

Action plan – Waikeria Prison

Recommendations to the Department of Corrections and Prison management

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Cease accommodating prisoners in the Separates Units.	Accept	The separates units are no longer in use, with the previous functions of these units having been incorporated into the new High Security management unit and the current separates arrangements.
Ensure no prisoner experiences solitary confinement.	Accept	As noted in our 28 July 2025 letter, we are committed to ensuring that people in prison do not experience solitary confinement, except where it is operationally necessary and appropriate. We therefore accept this recommendation but note that there are exceptions to this in appropriate cases. We will provide you with a separate update on the key pieces of work we are doing to fulfil our obligations and responsibilities. This will include providing information on our separation and isolation programme of work, which was established in response to the Office of the Inspectorate's thematic report on separation and isolation and also, the work that we are doing on possible legislative amendments that relate to prisoners who are segregated.
Review the way prisoners on directed segregation or assessed as at-risk are managed at Waikeria and take action to ensure these prisoners are safe at all times and their wellbeing is monitored.	Accept	We accept this recommendation and note that the new High Security Facility includes a designated management unit and an intervention and support unit designed to provide a safe environment for people in our care and management.
Ensure the privacy of prisoners when showering or using the toilet.	Accept	We acknowledge the importance of maintaining the privacy and dignity of the people we manage. The separates units are no longer in use. Prisoners previously fitting the criteria to be housed in the separates units are now housed in the new High Security Facility, primarily within the Mangawhara Unit—the only unit with in-cell cameras. The cameras do not have pixelation however they do have white blocks to provide protect privacy. All units also include privacy features in shower and toilet areas, ensuring people cannot be observed from the doorway.
Only use CCTV monitoring where it is lawful, necessary, and proportionate on an individual basis.	Accept	The separates units are no longer in use, and its previous functions have been incorporated into the High Security Management Facility Prisoners who present with any of the following: active self-harm, thoughts of self-harm with a plan, manic presentations that could result in non-intentional self-injury or psychotic presentations that could result in non-intentional self-injury are held in the Mangawhara Unit the only unit with in-cell cameras. While these cells do not allow pixelation, they do include full white-out capability, to protect the privacy of people in our care and management. Prisoners that do not fit within the above criteria are housed in the adjacent Otaku unit. CCTV has not been installed in this unit.

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Ensure prisoners have equitable access to the full range of purposeful activity and rehabilitative opportunities offered.	Accept	Corrections is committed to ensuring that the people we manage have access to a range of purposeful activities and rehabilitative opportunities. The site has developed strong relationships with mana whenua and several Kaiwhakamana are working with multiple men at the site to support their reintegration and pathway back into the community. A range of purposeful activities are also offered by different volunteer services. Approximately ninety faith-based volunteers have been approved to come onto the site to support the men. Other volunteers attend the site to help prisoners with literacy, writing CVs, distance learning, canine therapy and meditation, yoga and ukulele classes. Every Friday afternoon, the site holds 'Right Track' meetings. A variety of people attend these meetings including custodial officers, health staff, psychologists and members of the case management team. The purpose of these meetings is to identify a combined goal to support a prisoner's pathway and behaviour. Owing to the increase in staffing levels at the site, the prison's two activities officers are now able to perform their dedicated role helping the men with their health, wellbeing and fitness. The programmes team has six programme facilitators and one programme facilitator practice supervisor. This allows for three rehabilitation programmes to be delivered at a similar/staggered time across both mainstream and segregated prisoners. Medium intensity and short rehabilitation programmes are delivered at the site, with the programmes having alternated start dates between delivery to the mainstream and segregated populations. Segregated prisoners are placed on a service list and assessed for eligibility and suitability to attend medium-intensity rehabilitation programmes, which require a low-medium, low, or minimum-security classification due to the cohort currently housed at Waikeria. The principal facilitator collaborates with case managers and the scheduler to assess current and near-future (six monthly) rehabilitation needs. Case managers check in with prisoners on their motivation to attend, and the principal facilitator follows up with those who initially decline. The site's Tirohanga whare offers a unique environment where people in our management can start their journey towards positive change and a crime-free future. Te Tirohanga aims to reduce re-offending by providing a rehabilitation pathway founded on a kaupapa Māori therapeutic environment. Te Tirohanga is a phased approach where people in our management enter the whare in groups of 10 on a quarterly basis and participate in the following phases: • Level 2 New Zealand Certificate (NZC) in Tikanga • Mauri Tū Pae (an equivalent Medium Intensity Rehabilitation Programme), and • Three-month intensive drug and alcohol treatment programme.

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		Te Tirohanga also provides education and training opportunities which are available in the whare or across the site. Prisoners who have been identified as requiring Alcohol and Other Drug (AOD) treatment initially undertake a comprehensive AOD assessment. The outcome of the assessment will determine whether they undertake a low, moderate or medium intensity programme. It is not practicable for every programme to be provided at every prison. For example, separate programmes need to be provided for people of different security classifications, and for individuals who need to be segregated. This means that people may need to transfer prisons to attend the programme that best meets their AOD treatment needs. Waikeria is the only prison with two high intensity AOD units, one for low security and the only one for high security in the prison network. In relation to accessing Special Treatment Units (STU) for violence and adult sexual offending, it is noted that these units are in mainstream units. STU's operate as a therapeutic community, providing high intensity, offence-focused rehabilitation for those deemed to be at high risk of reoffending. In addition, Waikeria provide one to one Psychological treatment for people presenting with complex issues precluding them from participating in more intense group rehabilitation. Where a voluntary segregation programme cannot be provided or facilitated at Waikeria, a transfer to another facility where the programme is available may be arranged. Inter-site transfers for rehabilitation, court appearances, and other operational requirements occur routinely across the network. We monitor statistics on the demand for services, which can prompt us to consider changing how services are delivered. The site also provides employment opportunities for men through its release to work and outside the wire programmes. These support men to gain skills and help them with their reintegration into the community. It is pleasing to note that some of the men have gone on to keep their release to work jobs after leaving prison. The site's Guided Release advisory panel considers applications from men and helps put in place supports to help them with their re-integration plans. Prisoners may also be offered internal employment, including roles in the site kitchen, laundry, cleaning, gardening, and groundskeeping. The Rata Unit and the Catering Kitchen/Distribution Centre (servicing Waikeria, Tongariro, and Spring Hill) provide additional internal work options. Remand prisoners, who are ineligible for return to work (RTW) and outside the wire (OTW), are offered internal employment and horticulture opportunities inside the wire.
Do not take a more restrictive approach to eligibility for Outside the Wire work than is required	Accept	Eligibility for Temporary Release or Temporary Removal is determined by legislation and policy. Section 62 of the Corrections Act 2004 outlines the eligibility criteria for temporary release or removal, while sections 26, 27, and 28 of the Corrections Regulations 2005 set out the eligibility

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by law, unless justified on an individual basis.		requirements for Release to Work (RTW) and Outside the Wire (OTW). The Department will review its policies with respect to OTW.
Provide appropriate bedding and clothing for all prisoners	Accept	Since the inspection, the mattresses at the site have been replaced. The site also has a sufficient supply of towels, sheets, duvet inners, covers, pillows, pillowcases and clothing to meet all size needs. A small stock is maintained within each unit, with the main stock of bedding and clothing being overseen by an administration support officer who orders new bedding and clothing as needed. Prisoners may request additional clothing and bedding from staff, and replacements are promptly issued from the storeroom.

Recommendations to Prison Management

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Ensure any use of force adheres to the principles of legality, necessity, proportionality, and is subject to comprehensive and timely review.	Accept	The site has commenced a violence & aggression review panel (VARP) on a weekly basis. This forum includes the General Manager, Deputy General Manager, Security Manager, Operational Support Manager, and Senior Adviser to the General Manager. The panel reviews all incidents and Use of Force (UOF) events from the previous week, examining documentation, data, and trends. A weekly report is generated to support this process. UOF footage is reviewed to ensure alignment with the UOF documentation. The purpose of this review is to identify good practice, address barriers, and extract lessons learned. It also provides a platform to determine if further training or support is required. Additionally, we have established a national tactical options training team, led by a Principal Corrections Officer. The team is focused on safe practice of all staff through the consistent delivery of high-quality training education and resources. The team sets common goals and uses a structured approach to reduce violence, strengthen custodial practice, and enhance tactical options. Through reflective practice, idea sharing, and strong communication, the tactical options training team builds relationships across teams and connects sites to share and grow regional best practice.
Ensure staff activate body worn cameras prior to any use of force and that footage is retained.	Accept	The site has reinforced expectations on activating body-worn cameras prior to any use of force and will continue to do so through regular briefings and reminders at staff meetings. Body-worn camera footage is automatically uploaded onto Corrections systems and compliance is monitored as part of our incident response process.
Ensure the use of force register and related paperwork is completed in full.	Accept	The site has improved its use of force oversight process following the inspection. The site has established a violence and aggression review panel. As noted above the panel meets on a weekly basis, and meetings are attended by the General Manager, Deputy General Manager, Security Manager, Operational Support Manager and Senior Adviser to the General Manager.

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		The purpose of this panel is to review documentation, data, and trends relating to all incidents and Use of Force (UOF) from the previous week. UOF footage is reviewed by the panel to ensure it aligns with the UOF review. The review process aims to identify good practice and lessons that can be learnt and shared with staff. These meetings also help inform staff training. They have led to general improvements in the quality of UOF reviews, which are now being completed within 14 days of the Receiving Officer (Custodial Manager) receiving the event notification. Safer Custody meetings are held monthly. These meetings provide a further opportunity to consider UOF incidents and for insights to be identified and shared with staff. Pae Ora will be present at these moving forward. In addition to the above changes, the site has made improvements to its electronic use of force register. All use of force reviews from 2022 to the present day have been transferred to the electronic register, with any new use of force reviews being added as and when they take place. This change was specifically designed to improve the quality of recording use of forces that occur on site. Once the hard copy UOF review is completed, it is scanned and electronically saved into the same folder for consistency and record integrity. Oversight of the register and associated UOF documentation is maintained by the Operational Support Manager.
Ensure all safety and security measures are implemented consistently and proportionately.	Accept	Safety and security measures are implemented through appropriate staff training, clear communication, and ongoing reinforcement. This includes: - training sessions for staff informed by best-practice security procedures, including rubdowns, searches, and facility checks. - rubdown searches in the unit sallyport for prisoners returning from OTW and RTW activities. - increased deployment of site emergency response team (SERT) and detector dog teams, including during as whānau days and graduations. With the SERT and intelligence teams are now located in the same building, stronger working relationships have been established, enhancing the speed and effectiveness of information-sharing and responsive action.
Implement comprehensive induction processes across all units and ensure prisoners retain access to the information provided during induction.	Accept	All new arrivals are inducted into their unit, which includes information about the prison rules. These rules are consistent across all units, and there are only nine prison rules at Waikeria Prison. We have taken on board your feedback regarding the visibility of these rules and have ensured that all units now display the prison rules on notice boards and behind cell doors for easy access by all prisoners. Furthermore, staff are always available to provide clarification on these rules, and prisoners can request this at any time during the day when they are unlocked.

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Ensure all induction information provided to prisoners is up to date.	Accept	Staff delivering unit inductions will provide relevant and up-to-date information, followed by an induction booklet to ensure clarity and understanding. All induction booklets are maintained by unit staff and will be regularly updated as new information becomes available. This process ensures that prisoners receive accurate and current guidance during induction, supporting clarity and compliance with operational requirements.
Ensure that all prisoner information kiosks are in working order.	Accept	All kiosks across the site are operational. Unit staff will continue to monitor kiosk functionality and promptly escalate any issues requiring repair to ensure consistent access for prisoners.
Ensure prisoners have the ability to make complaints independent of staff.	Accept	Hard copies of all required forms, including PC.01 forms and health complaint forms, are available in every unit and are routinely replenished to ensure continued accessibility for prisoners. In addition, all prisoners have access to kiosks where they can submit online complaints, including IR07s, providing different pathways to raise concerns or request support.
Provide prisoners with dedicated, comprehensive and timely case management.	Accept	We are committed to ensuring that all prisoners are provided with dedicated and timely case management. Since the submission of our provisional response, there have been several resignations. Recruitment is ongoing to fill current vacancies. In addition, work is underway at a national level to improve case management caseloads and workflows, strengthening consistency and efficiency across all sites.
Provide enough working phones in each unit to ensure equitable access to the phones for all prisoners.	Accept	Corrections acknowledges the importance of people we manage being able to access phones to speak whānau, friends and support people. With the exception of Te Ao Marama, each unit has two phones in the compound and one telephone in the annex. Te Ao Marama does not have an annex and accordingly does not have a third telephone. Currently, all site phones are functioning and the introduction of the 30 minute per day per prisoner personal telephone allowance has improved access to the telephones. This daily limit can be extended to ensure that there is flexibility built into the system. For those on RTW, arrangements are made on a case-by-case basis with the unit Principal Corrections Officer (PCO) to enable these prisoners to use the phones. These prisoners may have access to the telephones in the morning or following their return to the prison in the afternoon/early evening.
Provide private spaces for prisoners to have conversations with legal representatives and other statutory visitors.	Accept	Prisoners are provided with private spaces to meet with legal representatives and other statutory visitors outside of the unit compound, in the PCO office or visits room within the older site. With the addition of the new facility, the site has eight AVL suites, two interview rooms in every wing and four rooms in each of the two visits halls that have data points to enable the facilitation of teams calls.

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		For completeness, we note that we have identified some noise transfer issues in the AVL booths and we are urgently working to resolve these issues.
Confirm all staff are aware of, and provide, translation and interpretation services to all prisoners who require them.	Accept	The site understands the importance of translation and interpretation services being made available to prisoners. This is something that was discussed with the inspectors at the time of the inspection. It was noted that site staff are reminded of the significance, and availability, of translation and interpretation services available to prisoners. Going forward, follow-up reminders will be included in the daily unit briefing sheets as a way of further highlighting the importance of these services. We acknowledge that the inspection found our health staff could have better used interpretation services during health appointments. The use of interpreters is covered in orientation handbooks and information for all new staff during the orientation process as an assurance and documented as per cornerstone accreditation standards. The Health Centre Manager (HCM) will ensure all staff are reminded at the next monthly health meeting. In addition to the above, new arrivals into prison are provided with information on access to health care during their induction. This includes information on the types of services provided at the health centre, how to request a health appointment, and how to access an interpreter if one is needed. The information is available in a variety of language formats.
Ensure cells are well-ventilated and kept at an appropriate temperature.	Accept	Staff at the site actively manage heat-related risks in accordance with the established Heat Management Plan (HMP) and consider the HMP provides an appropriate response. Measures outlined in the HMP are implemented and monitored to support the wellbeing of both prisoners and staff, and the plan is reviewed annually and activated as required during seasonal or extreme temperature conditions.
Develop contingency plans to move prisoners out of cells when temperatures impact on prisoner's health and welfare.	Accept	Corrections is committed to managing heat-related risks, and staff will continue to apply all practical controls in line with the Heat Management Plan (HMP). As part of the HMP, Waikeria assesses airflow within units and adjusts where possible. Additional fans and cooling towels are provided when required. Prisoners also have access to outdoor yards, which offer shaded areas and natural airflow to help reduce heat discomfort.