



# *West Coast District Health Board*

## *Te Poari Hauora a Rohe o Tai Poutini*

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15 May 2018

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### **RE Official Information Act request WCDHB 9118**

I refer to your email dated 4 April 2018 to the Ministry of Health which was subsequently transferred to us on 16 April 2018 requesting the following information under the Official Information Act from West Coast DHB.

- **Seeking a breakdown in reported assaults on staff and assaults on patients at all mental health facilities, including forensic facilities. I would like the numbers broken down on a monthly basis for each unit dating back to 2008.**
- **I would like to get a similar breakdown on the number of times Police were called to assist or intervene in any incident.**

Electronic records pre dating 2014 do not exist in relation to the data requested; some data in hardcopy where it does exist has been added retrospectively to our Safety 1st incident management system around March 2015 when the West Coast DHB went live with the electronic reporting system.

We are declining to provide information between 2008-2013 under section 18(f) of the Official Information Act i.e. we do not hold this information in an easily retrievable system and it would require substantial collation and research to go through individual patient files for these six years.

Between 2014 and 2018 (YTD) there were 14 occurrences of patient assaults on staff and 15 occurrences of patient on patient assaults recorded at West Coast DHB Mental Health facilities.

Because of the very small numbers involved we are declining to break this down any further under section 9(2)(a) of the Official Information Act i.e. *"...to protect the privacy of natural persons, including those deceased"*.

With regard to the number of times police were called to assist, the West Coast DHB does not hold this information in a centralised data base and to obtain this information would require us going back through client files over the period requested. We are declining to do this under section 18(f) of the Official Information Act i.e. *"the information cannot be made available without substantial collation or research"*.

Since the adoption of the Safety First reporting system, we have encouraged a strong reporting culture for all types of adverse incidents. With all incidents staff are entitled to make a complaint to Police.

Our greatest priority is the wellbeing and safety of our patients and staff and our staff work extremely hard to maintain and manage safe working environments across all clinical service departments.

When incidents do occur, these are promptly reported by staff. This information is then investigated and appropriate recommendations are implemented where appropriate. Staff are actively supported by their line managers, rehabilitation specialists, and have direct access to Employee Assistance Programme [EAP], for ongoing assistance, advice and support where indicated or warranted.

If you disagree with our decision to withhold information you may, under section 28(3) of the Official Information Act, seek an investigation and review of our decision from the Ombudsman.

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 West Coast DHB website.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'C. Gullery', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

**Carolyn Gullery**  
**Executive Director**  
**Planning, Funding & Decision Support**