



23 May 2017

C85225

Ti Lamusse
fyi-request-5572-07f8e169@requests.fyi.org.nz

Dear Ti Lamusse

Thank you for your email of 23 April 2017, requesting information about the Department's Suicide Prevention Framework. Your request has been considered under the Official Information Act 1982 (OIA).

Your request is in response to previous information provided by the Department, related to the Suicide Prevention Strategy referenced in our Statement of Intent 2012-2015. You previously requested a copy of the Department's Suicide Prevention Strategy. As you will be aware, the Department declined that request under section 18(e) of the OIA as the document alleged to contain the information requested does not exist.

Your additional questions related to suicide prevention, and the Department's responses to these, have been included below.

- *'Was a suicide prevention strategy produced, as was indicated in the Department's Statement of Intent 2012-2015?'*

Corrections' Statements of Intent (now known as Strategic Intentions) are documents that inform Parliament and the New Zealand public of the Department's future goals and priorities and how we intend to meet these. These are subject to change as priorities evolve and unforeseen events affect our ongoing operations.

When our Statement of Intent 2012-2015 was produced, we intended to create an independent Suicide Prevention Strategy. This plan was later superseded by the Government's overarching Suicide Prevention Strategy. Once Corrections became involved in the creation of this collaborative strategy, it was no longer considered necessary to continue with our own.

In early 2013, in order to affect immediate change in how we approach suicide prevention within the Corrections environment, we created our Suicide Prevention Framework. This document applied the principles set out in the Government's strategy and empowered the Department to make actionable decisions as to how we improve suicide prevention for prisoners and community-based offenders.

- *'In your response, you state that Corrections "implemented a framework with the purpose of reducing rates of suicidal behavior by offenders". Please release any document(s) outlining this framework.'*
- *'If such a document(s) does not exist, please outline the elements of the framework.'*

Please see the Department of Corrections' Suicide Prevention Framework, attached to this response.

I trust the information provided is of assistance. Should you have any concerns with this response, I would encourage you to raise these with the Department. Alternatively you are advised of your right to also raise any concerns with the Office of the Ombudsman. Contact details are: Office of the Ombudsman, PO Box 10152, Wellington 6143.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read 'Jo Field', written in black ink.

Jo Field
Deputy Chief Executive
Service Development

Department of Corrections Suicide Prevention Framework

PURPOSE

The purpose of this framework is to reduce the rates of suicide and suicidal behaviour by offenders in prison and the community, and minimise their harmful effects on staff, other offenders and families.

In Prisons

Current approach

- suicide awareness training for custodial staff
- at risk assessments (joint decision making by custody and health)
- at risk units and cells
- improved at risk clothing and mattresses
- mental health screening tool
- packages of care for prisoners with mental health issues
- welfare checks in mainstream units
- replacement programme for air vent grilles in high risk cells
- mental health in-reach clinicians (pilot)
- confidential listening service (pilot)

Looking ahead

- joint working model for custody and health to manage at risk units
- develop a model of care for vulnerable prisoners in mainstream units to minimise the number of prisoners transferred to at risk units
- develop tools and resources that can be used by staff, prisoners and their families following a suicide or suicidal behaviour
- review training material available for mainstream and at risk unit staff regarding suicide, suicidal behaviour and mental health issues
- conduct a follow up evaluation of the at risk assessment tool

Linkages

- mental health strategy
- youth strategy
- Right Track
- induction units, booklet and DVD
- activities for remand prisoners
- brief interventions by case managers and nurses (including alcohol and drug, and motivational interviewing)

In the community

Current approach

- practice guidance for working with suicide
- mental health screening assessments
- safety screening questions at induction
- DRAOR – identification of negative mood
- policy for referral to district health boards

Looking ahead

- develop better joint working between prisons and probation to ensure information is more effectively communicated when offenders are transitioned
- develop community-based resources for probation officers working with people at risk of suicide and suicidal behaviour
- strengthen relationships with community agencies including aligning the Department's approach with the Ministry of Health's suicide prevention strategy

Linkages

- youth rehabilitation project
- offending planning
- pre-release liaison
- brief interventions by probation officers (including alcohol and drug, and motivational interviewing)

Early identification

To identify offenders at greatest risk of suicidal behaviour and create an environment where they feel safe and confident to ask for help. By identifying high-risk offenders early we can provide the support where it is needed most.

PRINCIPLES

Action taken to implement this framework will:

- be based on research or incorporate evaluation
- be targeted
- be responsive to the disproportionate risk among Māori
- provide a humane prison environment which is safe and secure
- support and strengthen staff
- reflect a coordinated effort with other agencies and the community
- acknowledge that everyone has a role in suicide prevention.

Targeted care

To provide care for offenders at greatest risk of suicidal behaviour because assessment alone is not enough to reduce suicides, we need to create an environment where offenders get the right support to help them get well.

Reducing the impact

To provide support to staff, offenders and their support people following a suicide or non-lethal attempt, to reduce the harmful effects and impacts.

Right tools for staff

To provide staff with the necessary tools to identify and support offenders at greatest risk of suicidal behaviour.

Monitor the means

To continually monitor and evaluate the means of suicide in prison. By identifying the methods prisoners use to commit suicide we can look at ways to reduce the risk.

Monitoring effectiveness

To monitor ongoing progress towards reducing suicidal behaviour by offenders to inform future initiatives and continue to reduce the rates of suicides.

WHY WE NEED A SUICIDE PREVENTION FRAMEWORK

On average five or six deaths in our prisons each year are due to apparent suicide. We have a duty of care for offenders, including those at risk of suicide and those who could be affected by suicidal behaviour. We have a responsibility to the community, including our staff, offenders' families and the wider community, to minimise the harmful effects and impacts of suicide and suicidal behaviour. We have a responsibility to provide staff with the necessary tools to carry out their duties, including working with people at risk of suicide.