



1 May 2019

C106939

Kate McIntyre
fyi-request-10036-8dfd2639@requests.fyi.org.nz

Dear Ms McIntyre

Thank you for your email of 7 April 2019, requesting information about research commissioned by Corrections into the prevalence or experiences of intellectually disabled persons in prison. Your request has been considered under the Official Information Act 1982 (OIA).

Currently, if a prisoner is identified as potentially having an intellectual disability, they will be assessed in the first instance by prison health services and referred to a Doctor or Clinical Psychologist for further assessment as appropriate. The Doctor or Clinical Psychologist then form recommendations in respect of how best to manage the health needs of that individual. Those recommendations are then taken into consideration when determining the overall management of that prisoner.

If a person has mental health difficulties so severe or acute that the individual cannot be adequately managed and treated in a prison environment, they may be transferred to a secure inpatient forensic unit under the Mental Health (Compulsory Assessment and Treatment) Act 1992.

If staff have concerns for someone with an intellectual disability in prison, we would refer them to the National Intellectual Disability Care Agency to assess whether it would be more appropriate for the person to be transferred and managed in an intellectual disability care unit instead.

As you may be aware, we have also embarked on a significant programme of work to improve access to mental health services.

This includes implementation of a mental health screening tool, enhancement of our primary mental health services, and improved access to clinical care. Additionally, we have four pilot programmes underway: support for female offenders dealing with trauma; wrap-around services for prisoners' families with mental health needs; greater access to health practitioners; and supported accommodation for offenders with high and complex needs. Corrections has also invested \$11.6 million over four years to help manage and support prisoners at risk of self-harm.

These initiatives complement our *Investing in Better Mental Health for Offenders* strategy, which is available online:
http://www.corrections.govt.nz/resources/strategic_reports/investing_in_better_mental_health_for_offenders.html

Please note that secondary mental health services, including for prisoners with acute and complex needs, are provided by Ministry of Health-funded Regional Forensic Mental Health Services. Prisoners with an identified mental health need are referred to Forensic Mental Health Services for a further specialised assessment.

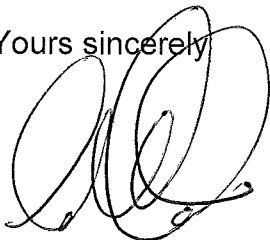
You requested:

- *any research produced or commissioned by the Department of Corrections relating to the prevalence or experiences of intellectual disability in prison.*

To date, Corrections has not undertaken or commissioned specific research relating to the prevalence or experiences of intellectually disabled persons in prison. Your request is therefore declined under section 18(e) of the OIA as the document alleged to contain the information requested does not exist.

Should you have any concerns with this response, I would encourage you to raise these 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.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'Gillon Carruthers', written in a cursive style.

Gillon Carruthers
General Manager Public Affairs
Corporate Services