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FREEDOM OF INFORMATION REQUEST REFERENCE NUMBER: 144/2022

Thank you for your request for information regarding NPCC suicide prevention, which has now been considered.

Applicant Questions:

In 2019, it was publicly pledged by Chief Constable Martin Hewitt that the NPCC (and individual forces) would begin counting suicides of serving police officers and staff members ([article here](#)).

I am aware that in the College of Police's recent Suicide Prevention Strategy it states "Continue to develop systems to record the number of in-service deaths in policing, including those by suicide (current NPCC project)."

1. Who, in the NPCC, is in charge of the "system" to record these suicides?
2. How and where are police suicides recorded at the NPCC?
3. When did the NPCC start recording police suicides?
4. What is the NPCC strategy to ensure that each force in England and Wales are recording in-service deaths/suicides?
5. When and where will the statistics be published?
6. Does the NPCC have a suicide prevention strategy for its members?

NPCC Response:

The NPCC does hold information captured by your request some of your questions. The NPCC does not hold recorded information captured by questions 5 and 6 of your request, however my colleagues have provided additional related information outside of the Freedom of Information Act.

1. The pledge made by Martin Hewitt was progressed by NPCC as part of the wide ranging Officer and Staff Safety Review (OSSR). A proposal to create a national database of suspected suicides of the police workforce is being progressed by Chief Supt Ian Drummond-Smith from Devon & Cornwall Police.

Outside of the Act, my colleagues confirmed that this will be presented to Chief Constables' Council in the coming months. Every Chief Constable will of course be responsible for recording suicides within their own force and to ensure there is consistency and visibility on suicide data. The proposed database will enable the NPCC to collect national data for the first time.



2. The NPCC suicide working group have for several years been collecting suicide data as part of a research project.

Outside of the Act, my colleagues confirmed that in relation to the new proposed database, each force should record data themselves and as set out a Question 1, the NPCC have committed to establishing a consistent recording process using a data solution similar to the one recently launched to record assaults data. Funding will be required for this solution and Chief Constables will be asked to fund it.

3. As stated above, the NPCC suicide working group have for several years been collecting suicide data as part of a research project.

Outside of the Act, my colleagues confirmed that the NPCC Suicide Prevention Portfolio owner ACC Charlie Doyle from British Transport Police launched a pilot last year with all forces across the UK to try and understand the current level of reporting and of police response to suspected suicides as well as collate what information we could gather in regards to the deceased and incident to better inform police suicide prevention work.

To this end we circulated a template to all force suicide prevention leads requesting that each month from April 2021 they send returns back to BTP on all suspected suicides their force had knowledge of/responded to. Included in this request was a field in respect of occupation. This includes the categories of police officer, former police officer, police staff and former police staff.

Not all forces initially were able to complete the request and to date we have all but two forces now sending returns to us each month and not all those who were/are able to complete the request were/are able to populate this requirement. This is still in the pilot stage.

In relation to new national database, until the NPCC has a data solution in place the NPCC are not in a position to collect and present the information. We envisage this will be agreed and resolved this year.

4. This question is answered by the responses to questions 1 and 2.
5. The NPCC does not hold recorded information on when and where the statistics will be published.

Outside of the Act, my colleagues confirmed that this has yet to be decided but current thinking is that there will be a requirement for an annual data return.

6. The NPCC does not hold recorded information on a 'Suicide Prevention Strategy'.

However Outside of the Act, my colleagues have confirmed that 'The NPCC, College of Policing and other senior leaders signed the first 'suicide consensus statement' for policing on February 7th 2022. This follows the ambulance service approach and is accompanied by a 'next steps' commitment to a) deliver a postvention toolkit and b) resolve the data recording proposal.

The National Police Wellbeing Service (NPWS) have been working with the Samaritans to develop the postvention toolkit which is almost ready to be provided to all forces along with training materials and even a new training programme to help forces run a postvention process after a suicide or death in service. The toolkit signals a vital step forward and the NPWS will continue to work with Samaritans to develop further interventions. Many forces already provide suicide awareness and prevention training for their staff and this is something the NPCC promote as a vital intervention.

Yours sincerely

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COMPLAINT RIGHTS

Internal Review

If you are dissatisfied with the response you have been provided with, in compliance with the Freedom of Information legislation, you can lodge a complaint with NPCC to have the decision reviewed within 20 working days of the date of this response. The handling of your request will be looked at by someone independent of the original decision, and a fresh response provided.

It would be helpful, if requesting a review, for you to articulate in detail the reasons you are not satisfied with this reply.

If you would like to request a review, please write or send an email to NPCC Freedom of Information, c/o PO Box 481, Fareham, Hampshire, PO14 9FS.

If, after lodging a complaint with NPCC, you are still unhappy with the outcome, you may make an application to the Information Commissioner at the Information Commissioner's Office, Wycliffe House, Water Lane, Wilmslow, Cheshire, SK9 5AF.

Annex A

Section 17 of the Freedom of Information Act 2000 requires the NPCC, when refusing to provide information by way of exemption in question and (c) states why the exemption applies. In accordance with the Freedom of Information Act 2000 this letter acts as a refusal notice to those aspects of your request.

Legislation - Section 23 Information supplied by, or concerning, certain security bodies

- (1) Information held by a public authority is exempt information if it was directly or indirectly supplied to the public authority by, or relates to any of the bodies specified in subsection (3)

This is an absolute exemption and there is no requirement to consider the public interest test.

Legislation – Section 16

- (1) It shall be the duty of a public authority to provide advice and assistance, so far as it would be reasonable to expect the authority to do so, to persons who propose to make, or have made, requests for information to it.