

5 May 2022

s 9(2)(a)

By email: s 9(2)(a)
Ref: H202205087

Tēnā koe s 9(2)(a)

Response to your request for official information

Thank you for your request under the Official Information Act 1982 (the OIA) to the Ministry of Health (the Ministry) on 4 April 2022 for information relating resources for transgender surgery. You specifically requested:

“Can you please provide me with a breakdown of how many people are currently on the waiting list for publicly funded gender reassignment surgery, compared to 2021, 2020, 2019 and 2018?

I would like to see how much the list has increased or decreased.

Can you also please provide me with information on how long it would take to get through the list, based on current funding?”

The Ministry has interpreted your request as information for Gender Affirming Genital Surgery (GAgS) that is currently provided by a private surgeon with public funding.

Waiting list

GAgS wait list prior to 2020, was managed under the high-cost treatment pool (HCTP) where patients would be funded by the Ministry to have surgery in New Zealand (only feminising genital surgery up to 2014) or overseas.

The following table below provides a breakdown of the number of patient referrals received between 2018 and 2021 for the GAgS wait list.

Year:	Accepted referrals:	Declined referrals:	Total:	Please note:
2018	27	6	33	Accepted referrals are patients who meet current criteria for surgery.
2019	91	2	93	
2020	73	9	82	
2021	81	37	118	Declined referrals are patients who do not meet current criteria for surgery or there is insufficient information.
Total:	272	54	326	

For comparison, from 2003 to 2017 there were a total of 98 patient referrals received to be on the wait list for GAgS. As of 31 March 2022, there were 265 active patients on the waiting list for a first specialist appointment (FSA) to be considered for surgery, with 58 patients having already had a FSA. 15 out of the 58 patients who have had a FSA have completed surgery (five in 2020 and ten in 2021).

Surgery

From 1 January 2020, this service was funded with \$3.67 million over four years to perform up to 14 GAgS (feminising and masculinising genital surgeries) per year. All surgeries are completed in New Zealand by a private surgeon supported by Ministry funding and personnel.

The Ministry is unable to determine how long it would take to clear the wait list as current funding is currently sufficient, however there are factors to consider. This includes:

- Only one surgeon in New Zealand who can perform these surgeries.
- Some patients require more than one surgery and additional support before and after surgery.
- Ongoing impacts of COVID-19 delaying appointments and surgeries.
- Patient's suitability for surgery continually changing (health needs and meeting pre-surgical criteria)

The Service has lifted surgery delivery. Since 1 January 2020 to 31 March 2022, 15 surgeries have been performed, compared to 1 surgery in 2019. Under the High Cost Treatment Pool (HCTP) twelve surgeries were performed from 2005 to 2018.

There are regular updates provided on gender affirming (genital) surgery, including waiting list referrals, on the Ministry website at: www.health.govt.nz/our-work/preventative-health-wellness/delivering-health-services-transgender-people/updates-gender-affirming-genital-surgery-service.

I trust this satisfies your request. Under section 28(3) of the OIA, you have the right to ask the Ombudsman to review any decisions made under this request. The Ombudsman may be contacted by email at: info@ombudsman.parliament.nz or by calling 0800 802 602.

Nāku noa, nā



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