

04 November 2016

C80903

Emmy Rakete  
fyi-request-4754-84e86b24@requests.fyi.org.nz

Dear Ms Rakete

Thank you for your email of 13 October 2016, requesting the number of transgender prisoners in double-bunked cells. Your request has been considered under the Official Information Act 1982 (OIA).

The Department currently manages approximately 9,800 prisoners at any one time, and around 20,000 prisoners over the course of a year. The practice of accommodating prisoners in double bunked cells enables the Department to manage fluctuations in the prison population. We are currently using double bunking in around 43 percent of all prison cells across the country. The Minister of Corrections has recently announced plans to further increase prison capacity. Phase one of this plan is to add a further 341 beds through the use of double bunking and converting facilities to accommodate prisoner beds.

Prisoners are carefully assessed before being double-bunked using a Shared Accommodation Cell Risk Assessment (SACRA). No prisoner who poses a detectable threat to another prisoner will be double-bunked. The SACRA process is carried out by experienced custodial staff who review the compatibility of both prisoners before making a decision on their placement. Prisoners in Maximum Security Units, At Risk Units, Segregation Units and Youth Units are not placed in double-bunked cells given the risk they pose to themselves and others. The Department allocates extra staff to units that contain double-bunked cells in order to maintain a safe staff to prisoner ratio.

*1. When was this Shared Accommodation Cell Risk Assessment – Compatibility Guidelines introduced?*

SACRA was introduced on 1 December 2010, I can advise that the Department is currently reviewing POM 1.08.10 *Transgender prisoners* policy. While this review is underway, transgender prisoners are not to be double bunked with non-transgender prisoners. Transgender prisoners may continue to be considered for placement in a shared cell with another transgender prisoner (of the same identified gender transition), subject to their consent and in accordance with SACRA policy

2. *How many transgender prisoners are in double-bunked cells with another transgender prisoner?*

There are two transgender prisoners who are double-bunked with each other.

3. *How many transgender prisoners are in double-bunked cells with a non-transgender (cisgender) prisoner?*

No transgender prisoner is double-bunked with a non-transgender prisoner.

4. *How many transgender prisoners are in double-bunked cells by themselves?*

There are two transgender prisoners in a double-bunked cell by themselves.

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

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'Jeremy Lightfoot', written over a circular stamp or watermark.

Jeremy Lightfoot  
National Commissioner