

07 November 2022

C157572

Mohammed Khan

fyi-request-20495-45c8f7a0@requests.fyi.org.nz

Tēnā koe Mohammed

Thank you for your email of 9 September 2022 to the Department of Corrections – Ara Poutama Aotearoa, requesting information about people being released from prison into emergency housing. Your request has been considered under the Official Information Act 1982 (OIA).

Public safety is our top priority, and no person would be permitted to reside at an address if it was considered that the risk could not be safely managed and public safety upheld.

Around 15,000 people are released from prison every year and finding suitable accommodation for people who are lawfully required to be released from prison is one of our most significant challenges. The vast majority of people return home to family or make their own arrangements about where to live.

Some people require assistance with finding a place to live. Corrections provides support to people subject to community-based sentences and who have been released from prison in a range of ways, including accommodation. The level of support and accommodation placement is dependent on the level of risk and the order or sentence that the person is subject to.

Emergency accommodation is provided to people who have an immediate accommodation need and where all other accommodation options have been exhausted. A nationwide agreement is in place between the Ministry of Social Development (MSD) and Corrections which governs the placement of people into emergency accommodation.

In recent years, in response to an increasing shortage of supply options in the housing market, particularly for those with complex needs, we have increased investment in accommodation and support services from \$3.8 million in 2016 to over \$7 million per annum. In addition, Corrections received \$57.6 million in Budget 2018 to deliver housing and support services to people serving community-based sentences, on bail awaiting trial, or who have recently left prison.

You requested:

In light of the revelations of ex-prisoners being funneled to already overburdened Rotorua social housing, I am requesting information held by MSD about the areas to which released prisoners have been sent under the emergency housing agreement between MSD and Corrections.

Assuming it is available back that far, I would prefer to receive this for the past five years (to provide sufficient temporal context), and for the highest spatial resolution possible, but a spatial resolution to the local or regional council level is fine. Temporal resolution of a year would be fine, though I can summarize the data myself if it is held in a more detailed form. Electronic format as a spreadsheet/CSV is preferred, a scanned report is fine if not available.

If this data is somehow not available, I assume that you would be happy to specify that 'Corrections holds no information as to where released prisoners sent to emergency housing are settled.'

Corrections is responsible for locating and funding emergency accommodation for a small number of high-risk people. Other people released from prison are eligible for MSD's Emergency Housing Special Needs Grant.

Therefore, the information being requested is best suited for MSD to respond to as the information is held by them. MSD have advised they received the same request from you and that you can expect to hear from MSD in due course.

However, we can provide data that we hold regarding definitive placements into emergency accommodation, which is limited to those where there is a contract between Corrections and the emergency accommodation provider. Other accommodation, such as motels, is used as a last option and as a temporary measure, and is not included in the below data.

Please see the below table for the number of people managed by Corrections who have been referred to emergency accommodation over the last five financial years, broken down by the district the person was referred from.

REGION	DISTRICT	2017/ 18	2018/ 19	2019/ 20	2020/ 21	2021/ 22
Northern	Auckland	12	-	4	2	6
Northern	Manukau	10	4	7	10	7
Northern	Taitokerau	6	2	-	12	11
Northern	Waitemata	2	-	1	7	5
Central	Taupo/Rotorua/Tokoroa	-	-	-	1	1
Central	Waikato	-	6	1	7	3
Lower North	East Coast	-	2	-	1	-
Lower North	Wairarapa/Manawatu	-	-	2	-	-

Lower North	Wellington	4	5	3	4	-
Lower North	Whanganui/Taranaki	-	-	-	1	-
Southern	Canterbury	19	20	6	4	3
Southern	Otago And South/Mid Canterbury	7	9	4	8	3
Southern	Southland And Central/South Otago	-	1	2	-	1

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



Leigh Marsh
National Commissioner (acting)