

31 March 2020

C118065

Heather Rogers  
fyi-request-12074-84003c44@requests.fyi.org.nz

Dear Ms Rogers

I refer to your email of 23 January 2020 to the Ministry of Justice, requesting various information about policy guidelines and training for female Corrections Officers. On 24 January 2020, your request was transferred to the Department of Corrections under section 14 of the Official Information Act 1982 (OIA).

You requested:

- 1. Policy Guidelines applying to female officers working in Males prisons.*
- 2. Information on training provided to female officers working in Males corrections facilities specifically on handling sexual harassment and approaches from Male inmates.*

Please note that we have interpreted your requests to refer to policy guidelines and training specifically applying to, or specifically provided for, female Corrections Officers.

There are currently no policy guidelines specifically applying to, or training or learning packages specifically provided for, female Corrections Officers working in male prisons. All guidelines and training encompass both male and female Corrections Officers. Therefore, your requests are declined under section 18(e) of the OIA, as information requested does not exist.

Physical assaults, threats and harassment are unacceptable in any workplace. We are constantly working to ensure our prisons provide the safest environment possible for staff and prisoners. While Corrections considers no assault to be acceptable, we acknowledge the reality that these incidents do occur. Our staff manage some of New Zealand's most dangerous people in a complex and challenging environment.

Corrections has clear expectations in terms of a zero tolerance for violence and encourages all staff to report any incidents or abuse/threats or violence. All assaults at prison are categorised depending on their severity. These categories include assaults where no injury occurred, and non-serious assaults, such as those resulting in a bleeding nose. The third and most severe category is serious assaults, which includes sexual assaults of any form and degree where Police charges are laid.

Corrections Officers undertake extensive training delivered over multiple weeks to ensure they are in the best position to manage prisoners safely and effectively. The training provided to Corrections Officers includes Managing Our Safety in Prisons (MOSIP), which is a training package delivered over five days and is split between the first three weeks of training. The purpose of the course is to provide staff with techniques to maintain their safety in potentially volatile interactions with the people in our care. Discussions are facilitated within the group of how to keep yourself safe when working in a prison environment. Staff will learn the importance of situational awareness in being prepared for anything that happens and when it does, have the confidence to utilise disengagement tactics to remove themselves from dangerous situations.

Following their MOSIP training, Corrections Officers undertake a further three weeks of training, which involves completing a range of modules which encompass such topics as responding to incidents safely, keeping yourself safe whilst searching people, and de-escalation and disengagement techniques.

Staff also have access to an intranet site titled Safety Conversations, a learning resource offering multiple sessions that are designed to be delivered to a team to facilitate conversations around safety in the workplace. Topics on the site include: Managing Manipulative People; Intimidating Behaviour – Custodial; and, Inappropriate Staff Behaviour.

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  
Corporate Services