



9 December 2020



Dear [REDACTED]

Re: OIA request – Formal complaints

Thank you for your Official Information Act request received 3 November 2020 by Waitematā District Health Board (DHB) about the number of formal complaints that resulted in disciplinary action or Health and Disability Commissioner (HDC) review for the last three years.

You requested the following information:

I wish to receive information regarding the number of formal complaints which resulted in disciplinary action, went to the Health and Disability Commissioner or resulted in a review of hospital policy in the last three years. Can this information be broken down by year, what the complaint was about, where it happened, and if and how it was resolved?

We contacted you on 3 November to clarify your request, detailed below.

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

Waitematā DHB serves a population of more than 630,000 across the North Shore, Waitakere and Rodney areas, the largest and one of the most rapidly growing DHBs in the country. 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.

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

I am after information on the number of formal complaints which resulted in disciplinary action, went to the Health and Disability Commissioner and/or resulted in a review of hospital policy (i.e., all three options).

We have defined your request as complaints received by the DHB or HDC between 1 November 2017 - 31 October 2020, made by a patient or a patient's representative, in relation to the provision of care in our hospitals which have resulted in disciplinary action, a review of hospital policy, or both.

It is important to note that we thoroughly investigate all complaints and respond either directly to a person's concerns or via the HDC.

Waitematā DHB has more than 2,300 active policies. These are all subject to regular review and are updated to ensure they are fit-for-purpose. These policies are 'living documents' and it is expected that they continue to evolve in order to remain contemporary and to reflect day-to-day best practice.

This includes, where appropriate, incorporating learnings from our formal complaints process and feedback from the HDC. However, information about the impetus for policy changes is not formally captured in our policy library and we are, therefore, unable to provide details on the number of complaints received by us or the HDC that have resulted in a review of hospital policies.

We are, therefore, refusing this aspect of your request under section 18(e) as the information requested does not exist.

There were no complaints to the HDC which resulted in formal disciplinary action from 1 November 2017 to 31 October 2020.

Formal complaints received by Waitematā DHB from patients or patient representatives which resulted in disciplinary action:

| Year | Subject of complaint | Service | How it was resolved* |
|------|----------------------|---|---------------------------------|
| 2020 | Breach of privacy | Specialist Mental Health and Addiction Services | Via internal employment process |
| 2020 | Poor attitude/manner | Child, Women and Family | Via internal employment process |

*Further details are withheld under section 9(2)(a) of the Official Information Act 1982 to protect the privacy of individual staff members.

You have the right to seek an investigation and review by the Ombudsman of the decisions taken in providing this response. Information about how to seek a review is available at www.ombudsman.parliament.nz at 0800 802 602.

I trust that the information we have been able to provide is helpful.

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


Fiona McCarthy
Director Human Resources
Waitematā District Health Board