

28 September 2020

C125101

BAW Russell

[fyi-request-13435-8f9a733b@requests.fyi.org.nz](mailto:fyi-request-13435-8f9a733b@requests.fyi.org.nz)

Dear Mr Russell

Thank you for your email of 1 August 2020, requesting information regarding visits to prison sites by Members of Parliament (MPs) in the current parliamentary term. Your request has been considered under the Official Information Act 1982 (OIA).

You requested:

*all material on visits to prisons by MPs, including Ministers, in the current term*

Information relating to visits to prisons by MPs is not centrally recorded or located and providing this information would require individual consultation with each of our 18 prisons. Therefore, this part of your request is declined under section 18(f) of the OIA, as the information requested cannot be made available without substantial collation or research. If there is a particular visit or prison you are interested in, please advise and we can look into this for you.

However, I am able to provide a list of names and locations of visits to prisons by MPs between 1 January 2017 and 1 August 2020, which is in the attached Appendix One. As visits have been recorded by calendar year, not term of Government, the information has been provided accordingly. The list does not include visits that were postponed or cancelled, or visits to other Corrections sites or initiatives.

As stated in section 161 of the Corrections Act 2004 any MP may, whenever the member considers it appropriate, enter a prison and examine it and the condition of the prisoners, and may inform the prison manager of his or her observations.

Individual prisons generally determine the nature of the visit following consultation with the visiting MP. Visits may differ depending on what the visiting MP would like to see. Some visits include a general tour of the prison, while others may focus on a specific industry or training programme.

In recent years, there has been an expectation that details of planned visits to a prison by an MP (or any subsequent cancellations of the visit) will be notified to a staff member based at Corrections' National Office in Wellington. The information provided in Appendix One has been extracted from these centralised records and as such, only includes information that has been notified to Corrections' National Office.

As you will appreciate, COVID-19 restrictions have impacted Corrections' ability to accommodate visits this year. Therefore, there have been fewer prison visits by MPs in 2020 than previous years.

I trust the information provided is of assistance. Should you have any concerns with this response, I would encourage you to raise these 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.

Yours sincerely



Richard Waggott  
Deputy Chief Executive - People and Capability