

07 October 2022

C157575

Mohammed Khan

fyi-request-20496-78a93944@requests.fyi.org.nz

Tēnā koe Mohammed

Thank you for your email of 9 September 2022 to the Department of Corrections – Ara Poutama Aotearoa, requesting information about people being released from prison and emergency accommodation. Your request has been considered under the Official Information Act 1982 (OIA).

Around 15,000 people are released from prison every year and finding suitable accommodation for people who are lawfully required to be released from prison is one of our most significant challenges. The vast majority of people return home to family or make their own arrangements about where to live. Most people released from prison can choose where to live or have provided the NZPB with a release plan (including a proposed address) for consideration, prior to leaving prison.

Some people require assistance with finding a place to live. We contract almost 1,000 supported and emergency accommodation places each year for people, delivered by contracted providers across New Zealand such as PARS, the Salvation Army and other social service agencies.

Emergency accommodation can be used by people on a range of conditions, including Home Detention, Parole, Community Detention and Release on Conditions. It is provided to people who have an immediate accommodation need and where all other accommodation options have been exhausted. The alternative is that these people would otherwise be homeless, which would present an unacceptable safety risk to communities.

You requested:

According to this article in the Rotorua Daily Post, if a prisoner would be released but cannot establish their own arrangements as to where they reside, and if they reject being sent to emergency housing, say, in Rotorua, Corrections could apply to vary their sentence.

<https://www.nzherald.co.nz/rotorua-daily-post/news/rotorua-emergency-housing-motels-ben-sandford-claims-recently-released-prisoners-sent-to-city-motels/BD5KUP3LMSH5AT4MZAEDU36RLE/>

1) I assume that means that you would hold them in prison for a longer period if they refused to be sent to somewhere where emergency housing is systematically available, for example, in Rotorua?

Corrections delivers an essential public service in prisons and communities, and we are committed to continuing our work to keep New Zealanders safe. Corrections does not decide who is in prison, when they will be released or who is on a community-based sentence or order. These decisions are made by the New Zealand Parole Board (NZPB) or a Judge in court. Corrections Chief Executive does not hold the powers to grant early releases or to hold people in prison beyond their statutory release date.

Further information about release from prison is available on Corrections' website [here](#).

2) If the assumption in (1) is correct, how many persons who would otherwise be released made that decision each year for the past five years?

3) If the assumption in (1) is correct, how much longer are such persons held? A defined period? Until the end of their sentence? Until it is possible for them to either make other arrangements or access emergency housing in their actual community?

As outlined above, the assumption is incorrect, Corrections Chief Executive does not hold the powers to grant early releases or to hold people in prison beyond their statutory release date. Therefore, the remaining part of your request is refused under section 18(e) of the OIA as the information requested does not exist.

As per section 18B we have considered whether consulting with you would enable the request to be made in a form that would remove the reason for refusal. However, we do not consider that the request can be refined in this instance as your request is specific, but the information does not exist.

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 trust the information provided is of assistance. 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.

Ngā mihi



Matt Huddleston
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People and Capability