

25 October 2019

Email: ailsac@adhb.govt.nz

Re: Official Information Act request – GP to clinical psychologist wait times

I refer to your phone conversation on 3 October 2019 with Sarah McMahon from our Communications Department where you requested information under the Official Information Act request dated 3 October 2019.

- 1. What the waiting time is for referral from a GP to a clinical psychologist for Tipu Ora (our eating disorder service)?**
- 2. What are the waiting list numbers? (I just want an overall estimation of wait times. If you can give me the difference between regional and residential even better but the most important info I need is the overall average wait time someone can expect to wait after seeing their GP. I understand it will also vary depending on whether you live in Auckland or in a region where you need to travel to get specialist treatment).**
- 3. Can you also confirm what regions are attached to Tipu Ora and if this is the only specialist eating disorder clinic in the North Island (or if Wellington or any other regions have one too).**

Tupu Ora is the specialist eating disorder service of Auckland DHB. The service is comprised of the following elements:

- 1. Adult outpatient care** to the 3 Auckland metro DHBs (Auckland, Waitematā and Counties), with referrals received from adult Community Mental Health Services (CMHC)
- 2. Children and young people** from the metro DHBs are most likely to be seen initially at their local Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service (CAMHS) rather than be referred into Tupu Ora. A proportion of cases will be referred onto the Tupu Ora child/adolescent team. These tend to be the ones which are not amenable to treatment at the local CAMHS service or have required admission to Starship
- 3. Residential service** which is available to patients from the Northern and Midlands DHB regions.
- 4. Second opinions, and specialist consultation/ training and support** which is available from the Tupu Ora team to secondary mental health services in the Northern and Midlands DHBs.

1. What the waiting time is for referral from a GP to a clinical psychologist for Tipu (sic) Ora (our eating disorder service)?

It would only be appropriate to provide information about the adults referred to the Tupu Ora service. The reason for this is, as described above, adult eating disorders are primarily treated by Tupu Ora, whereas child and adolescent eating disorders are primarily treated within their local CAMHS service, with only a subsection referred onto the specialist team. Therefore, waiting times for children and young people to be seen by Tupu Ora would not be an accurate reflection of waiting times for appropriate assessment and treatment.

Referrals to Tupu Ora are accepted from secondary mental health services, and not directly from General Practitioners. Further, the Tupu Ora team is made up of health practitioners with specialist skills and training in eating disorders, from a range of professions, including nursing, psychotherapy, psychiatry, occupational therapy, social work and psychology. There is no waiting list or wait time to see a psychologist per se, as a new referral may be appropriately seen by another member of the team.

The time from GP referral, to CMHC, to Tupu Ora is influenced by a number of factors besides capacity of the Tupu Ora service. For example, a referral needs to contain sufficient medical observation information from the GP in order to determine acuity, and so if a referral does not contain this information, a prospective service user will be asked to attend the GP to gain this information. Similarly, some referrals may require assessments at the local CMHC prior to on-referral to Tupu Ora if there are questions of co-morbid mental health conditions.

There is no wait time from a GP to the CMHC, as this occurs on referral. There is a wait time from the CMHC receiving a referral, gaining further information or clarifying the referral, and then sending this on to Tupu Ora. There is then a wait from Tupu Ora receiving a referral to a first face to face appointment occurring. Because of the data available to us, we are only able to provide information on the wait time from GP referral to an Auckland DHB CMHC (shown by when the referral is received at the CMHC), which is then referred on to Tupu Ora. The average wait time for an ADHB referral from a GP to the referral being opened to Tupu Ora is 12.5 days.

The wait time from a referral being opened to Tupu Ora to the first face to face appointment (can be with any member of the specialist multidisciplinary team), based on referral data from the 2018/19 financial year is:

DHB	Average Wait Days
Auckland DHB	11.1
Counties Manukau DHB	17.7
Waitematā DHB	15.9

***Based on referrals to Tupu Ora that were from a CMHC in any of three metro DHBs. Only referrals from ADHB CMHCs can be confirmed as originating with a GP.*

2. **What are the waiting list numbers? (I just want an overall estimation of wait times. If you can give me the difference between regional and residential even better but the most important info I need is the overall average wait time someone can expect to wait after seeing their GP. I understand it will also vary depending on whether you live in Auckland or in a region where you need to travel to get specialist treatment).**

For the adult residential eating disorder unit, there are currently 6 patients on the waiting list.

While there is a waiting list of patients for residential treatment, it is not meaningful to provide an average waiting time. The reason for this is that the waiting list is actively managed, which means that those with the most acute needs are prioritised, irrespective of how long they have been on the waiting list. For example, if someone of high and acute need such as someone being discharged from hospital was referred, they would have almost immediate access to a bed. Others may wait up to two months for a bed, and sometimes longer if they also require other interventions elsewhere as well as eating disorder interventions.

With regard to the outpatient treatment programme, this option is only for those from the metro Auckland DHBs, not from those outside of Auckland. And this tends to be for adults as children and adolescents tend to be seen within local CAMHS services. There is no waiting list per se, as new clients are booked into an appointment on referral. So while there is no waiting list that people are put on, there is a wait time from referral to being seen for the first time. Please see information above at Q1.

3. **Can you also confirm what regions are attached to Tipu Ora and if this is the only specialist eating disorder clinic in the North Island (or if Wellington or any other regions have one too).**

For the regions served by Tupu Ora, please refer to the information provided above. The Ministry of Health can provide information on eating disorder services in other parts of New Zealand should you require this.

I trust this information answers your questions.

You are entitled to seek a review of the response by the Ombudsman under section 28(3) of the Official Information Act. 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.

Yours faithfully



Ailsa Claire, OBE
Chief Executive

