

To: SeneddHealth@assembly.wales

Dai Lloyd AM, Chair
Health and Social Care and Sport
Committee
National Assembly for Wales
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Cc: [REDACTED]
Director Mental Health, NHS Governance
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Government.

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Date: 8th December 2017

Annwyl / Dear Dai,

Re: Suicide Prevention

Her Majesty's Prison and Probation Service (HMPPS) in Wales is responsible for Public Sector Prisons (PSPs), the National Probation Service (NPS) in Wales and has contract management responsibilities for the privately contracted prison HMP Parc and the Wales Community Rehabilitation Company (CRC). The focus of these services is to protect the public, support the rehabilitation of offenders and reduce their risk of re-offending. HMPPS in Wales supervise approximately 16,000 offenders in custody and in the community at any one time¹. We welcome the opportunity to contribute to your inquiry into Suicide across Wales and to provide information on the contribution we are making to suicide and self-harm prevention in Wales.

HMPPS has clear policy and practice to manage and mitigate risks around suicide and self-harm. We work closely with Welsh Government officials in the development and delivery of the Talk to me 2 strategy and related delivery plans. Those we work with are often among the most vulnerable group of people at risk of suicide and self-harm. The latest Ministry of Justice Safer Custody Statistics² for England and Wales reflect that there were 77 self-inflicted deaths in prison custody in the 12 months to September 2017. Self-harm reached a record high of 41,103 incidents in the 12 months to June

¹ <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/offender-management-statistics-quarterly>

² <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/safety-in-custody-quarterly-update-to-june-2017>

2017. There were 233 self-inflicted deaths in the community during 2016/17³. It is, therefore, a critical priority for HMPPS to make sure that offenders who are at risk of suicide and/or self-harm are identified, managed and supported at the earliest opportunity.

Essential to this is the early identification of those at risk to provide them with the necessary integrated care and intervention needed; through collaborative staff awareness training and the routes to appropriate counselling or mental health support in custody and in the community. HMPPS in Wales is working closely with health boards, social services and other partners to look at how support services can be further aligned and expanded to improve provision, for example, through increasing opportunities to access counselling that gives individuals hope that can be lifesaving.

HMPPS in Wales staff are suicide and self-harm aware. Our case recording systems will alert staff to an individual's potential risks and to consider contingency plans at the earliest point of entry to our service. The Wales CRC and the NPS in Wales have jointly developed key documents in relation to suicide to support offender managers. This includes a resource pack, a guide for managing crisis situations and a risk assessment guide. These are designed to help offender managers best support individuals who present a suicide risk and to help individuals in a crisis situation. They also contain guidance on detailed risk assessment around suicide and how to record this appropriately. We work closely with external stakeholders to collectively manage a range of risks in the community. Welfare checks can be made by the police where there are safety concerns. We also report and make referrals to social services for POVAs (protection of vulnerable adults) and other safeguarding issues.

In custody, HMPPS has an integrated and evidence-based prisoner suicide prevention strategy that seeks to reduce the distress of all those in prison, staff, prisoners and visitors. Any prisoner identified as at risk of suicide or self-harm must be managed using the Assessment, Care in Custody and Teamwork (ACCT) procedures. ACCT is a prisoner-centred, multi-agency care-planning system which reduces an individual's risk. We are rolling out Suicide and Self-Harm (SASH) Prevention Training across all prisons, with the aim of having everyone who works in the prison, with HMPPS and staff, trained by April 2019. The training covers risks and triggers, conversing with vulnerable people, ACCT documents, referral processes, resilience and mental health.

Prisons also have peer support workers, such as Insiders, to support induction to the prison and the custodial journey. The Samaritans has been working in partnership with HMPPS for over 25 years to reduce suicide in prisons. Samaritans selects, trains and supports prisoners to become 'Listeners' who provide confidential, emotional support to their fellow prisoners. In 2016-17, the Listener scheme was operating in 113 prisons in England and Wales. Prisoners can also phone the Samaritans helpline at any time or write to them.

There are further projects and initiatives HMPPS in Wales are delivering that you may be interested in knowing more about. These include:

- Delivering training to staff on trauma informed approaches and adverse childhood experiences (ACEs). ACEs increase the likelihood of suicide and self-harm issues across an individual's life-course and those we manage are likely to have four or more adverse experiences in their lives⁴.

³ https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/654856/deaths-of-offenders-in-the-community-2016-17.pdf

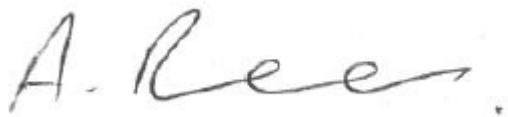
⁴ <http://www.wales.nhs.uk/sitesplus/888/page/88504>

- The #StayAlive mobile application for offenders in the community so they can access a safety plan, coping strategies and links with wider support networks such as the Samaritans.
- The Suicide Prevention Learning Tool which is a series of six short films to support learning from previous staff experience. These films will be published on the Justice Academy website.
- HMP Parc will be rolling out a revised mental health referral pathway to allow staff and offender self-referral and an integrated case management approach to those prisoners who may require enhanced case management through joint operational and health structures.
- Improving the use of and access to Mental Health Treatment Requirements to support supervision of offenders with complex mental health needs in the community.

We recognise there is always more to be done to support offenders in our care and to help them value their lives and improve their mental health and wellbeing. This is an ongoing and clear priority for HMPPS.

I hope the outline of this important work has been helpful and we look forward to seeing the full report of the Inquiry. If you require anything further please do not hesitate to get in touch.

Yn gywir / Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "A. Rees". The signature is written in a cursive style with a small flourish at the end.

Amy Rees

Cyfarwyddwr Gweithredol, Gwasanaeth Carchardai a Phrawf EM yng Nghymru
Executive Director, HM Prison and Probation Service in Wales