

31 August 2018

[REDACTED]  
Committee Secretary - Mental Health & Disability Committee  
Auckland District Law Society  
PO Box 58  
Shortland Street  
Auckland 1140

DX CP24001

E-mail: [REDACTED]

Dear [REDACTED]

#### Official Information Act (1982) Request

I write in response to your Official Information Act request, which we received on 07 August 2018, as partial transfer of request submitted to the Ministry of Health, and transferred to DHBs under section 14 of the OIA.

The Ministry of Health has already provided information directly to you on several of your initial questions, but transferred the following six questions to all DHBs for responses regards mental health patients and DHB procedures regarding service user care and leave from Acute Mental Health units.

1. How do Units monitor where patients are at all times?
2. Are there sign in / out procedures used at all facilities?
3. What are the definitions for locked, flexi and open wards?
  - a. Are these definitions used consistently?
4. Can involuntary patients be on open wards?
5. If patients do not return to the unit when they are supposed to, what is the protocol?
6. If patients are on escorted leave, and somehow get away from their escort, what is the policy?

The responses from our Counties Manukau Mental Health Services to each question are provided below.

1. A copy of the Counties Manukau Health (CMH) Mental Health Services (MHS) *Observation through Engagement Policy and Procedure* are provided (**attached**), which sets out how our inpatient units monitor service users.
2. When a service user arrives or leaves the acute adult mental health inpatient unit, their assigned Nurse documents this event in that service user's electronic clinical notes.

3. A copy of the CMH *MHS Open Doors in Acute Mental Health Services Policy and Procedure* are provided (**attached**), which explain the definitions and use of locked, flexi and open wards (this document also covers information requested for question 3a)
4. Yes, involuntary patients can be on open wards.
5. A copy of the *Absent Without Leave (AWOL) Policy and Procedure* is provided (**attached**). The Procedure is currently being reviewed, as part of our ongoing programme.
6. Our response to this situation will depend on the scenario and the context. Staff involved in direct care will assess an individual's current mental health status, current and past risk, and legal status. A range of variables, both clinical and environmental that will inform a response to this type of situation. For example, if the service user is on Escorted Leave within the hospital grounds, our staff response is typically to progress through the following sequence to encourage return:
  - Follow the person
  - Encourage their return to the unit
  - Engage and de-escalate any behaviours
  - Call Hospital Security to assist
  - Call NZ Police (111) to assist
  - Call the Mental Health Unit nurse in charge, to provide additional support or assistance.
  - Seek assistance from the clinical department / immediate location.

If the service user is on Escorted Leave outside the hospital grounds, the progression may be different, for example:

- Encourage user to return
- Follow, if appropriate but consider not following if not appropriate
- Engage and de-escalate any behaviours
- Contact family/ support people
- Contact community mental health staff for support
- Contact acute community team for assistance
- Contact NZ Police (111), if there is identified concern or risk
- Contact the service user on their cell phone
- Complete a clinical assessment of the situation, if able
- Discuss strategy with the Senior Nurse on duty, and the Mental Health Medical team
- Establish an appropriate response plan, congruent with the context.

I trust this information satisfactorily answers your query. If you are not satisfied with this response you are entitled to seek a review of the response by the Ombudsman under section 28(3) of the Official Information Act.

Please note that this response or an edited version of this may be published on the Counties Manukau DHB website.

Yours sincerely,



Gloria Johnson  
**Chief Executive (Acting)**