

9 June 2022

Ref: IR-01-22-10087

Finbar Murphy

Email: [fyi-request-19026-8e576fc7@requests.fyi.org.nz](mailto:fyi-request-19026-8e576fc7@requests.fyi.org.nz)

Dear Finbar

***Request for information***

Thank you for your request directed to the Department of Prime Minister and Cabinet (DPMC), dated 1 April 2022. The request was for:

*“What steps, if any, have been taken to ensure that individuals with Autism spectrum disorders are not mistakenly referred to the He Aranga Ake programme, as has occurred with the UK’s ‘Prevent’ deradicalisation programme’.*


On 6 April, your request was transferred to Police to respond to as the lead agency for delivering this programme. Your request has been considered in accordance with the Official Information Act 1982 (OIA).

He Aranga Ake, is currently under development and due to be delivered in December 2022. While the project team responsible for delivery is connected internationally to practitioners and services engaged in disengagement, He Aranga Ake is being specifically designed to provide a New Zealand response to disengagement. As such, our response draws on lessons learnt from within New Zealand, where Police and other government agencies have worked collectively over significant periods of time applying preventative approaches to identified persons of national security concern.

While Police acknowledge there may be some concern about whether a person identified and diagnosed as on the autism spectrum or requiring diagnosis should be referred to, He Aranga Ake, processes will be in place to assess this on a case-by-case basis. Police are unable to provide the detailed workings of He Aranga Ake, however specialists will be available to provide guidance around how to structure interventions and support in a way which positively addresses an individual’s unique needs.

**Police National Headquarters**

180 Molesworth Street, Thorndon, Wellington SX11149  
Telephone: (04) 474 9499. [www.police.govt.nz](http://www.police.govt.nz)



Unfortunately, New Zealand (along with many other countries) has experienced individuals who have been diagnosed or are suspected to be on the autism spectrum and who have posed threats to national security. Accordingly, we must always consider persons of concern on a case-by-case basis and ensure any response is appropriate, and proportionate not just from an individual, but also from a public safety perspective.

Once operational He Aranga Ake will have a key role in helping Government, policy makers, academics and the public understand what types of vulnerabilities, ages, ideologies, and other factors are being identified in New Zealand and where further support, prevention initiatives and other response mechanisms are required.

I trust that this information will be of use to you. You have the right to ask the Ombudsman to review my decision if you are not satisfied with my response to your request.

Yours sincerely,



Sean Hansen  
Detective Superintendent  
New Zealand Police