

21 December 2021

C142197

Chas Carroll  
[fyi-request-16996-e286a090@requests.fyi.org.nz](mailto:fyi-request-16996-e286a090@requests.fyi.org.nz)

Tēnā koe Chas

Thank you for your email of 1 October 2021 to the Department of Corrections (Corrections), requesting the following information:

Firstly, I would like to apologise for the delay in responding to you and thank you for your patience. Consultation with multiple business units was necessary and took longer than anticipated.

*Visits*

*1) Please provide me with the total number of visits to prisons per day, as far back as records permit. Please break this down by prison. Please provide me with this information in an Excel spreadsheet.*

*Audio-Video Link (AVL) visits*

*2) Please provide me with the total number of AVL visits in New Zealand prisons, per week, since January 1, 2019, broken down by prison. Please provide me with this information in an Excel spreadsheet.*

Your request has been considered under the Official Information Act 1982 (OIA).

Visits by whānau and friends are important to help people in prison maintain family and social relationships. Positive family support also increases their chance of successfully reintegrating into the community on release from prison.

Members of the public must apply to be an approved visitor of a person in prison. This includes all children under 18 years of age. People who want to visit must first fill out a visitor application form, which is followed by security checks.

Visits must be booked in advance. Visiting hours vary across all prisons, and generally depend on which unit the person is in. In some circumstances, special visits can be arranged, for example, family visiting from overseas or due to the bereavement of a loved one.

The data system that holds prison visit information was rolled out over 2000 and 2001 and had a graduated uptake. The daily data for this period is sporadic and will not represent the entirety of the visits. Therefore, for 2000 and 2001 we have

provided the yearly total of visits to each site. This is attached on Tab Two of Appendix One.

Tab Three of Appendix One provides a breakdown of physical visits to each prison between 1 January 2002 and 30 September 2021. Any data prior to 1 January 2002 would have been recorded on site and we cannot readily extract this information from our electronic records. We would need to determine whether the registers are held in archives, which would require a significant amount of work.

When reviewing Appendix One note that:

- Mt Eden Women's Prison closed September 2006
- Auckland Region Women's Corrections Facility opened August 2006
- Auckland Central Remand Prison closed April 2011
- Dunedin Prison closed July 2007
- Mt Eden Corrections Facility open May 2011
- Mt Eden Men's Prison closed May 2011
- New Plymouth Prison closed January 2013
- Northland Region Corrections Facility opened April 2005
- Ohura Prison closed October 2005
- Otago Corrections Facility opened June 2007
- Spring Hill Corrections Facility opened November 2007
- Wellington Prison closed October 2012.

Your request relating to AVL visits would be very difficult to provide without substantial collation. The booking of AVL visits is individually managed by each prison and there is no centralised recording of these visits. To identify all AVL visits we would be required to consult with each prison.

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, this part of your request is declined under section 18(f) of the OIA, as the information cannot be made without substantial collation or research.

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 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.

I trust the information provided is of assistance.

Ngā mihi

A handwritten signature in blue ink, consisting of a stylized, cursive 'L' followed by 'M' and 'A'.

Leigh Marsh  
Deputy National Commissioner