

10 May 2019

Gloria Fraser

By Email: fyi-request-10084-7ad4da88@requests.fyi.org.nz

Dear Ms Fraser

Official Information Act Request

I refer to your Official Information Act request received on 16 April 2019 in which you specifically requested the following:

Could you please advise whether the following gender-affirming healthcare services are funded by the Southern District Health Board for transgender patients, and whether the services are currently available:

- **Puberty blockers**
Puberty blockers are funded by the Southern DHB and currently available.
- **Hormone therapy**
Hormone therapy is funded by the Southern DHB and currently available.
- **Mastectomy, Hysterectomy, Orchidectomy, Breast augmentation, Facial feminization surgery**
Patients wanting Gender Reassignment Surgery (GRS) are generally referred to the GRS surgeon in Auckland.
- **Facial hair removal**
Facial hair removal is currently not available at Southern DHB.
- **Voice training**
Voice training is currently not available at Southern DHB.

Could you please also advise:

- Are transgender healthcare providers under the Southern District Health Board encouraged to follow Oliphant et al's (2018) Guidelines for gender affirming healthcare for gender diverse and transgender children, young people and adults in Aotearoa New Zealand? If not, which guidelines do they follow, if any?

These guidelines have recently been published, and one of the authors works in the Adult Southern DHB Endocrinology Department. We are moving towards integrating these guidelines into our practice. The Child Health Service utilises New Zealand guidelines as well as reference to international resources such as the Endocrine Society Clinical Practice Guideline.

- **Is a readiness assessment required to access gender-affirming healthcare services? (This is an assessment of readiness for treatment from a medical and psychosocial perspective, as well as whether the client understands the risks and benefits of treatment, and is sometimes referred to as a 'mental health assessment').**

All patients seen in the Adult Endocrine Clinic must have been assessed by a psychologist or psychiatrist prior to being seen in the clinic.

- **If a readiness assessment is required to access gender-affirming healthcare services, who carries out this assessment?**

Individuals are usually seen by a psychiatrist within the Southern DHB or Otago region.

- **Is this assessment funded by the Southern District Health Board? Does the assessment use an informed consent model?**

If this is done by a Southern DHB psychiatrist, it is a funded assessment. The patient is fully informed about the process and provided with a copy of the assessment report that is sent to the endocrinology service. In Child Health the assessment uses an informed consent model and is funded by the Southern DHB.

- **What steps is the Southern District Health Board taking to improve healthcare provision for transgender New Zealanders?**

The Southern DHB is committed to continue to provide publically funded gender-affirming healthcare services.

You have the right to seek an investigation and review of our decision by the Ombudsman. The Ombudsman's Office can be contacted on 0800 802 602 or on-line at <http://www.ombudsman.parliament.nz/>.

Yours sincerely



Chris Fleming
Chief Executive Officer