



2 July 2019



Dear 

Re: OIA request – Publicly funded fertility treatment

Thank you for your Official Information Act request received 18 June 2019 seeking the following of Waitematā District Health Board (DHB):

I am contacting you to confirm that the following is the eligibility criteria for publicly funded consultations for fertility treatment in the Northern region:

Eligibility Criteria for a publicly funded consultation:

Female must be 39 years or younger at the time of referral.

New Zealand resident(s) or work permit for at least two years (this applies to both couples, not just the woman). Proof of residency/citizenship/work visa must be provided before eligibility for treatment can be confirmed.

And:

Not pregnant after one year of trying to get pregnant, OR

a known male or female factor such as endometriosis, blocked tubes, and anovulation or a very low sperm count, OR

have a genetic condition that can be treated with preimplantation genetic diagnosis, OR requires fertility preservation before undergoing medical treatment that is likely to compromise fertility (eg before Chemotherapy).

Exclusion Criteria

The following criteria excludes women from being eligible for a publicly funded consultation:

Man or male partner aged 55yrs or older

Woman BMI >35

Man or male partner BMI >40

The following criteria excludes women from being eligible for publicly funded treatment:

BMI>32

Man or male partner BMI >40

Woman a smoker

Man or male partner a smoker

Illicit drug or alcohol abuse in the past 12 months

Have two or more children to the relationship or two or more children to any relationship living at home at least half of the time.

Eligibility for publicly funded fertility services provided by the Northern Region Fertility Service (NRFS) is outlined in "Detail on Eligibility for Publicly Funded Fertility Services". This document is

available on the NRFS website: <https://www.healthpoint.co.nz/public/fertility/northern-region-fertility-service-nrfs/>

In addition, you asked the following:

- *It seems that some of the eligibility criteria differs between regional health services, why is that? Is that fair?*
- *Can I please have some data on the number of people who received publicly funded fertility treatment last year and the cost of publicly funded fertility treatment last year?*
- *Can I please have some data on the current average wait time for publicly funded fertility treatment for the first specialist appointment and starting treatment?*

In response, Waitematā DHB cannot comment on services provided in other regions. In the northern region, the NRFS Advisory Group (the Advisory Group) agreed the local eligibility criteria based on the Ministry of Health Service Specifications, emerging issues or to clarify areas of uncertainty which have arisen from time-to-time and current evidence. It is important to have clarity to ensure fairness as there are three providers and multiple clinicians in the northern region. The Advisory Group is made up of senior clinicians and scientists from the three providers, DHB representatives from each of the four northern DHBs, an epidemiologist, a consumer representative, Planning and Funding and a general practitioner.

In answer to your further questions regarding the cost of fertility services, the number of people accessing services and wait times:

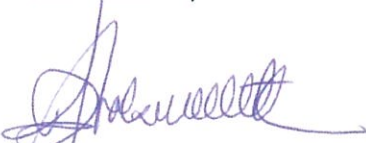
- In excess of \$5.5M was allocated for fertility services in the northern region in the 2018/19 financial year for all specialist fertility services.
- Based on data in the national database, for the year to 30 June 2018:
 - 906 first specialist appointments (FSAs) were provided (this is usually for a 'couple' rather than a person).
 - 487 treatments were provided (sum of 1st IVF cycle, cancelled IVF cycle, incomplete IVF cycle, 2nd IVF cycle and intrauterine insemination, noting some couples may have had more than one of these treatments).
- The average wait time to March 2019 was:
 - 98 days from receipt of referral to FSA.
 - 423 days from receipt of referral to treatment.

I trust that this information meets your requirements. Waitematā 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 sincerely



Dr Debbie Holdsworth
Director Funding
Waitematā District Health Board