

25 October 2022



Tēnā koe 

Official Information Act request, reference: HNZ4606 - Number of patients who have left Mental Health inpatient units without leave

Thank you for your Official Information Act request received 5 October seeking information from Te Whatu Ora – Health New Zealand Waitematā about the number of patients who have left Mental Health inpatient units without leave.

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 health districts 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 more than 8,900 people across more than 80 locations.

In addition to providing care to our own resident population, we are the Northern Region provider of forensic mental health services and child rehabilitation services, plus the metro Auckland provider of child community dental services and community alcohol and drug services.

In response to your request, we are able to provide the following information:

I would like a breakdown of all the mental health inpatients within Te Whatu Ora Waitematā who have left the facilities unsupervised and without leave between 1 October 2021 and 1 October 2022. May I also please have the same data on the year prior - October 1 2020 to October 1 2021? Could the data also please be broken down by child and adolescent units and adult units?

On 5 October, we advised that our response would include information about our adult mental health inpatient units and clarified whether our response should also include information about the following:

- MH for Older Adults ward (Kingsley Mortimer Unit) and
- Regional Forensic Psychiatry (Mason Clinic).

That same day, you confirmed that you did want information relating to these units included.

On 7 October, we sought further clarification about the term, “left the facilities unsupervised and without leave”. We asked if this should be interpreted as information on patients who have not been granted leave but had left regardless or whether you were seeking information about patients who are ‘absent without leave’ while on planned leave.

That same day, you confirmed that you were requesting data on both patients who had not been granted leave but have left regardless and patients who were overdue from planned leave and deemed ‘absent without leave’ (AWOL).

On 11 October, we notified you that the part of your request relating child and adolescent mental health units had been transferred to Te Toka Tumai Auckland, as the provider of those services in the metro Auckland region.

In response to your request, we can provide the following information:

Te Whatu Ora Waitematā is committed to ensuring the safety, welfare and wellbeing of all people accessing our services while receiving care and treatment. Therefore, incidents of unplanned leave are rare but are taken seriously when they do occur. The district has clear guidelines and processes for managing these incidents, based on the legal status of the individual and the potential risks of the situation.

The data provided in the table below is inclusive of any unauthorised absence, including any absence outside of the agreed conditions of approved leave broken down by service and year and the service to which the patient was admitted at the time.

In interpreting the following figures, it should be taken into account that some people recorded as “absent” are late returning from approved leave rather than having left a facility without approved leave.

This includes:

- people who may return minutes late from approved leave
- people who are repeatedly late (i.e., the same person is late multiple times)
- people who provide a valid reason for lateness.

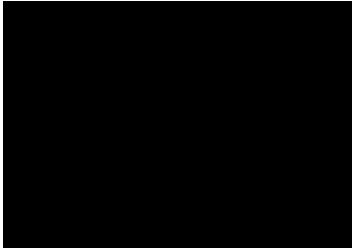
Te Whatu Ora Waitematā Mental Health inpatient units – absences without leave		
Service	Inpatient unit	Number
1 Oct 2020 - 1 Sep 2021		
Adult Mental Health Services	He Puna Waiora	11
	Waiatarau	22
Mental Health Services for Older Adults	Kingsley Mortimer Unit	1
Regional Forensic and Psychiatry Service	Mason Clinic	7
1 Oct 2021- 1 Sep 2022		
Adult Mental Health Services	He Puna Waiora	4
	Waiatarau	11
Mental Health for Older Adults	Kingsley Mortimer Unit	0
Regional Forensic and Psychiatry Service	Mason Clinic	15

I trust that this information is helpful. Waitematā 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.

Nāku iti noa, nā



**Director, Specialist Mental Health and Addiction Services
Te Whatu Ora Health New Zealand Waitematā**