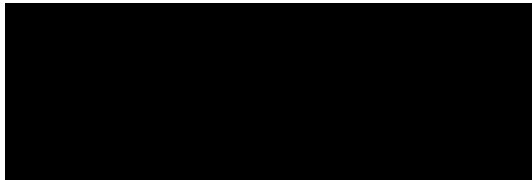


04 May 2022



Dear 

Re: OIA request – Review of referral trends among children and young people

Thank you for your Official Information Act request received 6 April 2022 seeking information from Waitematā District Health Board (DHB) on the detailed review of referral trends among children and young people referred to secondary mental health services, as reported to our Community and Public Health Advisory Committee (CPHAC) in May 2021.

Before responding to your specific question, 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.

The Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS) within Waitematā DHB provides comprehensive and specialist mental health assessments, liaison and treatment to children, young people and their families/whānau across the age range of 4-18 years (there is flexibility with adult services for those young people aged 18-19 years).

The service is provided by three geographically located multidisciplinary teams, serving the populations of Waitakere, North Shore and the Rodney districts. As well as providing psychiatric assessment, a range of interventions are provided, including: psychological therapies, group work, family therapy, pharmacology and parenting programmes.

Referrals are received from schools, primary care providers and other community and social service providers. All referrals are reviewed by a clinician and prioritised based on the clinical needs of the child or young person.

Urgent assessments are provided to young people presenting with significant mental health or risk concerns, including psychosis and/or suicide/self-harm attempts. The majority of children and young people requiring an urgent assessment are seen within 48 hours.

Non-urgent assessments are provided to children and young people presenting with a range of concerns, including depression, disruptive behaviour disorders (i.e. ADHD - Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder) and eating disorders.

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

Copies of the “detailed review of referral trends” among children and young people as noted in the May 2021, Community and Public Health Advisory Committee (CPHAC) meeting

The Specialist Mental Health and Addiction Services highlighted concerns regarding an increase in demand for Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services in its regular report to CPHAC in May 2021.

The report to CPHAC noted that a detailed review of referral trends was being completed by the service. Ultimately, the review was not undertaken because of the pressures created by the COVID-19 Delta and Omicron outbreaks in 2021 and early 2022. Therefore, we cannot provide a copy of the review. However, key observations in relation to referrals are detailed below:

- The service saw an increase in referrals in the 2020 calendar year but a small decline in 2021. Year-to-date, 2022 referral volumes are consistent with the volumes seen in 2021.
- While total referral volumes have not significantly increased, the acuity (as determined by young people who require an urgent assessment) has increased.

Waitematā DHB CAMHS number of referrals and crisis contacts by calendar year		
Calendar year	Total referrals	Urgent/crisis contacts
2018	4,889	1,434
2019	4,956	1,350
2020	5,142	1,412
2021	5,096	1,935

- North Shore Hospital’s Emergency Department sees almost twice as many young people under 18 years who require an acute psychiatric assessment as the Waitakere Emergency Department.

Young people under 18 years presenting at Waitematā DHB Emergency Departments requiring psychiatric assessment		
Calendar year	North Shore Hospital	Waitakere Hospital
2018	327	145
2019	385	156
2020	331	171
2021	358	238

- The majority of young people presenting to the Emergency Departments who require a psychiatric assessment are of New Zealand European ethnicity (64%), followed by Maori (21%) and Asian (10%).
- Since 2017, there has been an increase in Asian young people being referred to the service
This could be, in part, due to our changing demographics. However, further work is planned to understand the contributory factors.

Number of CAMHS open referrals for Asian young people	
Calendar year	New referrals
2017	434
2018	471
2019	467
2020	533
2021	531

- The need to respond to urgent referrals resulted in concurrent increases in wait times for non-urgent assessments in 2021. As you will note from the table below, there is evidence that wait times are now returning to pre-COVID-19 levels.

The service uses a standardised triage rating scale (the UK Mental Health Triage Scale) to determine the level of urgency with which an assessment needs to occur. Collaborative pathways are in place with a range of other services, both within the DHB and the community, to support children, young people and their whānau to access timely care.

For example, there is a collaborative pathway with our Paediatric Services for the assessment of children presenting with disruptive behaviour disorders (i.e. ADHD). This enables an assessment to be provided by either Paediatric Services or CAMHS, depending on the specific needs of the child or young person.

Average wait time for treatment across CAMHS						
Service	Average wait time for treatment (days)					
	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022 (to 14 Mar)
Marinoto (CAMHS) West	17	18	16	17	29	17
Marinoto (CAMHS) North	16	12	25	33	34	15
Marinoto (CAMHS) Rodney	18	16	23	28	31	20

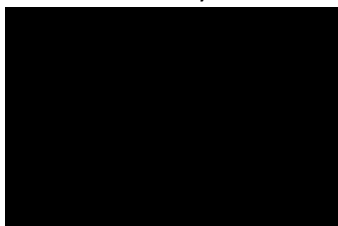
Waitematā DHB supports the open disclosure of information to assist community understanding of how we are delivering publicly funded healthcare.

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.

I trust that this information is helpful.

Yours sincerely



Director
Specialist Mental Health and Addiction Services
Waitematā District Health Board