



12 March 2019

C103825

Jessica Lim  
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Tēnā koe Ms Lim

Thank you for your email of 11 January 2019, in which you request information relating to parents in prison. Your request has been considered in accordance with the Official Information Act 1982 (OIA).

You have requested information relating to parents in prison, specifically:

*How many people in the prison are mothers?*

*How many people in prison are fathers?*

*Please break down statistics regarding parenthood and prisoners by age of prisoner, number of children, and age of children as far as records allow.*

*How many people (divided by gender) in prison have children aged under 24 months?*

Corrections recognises the important, positive effect that regular family contact and support has on prisoner morale. Accordingly, we endeavour to keep prisoners in the areas where their families reside and, where that is not possible, every effort is made to return prisoners to their home region prior to their release. Corrections also supports positive contact between prisoners and children through regular visits.

You may be interested to know that Corrections also offers Parenting Support Services for Prisoners, a programme designed to help prisoners learn parenting skills, get support to be a parent/caregiver and communicate with their child while they are in prison, and get support to strengthen their relationship after release. Delivering parenting support services in prisons can improve outcomes for the children of prisoners, reduce intergenerational re-offending, and reduce participant re-offending by supporting the creation and maintenance of positive family ties.

Corrections does not specifically collect data on prisoners' family lives. Retrieval of the information would require the manual review of notes for every offender. Your request is therefore declined under section 18(f) of the OIA, as the information cannot be made available without substantial collation or research.

However, you may be interested to know that in 2015 Corrections carried out an analysis within Statistics NZ's Integrated Data Infrastructure (IDI) in 2015. This analysis matched identities of current prisoners at that time with 2013 census data. Results indicated that 19 percent of prisoners were in a direct parenting role at the time of their imprisonment. These prisoners had an average of 1.9 children. Of the children, approximately half were biological children of the parent/offender, and the remainder were biologically unrelated to the parent. The average age of the biological children of prisoners was 5.9 years, while the average age of non-biological children of prisoners 9.1 years.

The proportion of female prisoners caring for children when imprisoned (29 percent) was higher than for males (17 percent); Pacific offenders were slightly more likely to have children in their care at the time of imprisonment (23 percent), followed by Māori (20 percent) then NZ European (16 percent).

You have also requested information relating to the Mothers with Babies Units. Each of New Zealand's women's prisons (Christchurch Women's, Arohata and Auckland Region Women's Corrections Facility) has a Mothers with Babies unit. Female prisoners with young children, who meet certain eligibility criteria, are able to apply to reside in these units, which provide a non-threatening, safe-haven situation for mothers to care for and bond with their child(ren) up to two years of age.

The units are self contained, shared accommodation. The mothers are responsible for cooking, cleaning, laundry and budgeting, and staff and community providers provide parenting support. Community providers also play an integral role in assisting the mothers to reintegrate into the community when they are released.

As you have not stipulated a timeframe, we have provided the following information for the 12 month period January 2018 to January 2019.

*How many prisoners use the Mothers and Babies Unit?*

Auckland Region Woman's Corrections Facility	13
Arohata Prison	0
Christchurch Women's Prison	4

*How many prisoners use the Mothers and Babies Bonding Facility?*

Auckland Region Woman's Corrections Facility	10
Arohata Prison	2
Christchurch Women's Prison	2

*How many prisoners who are eligible have been denied access to the Mothers and Babies Unit?*

Auckland Region Woman's Corrections Facility	6
Arohata Prison	0
Christchurch Women's Prison	0

Please note that while prisoners may meet the eligibility criteria for the Mothers with Babies Unit, this does not necessarily guarantee placement as there may be behavioural/motivation barriers that need to be addressed. In many cases, Oranga Tamariki does not support the child being placed with the mother, either because they have concerns for the safety of the child, or because they have determined it would not be in the best interests of the child.

*How many have been removed or Bonding Facility for Drugs, Neglect or Violence? Please break this down by offence.*

Auckland Region Woman's Corrections Facility	1*
Arohata Prison	0
Christchurch Women's Prison	0

*\*Removed due to an incident in the Bonding Facility.*

For more information about the Mother with Babies Unit, is available on our website at: [www.corrections.govt.nz/working\\_with\\_offenders/prison\\_sentences/being\\_in\\_prison/women\\_in\\_prison.html](http://www.corrections.govt.nz/working_with_offenders/prison_sentences/being_in_prison/women_in_prison.html).

You also requested:

*How many prisoners have babies (under 24 months) out in the community with an alternate caregiver?*

*How many prisoners with children in the facility access and the antenatal classes, immunisation, a midwife, Plunket, early childhood education, parenting support, and other services which they are eligible to use?*

Corrections does not hold this information in a manner that allows extraction or analysis. Retrieval of the information would require the manual review of individual prisoner files and health records, therefore your request is declined under section 18(f) of the OIA as the information cannot be made available without substantial collation or research.

You have asked if there is an official re-entrance plan for people leaving Mothers in Babies Units back into the mainstream population. I can advise that case managers work closely with women who leave the unit (e.g. on release from prison or when the baby leaves the unit) on an individual basis to ensure that they and their baby have the support they need.

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.

Ngā mihi nui

A handwritten signature in black ink, consisting of a series of fluid, connected strokes that form a stylized, somewhat abstract shape.

Rachel Leota  
National Commissioner