

Why does the Ombudsman monitor places of detention?

In 2007, the New Zealand Government ratified a United Nations agreement called 'the Optional Protocol to the Convention Against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment' or OPCAT for short.

This agreement is designed to help states meet their responsibilities under international law to prevent torture and cruel treatment in places of detention.

The aim of the agreement is to set up a system of regular visits to places of detention by an independent national organisation.

This organisation goes by the name of a National Preventive Mechanism, or NPM.

Contacting the Ombudsman

Free phone: 0800 802 602

www.ombudsman.parliament.nz

Email:

info@ombudsman.parliament.nz



Post:

PO Box 10152, Wellington 6143

Fax:

(04) 471 2254

Office enquiries:

8:30am to 5:00pm Monday to Friday

Wellington

Level 7, 70 The Terrace, Wellington 6011

Auckland

Level 10, 55-65 Shortland Street, Auckland 1010

Christchurch

Level 2, 138 Victoria St, Christchurch 8013

Other Ombudsman leaflets include:

Making complaints about government agencies, Making or complaining about requests for official information, "Whistle-blowing"; a guide to the Protected Disclosures Act, Making complaints about prisons and Community Corrections, Fair treatment for people with disabilities, and The Ombudsman: who we are.

Ombudsman

Fairness for all

Monitoring places of detention



Office of the Ombudsman
Tari o te Kaitiaki Mana Tangata

The Ombudsman's role

The Ombudsman is a National Preventive Mechanism for:

- prisons and court cells
- immigration detention facilities
- health and disability places of detention
- child care and protection residences
- youth justice residences.

Our role is to monitor the conditions of detention and treatment of people being detained and make recommendations for improvement.

The Ombudsman is assisted by inspectors who visit the places of detention.

We have full access to all relevant places of detention, and to any person being detained.

We're free to choose the time and places we want to visit, and the people we want to talk to.

What the Ombudsman looks at

- Treatment. For example any allegations of ill-treatment, the use of isolation, force or restraint.
- Protection measures. For example information for detainees, complaint processes, registers and record-keeping.
- Material conditions. For example facilities and living conditions.
- Activities. For example contact with family and the outside world, outdoor exercise, education and leisure activities.
- Access to health care.
- Staff. For example staffing levels, conduct and training.

Other National Preventive Mechanisms

- For people detained by the Police, contact the Independent Police Conduct Authority: 0800 503 728 email enquiries@ipca.govt.nz.
- For child care and protection, and youth justice residences, contact the Office of the Children's Commissioner: 0800 224 453 email: children@occ.org.nz.
- For defence force penal establishments, contact the Inspector of Service Penal Establishments: (04) 498 6824 email: robert.bywater-lutman@nzdf.mil.nz.
- The Central Preventive Mechanism which helps coordinate the activities of the NPMs is the Human Rights Commission: 0800 496 877 email: infoline@hrc.co.nz.