

16 September 2020

C124223

Amy Ferguson  
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Tēnā koe Ms Ferguson

Thank you for your email of 10 July 2020, requesting information about mealtimes in remand units in New Zealand prisons. Your request has been considered under the Official Information Act 1982 (OIA).

You requested the following information:

*For each of the remand units, I'd like to know at what times of day/afternoon/evening the prisoners are served breakfast, lunch and dinner*

Corrections is committed to providing meals that meet the Ministry of Health, Food and Nutrition Guidelines for people in our prisons. We provide all individuals in prison with at least three meals per day, one of which is hot, that contain all daily nutritional requirements. All meals are prepared in accordance with food safety standards.

Mealtimes are scheduled during prison unlock hours. Each prison determines specific unlock hours based on the operational routines of the units. Remand units generally run to a standard 08:00 to 17:00 unlock regime with an hour-long lockup around midday to allow for staff lunch breaks. Consequently, the following approximate mealtimes are within normal range; breakfast between 08:15 and 09:00, lunch between 11:00 and 12:00, dinner between 16:00 and 17:00. Food for supper can also be provided with the evening meal so people have food between dinner and breakfast. If supper has not been provided with dinner, people are provided with breakfast no more than 14 hours from the previous evening meal. Where operational needs dictate, some units may operate different mealtimes to those outlined above.

Each prison is required to follow Corrections' policy on minimum entitlements which addresses meal requirements. This policy includes four-week national menu templates and can be found in the Prison Operations Manual at the following link:

[www.corrections.govt.nz/resources/policy\\_and\\_legislation/Prison-Operations-Manual/Prisoner-finance-activities/F.01-Minimum-entitlements](http://www.corrections.govt.nz/resources/policy_and_legislation/Prison-Operations-Manual/Prisoner-finance-activities/F.01-Minimum-entitlements)

There are 18 prisons across New Zealand and many house people on remand. Every prison will likely have different scheduled mealtimes across units. In order to identify this type of specific information for each unit holding remand prisoners, we would be required to manually review a large quantity of information.

In accordance with the OIA, we have considered whether to affix a charge or extend the time limit for responding. However, given the scale of the request we do not consider that this would be an appropriate use of our publicly funded resources. Therefore, your request is declined under section 18(f) of the OIA, as the information cannot be made available without substantial collation or research.

However, you may be interested to know that Corrections is currently working to normalise mealtimes through the 'Making Shifts Work' project. The project is being progressively rolled out across New Zealand's prisons and is designed to deliver flexible roster patterns that provide safer and better working conditions for corrections officers, create more opportunities for increased rehabilitation, and structured activity for prisoners.

Traditional shift patterns pose constraints on unlock hours, including mealtimes. Making Shifts Work has included input from Corrections staff and union representatives. It will deliver new 12, 10, and 8-hour shifts for all custodial staff, replacing current fixed 8-hour shifts. Staff will work fewer shifts and gain extra days off per year, which along with mealtimes will see an immediate improvement in medication and visiting times.

Making Shifts Work was implemented at the first site, Manawatu Prison, in July 2020 and is expected to be implemented across all prisons over the next 12 months.

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

Ngā mihi nui



Richard Waggott  
Deputy Chief Executive  
People & Capability