



16 May 2022



Dear 

Re: OIA request – Maternal Mental Health referrals and wait times

Thank you for your Official Information Act request received 16 April 2022 seeking information from Waitematā District Health Board (DHB) about referrals to Maternal Mental Health in 2021 and current wait times.

You requested the following information:

- 1. The number of women referred to Maternal Mental Health at this DHB in 2021 and the number that were accepted.**
- 2. The current wait times for Maternal Mental Health in this DHB.**

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

Maternal Mental Health is a small specialist tertiary mental health service that provides care to women who are pregnant or have a baby less than 12 months of age. Women under the care of the service are predominantly experiencing moderate-to-severe mental health issues related to pregnancy, childbirth and/or the adjustment to parenting.

All referrals to the service are received by the Adult Community Mental Health teams in the first instance. The team reviews all referrals received and assesses the level of urgency required in providing mental health care. If urgent care is required, this is initially provided by the Adult Acute Service. Non-acute care is provided by the Maternal Mental Health team.

The team provides perinatal mental health advice and support to other mental health services, for example, for pregnant women with a known history of bipolar affective disorder or schizophrenia, who may be currently well.

An assessment prior to a woman becoming pregnant can also be offered to those who have experienced a serious mental illness (e.g. bipolar affective disorder, schizophrenia) to discuss the potential considerations and implications of pregnancy on their wellbeing (e.g. use of medications throughout pregnancy).

A phone consultation is offered to primary care providers, which enables general practitioners (GPs) to seek advice from the team's psychiatrists about safe medications during pregnancy and breastfeeding.

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

1. The number of women referred to Maternal Mental Health at this DHB in 2021 and the number that were accepted.

In 2021, 358 women were referred to the Waitemata DHB Maternal Mental Health Service. All were accepted into the service.

2. The current wait times for Maternal Mental Health in this District Health Board.

As of 19 April 2022, there are 102 open referrals to Maternal Mental Health. These women remain under the care of their GP and are allocated to a Maternal Mental Health clinician within one week of referral.

Of these, 16 women are waiting for their first face-to-face appointment. The current wait time (days between referral start and first face-to-face contact) is 18 days.

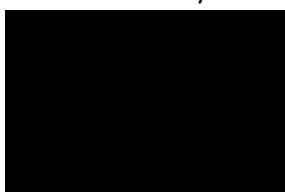
Please note, all referrals are reviewed for urgency by the clinical team and assessments are offered accordingly, including on the same day as referral, if required.

I trust that this information is helpful.

Waitemata 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 Addictions Service
Waitemata District Health Board**