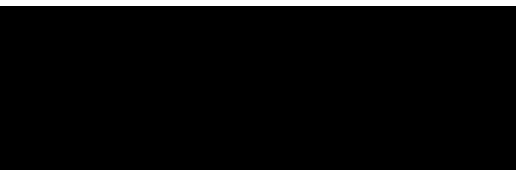


27 January 2021



Dear 

Re: OIA request – Body parts returned to patients

Thank you for your Official Information Act request received 6 January 2021 seeking information from Waitematā District Health Board (DHB) about the return of body parts to patients in the last three years.

Before responding to your specific questions, it may be useful to provide some context about our services.

Waitematā is the largest and one of the most rapidly growing DHBs in the country, serving a population of around 650,000 across the North Shore, Waitakere and Rodney areas. We are the largest employer in the district, employing around 8,500 people across more than 80 locations.

In addition to providing services to our own population, we are also the metropolitan Auckland provider of forensic psychiatry, child disability services, child community dental services and community alcohol and drug services.

You requested the following information:

The total number of body part items returned to patients by the DHB during the calendar years of 2020, 2019, and 2018, broken down by the specific type of body part (including but not limited to, body tissue, bones, organs, placentas/products of conception) returned each year.

Any such information is recorded in individual patient files, or manually by our surgical pathology department. It is not recorded in a central database.

Due to the sensitivity of this information, frontline clinical staff would need to review individual clinical files and records to determine if a body part had either been given to a patient or, if requested, that it had subsequently been returned to the patient. It would not be appropriate to use a contractor to review the records. This would take the frontline staff away from their clinical work and prejudice our ability to provide core clinical services.

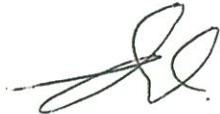
We have considered whether charging or extending the timeframe for responding to this aspect of your request would assist us in managing this work and have concluded it would not. We have, therefore, determined to refuse this element of your request under Section 18(f) of the Official Information Act due to substantial collation and research.

You have the right to seek an investigation and review by the Ombudsman of this decision. Information about how to seek a review is available at www.ombudsman.parliament.nz or freephone 0800 802 602.

Waitematā DHB supports the open disclosure of information to assist community understanding of how we are delivering publicly funded healthcare. This includes the proactive publication of anonymised Official Information Act responses on our website from 10 working days after they have been released.

If you consider there are good reasons why this response should not be made publicly available, we will be happy to consider your views.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'MS', written over a horizontal line.

Mark Shepherd
Executive Director Hospital Services
Waitematā District Health Board