

## VICTIM INFORMATION NEWSLETTER

A newsletter for victims registered on the Victim Notification Register.

Welcome to our first newsletter, our intention is to keep in touch with you. Normally you will only hear from us (Victim Information Services) if there is a specific event to notify you of. This can mean that a lot of you won't have had any contact from us since your registration.

We would like this to change and at the same time hope to bring you information about us and our processes you may not be aware of, making it easier for you to understand us and how the system works.

In the past we have usually only contacted you to let you know that the offender is facing a hearing, is being released or there is some other issue around their sentencing, but we'll now keep more actively in touch. This newsletter will come to you at least once every 12 months, it may look plain but that helps to keep it low key and our presence in your life in the background.

In this newsletter we cover a few areas including an introduction to Christine and Hayley; some information about temporary releases; the importance of keeping your contact details up to date and how this can be done and what to do if you don't feel listened to.

### Who are we?

#### **Christine Smith, Victim Information Manager**

I am the Victim Information Manager and have been in this role now for five years. I still leave work each day feeling satisfied that the victim notification staff in Corrections provide a much needed and valuable service.

The first time you will hear from me is when I send a letter confirming your registration. After that, I am responsible for ensuring that you receive the information you are entitled to receive from Prisons or Probation, and that you receive it in a timely manner.



A large part of my day is spent talking to victims and other agencies that support victims. I also spend a lot of time searching for updated contact details when it comes to our attention that the details in our database are out of date.

If you have any questions, concerns or complaints, please don't hesitate to contact me. You can ring me on 04 460 3064 or email me at [christine.smith@corrections.govt.nz](mailto:christine.smith@corrections.govt.nz).

#### **Hayley Buckley, Administration Assistant**



Hi, I'm Hayley. My main role is to enter your information into the Victim Notification Register and when you advise us of your updated contact details, I am the one who updates the Register.

You can ring me on 04 460 3240 or email me at

[hayley.buckley@corrections.govt.nz](mailto:hayley.buckley@corrections.govt.nz)

## Your correct details are important

As a registered victim the Department and the New Zealand Parole Board rely on the Victim Notification Register being up to date so that notifications around parole hearings, temporary release and final release from prison are sent to your correct address. In addition, your physical address is important when considering offenders for release whether it is on parole or a temporary release.

Your contact details are recorded in a secure database that is only accessible by the staff responsible for providing you with information.

## What happens when an offender is granted a temporary release or release to work?

Under certain circumstances prisoners may be able to get a temporary release, including being able to participate in release to work. Temporary release is only granted when the prisoner is eligible and the release meets certain objectives.

All prisoners who are granted an unescorted temporary release or release to work are considered for GPS monitoring. This means that their whereabouts can be tracked at all times. Currently all of our prisoners on temporary releases have had GPS monitoring included as a condition of their temporary release.

Before an unescorted temporary release (including employment) is approved, an address check is carried out to ensure that the address is not in close proximity to any registered victims. This is another reason to keep your contact details up to date with us.

## Making it easy to update your details

The only way we can keep you informed is if your contact details are kept up to date. We can't emphasise strongly enough the importance of this.

To make it easier for you to keep your details up to date, you can now do this online via our website, by phone, email or post.

**Website:** <http://www.corrections.govt.nz>

*Click on: Information for victims>>Victim notification register>>Update your details on VNR*

**Phone:** Christine on 04 460 3064 or Hayley on 460 3240

**Email:** [victim.notification@corrections.govt.nz](mailto:victim.notification@corrections.govt.nz)

**Post:** Victim Information  
Department of Corrections  
PO Box 1206  
WELLINGTON 6140

## The Term "Victim"

One thing we are often asked is why you are referred to as a "victim" when you are a "survivor".

We acknowledge and respect that you are all survivors and the term "victim" is in no way meant to offend.

The term victim has evolved from the Victims' Rights Act – the legislation that allows us to provide you with information. Our database is called the Victim Notification Register, and each registration is given a unique Victim ID number that lets us know that the person making contact is actually the person entitled to request/receive information.

## Complaints

If at any time you feel that you have not been treated with respect or not been provided with the information you should have received, or not received that information in a timely manner, please let us know.

Complaints can be made via email to [victim.complaints@corrections.govt.nz](mailto:victim.complaints@corrections.govt.nz) or in writing to:

Victim Complaints  
Department of Corrections  
PO Box 1206  
WELLINGTON 6140

## Get in touch

This newsletter is for you so please give us your feedback or suggest a topic to cover in our next newsletter by emailing us at [victim.notification@corrections.govt.nz](mailto:victim.notification@corrections.govt.nz).

For general information visit us at [www.corrections.govt.nz/information\\_for\\_victims](http://www.corrections.govt.nz/information_for_victims)

