

05 March 2021

C129115

Mark Hanna

FYI

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Tēnā koe Mark

Thank you for your email of 27 November 2020, requesting information about the number of people in prison who have current or previous convictions for sexual offences and are double bunked. Your request has been considered under the Official Information Act 1982 (OIA). I apologise for the delay and thank you for your patience.

Corrections takes its duty of managing people in prison safely extremely seriously. Double bunking has been a long-standing practice in New Zealand and internationally, and Corrections has a range of policies, processes and tools in place to identify and mitigate concerns about safety when placing a person in a shared cell.

Corrections staff use a comprehensive assessment tool called the Shared Accommodation Cell Risk Assessment (SACRA) to review the compatibility of prisoners before they are placed in a shared cell. This tool does not replace staff judgement but helps to inform their decision-making and minimise any potential risk.

The SACRA tool identifies key risk factors to consider before placing a person in a shared cell. The assessment captures a range of information about the person, including their age, security classification, offending history, history of imprisonment, gang affiliation, notable physical characteristics, mental health concerns and any other special needs.

A copy of the SACRA compatibility guidelines is available on our website at [www.corrections.govt.nz/ data/assets/pdf file/0016/6460/I.08.Res.01-v.04-280817.pdf](http://www.corrections.govt.nz/data/assets/pdf_file/0016/6460/I.08.Res.01-v.04-280817.pdf).

While previous convictions are considered during the assessment process, there are a multitude of factors that are relevant, and a sexual conviction does not necessarily preclude a person from being double bunked. However, staff are directed to consider sexual predation when considering suitability to double bunk. An individual who poses an identifiable threat to another will not be double bunked. If a person is deemed not suitable to share a cell (with any other person), a Not to Double Bunk (NTDB) alert is placed on their electronic file.

There are a variety of ways in which a person in prison can notify staff of a potential safety risk while in custody. When in their cell, an individual can use an intercom to alert staff. Individuals are also encouraged to report any concerns directly to staff. They can also raise concerns via a family member or friend, or by contacting an Inspector, the Office of the Ombudsman or the anonymous crime reporting line Crimestoppers.

When an allegation of assault is made by a person in prison, we act immediately to ensure the victim is supported and that appropriate action is taken. The victim may be provided support by Health Services staff, a chaplain or other spiritual support person, a kaiwhakamana or other cultural support person, or senior staff. People who commit assault are held to account, such as through the misconduct system, a change in security classification or a referral to Police for prosecution. We work closely with Police to ensure they have access to information or evidence that may assist any criminal investigation.

You requested:

- The number of prisoners currently kept in double-bunked cells who*
- 1) Are serving a sentence for a conviction of a sexual offence*
 - 2) Have one or more historical convictions for a sexual offence*
 - 3) Have either current or historical convictions for a sexual offence*

A sexual offence is any offence included in division 03 of the Australia and New Zealand Standard Offence Classification 2011, accessible at:
[http://www.ausstats.abs.gov.au/ausstats/subscriber.nsf/0/5CE97E870F7A29EDCA2578A200143125/\\$File/12340_2011.pdf](http://www.ausstats.abs.gov.au/ausstats/subscriber.nsf/0/5CE97E870F7A29EDCA2578A200143125/$File/12340_2011.pdf).

The same definition of a sexual offence has been used to enable comparisons with Corrections' response to you in November 2017 (ref C88400).

As at 30 November 2020, 464 people had current or previous convictions for sexual offence(s) and were sharing a cell in a New Zealand prison.

Please find attached as Appendix One, the information requested. For context, the total prison population as at 30 November 2020 was 8,784.

When reviewing the data note that a small number of the individuals have both a conviction for a sexual offence in relation to their current sentence and a historic conviction for a sexual offence. For this reason, some people are counted more than once and the sum of these groups is greater than the total number of individuals ever convicted of a sexual offence and double bunked.

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

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'TR', followed by a horizontal line extending to the right.

Topia Rameka
Acting National Commissioner