

16 August 2021

C136983

S 9(2)(a)

Tēnā koe S 9(2)(a)

Thank you for your email of 4 June 2021, requesting information relating to prisoner incentives, employment and income schemes. Your request has been considered under the Official Information Act 1982 (OIA). Thank you for your patience, I apologise for the delay in responding to your request.

The Prisoner Incentive Allowance Framework was introduced in 2002 and is aimed to provide all people in prison with an incentive to improve their work habits, attend vocational training, and attend rehabilitative programmes as detailed in their individual offender management plans. The rates of pay have remained the same since 2002.

People in prison undertake employment, and training through this incentive scheme on a voluntary basis. Corrections pays people in prison a small allowance through this framework to encourage them to take part in activities that we know will help with their rehabilitation and reintegration. This allowance is not a wage or a salary.

The Prisoner Incentive Allowance Framework provides an allowance for people in prison ranging from \$0.00 to \$0.60 per hour across six classes of payment as shown in the table below:

Current Prisoner Incentive Allowance Framework		
Class	Description	Allowance rate per hour
Class Zero	Refusal to participate, dismissed from work or removed from programmes	\$0.00
Class One	Sick or unemployed remand, or sentenced	\$2.70 per week, or \$0.09 per hour
Class Two	Initial employment/ programmes rate	\$0.20 per hour
Class Three	Average - Employment/programmes rate, for improved behaviour and skill	\$0.30 per hour
Class Four	Senior - Top rate for unit employment, work and programmes	\$0.40 per hour
Class Five	Advanced - Available to people employed in specified industries	\$0.60 per hour
Class Six	Programme/study allowance	\$0.20 to \$0.40 per hour, or employment rate if employed

The decision to advance a person's incentive level is made by their work supervisor. If the person is not in employment, but is in a programme or training, the relevant supervisor will complete the process. People in prison will commence on the initial allowance level, Class two. They can progress to different allowance classes when the results of Formative Assessment forms permit an increase. The incentive allowance payment is an automatic entitlement, provided assessment requirements are met and timesheets indicate that work or attendance at programmes has occurred.

Individuals must remain on Class two for a minimum period of two weeks (10 working days) prior to being assessed for a higher allowance, to allow for a considered judgement to be made on progress. People who move from one prison site start work at the new prison on the Class two rate.

Money earned through the incentives scheme can be used to purchase canteen items, TV rental and hobby materials. The cost of items has fluctuated over the years but has not increased significantly. This is due to more efficient purchasing procedures, which allows people in prison to purchase affordable items. The cost of phone cards has also remained static since 2011. These prices are set nationally and remain consistent across all of Corrections' sites.

Employment and industry training, including our Release to Work (RtW) programme, are hugely beneficial avenues for people under Corrections' management to gain real work experience and employment skills, making it easier for them to find work on release. Having a job means someone is able to provide for themselves and their family, connect with pro-social support and it gives them a sense of pride.

The RtW programme allows minimum security prisoners, who are assessed as suitable, to engage in paid employment in the community where they can gain experience, employment skills and job stability to support them into work and to live crime free on release. People employed on RtW are paid at a full market rate determined by their employer, and have previously taken part in unit and prison-based activities and education to ensure they are well-prepared for community-based employment and that the public are safe.

In addition to the training and employment opportunities in prison, Corrections operates a recruitment service where specialised recruitment consultants help place people under Corrections' management into jobs in preparation for their release from prison, or while they are serving a community sentence.

You requested:

- 1. Has the Department of Corrections implemented any changes to the prisoner incentives/employment/income scheme since 01 Jan 2021?*
- 2. Please provide me with all policy documents, briefings, memos, regulatory amendments and other documents, which detail these changes since 01 Jan 2021 (if any such changes have occurred).*

No policy changes have been made to the Prisoner Incentive Framework since 1 January 2021. As such the second part of this request is declined under section 18(e) of the OIA, as the documents you have requested do not exist.

Minor changes were made to the Release to Work section of the Prisoner Operations Manual on 26 July 2021. A copy of the changes is attached as Appendix One. Some information is excluded as outside of scope of your request.

- 3. Please provide me with the most up to date policy documents about the prisoner incentive/employment/income scheme.*

Please note: I have used the descriptor "incentive/employment/income", as this descriptor has varied over the last twenty years. By this, I am referring to the scheme by which prisoners receive some form of monetary compensation for their work. Interpret this descriptor widely to include all income prisoners receive from Corrections, Corrections contractors, and private employers.

The most up to date Prisoner Incentive Allowance policy documents are attached in Appendix Two. This information is available to staff on Corrections' intranet. Some information is excluded as it is outside of scope of your request.

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. 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



Rachel Leota
National Commissioner