

16 November 2023

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Tēnā koe ██████████

Thank you for your email of 4 October 2023 to the Department of Corrections – Ara Poutama Aotearoa, requesting information about people placed in Auckland’s city centre for the financial year ending 30 June 2023. Your request has been considered under the Official Information Act 1982 (OIA).

Public safety is our top priority. Corrections manages people at the direction of the courts and the New Zealand Parole Board and does not determine who is in prison and who is in the community.

In most cases when a person is released from prison, they can decide where to live. The majority of people released from prison prefer to return to the community they were in prior to being arrested in order to reconnect with family, employment and other supports. While in custody, Corrections works with each person to develop a release plan that addresses their risks and supports their rehabilitation and reintegration needs. These release plans are tailored to the person’s specific risks, needs and circumstances. For those people who are subject to Corrections’ oversight on release, they need to propose a release address which is assessed by Corrections staff for its suitability and approved or declined depending on the person’s specific risks.

Providing people who have offended with stable accommodation is critical to successfully reintegrating them into society and helping them to remain crime-free. The reality is that without accommodation, people would be homeless, which would present an unacceptable safety risk to communities.

You requested:

- *How many people did the Department of Corrections place in Auckland’s city centre in the year ending June 2023? Please include placements made by providers you contract this service to.*
- *Please provide the number of placements that were: emergency, transitional, permanent.*

In the 2022/2023 financial year, Corrections approved 27 people to reside in Corrections contracted supported accommodation, and 10 people to reside in Corrections contracted emergency accommodation provided by our contracted provider Te Pa within Auckland's city centre. Corrections does not use other contracted accommodation providers within the city centre.

Please note that Corrections does not provide permanent accommodation for people in the community.

- *What was the average length of stay?*

The average length of stay for a person in Corrections contracted supported accommodation within Auckland's city centre in the 2022/2023 financial year was 81.4 days. The average length of stay for a person in Corrections contracted emergency accommodation was 10.3 days.

- *How much did this cost?*

As Te Pa is Corrections' only contracted provider within the city centre, the release of this information could jeopardise their future negotiations. This part of your request is therefore refused under section 9(2)(b) of the OIA, as the information would be likely to unreasonably prejudice the commercial position of the person who supplied or who is the subject of the information.

In accordance with section 9(1) of the OIA, we have also considered countervailing public interest relating to the release of the information, including transparency, accountability, and the administration of justice. We are satisfied that in this case, public interest considerations do not outweigh the withholding reasons outlined above.

- *Which apartment blocks are used for this purpose?*

Providing the exact location of apartment blocks used specifically to house people released from prison could jeopardise the privacy of those people. This part of your request is therefore refused under section 9(2)(a) of the OIA, in order to protect the privacy of natural persons.

Releasing this information could also prejudice the work of accommodation providers to protect the public by aiding the rehabilitation of those people. As such, this part of your request is refused under section 9(2)(c) of the OIA, to avoid prejudice to measures protecting the health or safety of members of the public.

In accordance with section 9(1) of the OIA, we have also considered countervailing public interest relating to the release of the information, including transparency, accountability, and the administration of justice. We are satisfied that in this case, public interest considerations do not outweigh the withholding reasons outlined above.

- *What are the criteria for determining how many placements are made in mixed ownership apartments?*

When a person is released on conditions, there are a number of criteria Corrections considers when deciding whether to approve them to reside at an address. These are specific to a person's conditions and risk to the community. Criteria could include proximity to victims, location of support services, and the ability to ensure a clear GPS signal at all times for people on an electronically monitored sentence.

While Corrections considers a range of criteria when approving where a person may reside upon their release from prison, I am advised that there are no specific criteria for determining how many people are approved to reside in mixed-ownership apartments. This part of your request is therefore refused under section 18(g) of the OIA, as the information is not held by Corrections, and we have no grounds for believing that the information is held by another agency or more closely connected with the functions of another agency.

- *Are wrap around services provided?*

We have interpreted this part of your request to refer to services provided to people released to Auckland's city centre. Wraparound support is available to everyone released to Corrections contracted supported accommodation in the city centre.

We acknowledge that the location of people who have offended can be a concern for communities, and are always happy to meet with people to discuss any questions they may have. If you wish to speak to a spokesperson from Corrections, you are welcome to contact me at the following address: northernregionalcommissioner@corrections.govt.nz

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



Sean Mason
Northern Regional Commissioner