



27 April 2022

Dear [REDACTED]

Re: OIA request – NZ Sign Language interpreters

Thank you for your Official Information Act request received as a transfer from the Ministry of Health on 29 March seeking information from Waitematā District Health Board (DHB) about the use of New Zealand Sign Language (NZSL) interpreters.

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. The number of times NZSL interpreters were booked (successful and unsuccessful) for doctor appointments in each DHB each week over the period of one year from February 2021 to February 2022.**

It should be noted that this response covers the Waitemata district only. In most cases where we have been unable to fulfil a request for a NZSL interpreter, this is due to late notice of a booking or where interpreters were already fully booked for other appointments during that timeframe.

In these instances, the service that has requested the interpreter will be advised as soon as possible that an interpreter is not available at the required time.

In instances where an interpreter is unavailable and the appointment is planned and non-urgent, we try to reschedule as soon as possible. Alternatively, the clinic will give the patient the option to attend with a family member, friend or support person.

The following numbers show that more than 97 percent of booking requests were fulfilled.

NZSL interpreters booked for appointments at Waitematā DHB from Feb-2021 to Feb-2022													
NZSL bookings	2021											2022	
	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb
Confirmed	34	44	46	68	62	58	39	25	23	46	45	33	53
Unable to fill*	1	0	0	3	5	1	1	1	0	1	0	1	2

* Late bookings or where interpreters were already booked for other appointments.

2. **Would it have the type of doctor appointments by medical field or location (e.g. hospital or general practice) appointments that used NZSL interpreters?**

Information for Waitematā DHB covers all services – hospitals, community services, mental health etc. Information for primary health care covers GPs, Plunket, community midwives, pharmacies, hospices etc.

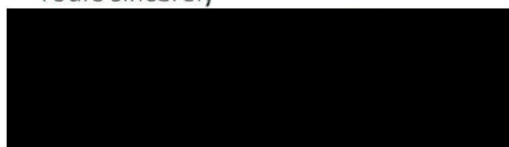
NZSL interpreter bookings within Waitematā DHB services and GP/primary health care setting													
NZSL bookings	2021											2022	
	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb
Waitematā DHB	23	31	35	52	48	39	28	22	17	42	32	26	42
Primary health care	12	13	11	19	19	20	12	4	6	5	13	8	13
Total	35	44	46	71	67	59	40	26	23	47	45	34	55

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



Deputy Chief Executive Officer
Waitematā District Health Board