

28 April 2022

Dear [REDACTED]

Re: OIA request – Asian Mental Health Services workforce and proportion of Mandarin/Cantonese speakers

Thank you for your Official Information Act request received 25 March 2022 seeking information from Waitematā District Health Board (DHB) about our Asian Mental Health Services workforce.

You submitted eight questions and, on 30 March, you added the following additional questions to your request:

I understand that the Ministry of Health provides the following targets for wait times for first contact with mental health services:

- **80% of referrals to be seen face-to-face within three weeks of referral**
 - **95% of referrals to be seen face-to-face within eight weeks of referral.**
- 9. What are the mental health wait time target results for Waitematā DHB across the age groups 0-19, 20-64, 65+, all age groups, for these targets from March 2021 to March 2022?**
 - 10. Could you please provide the data for the ethnic groups: Pakeha, Asian, Chinese, Indian, Maori, Pacific, and the average across all ethnic groups, March 2021 to March 2022?**

We contacted you on 1 April 2022 to clarify which services you wanted included in the above additional questions. On 7 April, you confirmed that you wanted the wait time for Adult Mental Health Services across the specified age groups and ethnicities.

On 27 April, we contacted you to advise that an extension to the timeframe was necessary due to the unavailability of key staff who were providing and reviewing the information required for this response. We advised we would provide the response within another two working days, on 29 April. You advised it was your preference to receive the response on 28 April and we confirmed we would endeavour to provide the response within this timeframe or notify you if this was not possible.

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

1. How many people are working at Waitematā DHB’s Asian Mental Health Services workforce? What percentage do they make up of the total Mental Health and Addiction Services workforce in Waitematā DHB?

The Asian Mental Health Service provides cultural and linguistic support for service-users under the care of the mental health services provided by Waitematā DHB. This includes people residing in Waitakere, the North Shore and Rodney areas.

Asian Mental Health Services directly employs 5.50 full-time equivalent¹ (FTE), equalling to a headcount of six people, and holds contracts with 27 mental health professionals and cultural workers in order to meet the needs of the Asian community across the DHB.

Out of the 33 employed and contracted staff, 13 can speak Mandarin or/and Cantonese:

- **3 FTE employed staff** (cultural support coordinators) can speak Mandarin or/and Cantonese.
- **10 contractors**, consisting of nine mental health professionals and one cultural worker can speak Mandarin or/and Cantonese.

The Asian Mental Health Service offers a service in support of people who are engaged with staff of the Specialist Mental Health and Addiction Services. While the Asian Mental Health Services workforce makes up 0.38% of our total mental health and addictions workforce, it should be noted that all of our staff are able to assist Asian mental health clients.

Where appropriate, there will be some matching of ethnicity of Specialist Mental Health staff with the ethnicity of someone who is referred to Asian Mental Health Services and other matters are also taken into consideration in the allocation within Specialist Mental Health and Addiction Services. Where there are specific cultural needs unable to be addressed within Specialist Mental Health and Addiction Services, a referral is made from the service to the Asian MHS.

Across the DHB’s Specialist Mental Health and Addiction Services, nearly 23% of our staff identify as Asian. The table below shows the breakdown of Specialist Mental Health and Addiction staff by ethnicity, which is somewhat reflective of our district’s population demographics:

Waitematā DHB’s Specialist Mental Health and Addiction Services workforce March 2022		
Ethnicity	Total number of staff members	Percentage of staff members
Asian	362	22.8%
European	788	49.5%
Māori	203	12.8%
MELAA ²	45	2.8%
Pacific	193	12.1%
Total	1,591	100%

² Middle Eastern, Latin American and African

2. How many counsellors, psychologists and psychiatrists working for or contracted by Waitematā DHB speak Mandarin and/or Cantonese?

¹ 1.00 full-time equivalent = 40 hours per week

This information is not held in a centralised database. To provide the information you are seeking would take several days of interviewing a large number of staff to ensure that accurate information is captured. This work, and the subsequent collation and review that would be required, would need to be spread amongst the service's core duties and, therefore, would require a matter of several weeks, if not months, to properly collate and review. This work would be unmanageable for our service in a business-as-usual environment and is even more challenging to undertake at a time when staff are concentrating on efforts to manage the recovery from the recent COVID-19 outbreak.

We have considered whether charging or extending the timeframe for responding to your request would assist us in managing this work and have concluded it would not. We have, therefore, determined to refuse your request under Section 18(f) of the Official Information Act due to substantial collation and research.

3. What do you think of the figure that just 14 counsellors registered with the NZ Counsellors Association speak Mandarin or Cantonese? Do you think this is a shortage given the size of the Chinese population in New Zealand and Waitemata's high Chinese population?

As this question seeks an opinion, we are refusing it under section 18(g) of the Official Information Act as the information you are seeking is not held by Waitematā DHB.

4. What is the number of all mental health clients and referrals in Waitematā DHB for the year 2021?

The Waitematā Specialist Mental Health and Addiction Service consist of the following services:

- Adult Mental Health Services
- Child and Youth Mental Health Services
- Community Alcohol and Drug Service (CADS)
- Regional Forensic Psychiatric Services (Mason Clinic)
- Mental Health Services for Older Adults (MHSOA)
- Whitiki Maurea (Māori Mental Health and Addictions Services)
- Takanga A Fohe (Pacific Mental Health & Addictions Services).

In the calendar year 2021, Specialist Mental Health and Addiction Services received 38,791 referrals across all services. These referrals include community and inpatient referrals. Of the 38,791 referrals received, 22,124 were individual clients.

Adult Mental Health Services received 13,861 referrals, of which 7,708 were individual clients.

It should be noted that some people will be referred to both services; therefore, multiple referrals can be received for an individual through various pathways.

5. You said the waiting time for treatment for Asian Mental Health Services is 10.9 days - but what is the waiting time across Waitematā DHB for a Mandarin or Cantonese-speaking person requiring a mental health referral in their own language?

We are unable to provide a response about wait times across Waitematā DHB for people who speak Mandarin or Cantonese who require mental health referral in their own language as this data is not recorded by the service.

We are, therefore, refusing the aspect of your request from 2015 – 2016 under section 18(g) as the information requested is not held and there are no reasonable grounds to believe it is held by, or more closely connected with, the functions of another ministry or agency.

It is relevant to note that clients are triaged and seen according to their clinical need and acuity. Where clients need to be seen in their native language or may have language barriers, interpreters are invited to assist with appointments, whether by phone or face-to-face.

6. What is the average waiting time for treatment across all mental health patients in Waitematā DHB for the year 2021?

As indicated above, it is relevant to note that clients are triaged and seen according to their clinical need and acuity. We have also provided figures for 2022 year-to-date which show improvements made in some areas.

Average wait time for treatment (days) across Waitematā DHB Mental Health Services		
Service	2021	2022 (as at 14 March)
Asian Mental Health	21	10.9
Early Psychosis Intervention	16.6	16.4
Eating Disorders Liaison	16	0
ECT Service	8.1	20.5
Isa Lei (Pacific Mental Health)	13.8	8.5
MOKO (Maori Mental Health)	23.3	15.4
Liaison Psychiatry	0.6	0.8
Marinoto (CAMHS) West	29.3	17.2
Marinoto (CAMHS) North	34	15.5
Marinoto (CAMHS) Rodney	31.4	19.7
Maternal Mental Health	20	14.3
Infant Mental Health	34.2	27.3
Adult Mental Health North	7	5.2
Adult Mental Health West	8.5	4.7
Adult Mental Health Rodney	10.5	5.3

7. Out of the 137 referrals under Asian Mental Health team for 2021, how many of these patients received treatment in their native language?

Clients who are accepted by Asian Mental Health Services receive support by bi-lingual staff, contracted mental health professionals or cultural workers employed by the service. When a client's primary clinical responsibilities fall under the Specialist Mental Health and Addiction Services, an interpreter is used where there are language barriers.

8. Of the 137 referrals, how many were referred to a community organisation?

The Asian Mental Health Service accepted 123 of the 137 referrals received; 14 referrals were declined as they did not meet the service criteria at the time of the referral.

Where a referral is declined, the service's referral management team refers the person back to their general practitioner (GP) or primary mental health care provider.

9. The Ministry of Health provides the following targets for wait times for first contact with mental health services:

- 80% of referrals to be seen face-to-face within three weeks of referral
- 95% of referrals to be seen face-to-face within eight weeks of referral

What are the mental health wait time target results for Waitematā DHB across the age groups 0-19, 20-64, 65+, all age groups, for these two targets?

The table below shows the percentage of referrals to Adult Mental Health Services seen within three and eight weeks of receiving the referral, broken down by age range.

Mental health wait time target results for Waitematā DHB across the age groups 0-19, 20-64, 65+ for calendar year 2021		
Age	Percentage of referrals seen within three weeks of receiving the referral	Percentage of referrals seen within eight weeks of receiving the referral
0-19	90%	98%
20-65	91%	98%
65+	94%	99%

Until seen, people remain under the care of their usual health care practitioner. Information is provided about how to make contact should circumstances change and a more-urgent response appears to be required.

10. Could you please provide the data for the ethnic groups: Pakeha, Asian, Chinese, Indian, Māori, Pacific, and the average across all ethnic groups

The table below shows the percentage of referrals to Adult Mental Health Services seen within three and eight weeks of receiving the referral broken down by ethnic group for the year 2021.

Mental health wait time target results by ethnic group for calendar year 2021		
Ethnic groups	Percentage of referrals seen within three weeks of receiving the referral	Percentage of referrals seen within eight weeks of receiving the referral
Asian	92%	97%
Chinese	87%	98%
Indian	91%	99%
Māori	93%	99%
Pacific	91%	99%
Pakeha	91%	98%

I trust that the information we have been able to provide is helpful.

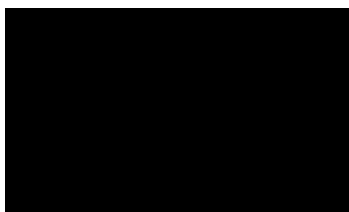
You have the right to seek an investigation and review by the Ombudsman of the decisions made in providing this response. Information about how to seek a review is available at www.ombudsman.parliament.nz or freephone 0800 802 602.

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



**Director
Specialist Mental Health and Addiction Services
Waitematā District Health Board**