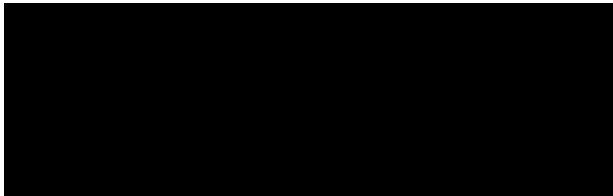


14 April 2022



Dear 

Re: OIA request – Speech-language therapy services for people who stutter

Thank you for your Official Information Act request received 7 April seeking information from Waitematā District Health Board (DHB) about our speech-language therapy services available to people who stutter.

Before responding to your specific questions, it may be useful to provide some context about our services.

Waitematā is the largest and one of the most rapidly growing DHBs in the country, serving a population of around 650,000 across the North Shore, Waitakere and Rodney areas. We are the largest employer in the district, employing more than 8,900 people across more than 80 locations.

In addition to providing care to our own resident population, we are the Northern Region provider of forensic mental health services and child rehabilitation services, plus the metro Auckland provider of child community dental services and community alcohol and drug services.

In response to your request, we are able to provide the following information:

- 1. Whether you do provide services for people who stutter?**
- 2. If you do provide services for people who stutter, would you please advise:**
 - a. how many people who stutter that you have worked with in the last year, including:**
 - I. breakdown of their ages and ethnicities**
 - II. the type of services that you provided, e.g. individual speech therapy, group programmes**
 - III. the number of sessions of individual speech therapy you provided in the last year**
 - IV. the number of any other programmes etc that you offered and the number of participants in these programmes.**

We are providing a combined response for questions 1 and 2. For adults, our entry criteria for speech-language therapy services does not include stuttering as a symptom as we do not treat people who have developmental difficulties where there is no acute change in communication.

Very occasionally, we receive a referral for an adult who has an acquired stutter/dysfluency (i.e. the sudden onset of stuttering in adulthood) following a brain injury, which we would typically treat as part of their overall acquired communication difficulty. However, these referrals are very rare and would total approximately one patient every few years.

If it was purely a dysfluency, even if it was acquired, we might still discuss the option of using Stuttering Treatment and Research Trust (START), due to the Trust's expertise in this area. If the patient declined this option, we would continue to offer treatment.

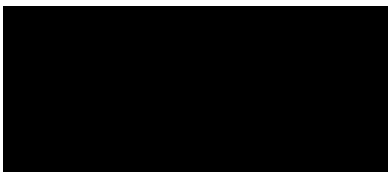
Paediatric patients (aged 0 to 18 years) are referred to the Ministry of Education as it holds the contract for this service.

I trust that this information is helpful.

Waitematā DHB supports the open disclosure of information to assist community 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 consider there are good reasons why this response should not be made publicly available, we will be happy to consider your views.

Yours sincerely



**Executive Director Allied Health, Scientific and Technical services
Waitematā District Health Board**