

14 February 2023

C161866



Tēnā koe 

Thank you for your email of 29 November 2022 to the Department of Corrections – Ara Poutama Aotearoa, requesting various information. Your request has been considered under the Official Information Act 1982 (OIA).

For ease of response, some of your questions have been re-ordered. In accordance with Corrections' standard reporting conventions, figures are provided by financial year.

You requested:

Could you please provide me with the past four years' annual figures for the below items?

- *Prison staff numbers by ethnicity*

Please find attached a spreadsheet showing these figures from 2019 to 2022. Please note that totals add up to more than 100%, as staff may identify with more than one ethnicity.

- *The number of inmates placed into employment*
- *Work hours – Community and In-Prison*

Corrections' This Way for Work employment service assists people who are leaving prison to find employment. Since November 2016, this service has placed more than 6,500 people into employment.

Figures for people placed into employment and hours completed by people on community work can be found in our Annual Reports, available at https://www.corrections.govt.nz/resources/strategic_reports/annual-reports

Your request for these figures is refused under section 18(d) of the OIA, as the information requested is or will soon be publicly available.

People in prison undertake employment training opportunities in more than 150 industries in prisons throughout the country. We do not centrally collate the number of hours worked in each of these industries. Therefore, this part of your request is refused under section 18(f) of the OIA, because the information cannot be made available without substantial collation or research.

Substance abuse/addiction programs – The number of inmates who entered prison with alcohol or other drug issues and the number of inmates who started a drug and alcohol treatment program. If there is a significant difference between the two numbers, is there a firm plan to improve the coverage?

Previous research has shown that 47 percent of people in prison met criteria for a substance use disorder within the 12 month period prior to their imprisonment, and 87 percent met these criteria at some point in their life prior to entering prison. Accordingly, providing treatment and health services for people with addiction issues is a critical priority for Corrections.

When a substance use disorder is identified by Corrections' health staff or disclosed to them by someone in prison, this information is stored on the individual's health file. It is not centrally collated for statistical purposes. Therefore, this part of your request is refused under section 18(f) of the OIA, because the information cannot be made available without substantial collation or research.

As noted in Corrections' Annual Report, 723 people in prison started a core alcohol or other drug programme in 2021/22.

Making Shifts work -What are the improvements for inmates resulting from this program? Meal timings, access to family phone calls etc. As per the Annual Report, two prisons have only partial benefits and the program is now closed. What is the main reason for not completing the programs for the two prisons?

The Making Shifts Work (MSW) project was launched in July 2019 to run for a finite period of four years. At the 11 sites where it has been fully implemented, people in prison benefit from improved meal and medication times, more whānau-friendly visiting times, and longer enabled unlock periods within high security.

It was anticipated at the outset of the project that full benefits may not be delivered to all Corrections-run prisons within the lifetime of the project. Delivery to all 17 sites was a best-case scenario, but analysis in 2018 defined the lower range of expected outcomes as delivery of benefits to 11 sites. Despite experiencing unintended challenges resulting from COVID-19, this goal was exceeded with full benefits delivered to 11 sites, near-full staff benefits to four sites, and partial benefits to two sites.

The impact of MSW is not limited to the benefits that were delivered during the lifetime of the project. While the project has closed, benefits resulting from MSW will continue to be delivered. The timeline for full realisation of MSW benefits will depend on the outcome of Corrections' current work to increase recruitment and improve staffing levels in prisons.

Please find below a table summarising the benefit outcomes as at June 2022.

Benefit	Measures	Comment
Enable increased unlock hours, providing more opportunities for meaningful activity to support offender rehabilitation	Potential unlock hours	Achieved for 15 Sites
Improved work-life balance for staff, providing flexible arrangements that appeal to a modern workforce and reducing risks of fatigue	Every second weekend off	Achieved for 15 Sites
	Exceptions to fatigue roster rules: MSW Site staff work no more than 14 hours per day, no more than 70 hours per week, and no more than 50% of an RDO block.	Achieved. Exceptions running at <2% at sites using the new software system enabled sites, well within target (see next page)
Enhanced compliance with national and international regulations through shifts that enable more appropriate timings for meals and medication	No more than 14 hrs between dinner and breakfast (COTA)	Achieved for at least 11 sites with a small number of minor exceptions
	Medication times appropriate and meet Department Standards	Achieved for at least 11 sites with a small number of minor exceptions
Enhanced technology that is easy to configure, reduces manual processes and delivers a better user experience	Ease of use	All 17 sites have had the new scheduling software application deployed.
Ongoing financial sustainability through delivering a solution that is "cost neutral" with current state staffing, and better alignment of actual resource deployment with national standards	Operating cost	Investment case assumptions relating to cost reduction in overtime and call-backs are not able to be validated.
	Alignment with national (rostering) standards	Has been achieved for at least 11 sites

- *Remand Prisoners – Statistics – Rehabilitation hours, education, hours worked etc.*
- *The number of rehabilitation hours completed by maximum and high-security prisoners?*

Corrections does not centrally record statistics on the number of rehabilitation, education or employment training hours completed by people in prison. Therefore, your request is refused under section 18(f), because the information requested cannot be made available without substantial collation or research.

- *Post-release free GP Visits – Any plans to increase locations for free GP visit coverage?*

The programme you are referring to, Te Ara Whakapuāwai, is an initiative of Canterbury health and social providers and is currently unique to that region. Corrections welcomes opportunities to partner with health services in other areas to deliver similar services. For example, Well South Primary Health Network provides vouchers for subsidised GP visits and prescriptions which can be provided to people leaving prison or managed by Corrections in the community.

There are currently no formal plans underway to start a programme like Te Ara Whakapuāwai in any other regions.

- *Inmate numbers by security category at year-end - Maximum, high etc.?*

The table below shows the number of people with each security classification who were in prison on 31 June 2022. People on remand are not subject to security classification. “Unclassified” refers to people who have recently been sentenced and have not yet been assigned a security classification.

Security Classification	Onsite Total	% of Total
Maximum	85	1.1%
High	655	8.6%
Low Medium	1,107	14.5%
Low	885	11.6%
Minimum	1,714	22.5%
Remand	3,058	40.1%
Unclassified	126	1.7%
Total	7,630	100%

- *The number of hours of in-prison work is low compared to the number of prisoners - 498,000 hours is approximately 270 Full-time equivalents (compared to 7,000+ inmates). Any plans to increase this?*

We have interpreted your question as referring to page 75 of the 2021/22 Annual Report, which states “...people on community work still completed 498,871 hours of labour in 2021/22”. This is a reference to hours completed by people serving a sentence of Community Work in the community, and does not relate to employment training in prisons.

As previously noted, we do not centrally collate the number of hours worked by people in prison who undertake employment training opportunities. Corrections already takes steps to maximise opportunities for people in prison to undertake rehabilitation and training, including through employment training in prison industries. It is expected that opportunities for rehabilitation and training will increase as the impact of COVID-19 reduces, our current staffing challenges are addressed, and more of the benefits of Making Shifts Work are realised.

This part of your request is refused under section 18(f) of the OIA, because the information cannot be made available without substantial collation or research.

In my opinion, the following areas are not consistent with Hokai Rangi. Are there any plans to improve?

- *The post-release allowance of \$350 is too low.*

We have interpreted your question as referring to the Steps to Freedom grant, which is provided by the Ministry of Social Development. As Hōkai Rangi is the strategic direction for Corrections, grants provided by other agencies are outside the scope of the strategy.

- *The ultra-low pay rates of between 20c and 60c an hour. If we pay minimum wage to inmates, the approximately one million hours of community and in-prison work will cost only \$21 Mn, a drop in the bucket of the Corrections annual budget of \$2 Bn.*

The allowance paid to individuals through the Prisoner Incentive Allowance Framework (PIAF) is an incentive to encourage people in prison to take part in activities that we know can help with their rehabilitation and reintegration. It is not a salary or wage, and people in prison who are participating in rehabilitation programmes or activities, including employment training opportunities, are not considered to be employees of Corrections.

Improving access to rehabilitation and better preparing people to reintegrate into society following release from prison are important aspects of Hōkai Rangi. However, the strategy does not identify the current PIAF rates as being a barrier to participation in rehabilitation or include any actions regarding rates.

Corrections is currently reviewing the PIAF to ensure it is achieving the purpose of incentivising people in prison to take part in activities which will benefit their rehabilitation and reintegration. Any changes to PIAF rates would need to be approved by the Minister of Corrections.

- *Not providing a higher budget (compared to the regular daily budget) for festive day meals like Christmas*

Corrections provides basic, nutritious meals for people in prison each day, including Christmas Day. In 2022, we provided a roast chicken meal for lunch, and chicken with rice and salad for dinner. We also provided two fruit mince tarts to acknowledge the day, which were additional to the normal daily budget.

- *Libraries stocked with discarded books from public libraries that may not be suitable for inmates*

Corrections is grateful for donations of books to prison libraries, which allow us to provide a wide range of reading material for people in prison. Feedback from people in prison is

positive, with many reporting that they are grateful for the opportunity to access a range of material for educational or recreational reasons.

Prison libraries do not accept every offer of donated books, and decisions will be made about books to include in the library based on their suitability for people in prison. We are not aware of any incidents where donations from public libraries have resulted in unsuitable books being available, and have not been able to identify any complaints or concerns on this topic which have been raised with us.

- *Waikeria prison fire -The two court cases appear to be taking a long time. In my opinion, there is a case for at least a redacted report; any comments regarding this? Any comments regarding actions taken on issues highlighted by the fire incident?*

As you have noted, charges relating to the Waikeria Prison riot are currently active before the Court. It would not be appropriate for Corrections to release information about the riot in the form of a full or redacted report, or to comment on actions taken in response to the riot, while court proceedings which could be prejudiced by the release of this information are ongoing.

Your request is refused under section 6(c) of the OIA, as the making available of this information would be likely to prejudice the maintenance of the law, including the prevention, investigation and detection of offences, and the right to a fair trial.

In accordance with section 18A of the OIA, we have considered whether to affix a charge or extend the time limit for responding to those parts of your request which have been refused under section 18(f) of the OIA. However, given the scale of the information requested we do not consider that this would be an appropriate use of our publicly funded resources.

In accordance with section 18B of the OIA we have also considered whether consulting with you to refine the request would enable us to release information to you. However, we do not consider that the request can be refined, as we do not hold further centrally collated information which we believe would assist you in this instance.

Please note that this response may be published on Corrections' website. Typically, responses are published quarterly, or as otherwise determined. Your personal information including name and contact details will be removed for publication.

I trust the information provided is of assistance. I encourage you to raise any concerns about this response with Corrections. Alternatively, you are advised of your right to also raise any concerns with the Office of the Ombudsman. Contact details are: Office of the Ombudsman, PO Box 10152, Wellington 6143.

Ngā mihi



Leigh Marsh

National Commissioner (acting)