



West Coast District Health Board

Te Poari Hauora a Rohe o Tai Poutini

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25 March 2020

9(2)(a)

RE: OFFICIAL INFORMATION ACT REQUEST WCDHB 9399

I refer to your email dated 24 February 2020 requesting the following information under the Official Information Act from West Coast DHB.

- 1. The number of patients currently on the DHB's ophthalmology wait list (as at February 1, 2020)**
- 2. A breakdown of how long these patients have been waiting for appointments - broken down by the time between the initial referral and first appointment, and those waiting for/overdue for follow-up appointments (as at February 1, 2020)**

We note that ophthalmology waiting lists are dynamic and change on a daily basis as new referrals arise and as outpatient clinics, surgeries, and other treatment options are undertaken (such as the use of intraocular injections and other ophthalmic treatments). This noted, in answer to both Question 1 and Question 2 above, the numbers on the waiting list for first specialist assessment and for surgery procedures by concurrent waiting time in days were as follows:

Days Wait	Waiting List Type		
	Outpatient List for FSA *	Minor Operations List (Outpatient)	Surgery List
0 - 31 days	34	6	20
32 - 62 days	20	5	0
63 - 93 days	24	6	4
94 - 120 days	22	2	0
Over 120 days	1	0	1
TOTAL WAITING:	101	19	25
Average Wait Time (days)	53.15 days	49.1 days	33.52 days
Range (shortest to longest wait time days)	4 to 152 days	1 to 117 days	18 to 131 days

* FSA = First Specialist Assessment.

It is noted that the patient waiting over 120 days for surgical intervention is not yet ready for admission, which has resulted in their current delay. It is noted that 12 of those people on the waiting list above for outpatient first specialist assessment had clinic appointment bookings for later in February and a further 2 with appointments booked in March, including the person waiting over 120 days.

There were 690 people who are booked ahead for follow-up review at various planned intervals, including 1-year and 2-year follow-up scheduled review. Among these 690 were 35 people who were waiting or 'overdue' for their planned follow-up reviews as at 1 February 2020. This included eight patients who had been offered an appointment within scheduled review time but who did not turn up to their booked clinic appointment; five who cancelled at their own request and will recontact the DHB to arrange suitable new dates when they are able to attend; six scheduled to be seen at clinic by a specific ophthalmologist with sub-specialisation; and 14 on the list for scheduled follow-up at 1-year and 2-year post surgery should this be required.

3. The number of patients referred/transferred from the DHB's ophthalmology service to private providers or other outside contractors, broken down by calendar year from 2008-2019

West Coast DHB has a mixed model for delivery of our ophthalmology services for our population. The DHB's local service provides publicly funded ophthalmology outpatient assessment and follow-up services locally at West Coast DHB hospital facilities at Greymouth and Westport, which are undertaken by a group of consultant specialists under contract.

Patients requiring elective eye surgery procedures through our contracted services however, all have to travel off the West Coast to receive these either via outsourced services provided by private providers at private facilities that we contract directly, or at other DHB public specialist services funded by West Coast DHB and provided via public waiting lists; principally being those at Canterbury DHB. Acute ophthalmology services required for residents of the West Coast DHB are referred directly to Canterbury DHB – none are referred by us directly to private providers.

This noted, the volumes of outsourced elective surgery services funded by West Coast DHB that have been provided by directly contracted private providers at private facilities per calendar year from 2008 to 2019 have been as follows:

Calendar Year	Number of Elective Surgery Patients Treated By Our Contracted Private Providers
2008	78
2009	152
2010	165
2011	259
2012	197
2013	216
2014	250
2015	219
2016	255
2017	285
2018	290
2019	242

4. *The number of dedicated clinics (including, but not exclusive to: catch-up clinics, weekend and evening clinics) over and above held by the DHB broken down by calendar year*

The visiting ophthalmology specialists that deliver our outpatient services make regular 2-day visits on a monthly basis to both Greymouth and Westport. Additional clinics over and above this routine scheduled number of dedicated clinics were conducted in October 2016; in February, May, August and September 2017; in May 2018; and January, February, June, August, September October and December in 2019.

These additional clinics were and are conducted by the DHB for a combination of reasons - both to help address additional demand and reduce extended waiting times that existed at the time; as well as to provide outpatient sub-specialisation appointments for patients to see specialists who cover paediatric and neurophthalmology cases not covered by ophthalmologists who are on the scheduled roster rotation, rather than having to travel off the West Coast for their initial reviews and follow-ups (and thus reducing the time off school and work, and travel time and cost to the patients involved in getting to appointments).

Due to changes made to our booking methodology for our ophthalmology services, no specific data is held any longer in this regard to any additional monthly clinics that may have been conducted prior to July 2016 with which to be able to answer this with any degree of accuracy; if at all. We therefore decline to answer this aspect of your request for year periods prior to July 2016 pursuant to section 18(f) of the Official Information Act, that the information requested cannot be made available without substantial collation or research.

5. *The number of adverse events recorded by the DHB due to ophthalmology delays.*

There have been no adverse events recorded by the West Coast DHB due to ophthalmology delays.

I trust that this satisfies your interest in this matter.

You may, under section 28(3) of the Official Information Act, seek a review of our decision to withhold information by the Ombudsman. 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 West Coast DHB website after your receipt of this response.

Yours sincerely



Carolyn Gullery
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Planning, Funding & Decision Support