

Australian Capital Territory

Corrections Management (Detainees at Risk of Suicide or Self-harm) Policy 2022

Notifiable instrument NI2022-206

made under the

Corrections Management Act 2007, section 14 (Corrections policies and operating procedures)

1 Name of instrument

This instrument is the *Corrections Management (Detainees at Risk of Suicide or Self-harm) Policy 2022*.

2 Commencement

This instrument commences on the day after its notification day.

3 Policy

I make this policy to facilitate the effective and efficient management of correctional services.

4 Revocation

This policy revokes the *Corrections Management (Management of At-Risk Detainees) Policy 2019* [NI2019-657].

Ray Johnson APM
Commissioner
ACT Corrective Services
20 April 2022

DETAINEES AT RISK OF SUICIDE OR SELF- HARM

POLICY NO. D30



ACT
Government

Justice and Community Safety

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1 PURPOSE

ACT Corrective Services (ACTCS) is committed to ensuring that detainees at risk of suicide or self-harm are identified and receive immediate care and support. Care and support are based on harm minimisation and addresses therapeutic and personal needs of each detainee in an integrated way.

This policy provides instructions on the identification and care of detainees who may be at risk of suicide or self-harm in correctional centres.

2 SCOPE

This policy applies to all ACTCS staff operating in ACT correctional centres. While governed by their own policies and procedures, Canberra Health Services (CHS) and Winnunga Nimmityjah Aboriginal Health and Community Services staff are required to act in accordance with ACT Correctional policies and procedures as far as reasonably practicable within those constraints.

Where required, operational procedures may be established under this policy.

3 DEFINITIONS

At risk detainee	A detainee identified or assessed as being at risk of suicide or self-harm, requiring immediate care and support.
Business day	A day that is not: <ol style="list-style-type: none">Saturday or Sunday ora public holiday in the ACT.
Business hours	For the purposes of this policy, business hours for Custodial Mental Health are: <ol style="list-style-type: none">Monday to Friday, 0830 to 1800 hours andAll other days, 0830 to 1600 hours.
Crisis Support Unit (CSU)	The Crisis Support Unit is the primary accommodation location for detainees assessed as being at risk of suicide or self-harm and/or demonstrating a significant psychiatric condition requiring mental health treatment. The Crisis Support Unit also accommodates detainees who require more intensive medical supervision.

Custodial Mental Health (CMH)	Custodial Mental Health sits within Justice Health Services and provides specialist mental health services to detainees in ACT adult correctional centres who require mental health assessment and/or specialised treatment for a moderate to severe mental illness or disorder.
High Risk Assessment Team (HRAT)	A multi-agency decision and intervention planning team established by ACT Corrective Services and Justice Health Services to coordinate the immediate care of detainees at risk of suicide or self-harm (<i>Risk Alerts Policy</i>).
Officer-in-Charge (OIC)	The officer who is designated as Officer-in-Charge for the shift who has responsibilities set out in policy
Person At Risk	An alert generated for a detainee where a potential suicide or self-harm risk is identified prior to, or during an escort or transfer of the detainee.
Safety smock	A short-sleeved gown made of non-tearable fabric.

4 PRINCIPLES

- 4.1 Detainees must be managed under this policy where there is information that suggests the detainee is at risk of suicide or self-harm, or a staff member is concerned that the detainee may be at risk of suicide or self-harm (see section 8).
- 4.2 ACT Corrective Services takes all reasonable steps to ensure detainees at risk of suicide or self-harm are identified and receive appropriate care and support.
- 4.3 Detainees must be assessed on admission to a correctional centre to identify any risk or issues that may render a detainee at risk of suicide or self-harm (*Admissions Policy*).
- 4.4 Correctional officers must receive appropriate training in identifying and managing detainees who are at risk of suicide or self-harm.
- 4.5 The treatment, care and support of detainees at risk of suicide or self-harm will be managed through a multi-disciplinary response by ACT Corrective Services and Justice Health Services (JHS) in accordance with *An Arrangement between Director-General, ACT Justice and Community Safety Directorate and Director-General, ACT Health for the Delivery of Health Services for Detainees 2017*.

- 4.6 All appropriate and necessary precautions must be taken to ensure the safety and wellbeing of detainees at risk of suicide or self-harm during escort in accordance with the Court Transport Unit Person at Risk Management Operating Procedure.
- 4.7 Positive staff engagement with detainees at risk of suicide or self-harm is necessary to reduce social isolation.
- 4.8 Management of detainees under this policy will occur in the least restrictive way necessary to ensure the wellbeing and safety of all detainees and staff.

5 ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

- 5.1 The identification and management of detainees at risk of suicide or self-harm in accordance with this policy is an ongoing responsibility of each ACT Corrective Services staff member.
- 5.2 The Officer-in-Charge, relevant Area Manager and Supervisor must:
- a. be aware of which detainees are being managed under this policy; and
 - b. ensure appropriate handovers between shifts so that staff responsible for conducting observations under this policy are familiar with a detainee's D30.F2: Interim Risk Management Plan or D30.F3: Modified Risk Management Plan.

High Risk Assessment Team (HRAT)

- 5.3 The High Risk Assessment Team meets daily on business days to coordinate the management of detainees who are or who are likely to be vulnerable to suicide or self-harm risks. Members of the Team represent key stakeholders including, but not limited to, Justice Health Services, Area Managers, Area Supervisors, Supports and Interventions Unit, Sentence Management Unit, and the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Services Unit. The High Risk Assessment Team is empowered to:
- a. facilitate the information sharing between ACT Corrective Services (ACTCS), Justice Health Services (JHS) and Custodial Mental Health (CMH) regarding detainees at risk of suicide or self-harm
 - b. develop, determine and review Risk Management Plans for detainees at risk of suicide or self-harm
 - c. review the S alert ratings in accordance with the Risk Alerts Policy

- d. make recommendations regarding overall case management in conjunction with relevant stakeholders including Supports and Intervention Unit, Sentence Management Unit and the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Services Unit.
 - e. make recommendations regarding detainee accommodation based on clinical need
 - f. make recommendations regarding whether a detainee is too great a risk of suicide or self-harm to attend activities
 - g. conduct urgent reviews of detainees who have been identified as at risk of suicide or self-harm in the event of a likely suicide in custody
 - h. endorse 'exit' plans for detainees to enable the transitioning from the Crisis Support Unit (CSU) to general population, or specialised units such as the Assisted Care Unit, and Therapeutic Community. Exit plans must be developed in conjunction with the relevant support units to allow for a supported and planned transition.
 - i. discuss JHS/CMH Safety Management Plans for detainee/s
 - j. recommend broader strategies to address potential suicide and self-harm risks at the Alexander Maconochie Centre (AMC).
- 5.4 Risk Management Plans are initially developed by Custodial Mental Health and are interim until reviewed at the next scheduled safety management plan multi-disciplinary team meeting and agreed at a High Risk Assessment Team meeting.

Information sharing

- 5.5 Information will be shared between appropriate ACT Corrective Services staff and Justice Health Services to facilitate the access of suitable health services in accordance with section 12(j) of the *Corrections Management Act 2007* and *An Arrangement between Director-General, ACT Justice and Community Safety Directorate and Director-General, ACT Health for the Delivery of Health Services for Detainees.*

6 'PERSON AT RISK' (PAR) ALERT

- 6.1 Prior to and during an escort from court, a person in custody may be deemed a 'Person at Risk' in accordance with the *Court Transport Unit Person at Risk Management Operating Procedure.*
- 6.2 A 'Person at Risk' alert must be implemented where a person in custody:

- a. is at risk of self-harm or suicide or
 - b. has recently engaged in suicidal or self-harming behaviour.
- 6.3 A 'Person at Risk' alert can be initiated:
- a. by police on transfer of custody of the person in custody
 - b. by an escorting officer
 - c. at the request of:
 - i. a court, tribunal or the Sentence Administration Board
 - ii. the person in custody's legal representative
 - iii. Forensic Mental Health Service (FMHS)
 - iv. Mental Health Court Assessment and Liaison Service as appropriate
 - d. as a result of information provided to an escorting officer by any other party
 - e. by any ACT Corrective Services or Justice Health Services officer.
- 6.4 Transportation of a person in custody with a 'Person at Risk' alert must be conducted in accordance with the *Court Transport Unit Person at Risk Management Operating Procedure*.

7 ADMISSION

- 7.1 Identification of a detainee's potential risk of suicide or self-harm on admission to a correctional centre is a responsibility of all staff in contact with the detainee and not only undertaken by Custodial Mental Health.
- 7.2 Custodial Mental Health must undertake a mental health assessment of all detainees within 24 hours after admission in accordance with section 68 of the *Corrections Management Act 2007* and the *Admissions Policy*.
- 7.3 If a detainee arrives after hours and a mental health assessment cannot be undertaken until the next business day, the detainee will be placed in the Crisis Support Unit (CSU) on 15 minute observations and classed with an S2 category rating.
- 7.4 Following a mental health assessment, and if a detainee is deemed at risk of suicide or self-harm, all relevant staff must follow the procedures outlined in the *Detainees at Risk of Suicide or Self-harm Operating Procedure*.

8 IDENTIFICATION OF DETAINEES AT RISK OF SUICIDE OR SELF-HARM

- 8.1 Where an ACTCS staff member makes observations or has information that they think indicates a detainee is likely to be at risk of self-harm or suicide, they must take action:
- a. If an officer, they must begin the at risk referral process in accordance with the *Detainees at Risk of Suicide or Self-harm Operating Procedure*.
 - b. If a non-uniformed staff member, they must inform an officer.
- 8.2 Observed detainee behaviour that may suggest a detainee is at risk or suicide or self-harm can include but is not limited to self-harming and/or suicidal statements from the detainee, deterioration in mood, increased isolation and decreased engagement from peers and staff. See also *Annex 1: Risk factors*, and *Practice Guideline – Responding to Suicidal Thoughts and Behaviours*.
- 8.3 Information that suggests a detainee may engage in self-harm or suicidal behaviours can come from different sources including, but not limited to, Intelligence, statements from other detainees, and concerns raised by external parties (such as family members or external services).
- 8.4 If a staff member from Justice Health Services or Winnunga Nimmityjah Aboriginal Health and Community Services makes observations or becomes aware that a detainee may be at risk or suicide or self-harm, they must inform a correctional officer as soon as possible.

Compassionate leave

- 8.5 Where a detainee has returned to a correctional centre following compassionate leave the Admissions Area Manager must ensure that a welfare check occurs and that it is case noted. The purpose of the welfare check is to determine if the detainee should be monitored under this policy.

Receiving distressing news

- 8.6 When a Correctional officer becomes aware that a detainee has received distressing news, they may offer to refer the detainee to the Chaplain, Imam or an Aboriginal Liaison Officer. At the discretion of the Area Manager, other support options may be considered appropriate.

Welfare Reviews

- 8.7 At any time, a detainee, a correctional officer or other ACTCS staff member may request a Welfare Review by making a referral to the Support and Interventions Unit. Welfare Reviews are commonly requested following compassionate leave,

receiving distressing news, following significant court outcomes, and after the death of a loved one. A Welfare Review can also be requested when a staff member becomes concerned about a detainee's mental health for any reason.

Emergency

- 8.8 Where a detainee exhibits signs or symptoms of a medical emergency at any time, the Code Pink Operating Procedure must be immediately initiated.

9 INTERIM RISK MANAGEMENT PLAN

- 9.1 Once a detainee has been identified as at risk or suicide or self-harm, Custodial Mental Health will provide a D30.F2: Interim Risk Management Plan in accordance with the Detainees at Risk of Suicide or Self-harm Operating Procedure.
- 9.2 Upon review of the Interim Risk Management Plan, the High Risk Assessment Team will complete a D30.F3: Modified Risk Management Plan and make amendments if needed or revoke the Interim Risk Management Plan in accordance with the Detainees at Risk of Suicide or Self-harm Operating Procedure.

10 MANAGEMENT

- 10.1 The High Risk Assessment Team must review a detainee's D30.F2: Interim Risk Management Plan in accordance with the Detainees at Risk of Suicide or Self-harm Operating Procedure and the High Risk Assessment Team Standing Committee Terms of Reference.
- 10.2 Appropriate reasonable adjustments must be made to allow a detainee ongoing access to education and programs consistent with managing the risk posed by the detainee.
- 10.3 Detainees must have access to and can request to see an independent health professional in accordance with the Access to Health Care Policy.

Observations

- 10.4 Observations of detainees must be conducted in accordance with the D30.F2: Interim or D30.F3: Modified Risk Management Plan, or the Custodial Mental Health Notification Form and the Risk Alerts Policy.

11 DETAINEES ACCOMMODATED AT THE CRISIS SUPPORT UNIT (CSU)

- 11.1 The Crisis Support Unit (CSU) accommodates detainees who have engaged in or are at risk of suicidal or self-harming behaviour and who need more support to maintain their safety.
- 11.2 Service delivery at the Crisis Support Unit is achieved through collaboration between ACT Corrective Services and Justice Health Services/Custodial Mental Health to achieve the following objectives:
- a. ensure the safety of the detainee
 - b. to provide appropriate health care and support to detainees at risk of suicide or self-harm
 - c. to enable detainees to achieve their optimal functioning
 - d. empower detainees to understand and manage their illness and/or vulnerabilities
 - e. successfully transition the detainee to general accommodation in a correctional centre.
 - f. successfully transition the detainee to a specialised support unit, such as the Assisted Care Unit, or Therapeutic Community.
- 11.3 The after-hours placement of a detainee in the Crisis Support Unit must be authorised by the Officer-in-Charge.
- 11.4 The High Risk Assessment Team will review the placement of all detainees in the Crisis Support Unit on an ongoing basis in accordance with the *High Risk Assessment Team Standing Committee Terms of Reference*.
- 11.5 Detainees may be searched on arrival to the Crisis Support Unit if required, as per the *Searching Policy* and *Searching Program*. The psychological state and risk ratings of the detainee must be considered in determining the appropriate search to avoid unnecessary distress of detainees in crisis. The search must be the least intrusive necessary to ensure the safety of the detainee in accordance with the *Searching Policy*.
- 11.6 The issue of clothing, bedding, hygiene and property items to detainees will be managed in accordance with:
- a. the minimum living conditions and Chapter 6 entitlements in the *Corrections Management Act 2007*
 - b. the detainee's *D30.F3: Modified Risk Management Plan*
 - c. *Detainee Hygiene Policy* and

d. Detainee Property Policy.

- 11.7 As far as practicable, the restriction of access to in-possession property items must be the least restrictive consistent with managing the risk posed by a detainee.

Buy-ups

- 11.8 Once accommodated in the Crisis Support Unit, detainees will have access to buy-ups through the dedicated Crisis Support Unit buy-up form.

Privileges

- 11.9 While detainees are accommodated in the Crisis Support Unit, Crisis Support Unit staff will manage privileges according to individual management plans.

Safety smock

- 11.10 ACT Corrective Services will only require a detainee to wear a safety smock as a last resort where directed by Custodial Mental Health or authorised by the Officer-in-Charge after hours (Detainees at Risk of Suicide or Self-harm Operating Procedure).
- 11.11 The High Risk Assessment Team must review the recommendation for a detainee to wear a safety smock each business day and confirm or revoke the direction.

12 MANAGEMENT OF DETAINEES IN ACCOMMODATION AREAS

- 12.1 Where a risk management plan identifies that a detainee may be accommodated in other areas apart from Crisis Support Unit, the Area Manager must assess the safety and security risk of the identified area and where reasonable address any risks.
- 12.2 Where the Area Manager does not believe the risks can be appropriately managed, they must escalate this concern to the Senior Director of Accommodation.
- 12.3 The High Risk Assessment Team must review risk management plans and ensure all relevant staff are informed.

13 EXIT PLANNING

- 13.1 The High Risk Assessment Team must review a detainee's D30.F3: Modified Risk Management Plan on each business day and recommend whether the detainee continues to require management under an individualised risk management

plan, including where Custodial Mental Health have recommended that a detainee can be relocated from the Crisis Support Unit.

- 13.2 If the High Risk Assessment Team determines that a detainee who is not accommodated in Crisis Support Unit no longer requires management under a risk management plan, all relevant staff in their accommodation unit must be informed. Staff can request a Welfare Review if they become concerned about the detainee's behaviour.
- 13.3 When a detainee transitions from the Crisis Support Unit, the High Risk Assessment Team must develop exit plans collaboratively with the Supports and Interventions Unit and other relevant teams.
- 13.4 Where the High Risk Assessment Team recommend that a detainee no longer requires management under this policy, the Chair must ensure all relevant ACTCS teams are informed.

14 RECORDS

- 14.1 All plans and observation records must be up to date at all times.
- 14.2 Detainee behaviours and interactions with staff must be recorded as a case note on a detainee's electronic record.
- 14.3 All plans and records under this policy must be stored in a detainee's electronic record.

15 RELATED DOCUMENTS

- A – Risk Alerts Policy
- B – Admissions Policy
- C – An Arrangement between Director-General, ACT Justice and Community Safety Directorate and Director-General, ACT Health for the Delivery of Health Services for Detainees
- D – Court Transport Unit Person at Risk Management Operating Procedure
- E – D30.F2: Interim Risk Management Plan
- F – D30.F3: Modified Risk Management Plan
- G – Detainees at Risk of Suicide or Self-harm Operating Procedure
- H – Practice Guideline – Responding to Suicidal Thoughts and Behaviours
- I – Code Pink Operating Procedure
- J – High Risk Assessment Team Standing Committee Terms of Reference

- K – Access to Health Care Policy
- L – Searching Program
- M – Searching Policy
- N – Detainee Hygiene Policy
- O – Detainee Property Policy

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 Commissioner
 ACT Corrective Services
 20 April 2022

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V2	Apr-22	First Revision	S Young

DETAINEES AT RISK OF SUICIDE OR SELF-HARM POLICY

Annex 1 – Risk factors

Risk factors to be aware of and recognise include but are not limited to:

- Actual suicide or self-harm attempt
- Verbal or written threats of suicide and/or self-harm
- Concerns about suicide and/or self-harm or stability raised by family members or others
- History of mental illness, past suicide and/or self-harm issues, past behavioural issues
- First time in custody and/or significant charges
- Court appearance
- Young person
- Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander
- Problems adapting to prison, victim of standover or target of threats, subject to disciplinary process
- Vulnerability
- Family distress/problems or external stressors including relationship breakdown
- Detainee is agitated and/or distressed
- Detainee is depressed and/or hopeless and/or helpless
- Detainee is withdrawn or isolating themselves
- Detainee is no longer caring for themselves (unhygienic, not eating, not sleeping) or not participating in usual activities
- Detainee is experiencing withdrawal/discontinuance symptoms from drugs and/or alcohol