

16 December 2021

C142202

Courtney Shannon  
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Tēnā koe Courtney

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

- 1) *How many instances of temporary release from prison “to assist in the prisoner’s rehabilitation” (see here: [https://www.corrections.govt.nz/working\\_with\\_offenders/prison\\_sentences/release/home\\_visits](https://www.corrections.govt.nz/working_with_offenders/prison_sentences/release/home_visits)) have occurred, per week, since January 1, 2019? Please break this down by prison and provide me with the information in an excel spreadsheet.*
- 2) *How many scheduled temporary releases from prison have been cancelled or postponed during Level 3 and 4 lockdowns? Please break this down by prison and provide me with the information in an excel spreadsheet.*

Your request has been considered under the Official Information Act 1982 (OIA). I apologise for the delay in responding and thank you for your patience.

Corrections is committed to providing the people we manage with the skills and experiences needed to safely reintegrate after release from prison and go on to lead pro-social lives. Temporary release is the release of a person from the custody of Corrections who is still serving a prison sentence. It is primarily a tool to be used to support and enable the person’s reintegration into the community when they are released. During a temporary release, the person is supervised by an approved sponsor such as their employer if taking part in Release to Work or a case manager or reintegration service provider for Guided Release. Temporary release is only available to people who have been sentenced and meet eligibility and suitability criteria.

The safety of the public is a foremost priority when considering a temporary release. Every application for temporary release is assessed by a multi-disciplinary panel made up of case managers, psychologists, and probation, custodial and intelligence staff. The panel can also include external representatives from the community, such as the New Zealand Police. These panels consider the risk to the public and the benefit to the individual in prison. A recommendation is then provided to the decision maker to allow them to make an informed decision about approving the individual’s

participation, and any conditions that they should comply with, including GPS monitoring.

More information about temporary release is available on Corrections' website, at: [https://www.corrections.govt.nz/resources/policy\\_and\\_legislation/Prison-Operations-Manual/Movement/M.04-External-movement-transportation-of-prisoners/M.04.06-Temporary-release](https://www.corrections.govt.nz/resources/policy_and_legislation/Prison-Operations-Manual/Movement/M.04-External-movement-transportation-of-prisoners/M.04.06-Temporary-release)

All the reasons for temporary release are available at the link above, but for the purpose of question one of your request, we have only considered reasons where a person has been released in order to:

- Participate in Guided Release
- Have a tattoo removed (including pre- and post-procedure assessments)
- Attend a community facility for educational, cultural, or recreational purposes
- Attend a programme at an approved agency for assessment or treatment of the person's rehabilitative or re-integration needs
- Attend a religious service or activity
- Be involved in a community project or other reintegrative activity in association with a community organisation
- Engage with an agency or person that will support the person on release
- Purchase clothing, equipment or possessions which is reasonably required before the person's release
- Seek vocational training, paid or self-employment.

Alongside temporary release, every year we carry out tens of thousands of escorts between prisons, courts, medical facilities, tangi or funerals and rehabilitation providers as a temporary removal. These escorts, where people are actively supervised and monitored by custodial staff, are managed in accordance with temporary removal policy which is distinct from temporary release policy and is also available on Corrections' website at:

[https://www.corrections.govt.nz/resources/policy\\_and\\_legislation/Prison-Operations-Manual/Movement/M.04-External-movement-transportation-of-prisoners/M.04.05-Temporary-removals](https://www.corrections.govt.nz/resources/policy_and_legislation/Prison-Operations-Manual/Movement/M.04-External-movement-transportation-of-prisoners/M.04.05-Temporary-removals)

For the purposes of answering your request, we are releasing data relating to temporary release only.

Attached as Appendix One is an excel spreadsheet of all temporary releases from 31 December 2018, broken down by week and prison. You have requested all data from 1 January 2019, but since that was a Tuesday, the first date of the data is from 31 December 2018 and goes through the week beginning on 27 September 2021.

In the data attached, each person who was granted a temporary release is counted every time they left a prison. For example, if a person participated in a release to work programme where they go to paid employment five days a week, they would be counted five times for that week.

While almost all prisons have some level of temporary release, Mt Eden Corrections Facility has no temporary releases that fall under the category of "assisting in a

prisoner's rehabilitation." This is because it is a remand prison and only people that are sentenced are eligible for the programmes and reasons listed above.

Some prisons have robust release to work programmes or have more external partners that facilitate programmes for those in prison. This includes Hawke's Bay Regional Prison that has a higher than average number of temporary releases each week due to their release-to-work programme and their Māori Pathways programme. Each prison differs in their operational needs, the security classifications of people in the prison, and the ability to facilitate temporary release programmes.

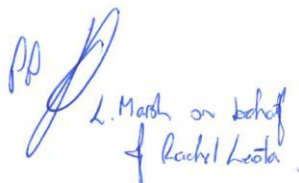
For question two, it is very difficult for us to extract data on how many temporary releases were cancelled during the Alert Level 3 and 4 lockdowns. Frontline staff were diverted to urgent critical tasks during the lockdown period, which has meant most cancelled temporary releases were not recorded during this period. Accordingly, we unfortunately do not have accurate data available. The data from the lockdown period on the attached spreadsheet should not be considered fully accurate as there will be cases during this period that were cancelled but are still included in the totals provided.

To accurately pull this data, we would be required to manually search through hundreds of individual files, which would impair the effective administration of the organisation. Therefore, this part of your request is refused under section 18(f), as the information cannot be made available without substantial collation or research. Under section 18A of the OIA, we have also considered whether fixing a charge or extending the time limit would enable us to respond to this request. However, we do not believe it would be a good use of our publicly funded resources in this case.

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



L. Marsh on behalf  
of Rachel Leota

Rachel Leota  
National Commissioner