

3 December 2021

Dear 

**Re: Official Information Act**

I am responding on behalf of Taranaki District Health Board (DHB) to your OIA request of 8 November 2021. You have requested the following information:

1. *Do you diagnose ADHD for those under the age of 18, and for those over 18? If so, what is the process to getting a diagnosis, and who does the diagnosis? If not, please explain why not.*

#### **Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS)**

CAMHS provides diagnosis up to the age of 18, and afterwards, if there is a diagnostic query, it will be done via the Adult MH services. While under CAMHS, the process includes a clinical assessment completed by a child psychiatrist; obtaining collateral history from parents and school; at times we use standardised questionnaires and screening tools (CONORS for example). In a handful of cases, if the diagnosis cannot be resolved by means of clinical assessment, we will resort to a comprehensive cognitive assessment, which is completed by our psychologists.

#### **Paediatric Department**

We provide diagnosis for those under the age of 15. Referrals can come from the GP, school, or other organisations. The process includes obtaining information from home and school regarding the child's development, behaviour, and academic functioning. We also obtain standardised questionnaires for ADHD from home and school. The paediatrician does the diagnosis.

#### **Adult ADHD Pathways**

Yes, a person will be referred in to specialist mental health services for review and assessment of possible ADHD. The assessments are done by Taranaki DHB Adult Psychiatrists and occasionally Psychologist if the diagnosis is in doubt. They are screened by intake staff after a standard psychiatric assessment to rule out comorbid conditions, drug and alcohol use and then assessed and treated by a psychiatrist.

2. *What is the waiting list/average time frame to be diagnosed over the last 12 months? (for under and over 18)*

#### **Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS)**

For patients under the age of 18 the wait list has been around 3-4 weeks for a first appointment with a child psychiatrist. Now that we are experiencing a shortage in child psychiatry it can be delayed up to 3 months.

*Continued...*

### **Paediatric Department**

Our average waiting time for this is 62 days.

### **Adult ADHD Pathways**

There is a general waiting time for 4 to 6 weeks but it is not diagnosis based. Urgency is based around risk and need.

### *3. What support do you provide once they are diagnosed?*

#### **Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS)**

1. Psychiatric follow ups until such time as the child is well stabilised and showing good outcomes.
2. Psychotherapy can be offered for cases where the ADHD is only a part of a bigger complex, such as behavioural issues, concomitant anxiety, Autism, etc.
3. Similarly, if indicated, we may offer parental guidance and therapy for parents who struggle with raising a child with ADHD.

### **Paediatric Department**

The paediatrician will do paediatric follow up as required, and titration of medication schedule if medication is prescribed. Our child development nurse will support this process and sees many of these children for follow up at her own clinic. She will also liaise with school and other agencies as required.

### **Adult ADHD Pathways**

The diagnosis is explained, treatment options discussed, medication discussed, and other comorbid conditions managed. They are referred to psychologist if needed. All clients have a key worker who follows them up. Patients are reviewed a week and then a month later.

### *4. Do you have the ability to cope with an ADHD person in crisis? What care is provided?*

- ADHD is not an acute condition, and there is no such things as ADHD-based crisis.
- A clinic visit can be brought forward if required, or phone clinic arranged when acute assessment or treatment is required.

I trust the above information answers your OIA request.

Kind regards



Gillian Campbell  
**Chief Operating Officer**