

11 July 2022



Dear 

**Re: OIA request – Complaints against mental health services**

Thank you for your Official Information Act request received 13 June seeking information from Waitematā District Health Board (DHB) about complaints made to mental health and addictions services over the last five years. We sought clarification from you and confirmed that you were seeking information about complaints to our mental health services, addictions services and forensic psychiatry services.

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.

In addition to providing psychiatric and addiction care to our own resident population, we are the Northern Region provider of forensic psychiatry services, plus the metro Auckland provider of community alcohol and drug services.

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

**1. In the past five years, how many complaints have been made against Waitematā DHB mental health services, broken down by year?**

Our services support approximately 1,854 inpatients and approximately 41,386 people in the community, on average, per year. While all complaints are taken seriously, the total number of complaints is low compared to the number of patients who use our services. Waitematā DHB has robust processes for dealing with patient-related complaints. Please refer to **Table 1**.

**2. How many of those complaints were resolved and action taken as a result?**

All of our complaints are investigated, with follow-up actions taken if the investigation found actions were needed. See **Table 1** below for the number of complaints resolved and the number which are still open as they are currently under investigation.

**3. How many of those complaints were investigated by the Health and Disability Commissioner?**

Please refer to **Table 1**. It should be noted that all complaints are investigated and resolved.

**Table 1: Number of complaints received, investigated by the Health and Disability Commissioner (HDC) and resolved by year to 14 June 2022**

Calendar year	Number of complaints received	Number of complaints investigated by the HDC	Number of complaints investigated and resolved	Open complaints and reason
2017	173	9	173	0
2018	159	11	159	0
2019	175	12	175	0
2020	140	13	139	1 – current open investigation with HDC
2021	155	11	149	6 – current open investigations with HDC
1 January to 14 June 2022	58	4	45	13 3 – current open investigations with HDC 10 - under investigation by service

**4. What have been the main reasons complaints against Wāitemata DHB’s mental health services were received?**

A complaint may be for more than one reason (i.e. cover more than one category) and we record all aspects separately. The majority of complaint reasons have been related to communication (60.2%), clinical care (22.8%) and environment (7.2%).

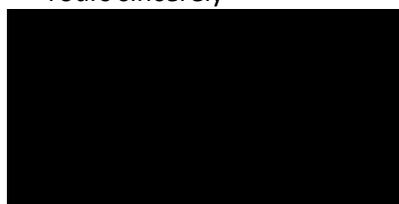
The remaining 9.75% of complaints have been related to access, continuity and transition of care, coordination and integration of care, lack of involvement of support people and property loss. Please note, percentages have been rounded.

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, Specialist Mental Health and Addictions Services  
Te Whatu Ora - Waitematā Health**