

20 January 2022

Kerry Wall

Via email: Kerry-tim@xtra.co.nz

Tēnā koe Kerry



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Official Information Act Request – OIA 14000 Allocation and Use of Respite Care

On 1 December 2021, under section 12 of the Official Information Act, you requested the following information from Whanganui District Health Board (WDHB):

I am requesting information regarding the allocation and use of respite care and carer relief in respect of the WHANGANUI DHB. My use of the terms are:

respite care: care provided in a residential care home for a client.

carer relief: a carer coming into the client's home for several hours or to stay overnight. (which the client pays and is later reimbursed)

I am requesting information on how much of EACH of these are allocated to clients and how much is actually used (or taken up) by clients.

I understand from you that it may be difficult to access the information on a year to year basis so an 'average' would be the best approach I think.

For example if the figures can be obtained for the full year of 2018 as to what carer relief and what respite care was allocated and what was actually used in both cases.

If this exercise was repeated for 2019 and 2020, I could take an average and get a more accurate picture.

Whanganui District Health Boards response:

From the OIA request it was ascertained that there was an acknowledgment that this information may be difficult to access. This has proven to be correct, particularly with regards to obtaining information from the DHB's financial accounting system.

We accessed data from two different DHB financial systems. The comparison showed similar volumes, but the values cannot be relied on due to accounting accruals and not using the DHB's financial year which is from 1 July to 30 June.

The data below includes the allocations by the DHB's funded NASC, Access Ability, for residential respite (a bed day) and the number of bed days that the DHB has funded to aged care providers through the payment system.

Please note that it is the individual carer who decides on when and how much of the allocation they will utilise. The information does not reflect what has occurred for the care, as some people will have moved into permanent care during their twelve-month allocated period, which is not by calendar year or DHB's financial year.

The NASC reports that often carers want respite bed days allocated as a 'just in case' safety net rather than planning to actually use them. This may be because often the person being cared for is reluctant to go into an ARC facility.

Chief Executive | Phone 06 348 3140

Also note that COVID had an impact in 2020, limiting ARC ability to accept respite care admissions.

Respite care bed days

Time Frame	Total Bed Days Allocated over calendar year	Total Bed Days Funded by DHB over calendar year
1 Jan 2018 > 30 th Dec 2018	3,175	1732 approximately
1 Jan 2019 > 30 th Dec 2019	3,349	1131 approximately
1 Jan 2020 > 30 th Dec 2020	3,280	1506 approximately

Carer Relief payments

Time Frame	Total Volume Allocated over calendar year	Total Volume Funded by DHB over calendar year
1 Jan 2018 > 30 th Dec 2018	2,125	933
1 Jan 2019 > 30 th Dec 2019	2,062	747
1 Jan 2020 > 30 th Dec 2020	1,915	605

Similar to the Respite allocations, people agree to an allocation of Carer Support with the thought that it may work better for their family member to remain at home with a relief carer, where they are settled and the environment is familiar.

However, the logistics of finding a suitable person to provide this informal care is not that easy. People who report good use of it, have either had it as a package of daytime "respite" through Alzheimers' Group, or who have strong whanau/family networks, and other whanau/family members provide the relief care.

Under section 28(3) of the Act you have the right to ask the Ombudsman to review any decisions made under this request. The Ombudsman may be contacted by email at: info@ombudsman.parliament.nz or by calling 0800 802 602.

Should you have any further queries about the above information, please contact our OIA co-ordinator Anne Phoenix at anne.phoenix@wdhb.org.nz

Ngā mihi



Graham Dyer
Kaihautū Hauora – Acting Chief Executive
Whanganui District Health Board