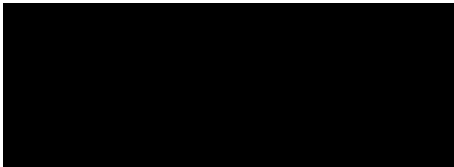



4 August 2023

C167289



Tēnā koe 

Thank you for your Official Information Act 1982 (OIA) request of 11 April 2023 to the Department of Corrections – Ara Poutama Aotearoa, requesting information about the housing of people being managed by Corrections in metropolitan Christchurch. I would like to sincerely apologise for the delay in responding to you, and thank you for your patience.

Public safety is our top priority. Approximately 15,000 people are required to be released from prison each year and we are committed to doing everything we can to ensure each person is safely reintegrated into the community and has safe, suitable accommodation.

We fully acknowledge that the location of offenders can be a concern for communities, and we work hard to balance this concern with our obligation to safely manage people in the community. We cannot legally keep someone in prison if they have come to the end of their sentence or been granted parole by the New Zealand Parole Board – they have a lawful right to live in the community.

Offenders with convictions for sexual offending against children are particularly challenging to find accommodation for. The reality is that without accommodation, these people would be homeless, which would present an unacceptable safety risk to communities. We carry out an extensive and robust process to assess the suitability of every address proposed to accommodate a person with convictions for child sex offences. A range of factors are considered, including the location of victims, proximity to places designed for children, physical factors such as shared access, location of support services, and the ability to ensure a clear GPS signal at all times.

We wrote to you on 10 May 2023 to refuse some parts of your request. We also advised that we needed to extend the due date for the remainder of your request to 22 June 2023 while we undertook further collation and consultation. We have now collated some of the information in scope of your request and identified further information which we would be unable to release without substantial collation or endangering the safety of individuals.

Some questions have been reordered for ease of response.

*Could you please tell me the suburbs where the 30 contracted facilities are located and how many contracted facilities there are by suburb.*

*B.2. How many contracted facilities are within 500 metres of a school? (and 14 sub-questions)*

*B.4. How many contracted facilities are within 500 metres of a play centre or other childcare centre?*

*Which suburbs are these facilities located in?*

The table below sets out the suburbs where contracted providers are delivering transitional and/or long-term accommodation for people leaving prison or subject to community-based sentences. I have also outlined which of these properties have been assessed as suitable to accommodate people convicted of sexual offending against children (CSOs). We have three contracted providers who we have long standing relationships with. They deliver a total of 30 properties, 22 of which may, from time to time, be used to accommodate CSOs.

<b>Suburb</b>	<b>Total Contracted Properties</b>	<b>Number approved for CSOs</b>
Russley	1	1
St Albans	5	4
Mairehau	1	0
Cashmere	1	1
Richmond	2	1
Linwood	8	7
Addington	6	6
Central City	4	2
Southshore	1	0
Wainoni	1	0
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>22</b>

None of the 30 contracted properties are within 500 metres of a school.

Nine properties are within 500 metres of an ECE, seven are in Linwood, one is in Mairehau, and one is in Wainoni. Not all properties accommodate people convicted of sexual offences against children.

Public safety is our top priority and Corrections assesses each of these properties, and their suitability for placement of a person convicted of sexual offending against children, on a case-by-case basis. This consideration takes into account the individual's specific offending, any ongoing risk they pose to the community and their reintegration pathway.

Corrections carries out an ongoing programme of engagement with the Ministry of Education, and with local schools and ECE's and has engaged with the relevant ECE centres near to these properties, and they have an established point of contact with Corrections

In addition to directing where a person convicted of sexual offending against children resides, additional conditions they may be subject to includes:

- Electronic monitoring, with exclusion zones – This means a person is directed not to enter the area, and if they do an alert will be triggered. Examples of an exclusion zone could include playgrounds, parks, schools and early childhood centres, malls and shopping centres, or other areas where a victim and their family may reside.
- Not to associate, either with a victim or a demographic of people – This means a person is directed not to have contact with (either is person or otherwise) a victim of their offending or a demographic such as any person under the age of 16 years.
- Attend a programme(s) or assessment(s) – This means a person must attend any assessments of rehabilitation programme directed by a probation officer in order to address their offending, or to identify further rehabilitation that may be required.
- Access to devices – This means a person may be prohibited from possessing or accessing a device that has internet capability, or may be required to submit any electronic device they possess for regular checks to ensure they are not accessing prohibited websites or mobile applications, or storing inappropriate content sourced from other places.

Any time a person subject to conditions while living in the community does not comply with their conditions, Corrections considers a range of actions, which may include changes to the person's management or accommodation. Non-compliance that is serious, ongoing, or is assessed to pose a risk to the community may result in Corrections prosecuting the person, which could result in their imprisonment.

The safety of the public is Corrections' key consideration when deciding how to respond to non-compliance.

*In the past two years, how many of said facilities have housed child sexual offenders?*

*In the past two years how many of these offenders have*

- *breached the terms of release to these addresses,*
- *been removed for breaches,*
- *been removed due to concerns of reoffending.*

*And, for those who have been removed:*

- *how many have been placed in another suburb in the city,*
- *which suburbs were they removed from and*
- *which suburbs have they been placed into and how many by suburb.*
- *How many have been placed in a contracted/non-contracted facility within 300 meters of a school or childcare centre*
- *How many have been placed in a contracted/non-contracted facility within 500 meters of a school or childcare centre*

*How many have been removed from that facility in the past two years because of:*

- *breaching the terms of release to these addresses,*
- *been removed due to concerns of reoffending.*
- *Reoffending relating to children*

Of the 30 properties contracted, 22 have been approved to accommodate child sex offenders. However, Corrections does not centrally collate statistics on the number of people with particular offending types who have previously been housed in each contracted facility, or instances of non-compliance by people housed in particular properties with particular offending type.

Compiling these statistics for the purpose of your request would require us to check individual files of all individuals within scope of your request.

Accordingly, these parts of your request are refused under section 18(f) of the OIA, because the information cannot be made available without substantial collation or research. In accordance with sections 18A and 18B of the OIA, we have considered whether consulting with you, extending the due date for the request, or fixing a charge would allow us to meet your request. However, we do not consider that any of these options would remove the need for the refusal.

*How many [of all contracted properties] still house sexual offenders?*

*How many [of contracted properties within 500m of an ECE centre] still house sexual offenders?*

These questions are refused in accordance with section 9(2)(c) of the OIA, to avoid prejudice to measures protecting the health or safety of members of the public.

In accordance with section 9(1) of the OIA, we have considered whether there is a public interest reason to release this information that would outweigh the reason to withhold. We do not believe any such reasons outweigh the reasons for withholding in this instance.

Please be advised that should you have any concerns regarding this response you have the right to ask the Ombudsman to investigate our decision to extend the timeframe. Contact details are: Office of the Ombudsman, PO Box 10152, Wellington 6143.

Ngā mihi



Leigh Marsh  
National Commissioner