

8 July 2022

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By email ██████████

Kia ora ██████████

Re: Official Information Request – Gynaecology Service Information – Auckland DHB Ref. 20220530-1246

I refer to your official information request received on 13 June 2022, seeking the following information:

- 1. How many people have been referred/requested appointments to Auckland DHBs gynaecology services in the past five years, broken down by the individual year?**
- 2. Of those, in the past five year, how referrals, requests have eventuated into appointments, broken down by the individual year?**
- 3. What has been the average wait time for gynaecology appointments at Auckland DHB for the past five years, broken down by the individual year?**
- 4. What has been the shortest and longest time a person has had to wait for an appointment since 2017?**
- 5. How many people have had to wait over a year for an appointment?**
- 6 How many people are currently on the waitlist for Auckland DHBs gynaecology services?**
- 7. Have some wait-list for certain gynaecology services increased more significantly more specifically than others, e.g., waiting list for conditions such as prolapse, heavy bleeding or endometriosis?**

Response

Please note that the referral times in this response may differ from other provider’s OIA responses based on the inclusion criteria.

Between referral and a first specialist appointment there may have been a number of interactions between the specialist team and the referrer and the patient may have also needed to have investigations prior to the specialist appointment. It is not possible, without further analysis of individual cases, to know from data for which patients the wait time was clinically appropriate (e.g. being treated in another specialty) and which were as a result of capacity issues or patient choice.

1. How many people have been referred/requested appointments to Auckland DHBs gynaecology services in the past five years, broken down by the individual year?

Please see table below, which sets out the electronic referral/request data that we hold. Note that this table only includes prioritised referrals and does not include declined referrals; referrals forwarded to another service or referrals where advice was given and no appointment was required.

Year	Number of referrals
2017	3,390
2018	4,178
2019	4,087
2020	3,780
2021	3,655

2. Of those, in the past five year, how many referrals, requests have eventuated into appointments, broken down by the individual year?

Apt Year	New Patient
2017	4,915
2018	5,020
2019	5,162
2020	5,065
2021	4,719

The new patient appointment figures are based on counting the number of appointments completed which had either a First Specialist Assessment (FSA) Purchase Unit Code (PUC) or 'new patient' in the appointment description. We aren't able to use just FSA PUCs to identify new patient appointments as colposcopy FSAs have the same PUC as non FSA colposcopies.

3. What has been the average wait time for gynaecology appointments at Auckland DHB for the past five years, broken down by the individual year?

The following data is average number of days wait for a new patient appointment.

Year	Avg days waiting
2017	62
2018	75
2019	86
2020	79
2021	76

4. What has been the shortest and longest time a person has had to wait for an appointment since 2017?

The below data shows the shortest and longest time by days waiting for a first specialist appointment.

As noted above, between referral and a first specialist appointment there may have been a number of interactions between the specialist team and the referrer and the patient may have also needed to have investigations prior to the specialist appointment. It is not possible without further analysis of individual cases, to know from data for which patients the wait time was clinically appropriate (e.g. being treated in another specialty) and which were as a result of capacity issues or patient choice.

Year	Shortest Days waiting	Longest Days waiting
2017	0	504
2018	0	366
2019	0	392
2020	0	496
2021	0	719

5. How many people have had to wait over a year for an appointment?

Again, between referral and a first specialist appointment there may have been a number of interactions between the specialist team and the referrer and the patient may have also needed to have investigations prior to the specialist appointment. It is not possible, without further analysis of individual cases, to know from data for which patients the wait time was clinically appropriate (e.g. being treated in another specialty) and which were as a result of capacity issues or patient choice.

Year	Number of appointments had to wait over a year
2017	2
2018	2
2019	2
2020	5
2021	14

6. How many people are currently on the waitlist for Auckland DHBs gynaecology services?

Currently there are 556 cases waiting for a First Specialist Appointment.

7. Have some wait lists for certain gynaecology services increased more significantly more specifically than others, e.g., waiting list for conditions such as prolapse, heavy bleeding or endometriosis?

Outpatient appointments in the Gynaecology service aren't grouped by condition but by priority. As a general comment, wait times are largely determined by priority categories, which are determined at referral stage based on the information provided by the referrer.

Manually reviewing the notes of all patients seen by the gynaecology service in the Te Toka Tumai Auckland, to identify the conditions requested is not feasible. We are therefore unable to provide the information requested as it would require the review of individual clinical records of patients.

Due to the sensitivity of this information, frontline clinical staff would need to review individual clinical files over the course of five years and it would not be appropriate to use a contractor to review the records. This would take the frontline staff away from their clinical work and prejudice our ability to provide core clinical services.

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

I trust this information answers your questions.

You have the right to seek an investigation and review by the Ombudsman of this decision. Information about how to make a complaint is available at www.ombudsman.parliament.nz or freephone 0800 802 602.

Please note that this response, or an edited version of this response, may be published on the Auckland DHB website.

Ngā mihi,



Dr Michael Shepherd

Interim District Director

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