

13 May 2022

C149481

S 9(2)(a)

Tēnā koe S 9(2)(a)

Thank you for your email of 19 March 2022 to the Department of Corrections – Ara Poutama Aotearoa, requesting information about medication prescribed in prison. Your request has been considered under the Official Information Act 1982 (OIA).

Our research shows people in prison have higher rates of complex personality traits, and mental health and substance use disorders than the general population. It is estimated that 62 percent of those in prison have met the diagnostic criteria for either a mental health or substance abuse disorder within the last 12 months, and 91 percent will meet these diagnostic criteria at some time over the course of their lives. Our research also suggests that these psychological disorders can go undetected and untreated prior to prison.

In addition, it is estimated that approximately 50 percent of people in prison suffer from a physical health condition requiring medication. Commonly reported or diagnosed chronic conditions include asthma and type 2 diabetes.

All people in prison have supervised access to medication and Health Services staff when required. Corrections employs approximately 250 nurses to provide primary-level services across our 17 Corrections-managed prisons. Corrections Health Services also contract in pharmacy services, doctors, dentists, and other primary health clinicians. We partner and collaborate with District Health Boards and health service providers to deliver services in prison. People in prison are referred to specialist and hospital services in the community when required.

You requested:

*Can you please provide me with a list of the top 20 medicines prescribed to people under Corrections care over the last two years and the total quantities that they have been prescribed in that time.*

Appendix One provides the 20 medications most frequently prescribed to people in prison, and the total number of prescriptions for each medication, from 1 April 2020 until 31 March 2022. Note this data includes Auckland South Corrections Facility, which is managed by Serco, not Corrections.

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 trust the information provided is of assistance. I encourage you to raise any concerns about this response 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

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to be 'JR' or similar initials, written in a cursive style.

Juanita Ryan  
Deputy Chief Executive, Health