

19 October 2020

133 Molesworth Street
PO Box 5013
Wellington 6140
New Zealand
T+64 4 496 2000

K Issac

By email: fyi-request-13869-8d0aa8c3@requests.fyi.org.nz
Ref: H202007421

Dear K Issac

Response to your request for official information

Thank you for your request under the Official Information Act 1982 (the Act) to the Ministry of Health (the Ministry) on 26 September 2020 for:

"On what clinical and evidential basis do you state (in reference to puberty blockers) that they are a "safe and fully reversible medicine" when the NHS guidance in the UK states that "Little is known about the long-term side effects of hormone or puberty blockers in children with gender dysphoria"

The Ministry refers to the *Guidelines for Gender Affirming Healthcare for Gender Diverse and Transgender Children, Young People and Adults in Aotearoa New Zealand* available on the University of Waikato's Research Commons' website:

<https://researchcommons.waikato.ac.nz/handle/10289/12160>. This guide for gender-affirming health care was developed by an independent group of health professionals and community stakeholders and states on page 29 that 'puberty blockers are considered to be fully reversible'.

The Ministry also notes that Standards of Care developed by the World Professional Association for Transgender Health (WPATH) lists the use of GnRH analogues to suppress estrogen or testosterone production and consequently delay the physical changes of puberty as 'fully reversible intervention'. Please refer to page 18 at the following link:

<https://www.wpath.org/publications/soc>.

It is important to note that the Ministry's website is intended to provide general health advice. For the treatment of young transgender New Zealanders, it is the responsibility of the treating clinician to consider the appropriateness of a particular treatment for a particular patient, and to ensure that the patient is informed of the risks and benefits associated with that treatment. Informed consent should be obtained by the clinician from the patient before the choice is made to prescribe the medicine.

I trust this information fulfils your request. Under section 28(3) of the Act you have the right to ask the Ombudsman to review any decisions made under this request.

Please note that this response, with your personal details removed, may be published on the Ministry website.

Yours sincerely



Dr Andrew Simpson
Chief Medical Officer