

14 MAY 2019

Gloria Fraser

Email: fyi-request-10077-dd2bf5db@requests.fyi.org.nz

Dear Ms Fraser

Thank you for your email request dated 12 April 2019 requesting information under the Official Information Act 1982, regarding gender-affirming healthcare availability. You requested:

1. *“Could you please advise whether the following gender-affirming healthcare services are funded by the Hutt District Health Board for transgender patients, and whether the services are currently available:*
 - Puberty blockers
 - Hormone therapy
 - Mastectomy
 - Hysterectomy
 - Orchiectomy
 - Facial hair removal
 - Breast augmentation
 - Voice training
 - Facial feminization surgery
2. *Could you please also advise: Are transgender healthcare providers under the Hutt District Health Board encouraged to follow Oliphant et al’s (2018) Guidelines for gender affirming healthcare for gender diverse and transgender children, young people and adults in Aotearoa New Zealand? If not, which guidelines do they follow, if any?*
3. *Is a readiness assessment required to access gender-affirming healthcare services? (This is an assessment of readiness for treatment from a medical and psychosocial perspective, as well as whether the client understands the risks and benefits of treatment, and is sometimes referred to as a ‘mental health assessment’).*
If a readiness assessment is required to access gender-affirming healthcare services, who carries out this assessment? Is this assessment funded by the Hutt District Health Board? Does the assessment use an informed consent model?
4. *What steps is the Hutt District Health Board taking to improve healthcare provision for transgender New Zealanders?”*

Question 1:

“Could you please advise whether the following gender-affirming healthcare services are funded by the Hutt District Health Board for transgender patients, and whether the services are currently available:

Puberty blockers, hormone therapy, mastectomy, hysterectomy, orchidectomy, facial hair removal, breast augmentation, voice training and/or facial feminization surgery”

The endocrinology service at Hutt Valley DHB provides transgender clients with the commencement and initial supervision of gender affirming hormonal therapy, but will look to discharge clients back to their GP for longer-term follow up. The DHB is not involved in other aspects of transgender care, including primary care health and surgical procedures.

Question 2:

“Are transgender healthcare providers under the Hutt District Health Board encouraged to follow Oliphant et al’s (2018) Guidelines for gender affirming healthcare for gender diverse and transgender children, young people and adults in Aotearoa New Zealand? If not, which guidelines do they follow, if any?”

The endocrinology service at Hutt Valley DHB, which provide transgender clients with the commencement and initial supervision of gender affirming hormonal therapy, follows the Oliphant et al (2018) guidelines.

Question 3:

“Is a readiness assessment required to access gender-affirming healthcare services? (This is an assessment of readiness for treatment from a medical and psychosocial perspective, as well as whether the client understands the risks and benefits of treatment, and is sometimes referred to as a ‘mental health assessment’).”

An assessment is required in order to access gender affirming healthcare services, and while this is currently provided by a psychologist, it does not necessarily need to be undertaken by a mental health professional. The content of the assessment is well established and should be consistent. It could be undertaken in the future by GPs with appropriate support from counsellors/psychologists as required.

Question 4:

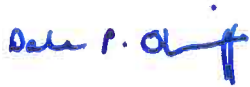
“What steps is the Hutt District Health Board taking to improve healthcare provision for transgender New Zealanders?”

When Hutt Valley DHB is unable to provide transgender healthcare locally and the referral meets the national specification, the DHB would refer the patient to an appropriate DHB. Travel for this care may be covered under the National Travel Assistance programme. Information regarding this is available on the Ministry of Health website (<https://www.health.govt.nz/new-zealand-health-system/claims-provider-payments-and-entitlements/national-travel-assistance>). If a psychiatric assessment was required, MHAIDs would be contacted.

I trust this information fulfils your request.

You have the right to seek a review, under section 28(3) of the Act, by way of a complaint to the Ombudsman.

Yours sincerely



Dale Oliff
Acting Chief Executive
Hutt Valley District Health Board