



MEDIA RELEASE

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Update to COVID-19 Family Violence Data Portal shows mixed impacts of the pandemic on incidence and service use to 31 December 2020

The Crime Statistics Agency (CSA) today updated the COVID-19 Family Violence Data Portal, which examines Victorian family violence incidents and service use trends across more than 30 data indicators. In its third release, the pandemic-focused portal highlights family violence data collected as Victoria's most restrictive lockdown measures began to ease, between 1 October and December 2020.

Key findings include:

- Victoria Police have recorded year on year increases in recorded family incidents for the past three years. This trend continued during 2020 with the number of incidents higher throughout all of 2020 compared to 2019, but significant spikes were seen in October (16.1% higher than October 2019), and June (15.3% higher than in 2019), suggesting potential increases in reporting of family violence as lockdowns begin to ease.
- Family or sexual violence related ambulance callouts were similarly higher during every month of 2020 compared with 2019, with the exceptions of November and December when there was a decrease of 13.7% and 20.9% respectively in callouts.
- The proportion of people recorded by Police for the first time as affected family members (AFMs) was slightly lower throughout 2020 compared with 2019. Forty-two per cent of the 20,007 AFMs recorded during the fourth quarter of 2020 were identified as an AFM at a family incident for the first time compared with 43.7% during the same period in 2019. This indicates that the majority of those recorded as an AFM during the pandemic had prior experiences of family violence.
- Victorian court closures throughout restriction periods were associated with lower numbers of finalised Family Violence Intervention Orders and increases in the number of Interim Orders issued against usual trends. Finalised orders increased in November and December by 2.2% and 11.0% compared to 2019 respectively, which marked the first monthly increases since March.
- Utilisation of family violence and victim-survivor support services was mixed during the last three months of 2020. Kid's Helpline, Victims of Crime Helpline and Victoria Legal Aid legal advice services recorded an increased number of services when compared with the same period in 2019, however many other services recorded decreases during this time.

CSA Chief Statistician Fiona Dowsley said that "while our data suggests the number of incidents recorded and services provided was higher throughout 2020 compared with 2019, significant spikes in police-recorded incidents occurred as restrictions eased, emphasising the importance of considering potential barriers to reporting faced by victim survivors when lockdown measures are in place".

Background

The COVID-19 Family Violence Data Portal is available [here](#).

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