

Maximising safety and wellbeing during COVID-19: our experience

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Today...

- 1. *Ara Poutama – Department of Corrections***
- 2. Correctional facilities, infectious diseases and COVID-19**
- 3. What guided our approach**
- 4. How we responded**
- 5. How we've done so far (according to others)**
- 6. (Brief) reflections**



DEPARTMENT OF
CORRECTIONS
ARA POUTAMA AOTEAROA

Our Purpose: *The wellness and wellbeing of people*



10,000 staff



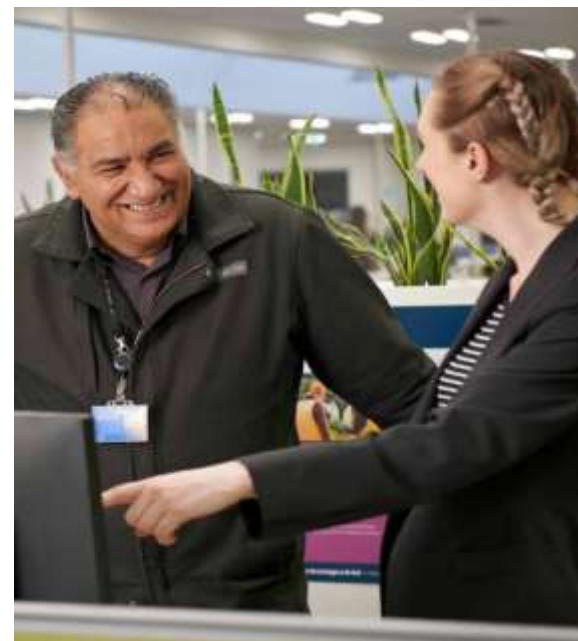
18 prisons



approx. 140 Community
Corrections sites, 5
national/regional offices



10,000 prisoners and
30,000 community-
based offenders

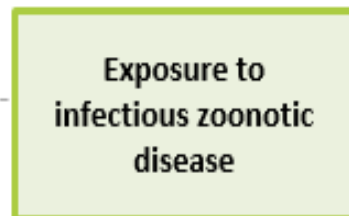
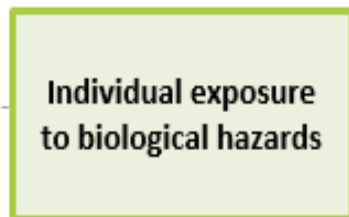
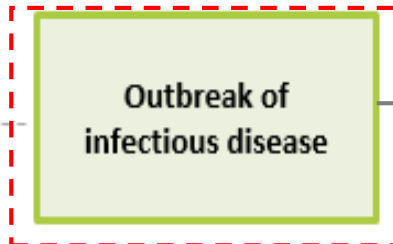


Correctional facilities and infectious diseases



Critical Risk

Critical Risk Scenario



1. High volume of movements in and out of sites / across the network each day
2. Lots of people in very close proximity
3. Limited ability to isolate or distance
4. Prevalence of underlying medical conditions

Correctional facilities and COVID

Complex challenge, competing demands

- Keep people safe,
- Minimise uncertainty, *and*
- Avoid unintended consequences

Prisons 'could see 800 deaths' from coronavirus without protective measures

Former justice secretary David Gauke calls for early releases and suspension of short sentences to limit spread of infection

- [Coronavirus - latest updates](#)
- [See all our coronavirus coverage](#)



▲ HMP Berwyn in Wales, where about 75 prison officers are reported to be either off work sick or self-isolating. Photograph: Dan Kitwood/Getty Images



23 dead in prison riot in Colombia prompted by coronavirus fears, Ministry of Justice says



Coronavirus: Six inmates killed during prison riots across Italy over measures to tackle virus



Nine Inmates Killed in Peru Prison Riot



COVID-19
What Covid-19 could do in prisons
Physical distancing in crowded prisons is next to impossible. If Covid-19 makes it into prisons, almost 10,000 people could be at risk.

What guided our decision making

1. Strategic Priorities

- Ensure the **safety and wellbeing of people**
- Focus on the **needs of those in our care** and their **whanau**
- Deliver key **operational activities, proportionate to risk**

2. Principles

- *'Go hard, go early'*
- Design from a *'work-as-done'* perspective
- Be *'chronically uneasy'* about risk and controls

3. General Approach

- Address as a **work health and safety issue**:
 - Duty of care and hierarchy of controls
 - Overlapping duties and shared responsibilities
 - Officers and due diligence
- **Embrace technology** and **new ways of working**
- **Break down the silos** and **push past the barriers**



How we responded: safety and wellbeing of people

Health Screening



Thermal Imaging Scanners



Personal Protective Equipment



Automatic 14-Day Isolation and Quarantine

Information for People in Quarantine Units

We're doing all we can to stop the spread of COVID-19 from the community into prisons.
Your health, and the wellbeing of everyone here, is our top priority.

You will be staying in a quarantine unit for 14 days. The screening process has indicated you are at risk of COVID-19.

- Health staff will see you every day to check your welfare.
- Between days 1-3 you will be asked to take a COVID-19 test.
- Around day 12 you will be asked to take a further COVID-19 test.
- You will always be told your results. Tests can take up to five days to process.
- You can refuse to be tested*.

We'll make sure you have:

- access to fresh air
- use of the telephone
- contact your family/whānau
- a clean cell.

Before you can leave your cell, staff will give you a face mask and gloves to wear.

Good hygiene

COVID-19 is spread by droplets when we cough, sneeze or talk. We'll encourage you to follow good hygiene practices to keep each other safe. Posters around the unit will show you more:

- Cough or sneeze into your elbow
- Avoid sharing food or cups with others
- Flush your tissues down the toilet
- Clean and disinfect your cell daily
- Wash your hands frequently with soap and water
- Keep 1m away from others wherever possible.

You can talk directly to custodial staff via the intercom at any time.

*Refusing a COVID-19 test

- If you refuse to be tested on days 1-3, or day 12, your stay in quarantine will continue for a further 14 days.
- The COVID-19 test helps to identify cases early and ensures you can be well supported if the test is positive.

Staff Wellbeing Support



Redesign Operational Practices

LEVEL	CRITICAL	SEVERE	MODERATE	MINOR
LEVEL 1 - ESSENTIAL FUNCTIONS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All critical functions are operational and staffed. • All critical functions are operational and staffed. • All critical functions are operational and staffed. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Some critical functions are operational and staffed. • Some critical functions are operational and staffed. • Some critical functions are operational and staffed. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Some critical functions are operational and staffed. • Some critical functions are operational and staffed. • Some critical functions are operational and staffed. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Some critical functions are operational and staffed. • Some critical functions are operational and staffed. • Some critical functions are operational and staffed.
LEVEL 2 - ELIMINATE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All critical functions are operational and staffed. • All critical functions are operational and staffed. • All critical functions are operational and staffed. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Some critical functions are operational and staffed. • Some critical functions are operational and staffed. • Some critical functions are operational and staffed. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Some critical functions are operational and staffed. • Some critical functions are operational and staffed. • Some critical functions are operational and staffed. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Some critical functions are operational and staffed. • Some critical functions are operational and staffed. • Some critical functions are operational and staffed.
LEVEL 3 - REDUCE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All critical functions are operational and staffed. • All critical functions are operational and staffed. • All critical functions are operational and staffed. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Some critical functions are operational and staffed. • Some critical functions are operational and staffed. • Some critical functions are operational and staffed. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Some critical functions are operational and staffed. • Some critical functions are operational and staffed. • Some critical functions are operational and staffed. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Some critical functions are operational and staffed. • Some critical functions are operational and staffed. • Some critical functions are operational and staffed.
LEVEL 4 - PREPARE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All critical functions are operational and staffed. • All critical functions are operational and staffed. • All critical functions are operational and staffed. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Some critical functions are operational and staffed. • Some critical functions are operational and staffed. • Some critical functions are operational and staffed. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Some critical functions are operational and staffed. • Some critical functions are operational and staffed. • Some critical functions are operational and staffed. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Some critical functions are operational and staffed. • Some critical functions are operational and staffed. • Some critical functions are operational and staffed.

How we responded: those in our care and whanau

Nelson Community Work staff and Police deliver 2000 care parcels



Continuation of primary healthcare services



Engagement and activity



Christchurch Women's and Rimutaka Prison horticulture programmes growing produce for food banks




Technology as an enabler



How we've done so far (according to others)



An Examination of COVID-19 Outbreaks in Prisons and Jails in Oceania

Sabrina S. Rapisarda  & James M. Byrne

Published online: 04 Nov 2020

COVID-19 outbreaks in New Zealand

Relative to other countries in the world, New Zealand has demonstrated great success in preventing and containing COVID-19 in its prisons and the broader community. Not only has the government successfully achieved more than 100 days without a reported case of the virus, there has also yet to be a single reported case among inmates within correctional facilities and only two positive cases among prison staff (Block, 2020; Godin, 2020). The government has approached its prison population with the same tenacity as it has the community. Mitigation strategies were executed swiftly and effectively, which can be largely attributed to public buy-in and support of measures in place, such as a nationwide lockdown (Shepherd, 2020). Among its prison population, various mitigation strategies have been implemented, including widespread dissemination of information regarding COVID-19 and the importance of taking health and safety precautions among inmates and staff (Adair, 2020), the use of personal protective equipment and the implementation of health screenings for prison staff (Boshier, 2020), a 14-day isolation period for newly admitted inmates (RNZ, 2020), and suspension of visitation in the initial stages of the pandemic (RNZ, 2020).

How we've done so far (according to others)

OFFICE OF THE INSPECTORATE

Te Tari Tirohia

Generally, during their visits, my inspectors noted positive interactions between prisoners and staff. There is a good shared understanding of the effects of COVID-19 and the importance of taking health and safety precautions. We found sites have good hygiene measures in place and staff are wearing PPE appropriately. Prisoners have been kept well informed. Prisoners have understandably spent more time in their cells, but this is starting to be eased under Alert Level 2.

Ombudsman

Fairness for all

My key observation was that prisons responded to the COVID-19 pandemic in a well-resourced, balanced, and efficient manner, despite the complex challenges of managing prisoners at this time. My Inspectors observed generally positive relationships between the staff and prisoners, and noted enhanced health and safety processes were in place and effectively communicated to staff and prisoners.

I found that prisons had taken measures to support prisoners in maintaining contact with the outside world, and provided them with relevant and up-to-date information about COVID-19. Prisoners spoke of feeling supported, safe, and well-informed.

Reflections

What we did well

- Wellbeing at the heart of our approach
- Incident response, procurement and 'call to arms'

Where we can do better

- Monitoring organisational 'drift' and preparedness for low likelihood, high consequence events
- '*Goldilocks*' communication to the frontline

What we're now doing differently

- Technology to meet the wellbeing and outcomes needs of those in our care
- Remote and different ways of working
- Critical control assurance to monitor '*drift*' and preparedness



Thank You