

10 July 2019

C107139

Kate McIntyre  
[fyi-request-10103-019843e1@requests.fyi.org.nz](mailto:fyi-request-10103-019843e1@requests.fyi.org.nz)

Dear Ms McIntyre

Thank you for your email of 12 April 2019, requesting the number of complaints made against Corrections Officers. Your request has been considered under the Official Information Act 1982 (OIA).

Corrections is committed to providing a safe, diverse and inclusive work environment for all of our staff. We have worked hard to strengthen our policies and processes to ensure that all staff can safely raise concerns. This can be done in a number of ways, including by raising the issue directly with the person's direct manager or another manager, through Corrections' Executive Leadership team, or by contacting our dedicated Integrity Support Team (including via our 0800 Integrity phone line).

In recent years we have implemented a number of initiatives to strengthen integrity in the organisation and ensure that it is embedded in the culture of our workplace. Our key integrity-related policies and procedures have been updated following an extensive consultation process with staff and Unions. Our new policy was launched in March 2019, and covers what bullying, harassment and discrimination is; how staff can raise concerns or lay a complaint, and the range of options available to them; and the process that is followed when a concern is raised or a complaint made.

Staff are reminded frequently through various channels that speaking up is a core value, practised at all levels of the organisation. We are committed to ensuring that this remains an ongoing focus across the organisation.

Corrections demands a high standard of conduct from all employees, and staff are expected to role model positive law-abiding behaviour. A significant emphasis is placed on these aspects throughout the recruitment and selection processes.

A number of measures have been implemented to strengthen integrity and ensure that it is embedded in the workplace culture. These include:

- Increased pre-employment checks, including integrity questions and conflict of interest questionnaires.
- Credit checking for staff who will have significant financial responsibility in their roles.
- Revision of the employee Code of Conduct.
- Resources for management teams to consider integrity examples and issues on a regular basis.
- Launching the 0800 Integrity Line for staff to get confidential advice, support or report concerns of wrongdoing.
- Drug testing for staff.

Corrections is New Zealand's largest core government agency, with over 9,000 staff managing around 40,000 prisoners and community-based offenders across New Zealand, which includes 18 operational prisons and 148 Community Corrections sites.

The overwhelming majority of our staff carry out their roles and responsibilities with high standards of integrity and commitment, in what is often a high pressure and challenging environment.

You have requested:

*“the total number of complaints made against Corrections Officers per annum, broken down by resolution type. Please provide this as far back as records permit.”*

Please see Appendix One – Complaints made against Corrections Officers since 1 July 2017.

Any allegations involving a member of staff must be reported by the prison. Senior managers can also decide to conduct an internal review or employment investigation, make a referral to the independent Office of the Inspectorate, Police, the Office of the Ombudsman, or a combination of these.

Please note when reviewing this information that in the last year alone approximately 17,000 people went through our prison system. All prisoners reporting an allegation against a staff member are given the opportunity to speak with Police, who are the authority responsible for then making the decision whether to commence a criminal investigation.

As mentioned above, Corrections expects a high standard of conduct from our more than 9,000 employees, and significant emphasis is placed on this throughout the recruitment and selection processes. Our pre-employment screening procedures support the high standard of conduct and integrity that we expect from our staff. We provide extensive training and development for our frontline staff to ensure that they can meet the demands placed on them.

I trust the information provided is of assistance. 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 read 'Richard Waggott', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Richard Waggott  
Deputy Chief Executive  
Corporate Services

**Complaints made against Corrections officers since 1 July 2017, broken down by year and outcome of investigation**

1 July 2017 – 31 Dec 2017	
Outcome of investigation	Number of allegations
Allegation unsubstantiated	35
Disciplinary action <sup>1</sup>	4
Allegation withdrawn	0
Additional training provided	6
2018	
Outcome of investigation	Number of allegations
Allegation unsubstantiated	47
Disciplinary action	3
Allegation withdrawn	5
Additional training provided	15
2019	
Outcome of investigation	Number of allegations
Allegation unsubstantiated	5
Disciplinary action	1
Allegation withdrawn	2
Additional training provided	4

<sup>1</sup> 'Disciplinary action' includes a Caution or Written Warning

Note that these numbers do not include complaints still under investigation