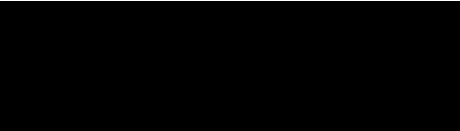



5 April 2023

C166217



Tēnā koe 

Thank you for your Official Information Act 1982 (OIA) request of 8 March 2023 to the Department of Corrections – Ara Poutama Aotearoa, requesting information about community notifications.

Public safety is our top priority. Approximately 15,000 people are required to be released from prison each year and we are committed to doing everything we can to ensure each person is safely reintegrated into the community and has safe, suitable accommodation.

We acknowledge that there is a high level of public interest in understanding how Corrections makes community notification decisions. We trust our final response to your previous request (C164632), sent to you on 17 March 2023, provides clarity on our processes for these decisions, and the review of our notifications policy. Further information on how community notification decisions are made is included as part of this response.

You have requested:

*How many prisoners convicted of sexual offending (rape or sexual assault, including indecent acts or assaults against children) have been released into the community where members of the public living in the vicinity were not informed.*

*The period I am requesting this information is from January 1 2022 until today's date, March 8 2023.*

*Please provide a breakdown specifying the region the person was released into, and the charge they'd faced.*

*How many prisoners convicted of murder have been released into the community where members of the public living in the vicinity were not informed.*

*The period I am requesting this information is from January 1 2022 until today's date, March 8 2023.*

As you will be aware from our response on 17 March 2023, Corrections' current policy is largely focused on community notification for child sex offenders. It does also provide for

the notification of people subject to Extended Supervision Orders or other offenders in certain circumstances.

As we noted when refusing your initial request on 3 March 2023, providing statistics on offences where a community notification has or has not been carried out would require a manual review of the file of each person who meets the criteria in your request.

Corrections does not decide when someone is released into the community – this is determined by the Courts and New Zealand Parole Board. Between 1 January 2022 and 28 February 2023, Corrections was required to release 645 people who had been convicted of murder or sexual offending. Manually reviewing each of these files to determine whether a notification was considered, the outcome of that consideration, and the type of notification that was carried out would substantially impact the operations of the business group which holds this data within Corrections.

In accordance with section 18A of the OIA, we have considered whether charging you or inviting you to refine your request would allow us to meet your request. We do not believe doing this work, even with a charge fixed, would be a good use of our publicly funded resources due to the time it would take away from the work of the relevant business unit. We also do not believe that consulting with you to further refine your request would allow us to meet your request, as you have already submitted a more specific request which will still require us to undertake substantial collation.

Therefore, your request is refused under section 18(f) of the OIA, as meeting your request would require us to undertake substantial collation or research.

*3. What is the threshold for advising the members of a community about the release of a convicted sex offender or murderer.*

*Please provide copies of any advice or briefings provided to Corrections staff which relate to this subject.*

Corrections' current policy and guidance for staff when considering community notifications is contained in the document "Notifying Specified Individuals and groups in the Community about Child Sex Offenders". Please find this document attached. Some information has been redacted as it is administrative information outside the scope of your request.

As mentioned in our 17 March response, we have taken on board recent public concerns about how we notify local communities when people are released from prison, and commissioned an independent review into our notification policy to ensure it is clear, transparent, fit for purpose and contributes to public safety.

Please be advised that should you have any concerns regarding this response you have the right to ask the Ombudsman to investigate our decision to extend the timeframe. Contact details are: Office of the Ombudsman, PO Box 10152, Wellington 6143.

Ngā mihi



Leigh Marsh  
National Commissioner