

6 September 2022

9(2)(a)



RE Official information request WCD 9727 / HNZ 3043

I refer to your email dated 12 August 2022 requesting the following information under the Official Information Act from Te Tai o Poutini West Coast. Specifically:

Request related to wait times in your obstetrics and gynaecology department.

- ***How many FTEs in total are there in your obstetrics and gynaecology department, and how many roles are vacant? Please state this by speciality (gynaecologist, nurse, etc)***
- ***How many women/people are currently waiting for a gynaecology appointment? Please state how many have been waiting more than four months, and how many have been waiting for more than a year. How many have seen a specialist, and how many have not been seen at all?***
- ***If your hospital prioritises these cases (urgent, semi-urgent, routine etc) please state these categories, and how many women are waiting in each. Please also give an example/list of how each category is defined (not for every patient, just the types of health issues that would fall into those in general)***
- ***What is the average wait time, and what is the shortest? Please state the longest five wait times and what they are waiting for (symptoms or issue, eg. bleeding or cancer surgery)***
- ***Please outline what your DHB is doing to care for these women or speed up their treatment, including providing copies of any action plans developed.***

Response

Question 1: FTE staff vacancies. West Coast has no current FTE vacancies for Specialists Obstetrician and Gynaecologists, with all resident positions on the West Coast fully staffed. Moreover, the service is supported by a Rural Generalist Specialist resident on the West Coast who has training and experience in providing a full range of secondary level obstetric care and treatment.

Other than a 0.2 FTE colposcopy nurse, we do not have separate or solely dedicated gynaecology nurse FTEs only at our hospital. Our registered nurses work across a range of our secondary care inpatient and surgical services at Te Nīkau Hospital in a mixed-ward service model. Theatre nurses and anaesthetic technicians similarly work across specialities in our operating theatres for acute and elective surgery, rather than being solely assigned or dedicated to obstetrics or gynaecology services alone.

West Coast currently has 3.55 FTE midwife vacancies from within our maternity staffing establishment of 14.05 FTE. Active recruiting is underway to fill these positions. This data does not include vacancies in FTE establishment for independent community Lead Maternity Carers (LMCs) who may operate within the area. Independent LMCs currently remain separately employed by the Ministry of Health under arrangement, rather than employed locally through our specialist hospital and health services.

Questions 2 – 4: Waiting list numbers and waiting times. Waiting lists are dynamic and literally change from day-to-day. The answers provided in the table below are given as a snapshot of our waiting lists as at 24 August 2022, excluding those patients already booked to a firm date for an upcoming first specialist assessment (FSA) review or surgery service:

Specialist Service	Waiting List Priority	Patient Waiting Times (Days)			Total Patients on Wait List
		Average Wait	Shortest Wait	Longest Wait	
Gynaecology Outpatient (FSA)	Urgent	82*	82*	82*	1*
	Semi-Urgent	51	51	51	1
	Routine	39.8	5	82	72
	TOTAL	40.5	5	82	74
Gynaecology Inpatient Surgery	Urgent	0	0	0	0
	Semi-Urgent	30.4	7	55	9
	Routine	34.4	7	114	17
	TOTAL	33.0	7	114	26
Obstetric Outpatient (FSA)	Urgent	33	33	33	1
	Semi-Urgent	26.2	1	51	8
	Routine	33	22	44	2
	TOTAL	28.1	1	51	11

***Note:** The gynaecology outpatient triaged as urgent priority cancelled an FSA appointment offered to them in early July and is to contact our services when they are ready and able to attend.

There is no current waiting list for inpatient or elective surgical services (e.g.: caesarean sections) for obstetric patients.

Priority is given to patients who present with a high suspicion of cancer. Waiting list priority is otherwise determined by clinical urgency as uniquely identified and outlined in each patient referral for review rather than by specific set list or type of health issues in the case of gynaecology services; and in respect of the aetiology of either mother or baby *in utero* during the term of the pregnancy for those requiring specialist obstetric services.

As indicated by the data provided above, there are no patients who have been waiting more than four months or longer for access to specialist obstetric and gynaecology services on the West Coast.

The five longest waiting times for gynaecology outpatient FSA at 24 August 2022 included two women waiting 82 days and the next three women waiting 72 days; all triaged for routine assessment. As all have been referred for individually different personal reasons and as none has been reviewed, we decline to specify the precise nature of the referral reasons for their respective conditions under Section 9(2)(a) of the Official Information Act i.e. “...to protect the privacy of natural persons, including that of deceased natural persons.”. The five longest patient wait times for gynaecology surgery as at 24 August 2002 include individual patient waiting times of 43, 50, 55, 57, 84 and 114 days respectively. The majority of these five cases are on the wait list for day case hysteroscopy procedures.

Question 5: Service Action Plan for speeding up treatment: There are no current action plans that have been developed for further speeding up access to West Coast obstetric and gynaecology services.

I trust that this satisfies your interest in this matter.

Please note that this response, or an edited version of this response, may be published on the Te Tai o Poutini West Coast website after your receipt of this response.

Ngā mihi / Yours sincerely,



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