

26 March 2020

C118477

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Tēnā koe Moka

Thank you for your email of 7 February 2020, requesting information about release to work and eligibility for prisoners to reside in self-care units. Your request has been considered under the Official Information Act 1982 (OIA).

As previously advised, we extended our timeframe to provide a response to you pursuant to section 15A(1)(b) of the OIA.

You requested:

- 1. In regards to life sentenced inmates, at what point (if any) are they eligible to work out side of prison grounds?*
- 2. Is working outside prison grounds for life sentenced inmates available before they have reached their first parole?*
- 3. If so, how would one go about this in Ngawha Prison?*
- 4. What grounds and criteria would one need?*

Release to Work (RtW) allows minimum security prisoners, who are assessed as suitable, to engage in paid employment in the community. The RtW programme can be an important step in the rehabilitation of a prisoner. RtW can assist prisoners in their reintegration into the community by maintaining, developing or re-establishing work skills and habits, and providing the opportunity to save money to assist them when they leave prison. RtW gives prisoners real work experience, employment skills and job stability, making it easier for them to find work on release from prison, which reduces their likelihood of re-offending.

A RtW placement also gives an employer the opportunity to access a pool of skilled workers and employ someone on a fixed term basis. It also offers them the satisfaction of knowing they have made a real difference in somebody's life by giving them a second chance.

Potential employers must meet certain criteria to be considered for a release to work placement. Criminal history checks are conducted on employers before a prisoner is placed in their employment. The prisoner's history along with other factors are also considered to ensure that they are being placed in an appropriate workplace.

Prisoners at any Corrections-managed prison who wish to apply for leave are encouraged to speak to unit staff. Unit staff will determine eligibility against the requirements outlined in *classes of prisoners who may be temporarily released under section 62* which is outlined in Corrections Regulations 2005, regulation 26 which is publicly available at: [www.legislation.govt.nz/regulation/public/2005/0053/latest/DLM315822.html](http://www.legislation.govt.nz/regulation/public/2005/0053/latest/DLM315822.html).

If the prisoner is eligible, staff will assist in filling out the M.04.06.Form.06 Application for temporary release (including guided release and release to work). Unit staff will then progress the application to the Custodial Systems Manager (CSM) who conducts a quality assessment and makes a recommendation. If the CSM recommends approval, the application progresses to an Advisory Panel.

An eligible prisoner can apply to be considered for RtW at any time. The prisoners on RtW programmes have been assessed by an advisory panel and have shown that they can be trusted and have a desire to be productive members of their communities.

Public safety is Corrections' number one priority. RtW employees are monitored with the use of GPS ankle bracelets where possible and are supervised by their employer.

Further information pertaining to RtW is outlined in the Prison Operations Manual (POM) and publicly available on our website at the following links:

[www.corrections.govt.nz/resources/policy\\_and\\_legislation/Prison-Operations-Manual/Movement/M.04-External-movement-transportation-of-prisoners/M.04.07-release-to-work-RTW](http://www.corrections.govt.nz/resources/policy_and_legislation/Prison-Operations-Manual/Movement/M.04-External-movement-transportation-of-prisoners/M.04.07-release-to-work-RTW)

[www.corrections.govt.nz/working\\_with\\_offenders/prison\\_sentences/employment\\_and\\_support\\_programmes/employment\\_activities/release\\_to\\_work](http://www.corrections.govt.nz/working_with_offenders/prison_sentences/employment_and_support_programmes/employment_activities/release_to_work)

You also requested:

5. *Also how would a life sentenced inmate become eligible for application to reside in self care units? How would one go about this?*

Self-care units are residential style accommodation designed to be used primarily by prisoners who are nearing release and have reintegrative needs that will be met by placement in a self-care unit. They contribute to the reduction of re-offending by increasing residents' personal responsibility and self-reliance before their release from prison. Internal self-care units are located within the secure perimeter of the prison. External self-care units are located outside the secure perimeter of the prison. External self-care units are normally located so that they are not seen as part of the main prison complex, while at the same time being sufficiently close to ensure that they can be supported from the prison.

Corrections runs a total of nine internal self-care units at the following sites:

- Northland Region Corrections Facility
- Auckland Region Women's Corrections Facility
- Spring Hill Corrections Facility
- Whanganui Prison
- Hawkes Bay Regional Prison
- Rimutaka Prison
- Christchurch Men's Prison
- Christchurch Women's Prison
- Otago Corrections Facility

Auckland South Corrections Facility also has an internal self-care unit. However, this facility is managed by Serco, not Corrections.

While each of the above prisons has one internal self-care unit, a single unit may in some cases consist of several separate dwellings, and the number of beds in a self-care unit varies from site to site.

Corrections runs a total of five external self-care units at the following sites:

- Arohata Prison
- Hawke's Bay Regional Prison
- Northland Region Corrections Facility
- Spring Hill Corrections Facility
- Whanganui Prison

For a prisoner to be placed in a self-care unit, they must meet eligibility and suitability criteria. To be eligible to reside in a self-care unit a prisoner must be 18 years or older and have identified reintegrative need(s). The entry criteria to reside in a self-care unit is outlined below:

- **Motivation/Behaviour:** A prisoner must be motivated to reside in the Self Care Unit
- **Security classification:** For placement in an external self-care unit, a prisoner must have a security classification of minimum. For placement in an internal self-care unit, a prisoner must have a security classification of minimum, low or low-medium.
- **Drug use:** A prisoner must be identified drug use (IDU) free or have provided two clean samples in the three months prior to placement. If tests are not available, placement is at discretion of prison management.
- **Prerequisite:** Prisoner must have completed their offence-related rehabilitative needs identified on their offender plan.
- **Other considerations:** The prisoner must have no serious misconducts in the preceding six months. The nature and frequency of historical misconducts will be considered as part of the risk assessment process. Further, in the last six months, the prisoner must have no charges or convictions for an offence under any Act other than the Corrections Act 2004, which was committed while in custody of Corrections.

The external self-care units at Hawke's Bay Regional Prison (HBRP) and Spring Hill Corrections Facility (SHCF) are specialised units called Whare Oranga Ake. Whare Oranga Ake uses a Kaupapa Māori environment to help prisoners train for employment, find work, find accommodation on release and form supportive networks with iwi, hapū and community organisations while strengthening their cultural identity.

Whare Oranga Ake operates a 24 bed unit at HBRP supported by an external provider Choices Kahungunu Health Services and a 16 bed unit at SHCF supported by an external provider, Kaukura Haoura O Tainui. In addition to the standard eligibility and entry criteria outlined above, this service is available to prisoners who:

- have a medium/high reintegrative need, particularly in terms of employment, accommodation and relationships
- show a commitment to the kaupapa Māori environment of the Whare Oranga Ake
- intend to reside in areas within the Lower North and Central Regions extending to Auckland.

For your convenience, we have enclosed is a copy of the Whare Oranga Ake referral process.

Further information pertaining to residing in self-care units are outlined in the POM and publicly available on our website at the following links:

[www.corrections.govt.nz/resources/policy\\_and\\_legislation/Prison-Operations-Manual/Movement/M.03-Specified-gender-and-age-movements/M.04.03-Self-care-units-for-women](http://www.corrections.govt.nz/resources/policy_and_legislation/Prison-Operations-Manual/Movement/M.03-Specified-gender-and-age-movements/M.04.03-Self-care-units-for-women)

[www.corrections.govt.nz/resources/policy\\_and\\_legislation/Prison-Operations-Manual/Movement/M.03-Specified-gender-and-age-movements/M.03.06-Self-care-units-for-men](http://www.corrections.govt.nz/resources/policy_and_legislation/Prison-Operations-Manual/Movement/M.03-Specified-gender-and-age-movements/M.03.06-Self-care-units-for-men)

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.

Ngā mihi nui



Rachel Leota  
National Commissioner