

02 February 2022

Dear [REDACTED]

Re: OIA request – Assaults on health staff in 2021

Thank you for your Official Information Act request, received as a transfer from the Department of Internal Affairs on 22 December 2021, seeking information from Waitematā District Health Board (DHB) regarding recorded assaults and verbal abuse of health staff.

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 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.

Our employees deal with a broad cross-section of the community in their day-to-day work and this often involves reaching out to people when they are at their most vulnerable and anxious, which can result in unpredictable behaviours. Therefore, caution is advised in comparing raw event numbers between different district health boards unless it is clear the breadth of service-delivery and clinical caseload is of similar complexity.

Waitematā DHB encourages the reporting of assaults or inappropriate behaviour and promotes a policy of ensuring that the safety and security of staff and patients is approached in-line with our organisational values, which can be found on our website:

<http://www.waitematahnb.govt.nz/about-us/our-promise-values/>

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

1. How many recorded assaults on health staff have there been in 2021?

For the period 1 January 2021 to 31 December 2021, the total number of recorded physical and verbal assaults on health staff was **993**.

2. How many recorded incidents of verbal abuse or threats have there been on health staff in 2021?

For the period 1 January 2021 to 31 December 2021, of the total number of recorded physical or verbal assaults on health staff, **424** of these were recorded as verbal assaults. Note, this number is included in the 993 assaults cited in our response to question 1.

3. How many days have been lost due to staff taking time off after being assaulted in the same time frame?

For the period 1 January 2021 to 31 December 2021, the total number of lost days due to staff taking time off following assault was **187.54** days.

I trust that this information 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



**Director People and Culture
Waitematā District Health Board**