



26 July 2024

C182175

Caleb

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Tēnā koe Caleb

Thank you for your email of 19 May 2024 to the Department of Corrections – Ara Poutama Aotearoa, requesting information about guided release. Your request has been considered under the Official Information Act 1982 (OIA).

Corrections previously extended the timeframe of our response in accordance with section 15A(1)(b) of the OIA. I acknowledge the delay in responding to your request. I understand that preparing a response required consultation with each prison, which took some time.

People serving prison sentences of more than two years may require dedicated support to carefully manage their transition back into the community. This can involve pre-release planning with case managers, probation officers and other external partners. It can include placement in internal or external self-care units to provide people with an intermediate step between prison and life in the community. People serving a long prison sentence who are nearing their release date can also apply to leave prison for short periods for guided release reintegration activities.

Through our guided release programme, we support people in prison to access reintegration activities that help their safe transition into the community. These activities include participating in pre-release meetings with probation officers, organising bank accounts, registering with a local doctor, visiting potential accommodation providers, and meeting with future employers. Every person is strictly vetted prior to undertaking guided release activities and equipped with an electronic monitoring anklet.

Guided Release relates to Corrections' Temporary Removals and Temporary Release procedures, outlined in the Prison Operations Manual. These procedures are publicly available at the following links:

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.04.06-Temporary-release.

For ease of response, your questions have been reordered and some questions are answered together. You requested:

1. *The total number of guided releases conducted at each prison over the past 6 months.*
4. *The number of staff employed solely to conduct guided releases at each site.*

The table below shows the number of people who participated in guided releases between 1 November 2023 and 30 April 2024.

Prison	Guided Releases
Northland Region Corrections Facility	3
Auckland Prison	-
Auckland Region Women's Corrections Facility	29
Auckland South Corrections Facility	22
Spring Hill Corrections Facility	36
Waikeria Prison	56
Tongariro Prison	18
Whanganui Prison	47
Manawatu Prison	4
Rimutaka Prison	3
Christchurch Men's Prison	1
Christchurch Women's Prison	1
Rolleston Prison	43
Otago Corrections Facility	6
Invercargill Prison	26

Notes for table:

- These figures have been compiled following consultation with each Corrections-managed prison in June and July 2024.
- They are provided to the best of Corrections' ability, however they do not exist in any central database and we have relied on each prison keeping timely records in an accurate and consistent manner.
- Guided Release at Hawke's Bay Regional Prison is currently occurring through a contracted provider for prisoners housed in self-care unit Te Whare Oranga Ake as part of their reintegration and is therefore not captured in the information held by Corrections.

- As Mt Eden Corrections Facility is a remand facility, it does not offer guided release.

It is not possible to provide 'the number of staff employed solely to conduct guided releases at each site'. While some larger prisons have staff whose primary focus is to conduct guided releases, many prisons utilise different staff depending on their availability, with these tasks being absorbed as part of their overall workload. For example, case managers, release to work brokers and reintegration coordinators may assist with guided release.

Accordingly, question 4 is refused under section 18(g) of the OIA, as the information is not held by Corrections and we have no grounds for believing that the information is either held by or more closely connected with the functions of another agency.

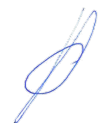
2. *If guided releases are not occurring, please provide an explanation for their suspension at each site.*
3. *When are guided releases expected to resume at each site?*

As at 1 July 2024, guided release is occurring at all Corrections-managed prisons except Mt Eden Corrections Facility (MECF) and Arohata Prison. MECF is primarily a remand prison, therefore, their population does not meet the criteria for guided release. Arohata Prison have not had a demand for guided release due to a majority remand prison population, however is preparing to restart guided releases and is currently recruiting for additional case managers, to help facilitate this.

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 hope this information is helpful. I encourage you to raise any concerns about this response with 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



Leigh Marsh
Commissioner Custodial Services