

15 May 2019

Gloria Fraser

By email to: fyi-request-10146-87ecd7ba@requests.fyi.org.nz

Dear Gloria

Re: Official Information (OIA) request - Gender-affirming healthcare provided 2018

Thank you for your request for information of 12 April 2019 regarding services and treatments available for transgender patients in the calendar year 2018. Our responses are listed below following each question. We have endeavoured to answer these questions as fully as possible using the information available to us.

I am writing to request information about the gender-affirming healthcare services provided by the Auckland District Health Board as a follow up to a similar request I made in May of 2018.

Could you please advise how many transgender people received each of the following services, specifically for gender-affirming healthcare purposes, within the 2018 calendar year?

- Puberty blockers
- Hormone therapy
- Mastectomy
- Hysterectomy
- Orchidectomy
- Facial hair removal
- Breast augmentation
- Voice training
- Facial feminization surgery

Auckland DHB provides funding for gender affirming health care to the Centre for Youth Health (CfYH) at Counties Manukau DHB and the Auckland Regional Sexual Health service (ARSHS) at ADHB. Both of these services provide non-surgical health services for Transgender people for the youth and adult Auckland DHB population. This includes hormone therapy, nursing, medical, clinical psychology and counselling. Where appropriate a client will be referred to a mental health professional for any underlying mental health issue. This may be to either primary mental health services or secondary mental health services depending on the need identified.

Auckland DHB is unable to provide definitive numbers of patients receiving hormone therapy or puberty blockers as this information is not electronically available. However, the number of people seen for an initial assessment by the Auckland Sexual Health service and the Centre for Youth Health residing in Auckland DHB area in the 2018 calendar year is provided in Table 1.

Table 1: Initial Assessments ADHB Population

Service	Youth	Adult	Total
Centre for Youth Health	40	NA	40
Auckland Regional Sexual Health Service		131	131
Total	40	131	171

Please see the attached link for details of the services provided:

<https://www.healthpoint.co.nz/public/paediatrics/kidz-first-centre-for-youth-health/>
<https://www.healthpoint.co.nz/public/sexual-health/northern-region-transgender-health-services/>

Auckland DHB does not provide funding for the following gender affirming services:

- Facial hair removal
- Breast augmentation
- Voice training.

A small number of general surgical procedures including mastectomy, hysterectomy and orchidectomy have been provided in the 2018 calendar year as part of the general elective services for the Auckland population. Auckland does not allocate transgender specific funding for surgical interventions for the Auckland Transgender population. Table 2 details the number of transgender surgical procedures delivered in 2018. This may not be a complete data set as there is no specific differentiation in the national data sets for Transgender specific surgery events.

Table 2: Transgender surgical procedures ADHB

Orchidectomy	2
Mastectomy	5
Hysterectomy	4
Total	11

Could you please also advise:

- Are transgender healthcare providers under the Auckland 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?

Auckland DHB follows the Northern Region Guidelines for gender affirming healthcare for Gender Diverse and Transgender Children, Young People and Adults the details of which can be found through the following link:

<https://www.healthpoint.co.nz/public/sexual-health/northern-region-transgender-health-services/>

- 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').

Both the ARSHS and the CFYH provide a full initial assessment. The non-surgical services provided by ARSHS do not require an assessment by a mental health professional unless there is an identified

underlying mental health issue which requires mental health expertise. Where this is identified a referral to either the primary or secondary mental health services will be made.

CfYH will seek a mental health assessment prior to commencing hormone therapy and prior to referring for surgical services.

- If a readiness assessment is required to access gender-affirming healthcare services, who carries out this assessment? Is this assessment funded by the Auckland District Health Board? Does the assessment use an informed consent model?

Both the ARSHS and CfYH follow an informed consent model. Please refer to the link below for details of referral guidelines and pathway information:

<https://www.healthpoint.co.nz/public/sexual-health/northern-region-transgender-health-services/>

Auckland DHB funds these assessments in both the Centre for Youth Health and Auckland Regional Sexual Health services for the Auckland DHB population

- What steps is the Auckland District Health Board taking to improve healthcare provision for transgender New Zealanders?

There are a number of initiatives underway to improve healthcare provision for transgender people in the Northern region. These include the implementation of two new service enhancements, Peer Support and Key Worker, as well as participation in a governance group that provides oversight across services.

Northern Regional Transgender Peer Support Service

Peer support has been associated with improved access to healthcare, reduced risk of suicide, is effective at engaging people into care, reducing the use of emergency rooms and hospitals and reducing substance use, reducing the use of crisis services and feelings of isolation, increasing social networks and wellness, and has a valuable role in quickly connecting with persons typically considered to be among the most alienated from healthcare. The new Northern Regional Transgender Peer Support Service will use a multi-faceted approach to service delivery, including: Peer Support Workers (PSW), who are trained and working in a locally informed Intentional Peer Support model. Peer Support Workers will be based at the Centre for Youth Health and the Auckland Regional Sexual Health services.

Northern Region Clinical Governance Group

ADHB is an active participant in the Northern Region Clinical Governance Group. The role of the Clinical Governance Group is to provide oversight of transgender health service provision in the Northern Region with a particular focus on equity, consumer satisfaction, access, safety, timeliness, quality and service Improvement.

I trust that this information meets your requirements. Auckland DHB, like other agencies across the state sector, supports the open disclosure of information to assist the public's understanding of how we are delivering publicly-funded healthcare.

This includes the proactive publication of anonymised Official Information Act responses on our website from 10 working days after they have been released.

if you feel that there are good reasons why your response should not be made publicly available, we will be happy to consider this.

Yours faithfully



Ailsa Claire, OBE
Chief Executive
Auckland District Health Board