

12 April 2021

Janis Adair
Chief Inspector
Department of Corrections

By email: janis.adair@corrections.govt.nz

Tēnā koe Janis

Re: Draft report of investigation into the management of three women at Auckland Region Women's Corrections Facility

Thank you for your letter of 31 March 2021 providing a copy of your draft report into the above matter, and for the opportunity to respond.

Your report specifically highlights the management of three women at Auckland Region Women's Corrections Facility (ARWCF), while also acknowledging the complex and challenging combination of factors involved in their management.

We acknowledge the significant failures that led to these women being managed in line with an increasingly restrictive regime in response to their escalating challenging behaviours. This did not meet our expected standards and those set out in the Prison Operations Manual and the Corrections Regulations.

As you are aware Corrections have already had an initial meeting with the three women involved, led by the Northern Regional Commissioner where we acknowledged the failings, the trauma they suffered and verbally apologised for the way they were managed during their time at ARWCF. Upon receipt of your final report, we intend to formalise this apology in writing as well as offering a package of care to go some way to remediate the situation. We are committed to continuing to work with the women to address their specific needs, provide any support they may require and to seek their input to improve our policies and procedures.

You made an overall recommendation within your report, seeking confirmation that no prisoners are subject to a similar regime throughout the prison network. You considered that a review of the way in which women across the prison network were managed should be reviewed and this should include:

- i. A consideration of the staffing, management and oversight of ARWCF in order to provide assurance that no other systemic issues persist. Given the broad range of findings, staff competency should be addressed at every level, including custodial and health staff.*
- ii. A review of the use of maximum security classification for women.*
- iii. A review of the use of management plans across the prison network.*
- iv. A review of the management of Corrections Regulations 2005 cl.55 (Health centre manager to be notified of certain segregation directions) across the prison network.*
- v. A consideration of developing a national guideline for staff to support meaningful management of Corrections Regulations 2005 cl.76 (Certain prisoners at risk or seriously ill) (a) and (b).*
- vi. A consideration of how the Department can better support staff to manage women (including those who present with complex and challenging behaviour) in a culturally appropriate, gender-responsive and trauma-informed manner.*

All recommendations are accepted.

I can advise that assurance has been provided from all prison directors that every prisoner at their sites who is subject to maximum security or directed segregation, are being managed in accordance with appropriate and individualised management plans. Further ongoing assurances will occur.

A programme of work has been established to drive the transformation of our three women's prisons into a cohesive network, underpinned by a trauma informed operating model, tailored specifically to the needs of women. This will involve developing a programme for the Women's Prison Network focusing on the design, implementation and embedding of a gender responsive operating model, including reviewing the maximum security classification for women. Corrections expects to produce a systemic plan for change across all three of the women's prisons before the end of June 2021.

A plan has already been developed to address the immediate issues at ARWCF and a number of changes are already being or have been progressed including the appointment of a permanent Prison Director and the management team, a \$12 million work programme to establish additional recreation yards, for more recreation time in the fresh air, increased oversight of unlock hours, increased prioritisation of monitoring and responding to the complaints of people in prison in a timely manner and the embedding of a new multi-disciplinary team approach to developing plans to guide progress and rehabilitation.

Staffing in the Health Centre has improved and has included the appointment of a permanent Health Centre Manager (mid 2020) and a Nurse Practitioner (June 2020). Since November 2020 we have had two Enrolled Nurses (EN) and a Health Care Assistant (HCA) on a three-month fixed term secondment. Due to the success of this pilot the secondments have been extended while the business case is approved to make this permanent. The addition of EN's into the service at ARWCF has had a significant impact on service delivery and has ensured the right staff are doing the right work at the right time.

Resources to support the development of Asthma Management Plans have been provided to staff, and three staff are undertaking the required training for cervical screening. The HCM is driving a strong focus on quality improvement, new ways of working and strengthening relationships between the health and custodial teams to support the delivery of health services. A new Panadol alert mechanism has been put in place to prompt assessment by the health team when there is frequent use of Panadol.

The Regional Operations Director (ROD) has supported the reinstatement of the Daily Segregation Report (DSEG) being sent to the HCM who will commence weekly visits to ensure health and wellbeing is being maintained for Women who are 'non-associating'.

Nationally, the Health Centre Manager Responsibilities Policy and the Health Care Pathway Policy are under review and will provide clarity on the Welfare Check process, the management of segregated people and escalation pathways to ensure the appropriate level of health care is provided. The processes for referral and access to mental health services will be considered as part of the policy review as we focus on at risk women and those who require ongoing assessment and mental health support, and coordination of access to services.

We understand that the role of Principal Assurance Inspector, Women, has been established to provide assurance oversight of ARWCF, and will report directly to you as Chief Inspector once appointed. We welcome this in order to enable us to enhance transparency and ensure overall process and performance improvement. We undertake to report to you quarterly against the progress of your recommendations.

I trust that you are satisfied with our response. Please advise me in the first instance if you have any concerns.

Ngā mihi nui



Rachel Leota
National Commissioner