



# *West Coast District Health Board*

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

Corporate Office  
High Street, Greymouth 7840

Telephone 03 769-7400  
Fax 03 769-7791

20 January 2020

9(2)(a)

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

### **RE Official Information Act request WCDHB 9379**

I refer to your email, dated 5 December 2019 requesting the following information under the Official Information Act from West Coast DHB.

- **Have there been any suicides of people while in the care of the DHB in the past five years? (On the ward)**
- **Have there been any suicides by someone within a week of discharge over the past five years?**
- **Have there been any suicides by someone living in the community with support in the past five years?**

There have been fourteen suicides (or suspected suicides\*) by people while in the care of the DHB in the past five years. However, because of the very small numbers involved in some categories of your request we are declining to provide any further detail pursuant to section 9(2)(a) of the Official Information Act i.e. “....to protect the privacy of natural persons, including those deceased”.

As the Coroner has not ruled on all the deaths in this time frame, release of this information would also contravene Section 71 of the Coroner’s Act.

#### **\*Please note:**

A death can only be classified as suicide by a coroner on completion of the coroner’s inquiry. However, it can take between 12 and 36 months for a coroner’s finding to have been received and documented. Deaths within part of the time frame requested are therefore unlikely to have been considered by the Coroner at this stage. All people over the period in question who died while in (SMHS) Mental Health Services inpatient care or under a Compulsory Treatment Order under the Mental Health Act while in community care would have been referred for an inquest to the Coroner’s Office.

The Chief Coroner releases national provisional suicide statistics each year to help suicide prevention efforts and initiatives undertaken by other agencies. <https://coronialservices.justice.govt.nz>

We have also published previous responses for Official Information Act requests relating to suicide on our website which you may find of interest. (Keyword to search: Suicide)

[https://www.wcdhb.health.nz/about-us/document-library/?\\_sft\\_document\\_type=official-information-act-response](https://www.wcdhb.health.nz/about-us/document-library/?_sft_document_type=official-information-act-response)

I trust that this satisfies your interest in this matter.

You may, under section 28(3) of the Official Information Act, seek a review of our decision to withhold information by the Ombudsman. Information about how to make a complaint is available at [www.ombudsman.parliament.nz](http://www.ombudsman.parliament.nz); or Freephone 0800 802 602.

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

Yours sincerely

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

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