

27 January 2023

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Tēnā koe [REDACTED]

Thank you for your email of 9 December 2022 to the Department of Corrections – Ara Poutama Aotearoa, requesting information about COVID-19 in prisons. Your request has been considered under the Official Information Act 1982 (OIA).

We have a duty of care to our staff and people in prison, and everything we have put in place to manage the threat of COVID-19 has been based on prioritising their safety and wellbeing. Since March 2020, we have put in place extensive plans to manage the risk presented by COVID-19, and we have continuously refined these plans in response to changing Alert Level settings and the introduction of the COVID-19 Protection Framework (traffic light system).

Our frontline staff have worked incredibly hard in some very challenging circumstances to keep people safe, and we could not be prouder of the way that they have responded to the unprecedented challenge that the pandemic has presented. Because of the measures we put in place and the hard work of our staff, we were able to keep COVID-19 out of the mainstream prison population until mid-February last year, after the highly transmissible Omicron variant started circulating in the community.

You requested:

*I would like to know the exact rate of recorded COVID-19 cases in prisons within the last 6 months.*

We have interpreted this question as a request for the number of total individuals in prison who have tested positive for COVID-19 in a six-month period. These numbers do not include staff.

From 9 June 2022 to 9 December 2022, there were 1,659 positive cases of COVID-19 in prison.

As your request was made before the holiday period and the 25 working days between 25 December 2022 and 15 January 2023 are not considered working days in the OIA, we acknowledge that some time has passed since your original request.

We considered that you may also be interested a more current figure. Accordingly, we are providing the preceding six months as at yesterday's date, 26 January 2023. We hope this additional information is helpful.


From 26 June 2022 to 26 January 2023, there were 1,476 positive cases of COVID-19 in prison.

Please note that Corrections also proactively releases the number of current COVID-19 cases on our website. This is regularly updated and available [here](#).

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



Matt Huddleston  
Manager Ministerial Services  
People and Capability