



T: 0131-244 0724
E: directorofmentalhealth@gov.scot

Ms Jenny Marra (MSP)
Convener
Public Audit and Post-Legislative Scrutiny
Committee
Scottish Parliament

Your ref:
Our ref:

22nd February 2019

Dear Convenor

I am responding to the question asked by Mr Sarwar (MSP) at the Committee's session on 17th January 2019.

Mr Sarwar sought clarification on statistics held by the Scottish Government on 'the number of people who lost their lives while waiting for treatment, either through a rejected referral or the length of time they were waiting'.

The information requested is not collected centrally. The Scottish Government is currently working with colleagues in the Information Services Division (ISD) of NHS Scotland to develop the current datasets gathered from NHS Boards on performance against the CAMHS and Psychological Therapies waiting times standards. The current collections gather aggregate data on waiting times from each board, and this enables performance against the standards to be monitored.

To allow more detailed investigation of those on the waiting lists or going through treatment, it will be necessary to gather individual level patient data that can be linked to other information. There are some technical issues to resolve but I expect to see substantial improvements in the datasets this year.

There is already significant work being done on data linkage by the Scottish Suicide Information Database (ScotSID). This provides valuable information on whether a person who has completed suicide was known to parts of the health system through:

- Mental Health (MH) drug prescriptions in the last 12 months
- A&E in the last 3 months
- General hospital inpatient admission with MH as primary condition in last 12 months
- Psychiatric inpatient hospital stay in last 12 months
- Psychiatric outpatient appointment in the last 12 months
- Specialist drug and alcohol treatment assessment in last 12 months.



The most recent report from ScotSID, published in December 2018, can be found at <https://www.isdscotland.org/Health-Topics/Public-Health/Publications/2018-12-04/2018-12-04-ScotSID-Report.pdf>.

This is powerful information that helps inform work on how people contemplating suicide might be supported as they engage with the wider health system. This work will be further developed to look at engagement with NHS 24, the Scottish Ambulance Service and GP out of hours. It is also part of the evidence base that will inform the work of the National Suicide Prevention Leadership Group as it supports implementation of our Suicide Prevention Action Plan.

I hope this information is helpful in setting out the work the Scottish Government is doing in this area.

Yours sincerely



Donna Bell
Director of Mental Health