

## CORPORATE OFFICE

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### RE Official information request CDHB 9941 and WCDHB 9208

We refer to your email dated 4 September 2018 to the Ministry of Health requesting the following information under the Official Information Act (the Act) from both Canterbury DHB and West Coast DHB. The Ministry of Health subsequently transferred your request to us on the 5<sup>th</sup> September 2018. We note your request was clarified on 11 September as relating to complaints: Patients against Staff, Staff against Patients and Staff against Staff.

- 1. All incoming and outgoing information – including emails, memos, texts, call transcripts, audio, video, reports and letters – relating to complaints made against District Health Board staff across the country over the past three years.**

In your request you advise that the information requested is to be used as part of a report by the NZ Herald into allegations of widespread bullying and sexual harassment/ harassment claims against DHB. As clarified your request was for information relating to complaints in the following categories: Patients against Staff, Staff against Patients and Staff against Staff.

- *Complaint patients against staff*

Both Canterbury DHB and West Coast DHB have a complaints management system which records any complaint received by consumers, family and the public on the performance and experiences of using the DHB services. Such a complaint about a DHB service follows the process detailed in our Complaints Management Policy to be investigated and resolved as appropriate for the nature of the complaint.

This system records complaints made about the DHB service rather than a specific complaint about the action of a particular DHB employee, for example a complaint by a consumer against a staff member for bullying or harassment. While a complaint about a particular employee may form part of a wider DHB complaint, a complaint about a particular employee is not captured in the complaints management system in any detail. Rather it is referred to the responsible area for consideration, investigation and action as appropriate. Therefore, Canterbury DHB and West Coast DHB do not have a centralised database holding the requested information and therefore cannot be made available

without substantial collation or research and is declined under section 18(f) of the Act.

- *Complaint staff against patient*

With respect to complaints made by staff against patients this information is not held in a central data base for either DHB and therefore cannot be made available without substantial collation or research. Accordingly, we are declining to provide this information under section 18(f) of the Act.

We did think it would be helpful for you to have information concerning the number of recorded incidents relating to assault and abuse against a staff member since the implementation of the incident management system in 2015. Our staff are encouraged to report **all** incidents. An incident is any unplanned or unexpected event resulting in, or having the potential for harm, ill health, damage, loss or disruption to service delivery. It is important to note that a recorded incident is not the same as a complaint.

This information is detailed below:

### Canterbury DHB Health Services

Abuse - Verbal	984
Abuse Verbal - Discrimination	43
Abused - Verbal	40
Assault - Physical	1923
Assault - Sexual	48
Assaulted - Physically	64
Assaulted - Sexually	2
Physical Threat	755
Threat - Verbal	437
Threatened - Physically	33
Threatened - Sexually	7
Threatened - Verbally	24
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>4,360</b>

### West Coast DHB Health Services

Abuse - Verbal	43
Abuse Verbal - Discrimination	3
Abused - Verbal	8
Assault - Physical	157
Assault - Sexual	1
Assaulted - Physically	36
Threat - Verbal	5
Threatened - Physically	16
Threatened - Verbally	2
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>271</b>

Each event is reviewed so that patients and staff are supported, and secondarily for continuous quality improvement. Since implementation of the Safety1st incident management system in 2015 and as at 25 August 2018, 68,320 incident forms have been submitted. Of these, 45,429 were clinical incident forms.

We take all forms of assault or abuse very seriously. Staff need to be supported and depending on the initial review, this may initiate the following action:

- Arrange support for the staff member. This would be providing a chance to talk, offering EAP (Employee Assistance Programmes), offering extra supervision or a debrief
  - Discuss the event with staff
  - Discuss practices with staff
  - Identify if an external agency (e.g. police ) has been involved
  - Advise the senior leadership team
  - Reassign the staff member to another area of work
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- *Complaint staff against staff*

This information is not held in a central data base for either DHB and therefore cannot be made available without substantial collation or research. Accordingly we are declining to provide this information under section 18(f) of the Act.

- 2. Can the information be broken down into districts and by complaint type: ie. bullying, sexual harassment, assault etc. Also:**
- a. how many complaints were investigated,**
  - b. how many are still ongoing,**
  - c. the results of those investigations,**
  - d. how many people were charged by police/sentenced/fired/had their employments ended as a result.**

This request for further detail on the complaints is not held in a central data base for either DHB and therefore cannot be made available without substantial collation or research. Accordingly we are declining to provide this information under section 18(f) of the Act.

I trust that this satisfies your interest in this matter.

Yours sincerely



Greg Hamilton  
**Acting Executive Director**  
**Planning, Funding & Decision Support**