE WARNED BY POLICE

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**ORANGA
TAMARIKI**
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The Oranga Tamariki Evidence Centre works to build the evidence base that helps us better understand wellbeing and what works to improve outcomes for New Zealand's children, young people and their whānau.

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Justice sector agencies are interested in better understanding the operation of the youth justice system in preventing children and young people from reoffending. This report presents information on the reoffending outcomes observed for cases involving youth who were warned by Police. Warnings are the least severe response to offending in the New Zealand youth justice system.

This report examines reoffending for the 20,626 cases where a Police warning was issued in the 2010/11 to 2013/14 fiscal years. The main focus of this report is on reoffending during the 12-month period after warnings. Reoffending two years post-warnings is also assessed in brief.

When interpreting results, it is important to note that reoffending outcomes in isolation do not provide evidence of an intervention's effectiveness. In addition, the data contained a number of issues that potentially introduced bias to the findings.

Key findings

Warnings are most often given to low frequency offenders for theft-related or public order offences

- Nearly half (45%) of the warnings were for theft-related offences, most commonly shoplifting. Public order offences were the next most common offence type (18%).
- As well as having usually committed less serious offences, youth who are warned are generally low frequency offenders: in 72% of cases they were proceeded against for their first (53%) or second (18%) offence known to Police.

Nearly two-thirds of warned youth did not reoffend within 12 months

- In 36% of cases youth had reoffended within 12 months of being warned and in 64% they had not reoffended.
- Across the entire cohort, the average number of offences committed by each person in the 12 months post-warning was 26% lower than the 12 months prior. However, the average total offence seriousness increased 28%.
- The majority of the decrease in offence numbers after the warnings was due to a drop in theft-related offences (down 47%) and public order offences (down 34%). In contrast, burglary offences increased 36% and traffic offences more than doubled.
- In 73% of cases youth reduced their frequency of offending and in 77% they reduced the total offence seriousness in the 12 months post-warning compared to the 12 months prior. These figures include youth who did not reoffend. In contrast, 16% of youth offended more often and 20% committed more serious offences. Reoffending was at the same level as before in the remaining cases.

Just over half the warned youth did not reoffend within two years

- In 49% of cases youth had reoffended within two years of being warned and in 51% they had not reoffended.
- In 63% of cases youth offended less often and in 68% they had a reduced total offence seriousness in the two years after being warned compared to the two years before. In contrast, 25% offended more often and 28% committed more serious offences after the warning.

Conclusions

This report showed that warnings are most often used for first or second-time offenders committing less serious offences.

In 36% of cases, youth reoffended within 12 months of the warning. Using the same methodology, another analysis found that 43% of youth reoffended within 12 months following Police Alternative Action cases, and 67% reoffended following intention-to-charge Family Group Conference (FGC) cases. However, these results do not imply that a warning is a more effective intervention. Measuring the relative effectiveness of interventions in reducing reoffending requires a robust statistical approach that controls for differences in the cohorts in key attributes such as offence history.

While this report does not allow us to comment on the effectiveness of warnings, in line with international research, we would expect to observe that reoffending rates following warnings would be lower than those following interventions targeted at more serious repeat offenders. The results above show this was the case.

INTRODUCTION

Justice sector agencies are interested in better understanding the operation of the youth justice system in preventing children (aged 10–13 years) and young people (aged 14–16 years) from reoffending. Ideally, the system will deliver an appropriate intervention that assists the person to make a sustained exit from the justice system (ie not reoffend). If this cannot be achieved, reducing the frequency of offending and offence seriousness is desirable. Interventions may also seek other outcomes, like re-engaging children or young people in school.

The youth justice system's least severe response is a Police warning.¹ This report describes changes in offending patterns in 20,626 cases² involving children and young people warned within a four year period (the 2010/11 to 2013/14 fiscal years³). Reoffending patterns are examined in detail for the 12-month period post-warning, and briefly examined for the two year period post-warning.

Reoffending outcomes should be interpreted with caution as in isolation they do not provide evidence of an intervention's effectiveness. For example, a person may not reoffend simply because they were caught by the police and made to account for their actions, regardless of the intervention applied. There may also be a general aging and maturing effect. Measuring the effectiveness of warnings in reducing reoffending would require a robust statistical approach, such as a matched comparison analysis, that controls for differences in key attributes such as offence history.

Legislative basis for warnings

Section 209 of the Oranga Tamariki Act 1989 (OT Act) states that:

Where an enforcement [police] officer is considering whether to institute criminal proceedings against a child or young person for an offence alleged or admitted to have been committed by that child or young person, that officer shall consider whether it would be sufficient to warn the child or young person, unless a warning is clearly inappropriate having regard to the seriousness of the offence and the nature and number of previous offences committed by the child or young person.

If a police officer decides a warning is sufficient, they can warn the child or young person themselves, or arrange for another person to deliver the warning (s210 of the OT Act). In nearly all cases, a police youth aid officer gives the warning rather than a frontline officer. As soon as practicable after the warning, Police send the child or young person and a guardian or caregiver a written notice recording the fact that the warning has been given for the alleged or admitted offence.

Report structure

The following chapter describes the data sources and methodology used, and caveats around the data.

Part 1 provides demographic, offence and prior offending information for cases where youth were warned in the period of interest. Part 2 examines reoffending patterns for these children and young people.

¹ Another less severe option for resolving an offence is for Police to issue a formal caution under s211 of the Oranga Tamariki Act 1989. Such cautions can only occur when recommended by an FGC and are rare. This report does not examine formal Police cautions because there are so few and they cannot be readily identified in the Youth Case data.

² A 'case' is an offence or a group of offences that are proceeded against together at a point in time for an individual.

³ Fiscal years begin on 1 July, and conclude on 30 June of the following year.

Appendix A describes the most common offence types committed within each offence division. Appendix B provides characteristics of youth in warning cases including demographics, the Police District where the proceeding occurred, and the number of offences prior to the warning. Appendix C provides additional reoffending information by gender, ethnicity, age group and Police District.

DATA SOURCES AND METHODOLOGY

Data sources

Analyses used New Zealand Police (Police) data⁴ and were supplemented with Oranga Tamariki—Ministry for Children⁵ data relating to youth justice FGC referrals and Supervision with Residence orders imposed.

The Police data included a list of all children and young people who had a Youth Case⁶ record in their National Intelligence Application (NIA) that indicated the case was resolved by a warning between 1 July 2010 and 30 June 2014.

Police also provided the offence history for these individuals, which includes details of all criminal offences in which the person is identified with the 'offender' occurrence role, from July 2005 to July 2016. For each offence, Police determined the particular person was responsible for having committed the offence, and advised this person that he or she will be recorded in NIA as being responsible for the offence. Given the emphasis of the youth justice system on diversion from prosecution, offence occurrence data provides a more consistent measure of offending patterns for children and young people than court outcomes data.

Court sentencing records, where imprisonment or home detention were imposed, were also provided which facilitated the post-warning custodial sentence rate calculation (when combined with the Supervision with Residence data).

The offence history data included the date each offence was committed, the type of offence, and the initial proceeding method by Police (eg warning, Alternative Action, youth justice FGC or prosecution). The initial proceeding method is not always the final resolution of the case. The proceeding method can change for a number of reasons, such as the person not completing an agreed diversionary plan.

The offence types youth were warned for were not available from the NIA Youth Case data. These were imputed from the offence history data by identifying the offences resolved by a warning that were closest in time to each Youth Case start date. If there was more than one offence on the same date, the most serious offence was selected using the *Justice Sector Seriousness Scale*.

Some individuals appeared in the data more than once over the four year period examined. Each case was analysed separately using individuals' characteristics at the start date of the Youth Case record. The total 20,626 cases analysed in this report involved 17,697 distinct children and young people.

Measuring reoffending

Offending patterns were examined using the offence history data described above. The date an offence was committed was used to assign the offence to the period before or after the warning. The reference date used to measure offending before and after was the start date recorded for each NIA Youth Case where a warning was identified as the method of proceeding on case closure.

When examining reoffending, rather than using a single measure of whether the individual did or did not reoffend, it is useful to calculate multiple measures to understand different aspects of how

⁴ Data are shared for research purposes under a Memorandum of Understanding.

⁵ Known as Child, Youth and Family before 1 April 2017.

⁶ The Youth Case module in NIA is a case management system used by Youth Aid and Youth Development staff to manage and record the actions taken in relation to children and young people who have come to the attention of Police, both for offending and other incidents.

offending patterns changed for the cohort of interest. In this report, the reoffending measures examined for cases involving a warning included:

- how quickly the warning cohort reoffended within 12 months (Figure 6)
- the average frequency⁷ and average total offence seriousness across the whole cohort in six month periods before and after the warning (Figures 7 and 8)
- changes in the offence types committed by the cohort in the 12 months before and after the warning (Figures 9 and 10)
- the proportion of individuals who did not reoffend within 12 months (Table 2)
- the proportion of individuals reducing the frequency or total seriousness of their offending in the 12 months after the warning compared to the 12 months before (Table 2)
- the proportion of individuals who reoffended and were referred to Oranga Tamariki for a youth justice FGC in the 12 months after the warning (Table 2)
- the proportion of individuals who reoffended and had a custodial sentence imposed in the 12 months after the warning (Table 2).

Measuring offence seriousness

Changes in offence seriousness were measured using the *Justice Sector Seriousness Scale*. This scale was developed by the Ministry of Justice as a way to compare the seriousness of different offence types based on adult court sentencing data.⁸ A seriousness score represents the average number of days of imprisonment imposed by the courts across all people convicted for the offence over a specified period. Statistical equivalences of imprisonment days are used for people who receive community-based sentences or fines. Where the number of convictions for an offence is small, the seriousness score is imputed based on scores for similar offences.

In this report, total seriousness scores are calculated for individuals in a set period of interest before the warning, and compared to total seriousness scores for a similar period post-warning. For example, if each offence in Table 1 was committed in a period, the total seriousness score for that period would be 783.9. If no offences were committed by an individual in a period, their total seriousness score for that period was set to zero.

Table 1: Examples of offence seriousness scores

Offence	Seriousness score
Robbery (by assault)	379.1
Shoplifts (estimated value of goods <\$500)	15.2
Wilful damage	9.5
Burglary (estimated value of goods \$500 to \$5,000)	380.0
Total	783.9

Note: Figures do not sum exactly to the total due to rounding.

It is important to note that seriousness scores are not exact – they are an average value, and as such have error variance. The methodology used to form the scale does not allow actual error variances to be calculated. Therefore, to acknowledge the inexact nature of scores, a 5% margin of error around total seriousness scores was used when comparing the pre-intervention period and the post-

⁷ 'Frequency' is used in this report to refer to the total number of offences committed in a period, rather than the number of distinct offending episodes.

⁸ For more information see: <https://www.justice.govt.nz/assets/Documents/Publications/2016-FAQs-Seriousness-Scores2.pdf>.

intervention period. In effect, this means that total seriousness scores for the two periods need to differ by more than 10% to be considered different.

The Justice Sector Seriousness Scale is developed from court sentencing data relating to adults. While there could be debate about applying the scale to youth offending, developing a similar scale based on the diverse range of ways cases are dealt with in the youth justice system would be extremely difficult. Here, the primary role of the seriousness scores is to help assess relative changes, rather than the absolute score values.

Caveats with data

Police data

The Police data contained issues that potentially introduced bias to the findings. The size of any bias, and whether this may have led to higher or lower rates of reoffending is difficult to estimate.

Police offence history data will not capture the full extent of offending by individuals as some offences are not reported to or detected by Police.

Ideally, offending patterns would be examined before and after the date on which a warning was given. However, this date was not available in the data. Instead, for the cases resolved by warning, the date when the Youth Case record was created in NIA was used as the reference point to measure offending patterns before and after.

Offence histories are only reliable from July 2005 when it became compulsory for this information to be captured in NIA when it came online to replace the Law Enforcement System. Therefore, some early offending histories may be incomplete.

Thirteen percent (3,081) of the original 23,707 sample supplied by Police were removed, leaving a final dataset of 20,626 cases. Reasons for removing cases included that no offence history was available for the individual (1,040 cases)⁹ or the available offending history did not include any offences prior to the start date of the NIA Youth Case resolved by a warning (1,382 cases). A total of 659 cases were removed as the date of birth was missing, or the age was recorded as being under 10 years or over 20 years.

Oranga Tamariki and court sentencing data

To calculate a reoffending measure in relation to subsequent youth justice FGCs, the names and dates of birth of the warnings cohort were matched to the names and dates of birth of Oranga Tamariki clients using a data matching algorithm developed by MSD using SAS *DataFlux Data Management Studio*.¹⁰ Probabilistic data matching has some level of incorrect (false positive) or missed (false negative) matches. This will have introduced some amount of error to the reoffending measure.

There can sometimes be a considerable delay between when a person offends and is apprehended by Police, and when the case is finally disposed of. For some people, the youth justice FGC or custodial sentence that occurred within the 12 or 24 month period post-warning may have been imposed for an offence occurring before the warning. This may be balanced to some extent by other people having such interventions occurring after the 12 or 24 month period of interest for offences that occurred within the period.

⁹ This includes no record of the offence(s) for which the warning was given. In at least some of these cases, there may have been issues with recording practices in NIA eg incorrectly recording the young person with a role other than 'Offender' in relation to the offence.

¹⁰ Matches accepted had either an exact match or an 85% or higher 'fuzzy' match on the full name, and an exact match on the date of birth. Some other matches were also accepted if the full names in the two sources matched exactly, and two of the three elements in the date of birth matched. Different levels of matching are required because the entry of identity information into source systems is sometimes imprecise, incomplete or inaccurate.

COHORT PROFILE

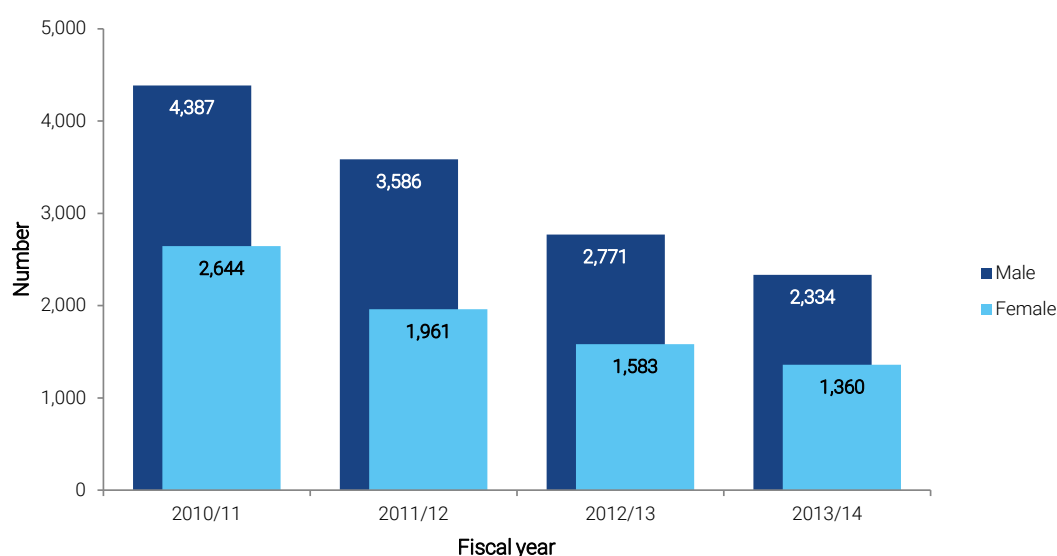
There were 20,626 cases where youth were warned by Police over the four fiscal years combined. Of these:

- 63% involved males and 37% females.
- 49% involved Māori, 38% European, 8% Pacific peoples, 2% some other ethnic group, with ethnicity not being recorded for an additional 2%. This information was based on the single ethnic group recorded by Police for each individual.
- 65% involved 14-16 year-olds and 31% 10-13 year-olds. In 4% of cases youth were aged 17-19 when they had a Youth Case record created in NIA, but they were likely under age 17 when they offended. The average age of youth in warning cases was 14.7 years (see Appendix B for information by year).

The total number of cases where youth were warned dropped 47% between 2010/11 and 2013/14 (Appendix B, Table B1). This decrease corresponds with a general decrease in youth crime during this period.

Warnings nearly halved in number for both genders (Figure 1).

Figure 1: Number of cases where youth were warned, by gender and fiscal year



All three of the largest ethnic groups showed a decrease in warning cases over the four years (Figure 2 and Appendix B, Table B1). The decrease was proportionally greater for European youth (56%) than Māori youth (43%) or Pacific youth (38%).

All three age groups showed a decrease in warning cases between 2010/11 and 2013/14 (Figure 3 and Appendix B, Table B1). The decrease was proportionally greater for young people aged 14–16 years (49%) than children aged 10–13 years (45%) or youth aged 17 years or older (33%).

All Police Districts showed a decrease in the number of warning cases over the four years examined (Appendix B, Table B1). The largest proportional decrease occurred in Waikato (58%) and the smallest in Northland (27%).

Figure 2: Number of cases where youth were warned, by ethnicity and fiscal year

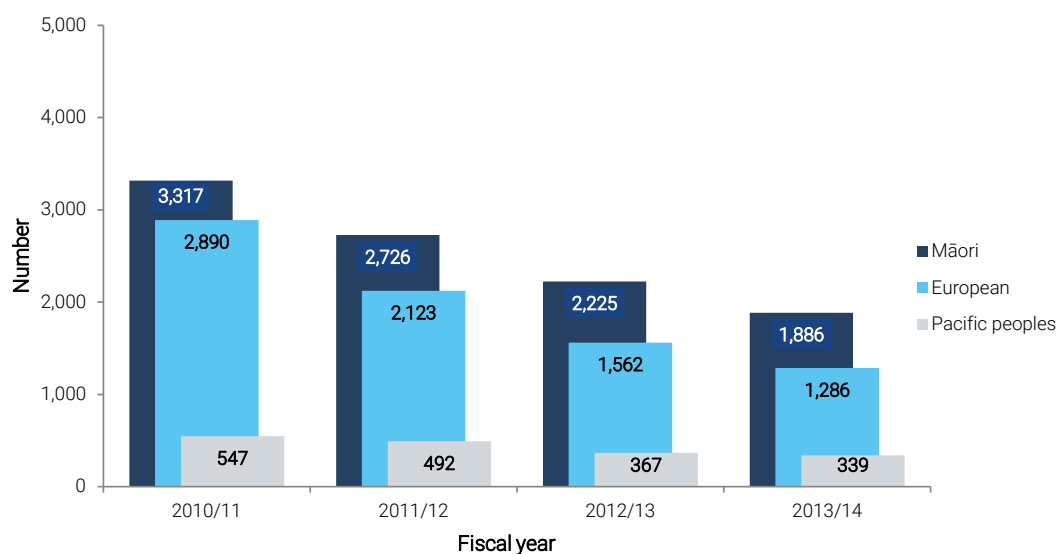
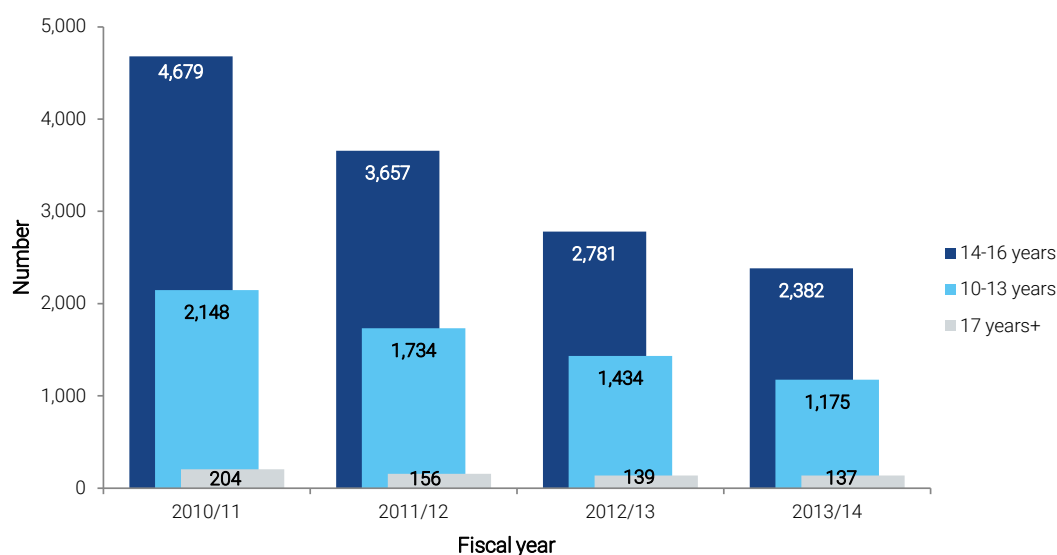


Figure 3: Number of cases where youth were warned, by age group and fiscal year

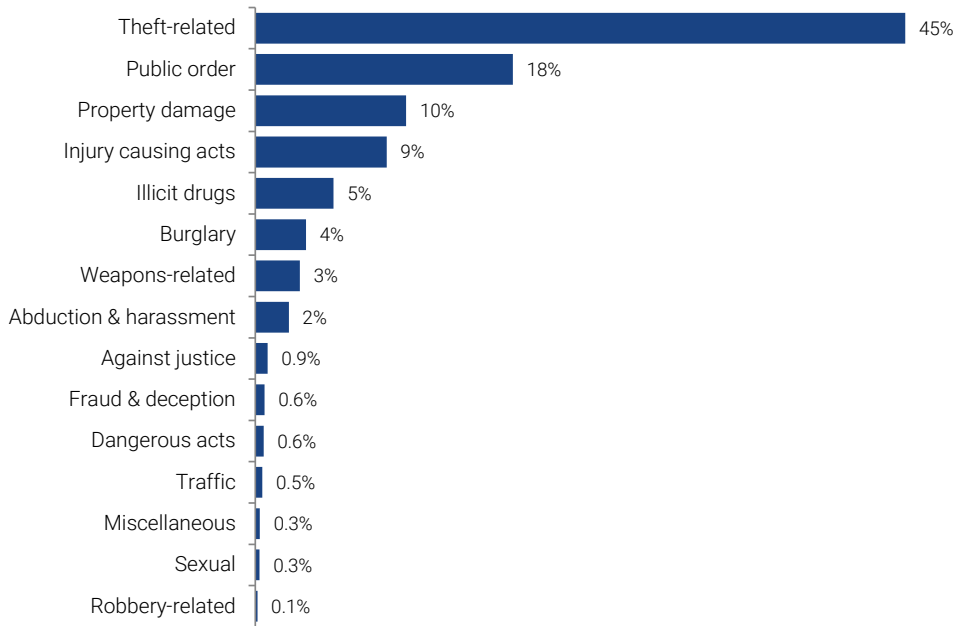


Youth were most commonly warned for theft-related offences (45% of cases), in particular shoplifting (Figure 4). In 18% of cases, the warning was for a public order offence (most often being found on a property without reasonable excuse, disorderly behaviour, or fighting in a public place). Property damage offences (mostly wilful damage and graffiti-related offences) and injury causing acts (mostly common assault) both accounted for around 10% of cases.

In over half (53%) of the warning cases between 2010/11 and 2013/14, youth were being dealt with for their first offence known to Police (Appendix B, Table B3). Eighteen percent had two recorded offences prior to being warned, 18% had three to five prior offences, and 11% had six or more prior offences. These prior offence counts include the offence or offences for which the youth were warned in the period of interest, as well as any earlier offences committed.

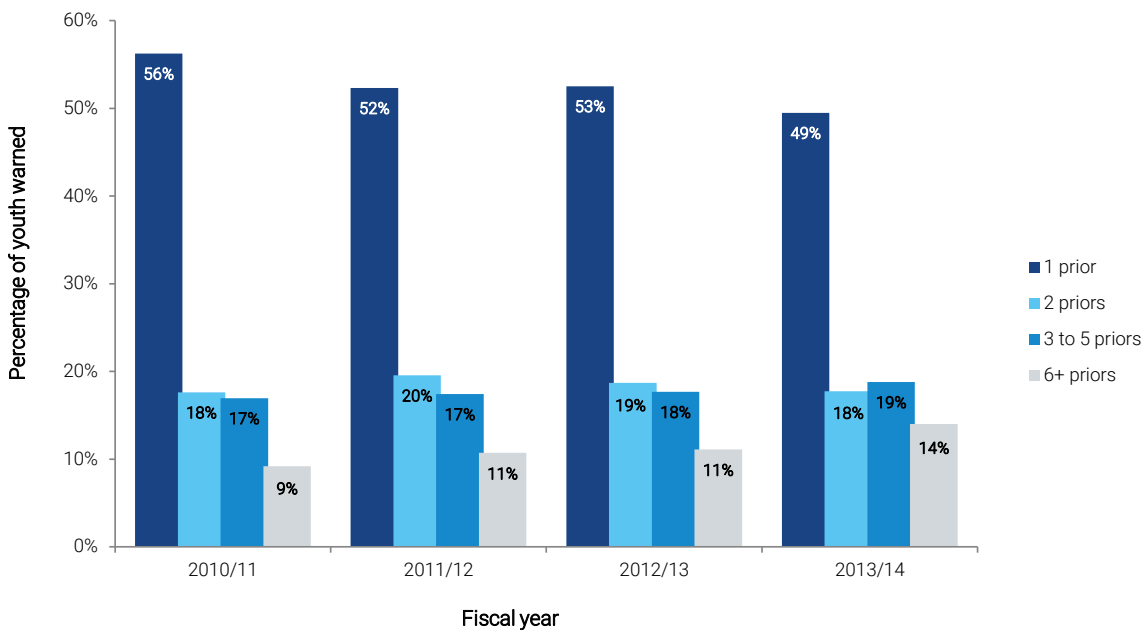
There was a decrease between 2010/11 and 2013/14 in the number of warning cases for both first-time and repeat offenders, with the decrease being larger for first-time offenders. A consequence of these trends was the decreasing pool of warning cases were less likely to involve a youth being warned for his or her first offence (Figure 5).

Figure 4: Types of offences leading to Police warnings, 2010/11 to 2013/14 fiscal years combined



Note: The types of offences people were warned for was not available from the Youth Case data, but were imputed from the offending history data provided by Police. Information was not available for 682 cases, which were excluded from this analysis. See the *Data sources and methodology* chapter for further details.

Figure 5: Percentage of warning cases involving youth with each number of prior recorded offences, by fiscal year



Note: Prior offence counts include the offence or offences for which they were warned, as well as any earlier offences committed.

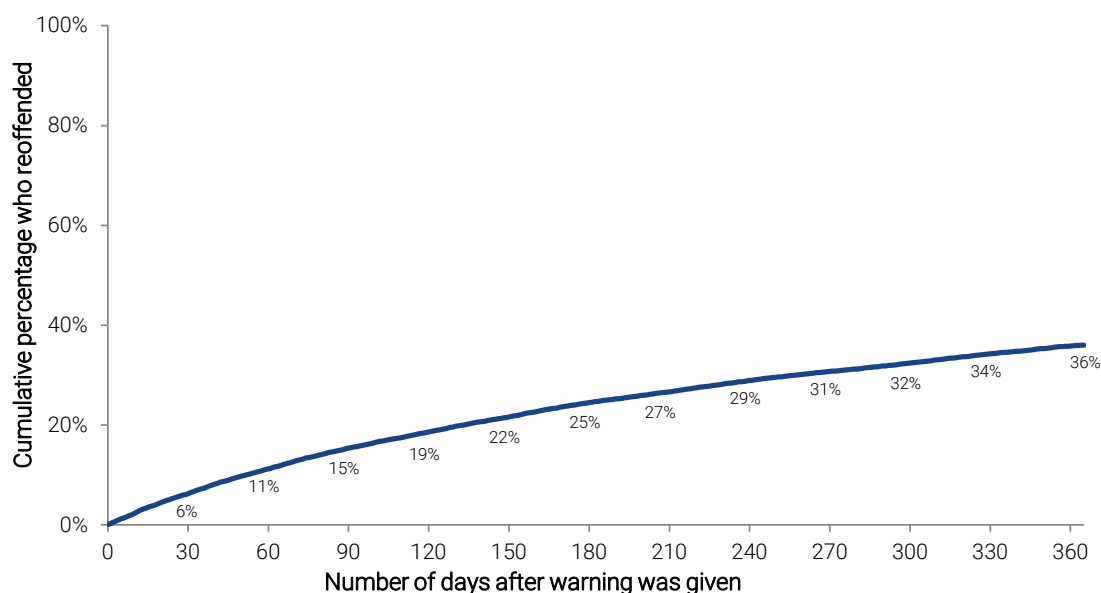
REOFFENDING RATES FOLLOWING POLICE WARNINGS

This chapter examines reoffending outcomes following cases where youth were warned by Police in the 2010/11 to 2013/14 fiscal years. Police offending records were available from July 2005 to July 2016. This data allows reoffending to be analysed for up to two years after the 2013/14 fiscal year ended. The *Data sources and methodology* chapter provides detailed information on the data and associated caveats.

Rate of reoffending within 12 months

In 15% of cases, the youth had reoffended within three months of being warned and within six months, 25% had reoffended (Figure 6). In 36% of cases, the youth had reoffended within 12 months. There was little difference in reoffending rates between the four fiscal years examined.

Figure 6: Percentage of cases where youth reoffended within 12 months of a Police warning, 2010/11 to 2013/14 combined



For cases involving warnings, rates of reoffending within 12 months varied by:

- *Gender*: male youth were more likely to reoffend than female youth, with the gap in reoffending rates growing considerably as time passed after the warning (Appendix C, Figure C1).
- *Ethnicity*: Māori youth reoffended at a higher rate than Pacific youth, who in turn reoffended at a higher rate than European youth over the 12-month period (Appendix C, Figure C2).
- *Age*: Children aged 10-13 years had slightly lower reoffending rates than 14-16 year olds over the 12-month period (Appendix C, Figure C3). The relatively small number of youth aged 17 years or older were more likely to reoffend than the two younger age groups.

Changes in the frequency and seriousness of offending by the warnings cohort as a whole

Youth who are warned are generally low frequency offenders who have committed less serious offences. Over the 12 months prior to the warning case, the average number of offences committed by each person was 1.8, with an average total seriousness of 108 (Figures 7 and 8). Over the 12

months post-warning, the average number of offences was 26% lower at 1.3, but the average total offence seriousness increased 28% to 138.

Figure 7: Average frequency of offences before and after being warned by Police, 2010/11 to 2013/14 combined

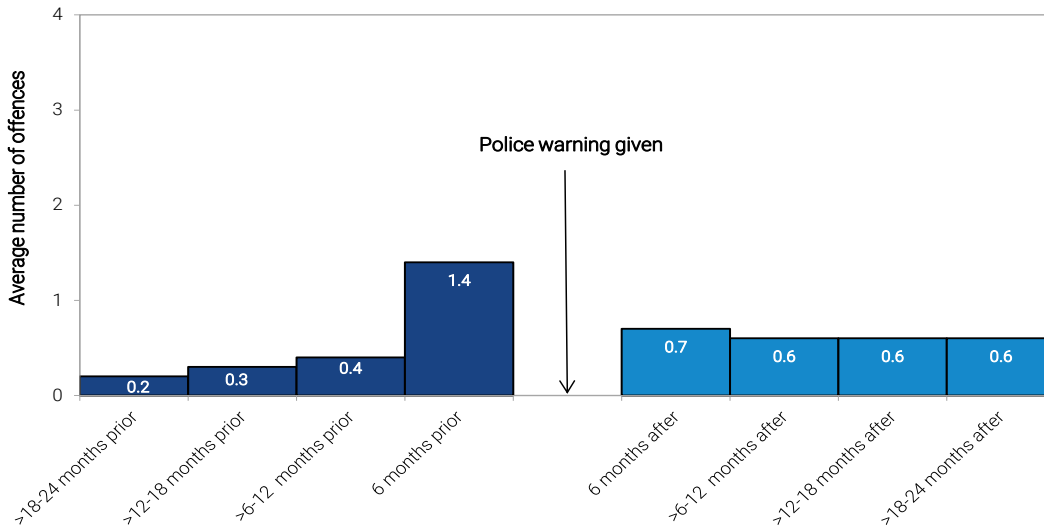
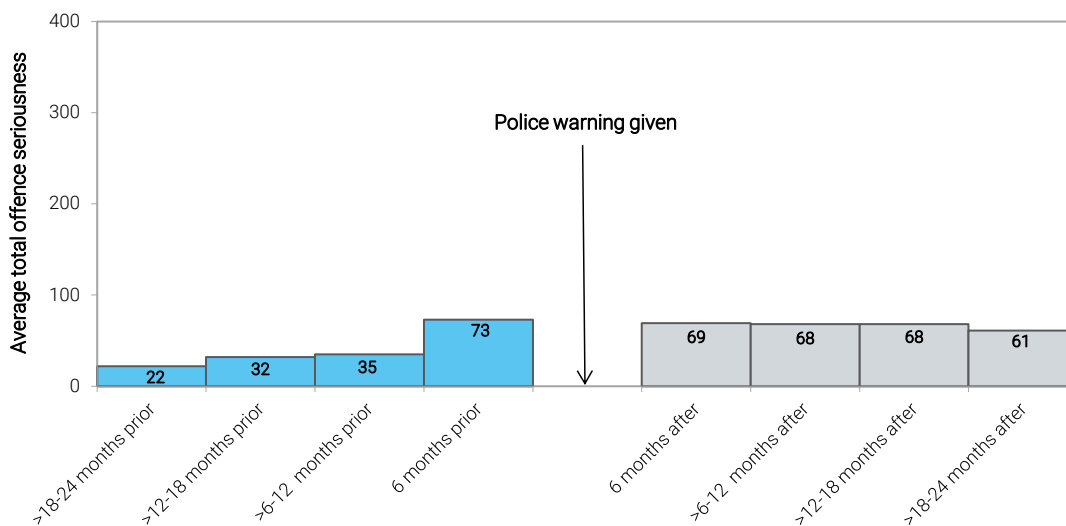


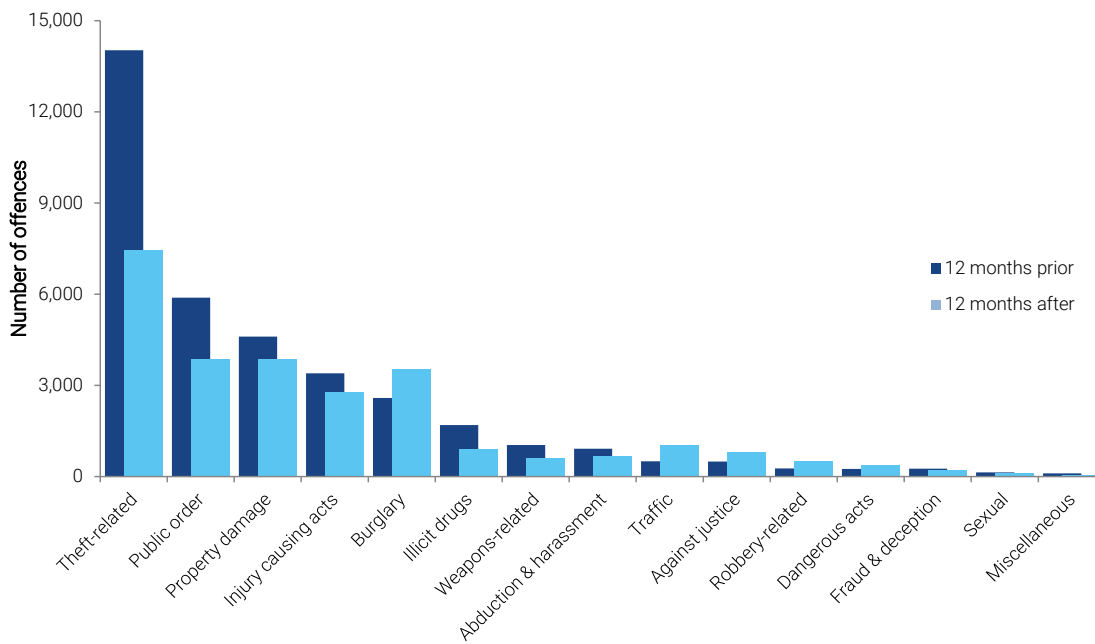
Figure 8: Average total offence seriousness before and after being warned by Police, 2010/11 to 2013/14 combined



Information is presented below on changes in the types of offences committed by the cohort in the 12 months after the warnings compared to the 12 months before the warnings. Changes are examined in two ways: Figure 9 shows changes in the total number of offences of each type committed by the warnings cohort as a whole, and Figure 10 shows changes in the proportion of youth who committed each type of offence.

Figure 9 shows the drop in offence numbers was largely due to a drop in theft-related offences (down 47% or 6,566 offences) and public order offences (down 34% or 2,027 offences). Illicit drug offences, weapons-related offences, and injury causing acts also reduced after warnings (46%, 42%, and 19% respectively). While many offence divisions decreased in volume, burglary offences increased 36%, traffic offences more than doubled, offences against justice increased 67%, robbery-related offences increased 88%, and dangerous acts increased 49% in the 12 months after warnings compared to the 12 months before.

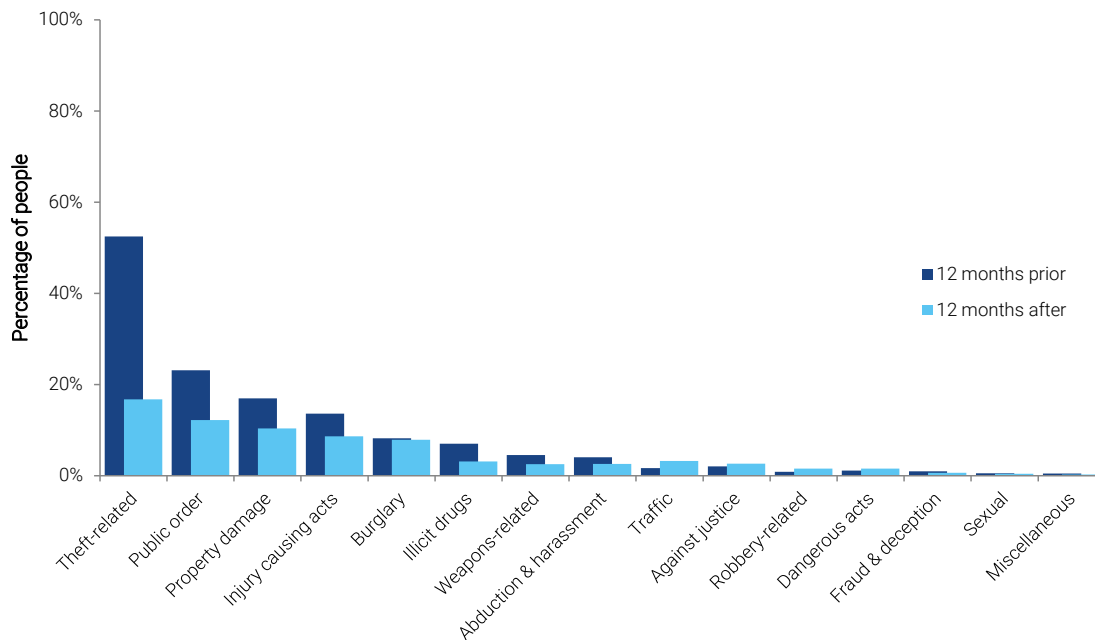
Figure 9: Change in the total number of offences committed in the 12 months before and after a Police warning, by ANZSOC offence division, 2010/11 to 2013/14 combined



Note: See Appendix A for details on the most common offences committed within each offence division.

Figure 10 shows in the 12 months prior to the warnings, over half (52%) of the youth had committed a theft-related offence, whereas in the 12 months after, the proportion was considerably lower at 17%. For public order offences, the proportions before and after were 23% and 12% respectively, for property damage offences they were 17% before and 10% after, and for injury causing acts they were 14% before and 9% after.

Figure 10: Percentage of youth committing one or more offences within each ANZSOC offence division in the 12 months before and after a Police warning, 2010/11 to 2013/14 combined



Note: See Appendix A for details on the most common offences committed within each offence division.

While Figure 9 showed the number of burglary offences increased in the 12 months after the warnings, Figure 10 shows the proportion of youth committing such an offence was the same before and after at 8%.

Reoffending outcomes in the 12 months following warning cases

When examining reoffending, rather than having a single measure of whether individuals did or did not reoffend, it is useful to calculate multiple measures to better understand how offending patterns have changed for the cohort of interest.

Table 2 presents five reoffending measures for cases where youth were proceeded against by a Police warning. This includes the proportion of cases where individuals did not reoffend, and the proportions where individuals reduced the frequency or total seriousness of their offending in the 12 months after the warning compared to the 12 months prior. The higher these figures, the more positive the outcomes. Also included are two indicators of more serious reoffending in the 12-months post-warning: a youth justice FGC referral being made, or a custodial sentence being imposed. The lower these figures, the more positive the outcomes.

Table 2: Reoffending outcomes for youth in the 12 months after cases involving a Police warning, by fiscal year

Outcomes within 12 months (compared with 12 months prior to warning)	2010/11 (n = 7,031)	2011/12 (n = 5,547)	2012/13 (n = 4,354)	2013/14 (n = 3,694)	Overall (n = 20,626)
Did not reoffend	64%	64%	64%	63%	64%
Reduced frequency of offending ¹	73%	73%	72%	73%	73%
Reduced total offence seriousness ¹	78%	77%	76%	76%	77%
Referred for a youth justice FGC ²	10%	10%	10%	11%	10%
Received a custodial sentence ³	0.5%	0.6%	0.6%	0.5%	0.5%

Notes:

1. Includes youth who did not reoffend, as well as those who reoffended, but at a lower frequency or seriousness than before.
2. Referred to Oranga Tamariki for a youth justice FGC within 12 months of being warned. This includes child offender, intention-to-charge and court-ordered FGCs.
3. A Supervision with Residence order made by the Youth Court, or a sentence of imprisonment or home detention imposed in the District or High Court within 12 months post-warning.

The five reoffending measures shown in Table 2 were relatively stable across years. Below are key findings in the 12 months after the warning for all fiscal years combined.

- In 64% (13,185) of the 20,626 cases the youth did not reoffend.
- In 73% (15,035) of cases youth committed fewer offences (including the 13,185 who did not reoffend¹¹). However, 16% (3,244) committed more offences and 11% (2,347) offended at the same rate as before.
- In 77% (15,878) of cases youth reduced the total offence seriousness (14,558 of whom also committed fewer offences). However, 20% (4,176) committed more serious offences and 3% (572) had the same total offence seriousness.
- In 10% (2,096) of cases youth reoffended and were referred to Oranga Tamariki for a youth justice FGC.
- A custodial sentence was rare, with 0.5% (110) of cases resulting in this outcome.

Of the 36% of cases where youth reoffended within 12 months, a little over 10% had a subsequent FGC or custodial sentence. For the other 26%, the Police offence history data showed that in around eight out of 10 cases, the proceeding method for the new offending was either another warning or Police Alternative Action. People aged 17 years or older for all or part of the 12 months post-warning who reoffended were dealt with through the adult justice system.

¹¹ The 73% who reduced their frequency of offending is made up of 64% who did not reoffend (ie they went from one or more offences before, to zero offences after), and 9% who did reoffend, but committed fewer offences afterwards.

Reoffending outcomes according to demographic characteristics

- In the 12 months following warning cases, female youth had more positive outcomes than males on all five reoffending measures (Appendix C, Table C1). For example, 74% of females did not reoffend, compared to 58% of males. This is likely due, in part, to females having committed fewer and less serious offences, on average, than males in the 12 months prior to the warning case.
- European youth had the most positive outcomes in the 12 months following warning cases (Appendix C, Table C2). Sixty-eight percent of European youth did not reoffend, compared to 59% of Māori youth and 64% of Pacific youth.
- Young people aged 14-16 years were twice as likely as children aged 10-13 years to be referred for a youth justice FGC in the 12 months following their warning case (Appendix C, Table C3). The small number of youth aged at least 17 years who had a Youth Case record created in NIA for a warning were more likely than the two younger age groups to receive a custodial sentence within 12 months. Any reoffending for this older age group was dealt with in adult courts, which may contribute to this finding.

Reoffending outcomes according to Police District

Cases where the youth was warned in the Waitemata and Canterbury districts had the most positive outcomes across the reoffending measures (see Appendix C, Table C4). In contrast, cases involving youth in the Counties Manukau and Tasman Police Districts had the least positive outcomes, with outcomes being worse than the national figures on all or most reoffending measures.

These differences should be interpreted with caution as they may be due to a multitude of reasons, including compositional differences between districts in the gender, age, and ethnicity of the children and young people proceeded against.

Reoffending outcomes in the two years following warning cases

This section provides a brief summary of reoffending outcomes in the two years following cases where warnings were given in the 2010/11 to 2013/14 fiscal years. Below are key findings in the two years after the warning for all fiscal years combined (see Table 3).

- In 51% (10,500) of the 20,626 cases the youth did not reoffend.
- In 63% (12,942) of cases youth committed fewer offences (including the 10,500 who did not reoffend). However, 25% (5,128) committed more offences and 12% (2,556) offended at the same rate as before.
- In 68% (14,101) of cases youth reduced the total offence seriousness (12,358 of whom also committed fewer offences). However, 28% (5,875) committed more serious offences and 3% (650) had the same total offence seriousness.
- In 15% (3,197) of cases youth reoffended and were referred to Oranga Tamariki for a youth justice FGC. It should be noted that in the two years post-warning, some young people will have aged out of the youth justice system for all or part of the follow-up period. Any new offending as adults cannot result in a FGC.
- A custodial sentence was relatively rare, with 2% (327) of the 20,626 cases resulting in this outcome.

Table 3: Reoffending outcomes for youth in the two years after cases involving a Police warning, by year

Outcomes within 24 months (compared with 24 months prior to warning)	2010/11 (n = 7,031)	2011/12 (n = 5,547)	2012/13 (n = 4,354)	2013/14 (n = 3,694)	Overall (n = 20,626)
Did not reoffend	51%	50%	52%	51%	51%
Reduced frequency of offending ¹	62%	63%	63%	63%	63%
Reduced total offence seriousness ¹	68%	69%	68%	68%	68%
Referred for a youth justice FGC ²	15%	16%	15%	17%	15%
Received a custodial sentence ³	1.6%	1.4%	1.5%	1.8%	1.6%

Notes:

1. Includes youth who did not reoffend, as well as those who reoffended, but at a lower frequency or seriousness than before.
2. Referred to Oranga Tamariki for a youth justice FGC within two years of being warned. This includes child offender, intention-to-charge and court-ordered FGCs.
3. A Supervision with Residence order made by the Youth Court, or a sentence of imprisonment or home detention imposed in the District or High Court within two years post-warning.

CONCLUSIONS

This report showed that warnings are most often used for first or second-time offenders committing less serious offences.

In 36% of cases, youth reoffended within 12 months of the warning. Using the same methodology, another analysis found that 43% of youth reoffended within 12 months following Police Alternative Action cases, and 67% reoffended following intention-to-charge FGC cases.¹² However, these results do not imply that a warning is a more effective intervention. Measuring the relative effectiveness of interventions in reducing reoffending requires a robust statistical approach that controls for differences in the cohorts in key attributes such as offence history. In saying this, if participants of the interventions are too dissimilar, an overall comparison of outcomes is not meaningful.

This report, therefore, does not allow us to comment on the effectiveness of warnings in reducing reoffending. However, international research has shown that prior offending is generally a good predictor of future offending. Those with less extensive offending histories are generally less likely to reoffend than those with extensive offending histories. Less serious offences are also generally paired with a less intensive intervention. As such, we would expect to observe that reoffending rates following a warning would be lower than those following interventions targeted at more serious repeat offenders. The results above show this was the case.

¹² Oranga Tamariki Evidence Centre (2018). *Comparing reoffending rates for participants of Police Alternative Action and intention-to-charge FGCs?* Wellington, New Zealand: Spier, P.

APPENDIX A: ANZSOC OFFENCE DIVISIONS

For each ANZSOC offence division, the most frequent types of offences committed in the 12 months before or after warnings being given are shown in the table below.¹³ Offences in the last column are listed in descending frequency, ie the most common offence type within the offence division is listed first, the next most common second, etc. Importantly, note that some of these offences are very serious, but these are unlikely to be the offences for which the person was warned.

Table A1: Most common offences by youth within each ANZSOC offence division in the 12 months before or after being warned

Shortened ANZSOC offence division name used in this report	ANZSOC offence division	Most common offences by the warnings cohort within each offence division
Homicide-related Injury causing acts	Homicide and related offences Acts intended to cause injury	<i>No such offences were recorded for this cohort</i> Common assault; assault with intent to injure; male assaults female; assault police
Sexual Dangerous acts	Sexual assault and related offences Dangerous or negligent acts endangering persons	Sexual connection with young person; indecent assault; unlawful sexual connection; rape Careless or dangerous driving; sustained loss of traction
Abduction & harassment Robbery-related	Abduction, harassment and other offences against the person Robbery, extortion and related offences	Threatening behaviour; disturbing or offensive use of telephone Aggravated robbery; robbery; assault with intent to rob
Burglary Theft-related	Unlawful entry with intent / burglary, break and enter Theft and related offences	Burglary Shoplifting; other types of theft; unlawfully takes or gets into a motor vehicle
Fraud & deception Illicit drugs	Fraud, deception and related offences Illicit drug offences	Take, obtain or use a document or credit card for pecuniary advantage; obtain by deception Possess or use cannabis; possess cannabis-related utensils
Weapons-related Property damage	Prohibited and regulated weapons and explosives offences Property damage and environmental pollution	Possess offensive weapon; possess knife in a public place; unlawfully carry imitation firearm Wilful damage including graffiti-related offences; unlawfully interfere with motor vehicles
Public order Traffic	Public order offences Traffic and vehicle regulatory offences	Disorderly behaviour; trespassing; being found on a property without reasonable excuse; fighting in a public place; breach of local liquor ban Unlicensed driver failed to comply with prohibition; driving with excess alcohol (not involving death or injury); failing to stop for flashing lights; drive with revoked or expired licence; driving while disqualified
Against justice Miscellaneous	Offences against government procedures, government security and government operations Miscellaneous offences	Resist or obstruct police; breach of court-imposed bail; escape lawful custody; false statement that offence committed Used telephone for fictitious purpose; minor buys or possesses psychoactive product

Note: The detailed offence types shown in the last column in the table are not necessarily the offences for which young people in this cohort were warned.

¹³ Offences are categorised in this report according to the Australian and New Zealand Standard Offence Classification (ANZSOC), 2011.

APPENDIX B: PROFILE OF YOUTH IN CASES INVOLVING A WARNING

This appendix provides information on the characteristics of youth in cases resulting in a warning each year. This includes their demographics, the Police District where they were proceeded against, and the number of offences prior to being warned.

Table B1: Characteristics of youth in warning cases (numbers), by fiscal year

Characteristic	2010/11	2011/12	2012/13	2013/14	Overall
Total number of cases ¹	7,031	5,547	4,354	3,694	20,626
Gender					
Male	4,387	3,586	2,771	2,334	13,078
Female	2,644	1,961	1,583	1,360	7,548
Ethnicity					
European	2,890	2,123	1,562	1,286	7,861
Māori	3,317	2,726	2,225	1,886	10,154
Pacific peoples	547	492	367	339	1,745
Other	191	112	91	75	469
Unknown	86	94	109	108	397
Age group					
10–13 years	2,148	1,734	1,434	1,175	6,491
14–16 years	4,679	3,657	2,781	2,382	13,499
17 years or over ²	204	156	139	137	636
Police District					
Northland	252	176	249	184	861
Waitemata	469	368	307	253	1,397
Auckland City	297	232	94	132	755
Counties Manukau	856	722	510	505	2,593
Waikato	607	396	284	255	1,542
Bay of Plenty	594	600	415	345	1,954
Eastern	896	560	474	418	2,348
Central	733	636	477	454	2,300
Wellington	626	460	420	292	1,798
Tasman	388	380	247	218	1,233
Canterbury	737	562	461	352	2,112
Southern	576	455	416	286	1,733

Notes:

- Figures exclude a total of 3,081 cases over the four year period which were removed from the analysis for various reasons including: a complete history of offending was not readily available, or the age of the person appeared to be under 10 years or over 20 years.
- Almost all such cases involved 17-year-olds, with very small numbers of youth being aged 18 or 19 years. These people likely had a Youth Case record created in NIA because they were aged under 17 years at the time they offended.

Table B2: Characteristics of youth in warning cases (percentages), by fiscal year

Characteristic	2010/11	2011/12	2012/13	2013/14	Overall
Gender					
Male	62%	65%	64%	63%	63%
Female	38%	35%	36%	37%	37%
Ethnicity					
European	41%	38%	36%	35%	38%
Māori	47%	49%	51%	51%	49%
Pacific peoples	8%	9%	8%	9%	8%
Other	3%	2%	2%	2%	2%
Unknown	1%	2%	3%	3%	2%
Age group					
10–13 years	31%	31%	33%	32%	31%
14–16 years	67%	66%	64%	64%	65%
17 years or over ²	3%	3%	3%	4%	3%
Police District					
Northland	4%	3%	6%	5%	4%
Waitemata	7%	7%	7%	7%	7%
Auckland City	4%	4%	2%	4%	4%
Counties Manukau	12%	13%	12%	14%	13%
Waikato	9%	7%	7%	7%	7%
Bay of Plenty	8%	11%	10%	9%	9%
Eastern	13%	10%	11%	11%	11%
Central	10%	11%	11%	12%	11%
Wellington	9%	8%	10%	8%	9%
Tasman	6%	7%	6%	6%	6%
Canterbury	10%	10%	11%	10%	10%
Southern	8%	8%	10%	8%	8%

 Table B3: Total number of offences recorded by Police for each youth prior to being warned¹, by fiscal year

Total number of prior offences	2010/11	2011/12	2012/13	2013/14	Total
1	3,955	2,902	2,287	1,828	10,972
2	1,239	1,084	814	655	3,792
3 to 5	1,192	966	769	694	3,621
6 or more	645	595	484	517	2,241
Total	7,031	5,547	4,354	3,694	20,626

Note:

1. The Police offending history data used in this report had limitations as information was only available from mid-2005, so prior offending histories may be incomplete for some people. The prior offences include the offence or offences for which the person was proceeded against by warning.

APPENDIX C: REOFFENDING PATTERNS FOR SELECTED SUBGROUPS

This appendix provides additional reoffending analyses by gender, ethnicity, age group and Police District.

Reoffending by gender

Figure C1: Percentage of cases where the youth reoffended within 12 months of being warned, by gender, 2010/11 to 2013/14 combined

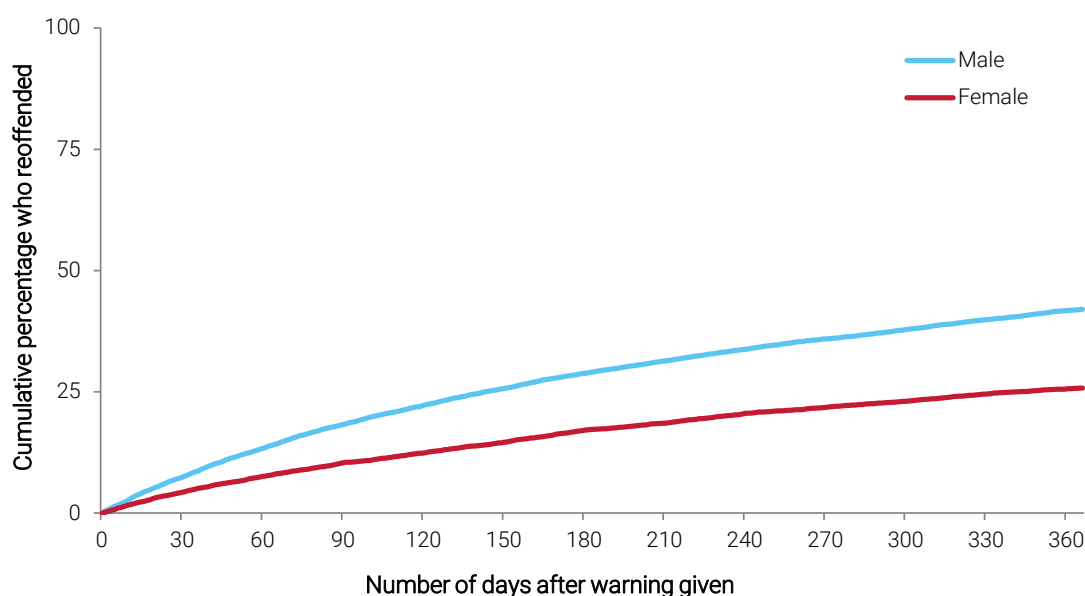


Table C1: Reoffending outcomes for youth in the 12 months after warning cases, by gender, 2010/11 to 2013/14 combined

Outcomes within 12 months (reductions compare after period to same period before)	Male (n = 13,078)	Female (n = 7,548)
Did not reoffend	58%	74%
Reduced frequency of offending ¹	69%	80%
Reduced total seriousness of offending ¹	73%	83%
Referred for a youth justice FGC ²	13%	6%
Received a custodial sentence ³	0.7%	0.2%

Notes:

- Includes youth who did not reoffend, as well as those who reoffended, but at a lower frequency or seriousness than before.
- Referred to Oranga Tamariki for a youth justice FGC within 12 months of being warned. This includes child offender, intention-to-charge and court-ordered FGCs.
- A Supervision with Residence order made by the Youth Court, or a sentence of imprisonment or home detention imposed in the District or High Court within 12 months post-warning.

Reoffending by ethnicity

Figure C2: Percentage of cases where the youth reoffended within 12 months of being warned, by ethnicity, 2010/11 to 2013/14 combined

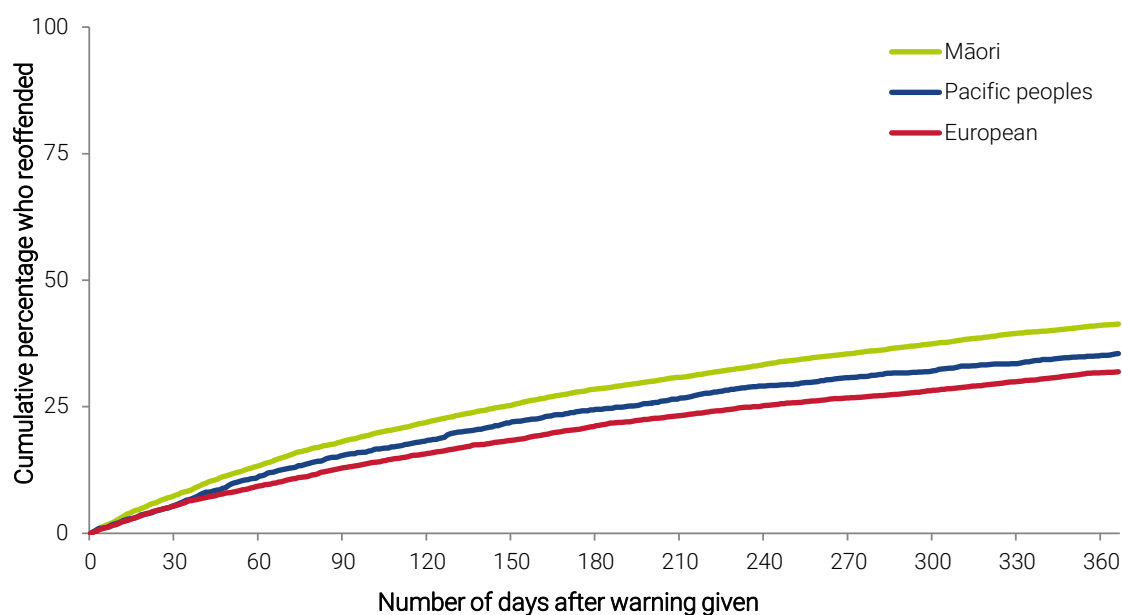


Table C2: Reoffending outcomes for youth in the 12 months after warning cases, by ethnicity, 2010/11 to 2013/14 combined

Outcomes within 12 months (reductions compare after period to same period before)	European (n = 7,861)	Māori (n = 10,154)	Pacific peoples (n = 1,745)
Did not reoffend	68%	59%	64%
Reduced frequency of offending ¹	76%	69%	72%
Reduced total seriousness of offending ¹	81%	73%	76%
Referred for a youth justice FGC ²	8%	12%	13%
Received a custodial sentence ³	0.3%	0.7%	0.7%

Note: The notes to Table C1 also apply to this table.

Reoffending by age group

Figure C3: Percentage of cases where the youth reoffended within 12 months of being warned, by age group, 2010/11 to 2013/14 combined

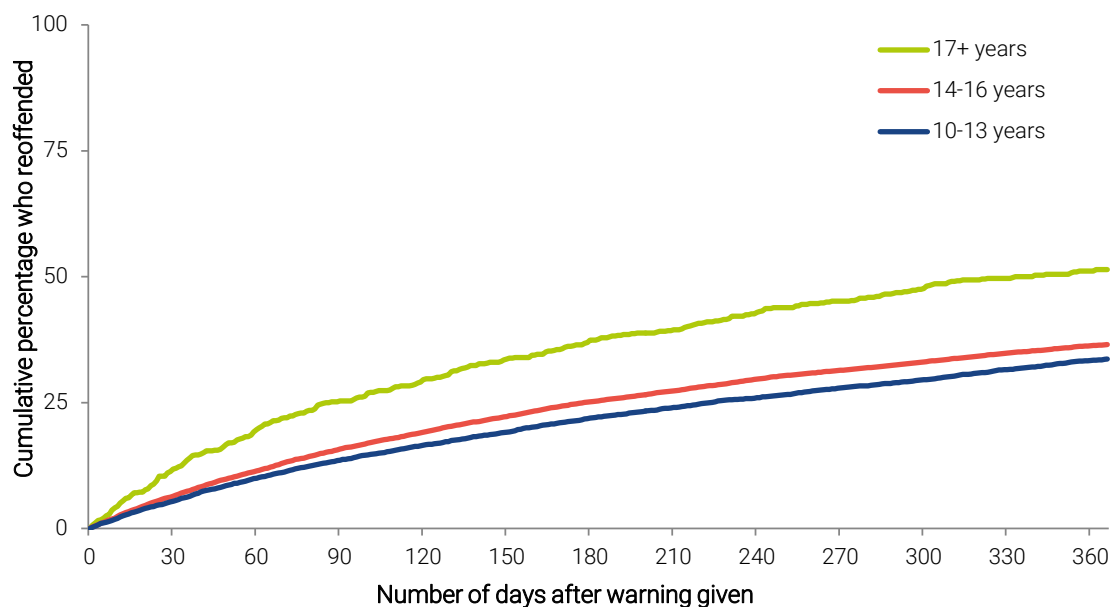


Table C3: Reoffending outcomes for youth in the 12 months after warning cases, by age group, 2010/11 to 2013/14 combined

Outcomes within 12 months (reductions compare after period to same period before)	10-13 years (n = 6,491)	14-16 years (n = 13,499)	17+ years (n = 636)
Did not reoffend	66%	63%	49%
Reduced frequency of offending ¹	73%	73%	66%
Reduced total seriousness of offending ¹	77%	77%	71%
Referred for a youth justice FGC ²	6%	13%	2%
Received a custodial sentence ³	s	0.6%	3.8%

Note: Figures were suppressed (shown as an 's') when the numerator in a calculation was under five. The notes to Table C1 also apply to this table.

Reoffending by Police District

Table C4 presents five reoffending measures according to Police District. There are clear differences in reoffending outcomes between districts. These differences should be interpreted with caution as they may be due to a multitude of reasons, including compositional differences between districts in gender, age, and ethnicity of the children and young people being proceeded against.

Table C4: Reoffending outcomes for youth in the 12 months after warning cases, by Police District, 2010/11 to 2013/14 combined

Police District	Did not reoffend	Reduced frequency of offending	Reduced total seriousness of offending	Referred for a youth justice FGC	Received a custodial sentence
Northland	67%	74%	78%	9%	s
Waitemata	73%	78%	82%	7%	s
Auckland City	70%	75%	80%	13%	s
Counties Manukau	59%	69%	74%	14%	0.7%
Waikato	63%	72%	76%	12%	0.8%
Bay of Plenty	64%	72%	76%	12%	0.8%
Eastern	65%	74%	78%	8%	0.8%
Central	63%	72%	76%	9%	0.4%
Wellington	63%	73%	77%	9%	0.3%
Tasman	56%	69%	72%	11%	0.4%
Canterbury	67%	76%	80%	8%	0.4%
Southern	63%	73%	77%	11%	0.6%
National	64%	73%	77%	10%	0.5%

Note: Figures were suppressed (shown as an 's') when the numerator in a calculation was under five. The notes to Table C1 also apply to this table.

