

29 January 2024

Section 9(2)(a)

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Ref: OIA 109128

Tēnā koe Section 9(2)(a)

### Official Information Act request: Coward punch assaults

Thank you for your request under the Official Information Act 1982 (the Act) on 18 January 2024 to the Ministry of Justice (the Ministry). Specifically, you requested:

*... information on the number, nature and outcome of charges relating to “single hit”, “king-hit” or “coward’s punch” type assaults that lead to the death of the victim either immediately or later in hospital as a result of their injuries; hereafter referred to as a “Coward punch assault”.*

- *Please detail the charges, date and names (please state if the person has name suppression) of people who have been charged in relation to a Coward punch assault resulting in death over the last ten years, please include the date and location of each incident relating to this charge.*
- *Please detail the convictions resulting from these charges and the sentences that were handed down in relation to these convictions.*

The Ministry of Justice is unable to identify charges relating to “single hit”, “king-hit” or “coward’s punch” type assaults that lead to the death” as this level of information is not recorded in the Case Management System (CMS) used by the courts. This is because “single hit”, “king-hit” or “coward’s punch” assaults are not specific offence types.

This level of information could only be identified by searching the court record for each individual charge of assault. Likewise, the detail around the circumstances of individual assaults, including dates, locations, sentences and names of defendants, is information that also forms part of the court record which can only be accessed with judicial permission.

As the information you have sought forms part of the court record and the courts are not subject to the Act under section 2(6)(a), I must therefore refuse your request under section 18(g) on the grounds that the information requested is not held by the Ministry or any other agency subject to the Act.

If you would like to request court information about specific cases, you need to apply to court under the appropriate court rules. Your request will be considered by a judge or registrar and there may be a charge. The form to make a request is available at:  
[districtcourts.govt.nz/assets/Uploads/Media-Information/2022/MOJ0148.2-Sept-2021-Application-for-access-to-court-docs-updated-v0.6.pdf](https://districtcourts.govt.nz/assets/Uploads/Media-Information/2022/MOJ0148.2-Sept-2021-Application-for-access-to-court-docs-updated-v0.6.pdf)

The contact details for all courts are available at: [justice.govt.nz/contact-us/find-us/](https://justice.govt.nz/contact-us/find-us/)

If you require any further information, please contact Media & Social Media Manager Joe Locke at [media@justice.govt.nz](mailto:media@justice.govt.nz)

Please note that this response, with your personal details removed, may be published on the Ministry website at: [justice.govt.nz/about/official-information-act-requests/oia-responses](https://justice.govt.nz/about/official-information-act-requests/oia-responses)

You have the right under section 28 of the Act to seek an investigation and review by the Ombudsman of this response. Information about how to make a complaint is available at [ombudsman.parliament.nz](https://ombudsman.parliament.nz) or call 0800 802 602.

Nāku noa, nā



Jacquelyn Shannon

**Group Manager, Courts & Tribunals, Regional Service Delivery**