

28 January 2026

TO THE LEGAL PROFESSION

Tēnā koutou,

AUTHORISED PROVIDER PRISON ENTRY (APPE)

The Authorised Provider Prison Entry System (APPE) is an electronic system that records people entering and exiting prisons. APPE will improve sign in/out processes and replace paper-based systems at the main entry gate and exit.

In addition to staff, APPE is used for external providers, legal advisers, contractors, and volunteers. For the purposes of this document, they will be referred to as 'providers' in this information. APPE allows the Department of Corrections to report who has been on site at any given time quickly and easily for emergency management purposes and helps understand the volume of different categories of providers coming and going across the network. This helps with planning and being pro-active in responding to any issues impacting providers.

Once a provider has been approved in the APPE system, a photo ID card is issued to them. When this photo ID card is scanned, the system displays a screen with the person's information. This allows gatehouse staff to match the photo on the card with that held within APPE and confirm the person is approved to enter the prison. The ID card must also be scanned upon exiting the prison.

Why do I need an APPE profile and/or card?

Historically, APPE profiles and cards were only required for individuals physically entering or exiting prisons. To improve access to defendants in custody, we now use the APPE system for remote/digital access as well. This change will streamline communication between legal professionals and clients in custody, reducing the need for repeated contact information submissions and vetting processes (noting that is the pending step following the APPE roll-out).

- If you plan to visit a prison in person: You will need both an APPE digital profile and a physical APPE card.
- If you only plan to communicate remotely (phone, email, AVL): You will need an APPE digital profile only.

What information is required to create an APPE profile?

We only collect information necessary to maintain prison security and complete our vetting process. For lawyers, this includes verifying your NZLS Practising Certificate. The details requested are basic professional contact information, typically already available on the NZLS register or online:

- First Name
- Last Name
- Work Email Address
- Work Phone Number

What about legal professionals who do not hold practising certificates, such as law clerks?

We have options for individuals directly assisting a lawyer, such as law clerks, who may need to contact a client on the lawyer's behalf.

Do I need a Ministry of Justice Criminal Record Check?

By default, all prison visitors must undergo a Ministry of Justice Criminal Record Check. However:

- Lawyers with a valid practising certificate are exempt from this requirement.
- Other legal professionals assisting a lawyer are assessed on a case-by-case basis.

How do I apply for an APPE profile?

To streamline and ensure consistency with the application process, a Microsoft Form has been created to obtain the relevant information to create your APPE profile. You simply need to fill out the form which also includes

basic induction information about visiting a prison. You must also supply a relevant photo attachment with the application (i.e. selfie or head shot).

For those that complete the application that wish to visit a prison, there will be an APPE card created and issued to you. It is also understood that some legal advisers may not visit a prison however we will still create an APPE digital profile for them only.

What are the next steps after completing an application?

Once your profile has been created, the physical APPE card will be couriered to the prison you have selected in the form to pick up at your next visit. Prison staff will confirm your identity and issue you the card and an approval letter.

Some prisons may also require you to complete additional induction requirements before allowing you entry into their prison.

What if I need to visit multiple prisons?

You will have one APPE card for all prisons. However, the permissions are managed on a prison-by-prison basis within the system.

When does my APPE card expire?

Your APPE card is valid for one year. Prison staff will use the law registry to confirm you have a current practicing certificate and will update our system to reflect this annually. This means you do not need to re-apply for a new APPE card.

I have an APPE card, can I just turn up at a prison?

You still need to book an appointment for the preferred day and time with the prison as per usual processes. You will bring your APPE card to your organised visit.

What should I do if I forget my APPE card?

In these instances, talk to gatehouse staff who will manually sign you in and out of the APPE system upon entry and exit. You must still present a valid photo ID to confirm your identity.

What if I lose my APPE card?

Please inform prison staff who will manage this process with you.

For any other queries or questions please e-mail ADC@corrections.govt.nz