



21 August 2017

C87722

Aaliyah Zionov
fyi-request-6315-d3df7762@requests.fyi.org.nz

Dear Ms Zionov

Thank you for your email of 30 July 2017, requesting information about the replacement of at risk units in prisons. Your request has been considered under the Official Information Act 1982 (OIA).

In October 2016, the Department began a project *Transforming the Management of At Risk prisoners*. The project recognised that prisoners considered to be 'at risk' have widely differing needs and contemplates a plan for the appropriate management of these prisoners.

You requested:

- *'Please provide me with the research and policy documents that outline this change.'*
- *'Please provide me with the guidelines for how the ISUs will operate.'*
- *'Please provide me with all advice to the Chief Executive about ISUs.'*

I have identified one document in scope of your request: a literature review titled *Transforming Intervention and Support for At Risk Prisoners*.

This document has informed discussion on strengthening Corrections' approach to at risk prisoners. It shows that, while there is no single model that has significantly reduced risks for at risk prisoners overseas, there is evidence of a number of elements that individually support outcomes. If implemented collectively, these may have a substantial, positive impact.

Corrections intends to publish a summary of this document in its Practice Journal, which will be available on our website in due course. Accordingly, your request for the document itself is declined under section 18(d) of the OIA, as the information requested is or will soon be publicly available.

While out of scope of your request, you may also be interested in an outline of a recent budget bid initiative, for which the Department received funding. This too is part of the project on transforming the way we manage at risk prisoners.

In Budget 2017, Corrections received \$11.6 million over the next four years to develop our new 'whole of prison' model of care for at risk prisoners. We will design and implement the model at three sites:

- Auckland Prison
- Auckland Region Women's Corrections Facility
- Christchurch Men's Prison.

The model will primarily be delivered by new multi-disciplinary teams comprising psychologists, occupational therapists, mental health clinicians, social workers and cultural workers. It will involve:

- improved screening and assessment tools.
- transforming existing at risk units into specialised intervention and support units (ISUs) including physical enhancements to soften the look and feel of the units.
- therapeutic intervention and support plans from prisoners in ISUs, including increased support to transition back into the wider prison environment.
- intervention and support plans for at risk prisoners who can be accommodated in mainstream units.

Budget 2017 funding enables us to deliver this model of care at three sites initially, we intend to design a national service that can be tested and then delivered to additional sites in the future. The new model will disrupt a pathway of escalating prisoner mental health issues, which can have significant flow on effects for the prisoners, their families/whanau, our staff, and wider society.

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



Richard Waggott
Deputy Chief Executive (Acting)
Corporate Services