

12 March 2019

C103149

Kendra Cox  
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Dear Ms Cox

Thank you for your email of 8 December 2018, requesting information about staff in New Zealand prisons. Your request has been considered under the Official Information Act 1982 (OIA).

We know that 91 percent of prisoners have a lifetime diagnosis of mental health or substance abuse disorders. Additionally, many prisoners have a personal history of trauma, and that 52 percent of women and 22 percent of men in prison have a lifetime diagnosis of post-traumatic stress disorder.

In recent years, we have increased our focus on the mental health of offenders. In 2016 we launched the mental health and reintegration services pilot, to improve and expand the level of mental health support offenders can access in prison and in the community.

As a result, there have been 4,126 prisoner referrals to these services between the beginning of the pilot and the end of November 2018. Additionally, there were 15,845 face-to-face mental health delivery hours in prisons during this timeframe.

The pilot includes four distinct programmes of work:

**Improving mental health in 16 prisons and four Community Corrections districts**

Corrections contracts mental health clinicians based in 16 prisons. The clinicians provide treatment and interventions to offenders and help them to better manage their mental health needs. In 2017/18, the average number of mental health sessions received by offenders was 6 and an analysis of records indicated that 75 percent of individuals experienced improvement after receiving the service.

### **Wrap around support for family and whanau in four Community Corrections sites**

This service provides support to families of offenders who are engaged in mental health services. In 2017/18, the service supported 90 families to access community services to improve their social, health and education outcomes.

### **Supported living transitional houses in Auckland and Hamilton**

This programme provides supported accommodation to a small number of offenders with complex mental health needs or cognitive impairment. In 2017/18, the service has received 83 referrals and supported almost 30 people to access the social and health services they need.

### **Social workers and counsellors in women's prisons**

This service helps address needs, such as trauma, victimhood and family, that many women entering prison struggle to manage. It also contributes to Corrections goal of reducing reoffending.

Since this initiative's launch in November 2016, counsellors have provided support to 888 women, with a further 754 women having received support from social workers.

Please note that where Corrections employed counsellors are not available, prisoners can be referred to services such as counselling on the same basis as those in the community. The Ministry of Health (or ACC) is responsible for funding and administering secondary health and tertiary health care services for prisoners.

In June 2018, Cabinet approved the new Waikeria Corrections and Treatment Facility, which is set to open in 2022. The facility will have accommodation for 500 prisoners, with a new mental health facility providing enhanced mental health services to an additional 100 prisoners.

Additionally, the new maximum facility at Auckland Prison was completed on 1 June 2018. The \$300 million redevelopment will provide improved rehabilitation and mental health treatment in a secure environment that is safer for everyone.

More information on Corrections approach to bettering the mental health of offenders is available on our website at: [www.corrections.govt.nz/resources/strategic\\_reports/investing\\_in\\_better\\_mental\\_health\\_for\\_offenders.html](http://www.corrections.govt.nz/resources/strategic_reports/investing_in_better_mental_health_for_offenders.html).

You have requested:

- 1) *How many mental health, therapeutic, and emotional support staff work in New Zealand Prisons? This includes, but is not limited to: psychologists, social workers, therapists, psychiatrists, care workers, community workers. Please provide this information broken down by Prison.*

Corrections nurses, psychologists, counsellors, social workers, occupational therapists and cultural support workers fall within the scope of your request. These are outlined in Appendix One attached. Please note that these figures are full time equivalent (FTE). One FTE is equivalent to one employee working full time.

Further, please note that psychologist teams employed by Corrections who are not recorded as based at a prison are often based at sites such as Corrections regional offices. Each local psychological service will cover a variety of Community Corrections and Prison sites.

Additionally, we have not included programme facilitators in these numbers, although some facilitate programmes for prisoners with at least part of the focus being on improving their mental health.

You may also be interested to know that we have nearly 1,700 authorised volunteers actively working with offenders on a regular basis. Volunteers support and complement our services and constructive activities for prisoners, including in the area of health and wellbeing.

- 2) *What is the rate of mental health, therapeutic, and emotional support staff turnover (hiring and firing) for the last financial year?*

Corrections currently employs over 9,000 staff members. During the last financial year, Corrections hired three social workers, 48.6 psychologists and 67.55 nurses.

As at 30 June 2018, the end of the last Corrections financial year, there were 195.4 permanent psychologist roles, 236.54 permanent nurse roles and 8 permanent social worker roles. Please note these figures are also FTE.

During the last financial year, one social worker, 27.65 psychologists and 50.9 nurses left Corrections. Please note these figures include staff who left Corrections at the end of their fixed-term employment contracts.



The turnover rates for these positions for the 2017/18 year were as follows:

- Psychologists: 14.24 percent;
- Nurses: 26.7 percent

Please note that the one social worker who left Corrections was on a fixed term contract and as such this has not been counted in turnover figures.

3) *How many vacancies does Corrections have for these positions?*

As at 4 February 2019, Corrections had vacancies for 23.84 nurses, 32.26 psychologists and three cultural support workers.

Due to a national shortage of clinical psychologists both within and outside of Corrections, we have developed an internal scholarship programme for our permanent staff who have been accepted onto a clinical psychology programme delivered at one of the participating universities.

This is the second year we have run this scheme with three of our staff from across the country being accepted onto these training programmes and also successfully being awarded a Corrections scholarship. The scholarship provides the recipient with an annual salary and pays their study fees. In return, the recipient is bonded to Corrections for three years following graduation. Over the last two years Corrections has allocated six of eight scholarships. We are hoping to be able to award two further scholarships later this year.

I trust the information provided is of assistance. Should you have any concerns with this response, I would encourage you to raise these 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.

Yours sincerely



Jo Field  
Deputy Chief Executive  
Service Development

**Appendix One – Number of Nurses, Psychologists, Counsellors and Social Workers who work in New Zealand prisons as at 21 December 2018**

Work Site	NURSE	PSYCHOLOGIST	COUNSELLOR	SOCIAL WORKER	CULTURAL SUPPORT WORKER	OCCUPATIONAL THERAPIST
Arohata Prison	9.2		2	2	2	
Auckland Prison	17.4	9.75		1	1	
Auckland Regional Womens Corr. Facility	14		1	1		
Christchurch Men's Prison	19	19.9		1		1
Christchurch Womens Prison	6.10		1	1		
Dunedin-Invercargill AO		12.7				
Hamilton Hub		18.85				
Hamilton Psych Office						
Hastings Psych Office		8				
Hawkes Bay Prison	12.2					
Invercargill Prison	4.4					
Kaikohe SC		2				
Manawatu Prison	7					
Manukau AO		11				
Mt Eden Corrections Facility	27.2					
National Office						
Nelson SC		1				
New Plymouth Remand Centre	1.5					

North Auckland Psych Office		9.7				
Northern Regional Corrections Facility	13.4					
NR Regional Office		9.8				
Otago Corrections Facility	10					
P North Psych Office		10.09				
Rimutaka Prison	24	8				
Rolleston Prison	5.5	13				
Spring Hill Corrections Facility	15.7	6				
SR Regional office		9.4				
Tauranga Hub SC		12.55				
Tongariro Prison	5					
Waikeria Prison	14	5.8				
Wellington Psych Office		15				
Whanganui Prison	13.4					
<b>Total</b>	<b>219.60</b>	<b>182.74</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>6</b>		