



CORPORATE OFFICE

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1 June 2022

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RE Official Information Act request CDHB 10818 & WCDHB 9667

I refer to your email dated 15 February 2022 requesting the following information under the Official Information Act from Canterbury DHB and West Coast DHB. Specifically:

- 1. What was your board's policy regarding media access to your DHB premises to interview staff and patients, and take photographs and video before any COVID-19 restrictions were introduced?**
- 2. Were any new conditions for media access introduced as a result of COVID-19?**
- 3. If so, how was this decision made and why?**
- 4. What were the new conditions and how did they affect access at different alert levels and under the current traffic light system?**
- 5. What is your board's intentions for the future regards media access under COVID-19?**
- 6. Do you feel your media access rules are consistent with the media's responsibilities to report accurately and promptly on issues, and also with the right of patients and staff to interact freely with the media if they consent?**

Pre COVID-19 pandemic, people staying in our facilities were able to speak to media in-person or by phone or Zoom/Skype etc.

For in-person media interviews, we ask that media contact our communications team regarding the timing of the proposed visit to ensure it doesn't cause disruption within the facility or to the person's scheduled care. We also make sure that any media engagement won't breach another patient's privacy.

If an in-person interview became possible, such as under the GREEN traffic light setting when visitor restrictions may be eased - and subject to the patient's state of health, we would endeavour to find somewhere private for them to use for an interview.

In the ORANGE setting visitors are restricted and media visits are not permitted inside our facilities.

Filming can take place outside our hospitals with prior permission. These restrictions are made on the advice of the DHB's infection prevention and control team to reduce the risk of exposure to our vulnerable patients and staff.

Our visitor access policy is reviewed under each alert level and traffic light setting to reflect the level of risk and to minimise the spread of COVID-19. We also take local factors into account when making these decisions, such as the number of community cases, staff absence and the current demands on care.

As rules were changed, they were communicated to the public, via our website, media including social media and posters, digital signs and handouts within our facilities.

Future access will continue to consider the health and wellbeing of our patients and staff and will follow the most up to date infection prevention and control advice.

I trust that this satisfies your interest in this matter.

Please note that this response, or an edited version of this response, may be published on the Canterbury DHB website and West Coast DHB website after your receipt of this response.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'RLS', with a long horizontal line extending to the left from the bottom of the signature.

Ralph La Salle
Senior Manager, OIAs
Canterbury DHB & West Coast DHB