



17 August 2015

C72257

Sophie Buchanan
fyi-request-2864-9ad335b0@requests.fyi.org.nz

Dear Ms Buchanan

Thank you for your emails dated 20 June 2015, requesting information on the number of prisoners in segregation from the mainstream prison population. Your request has been considered under the Official Information Act 1982 (OIA).

The Department operates prisons that are safe for prisoners, staff, visitors and the general public. Our staff recognise the importance of knowing and understanding prisoners, and actively engage with them to reinforce positive behaviour. Staff anticipate and attempt to resolve problems through the active management of prisoners, and are trained in de-escalation techniques, interpersonal and tactical communication skills. The goal is always to manage a potentially volatile situation in a manner that minimises the likelihood of provoking an aggressive response.

Prisoners can be segregated for a variety of reasons in line with the Corrections Act 2004, and these are outlined below:

Directed Segregation

Directed segregation is applied when the Prison Director has concern for the safety of a prisoner or where a prisoner is considered a threat to other prisoners, or presents an unnecessary disruption to the good order and safety of the prison. A prisoner placed on segregation for their own safety will remain segregated from the general prison population until the Prison Director believes their safety is no longer at risk. Prisoners on segregation for the purpose of good order and safety can be on segregation for a period of up to three months. After this time the decision must be reviewed by a Visiting Justice.

Voluntary Segregation

When a prisoner expresses concern for their safety, the Department has a duty to ensure prisoners are housed safely and securely. Therefore any prisoner who fears for their safety can be placed on segregation for a specified length of time, away from the general prison population. Prisoners on voluntary or directed segregation are usually able to mix freely with other segregated prisoners. The vast majority of prisoners are segregated at their own request.

You have asked four questions regarding prisoner segregation, and I have addressed these below.

1. *You have requested information about the conditions someone would be held who was considered by themselves and/or prison staff to be at risk from the mainstream prison population.*

As stated above there are various reasons for prisoner segregation.

2. *The number of prisoners currently in segregation from the mainstream prison population due to sex/gender, perceived sex/gender, sexuality, or perceived sexuality, whether due to assessment of risk to them by Corrections staff or at the request of the inmate.*
3. *Please also disclose the number of current prisoners who have been in protective segregation due to sex/gender/sexuality, even if they are currently not segregated.*
4. *If the Department does not keep records of the reason for segregation, please provide the number of inmates currently segregated for any reason, and/or the DOC's general statistics on segregation for the past 5 years*

The Department does not compile or collect data on the segregation of prisoners due to their sex, gender or sexuality. Therefore, this part of your request is declined under section 18(g) of the OIA, as the information requested is not held by the Department, and we have no grounds for believing that it is held by another agency or more closely connected with the functions of another agency.

The information relating to general prisoner population segregation, including directed and voluntary segregation is provided as Appendix One. Please note that the figures provided are snapshots of information as at the end of the relevant financial year period.

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 Department. 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.

Yours sincerely



Jeremy Lightfoot
National Commissioner

Appendix One – Number of segregated prisoners

Number of prisoners who have been segregated from the mainstream prison population as at 30 June for the financial years between 2009/10 and 2014/15 ¹						
Segregation category	30 June 2010	30 June 2011	30 June 2012	30 June 2013	30 June 2014	30 June 2015
Directed Segregation	94	101	94	74	89	96
Voluntary Segregation	2,336	2,089	1,576	1,730	1,800	2,169
Total	2,430	2,190	1,670	1,804	1,889	2,265

¹ Data is snapshot figures of segregated prisoner totals as of 30 June for each financial year