

12 March 2021

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Thank you for your email of 29 November 2020, requesting information about double bunking in prison and cell sizes. Your request has been considered under the Official Information Act 1982 (OIA).

Corrections takes its duty to safely manage individuals in custody extremely seriously. Cell sharing has been a long-standing practice in the New Zealand prison system and is common practice internationally.

Corrections has a range of policies, processes and tools in place to identify and mitigate any safety concerns. In particular, Corrections staff use a comprehensive assessment tool, the Shared Accommodation Cell Risk Assessment (SACRA), to review the compatibility of individuals before they are placed in a shared cell. The SACRA does not replace staff judgement, but is an important additional tool to help inform their decision-making and minimise any potential risk.

The SACRA tool identifies key risk factors to consider before placing a person in a shared cell. The assessment captures a range of information about the person, including their age, security classification, offending history, history of imprisonment, gang affiliation, notable physical characteristics, mental health concerns and any other special needs.

A copy of the SACRA compatibility guidelines is available on our website at www.corrections.govt.nz/data/assets/pdf_file/0016/6460/I.08.Res.01-v.04-280817.pdf.

You requested:

1. *The number of prisoners double bunked in New Zealand prisons*

As at 17 February 2021, there were 2,824 people sharing cells. This has reduced by 37 percent since 31 October 2017 when 4,494 prisoners were sharing cells.

2. *The average size of a regular cell at each New Zealand prison – please state if a toilet is included in this, or if there is additional space for a toilet.*

New Zealand has no set minimum cell size set out in legislation; however, Corrections has internal design standards and policies which govern cell sizes for new builds and double bunking as an operational practice.

Sizes vary across prisons depending on when the prison was built and the type of unit. Corrections has delivered cell sizes of above 8m² in the facilities opened most recently or currently under construction, with the standard cell sizes being between 8.62m² and 9m² including shower and toilet facilities. While showers in cells are not a requirement under legislation it is considered to have benefits for both safety and privacy.

With regards to toilets and showers in cells, the most recently built prisons (Auckland Region Women's Corrections Facility, Mt Eden Corrections Facility, Northland Region Corrections Facility, Otago Corrections Facility and Spring Hill Corrections Facility) have toilets and showers in cells, except for the cells in the Intervention and Support Units, which have separate showers for safety reasons.

Older prisons have a mixture of cells containing showers, and separate shower block facilities.

3. *The number of cells inside New Zealand prisons that do not meet international standards for living space - <https://rm.coe.int/0900001680698462>*

Information on cell sizes is held on a database that is owned by Corrections' third-party asset maintenance and facilities management provider. While Corrections has access to this information, the information is not recorded in a way that can be used to accurately and completely answer this request. Due to this, we cannot provide data on the number of cells that do not meet the standards set out in the European Committee for the Prevention of Torture (CPT). Note that these standards do not apply to New Zealand Corrections

In order to provide this information, we would be required to manually review and confirm the size of each cell before measuring it against these standards. In accordance with the OIA, we have considered whether to affix a charge or extend the time limit for responding. However, given the scale of the request we do not consider that this would be an appropriate use of our publicly funded resources. Therefore, this part of your request is declined under section 18(f) of the OIA, as the information cannot be made available without substantial collation or research.

4. *The number of applications lodged by prisoners in 2018 and 2019 to move from a double bunked cell due to safety concerns/other concerns*
5. *The number of these that were accepted/declined*

There are a variety of ways in which an individual can notify staff of a potential safety risk while in custody. When in their cell, an intercom can be used to alert staff. People in prison are encouraged to report any concerns directly to staff. They can also raise concerns via a family member or friend, or by contacting an Inspector, the Office of the Ombudsman or anonymous crime reporting line Crimestoppers.

Information on requests by prisoners to move from a shared cell is not centrally recorded in a way that is retrievable from our records. In order to provide this information, we would be required to manually review thousands of individual prisoner files. In accordance with the OIA, we have considered whether to affix a charge or extend the time limit for responding. However, given the scale of the request we do not consider that this would be an appropriate use of our publicly funded resources. Therefore, this part of your request is declined under section 18(f) of the OIA, as the information cannot be made available without substantial collation or research.

6. *The criteria for a prisoner not to be double bunked – how is this assigned/unassigned.*

Further information on shared cell accommodation assessments and guidelines are publicly available on our website via the below links:

- www.corrections.govt.nz/resources/policy_and_legislation/Prison-Operations-Manual/Induction/I.08-Shared-Accommodation-Cell-Risk-Assessment
- www.corrections.govt.nz/data/assets/pdf_file/0016/6460/I.08.Res.01-v.04-280817.pdf.

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



Topia Rameka
National Commissioner