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29 April 2024

s 9(2)(a)

By email: s 9(2)(a)
Ref: H2024039043

Tēnā koe s 9(2)(a)

Response to your request for official information

Thank you for your request under the Official Information Act 1982 (the Act) to the Ministry of Health – Manatū Hauora (the Ministry) on 6 May 2024. You requested:

- 1. Was information about the proposed disestablishment of the Office of Suicide Prevention included in briefings given to the Minister of Health and/or the Minister of Mental Health about potential cost savings?*
- 2. Did the Minister of Health and/or the Minister of Mental Health agree to this proposal before it was presented to Ministry of Health staff?*
 - 2a. If yes, which of the above Ministers agreed to this proposal?*
- 3. Has the rationale for disestablishing the Office of Suicide Prevention changed?*
 - 3a. If yes, what has caused the change in rationale?*

The Minister for Mental Health, Hon Matt Doocey was informed by the Ministry of a press release regarding the potential closure and job losses within the Suicide Prevention Office (SPO) team in the Ministry on Thursday 4 April 2024. Prior to this, information regarding changes to the SPO team specifically had not been provided to the Minister.

The Minister was provided high level briefs on the Ministry's change programme, but not specifically in relation to the SPO team. The Ministry has acknowledged that it was not sufficiently clear to both staff and the Minister about the proposed changes to the SPO team, and its ongoing functions and work programme, and has publicly apologised for this.

It is important to note that the proposal for the future of the SPO's functions and work programme is to change from 5.5 FTEs currently within the SPO team, to 6.5 FTEs with a focus on suicide prevention across teams within the Mental Health, Addiction and Suicide Prevention Group. This would maintain the current suicide prevention functions and work programme while being organised differently.

As of the date of this response, there has been no change in the current proposal to staff regarding the SPO team.

I trust this information fulfils your request. If you wish to discuss any aspect of your request with us, including this decision, please feel free to contact the OIA Services Team on: oiagr@health.govt.nz.

Under section 28(3) of the Act, you have the right to ask the Ombudsman to review any decisions made under this request. The Ombudsman may be contacted by email at: info@ombudsman.parliament.nz or by calling 0800 802 602.

Please note that this response, with your personal details removed, may be published on the Manatū Hauora website at: www.health.govt.nz/about-ministry/information-releases/responses-official-information-act-requests.

Nāku noa, nā

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'G Short', is positioned above the printed name and title.

Geoff Short
Director
Transformation Management Office