

# GENDER IDENTITY AND POLICE-RECORDED OFFENDING IN NEW ZEALAND

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## Background

Criminal offending affects individuals, families and communities. There has been an increase in focus on transgender people, especially women, in relation to offending, despite a lack of population-level evidence. This study contributes to existing research by using New Zealand (NZ) administrative data to examine patterns of police-recorded offending across people with different genders.

### Research Question

How does police-recorded offending patterns differ across people with different genders in NZ?

## Method

- The 2023 NZ Census collected information on sex at birth and gender separately for the first time, allowing researchers to identify six gender groups.
- Researchers linked Census responses with administrative records in Stats NZ's Integrated Data Infrastructure (IDI) to examine police-recorded offending.
- They compared selected offences involving direct harm to victims, including assault, sexual offences, robbery and theft, of individuals between ages 17 and 26, adjusting for ethnicity, parental income, parental sentencing history and birth cohort.

**Cisgender**
Someone whose gender matches their sex recorded at birth.

**Transgender**
Someone whose gender differs from their sex recorded at birth.

**Non-binary**
Someone whose gender is recorded as 'another gender', assigned male or female at birth.

### Data

**170,775**
NZ-born individuals

**10 years**
Observation window: ages 17-26

Birth cohorts: 1993-1998

Stats NZ disclaimer: These results are not official statistics. They have been created for research purposes from the Integrated Data Infrastructure (IDI) which is carefully managed by Stats NZ. For more information about the IDI please visit https://www.stats.govt.nz/integrated-data/. The results presented in this study are the work of the author, not Stats NZ or individual data suppliers.

Census 2023 data disclaimer: Access to the data used in this study was provided by Stats NZ under conditions designed to give effect to the security and confidentiality provisions of the Data and Statistics Act 2022.

Inland Revenue tax data disclaimer: The results are based in part on tax data supplied by Inland Revenue to Stats NZ under the Tax Administration Act 1994 for statistical purposes. Any discussion of data limitations or weaknesses is in the context of using the IDI for statistical purposes, and is not related to the data's ability to support Inland Revenue's core operational requirements.

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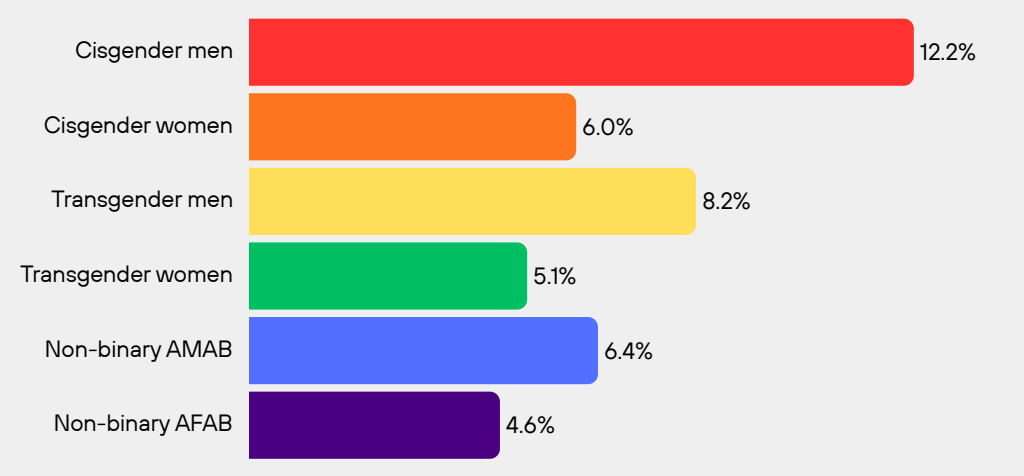
# Main Findings

Adjusted probability of having at least one qualifying police-recorded offence between ages 17 and 26




Note: AMAB = assigned male at birth; AFAB = assigned female at birth.

After accounting for ethnicity, parental income, parental sentencing history and birth cohort, cisgender men had the highest estimated probability of having at least one qualifying police-recorded offence.

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Transgender women's rates were significantly lower compared to cisgender men, but not significantly different from cisgender women.

Compared with cisgender men

**-7.1 pp** Lower adjusted probability for transgender women

Statistically significant

pp = percentage points. Differences are calculated using unrounded estimates: Transgender women (5.1%) - Cisgender men (12.2%).

**Transgender women**

Compared with cisgender women

**-0.9 pp** Lower adjusted probability for transgender women

Not statistically significant

pp = percentage points. Differences are calculated using unrounded estimates: Transgender women (5.1%) - Cisgender women (6.0%).

## Conclusion

- Cisgender men were significantly more likely than groups from every other gender to have a police record for the selected offences examined.
- Findings were consistent across offence types, court action, victim characteristics and locations. Similar results were found for a subgroup assigned male at birth with recorded oestrogen and testosterone-blocking prescriptions.

## Limitations

- The study only examined selected police-recorded offences, which may be influenced by reporting and detection practices rather than underlying behaviour alone.
- Gender was measured in 2023, potentially after recorded offences occurred.
- The results describe associations within a specific NZ population. Further research examining larger, more diverse populations across is needed.

Read working paper here:
https://www.aut.ac.nz/__data/assets/pdf_file/0006/1187367/working-paper-26-05.pdf

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