

26 November 2021

Response to a request for official information

Thank you for your request for official information received 27 September 2021 by Nelson Marlborough Health (NMH)¹, followed by the necessary extension of time 26 October 2021 and notice of decision 23 November 2021, where you seek the following information:

- 1. Please advise (Y/N) whether the following gender-affirming healthcare treatments are provided by your DHB for transgender patients:***

NMH response:

TABLE ONE

Treatment	Yes	No	Notes
Voice therapy/vocal training	Y		
Permanent facial hair removal (electrolysis, IPL, laser)		N	
Chest binding prosthetics (binders)		N	Delivered by Independent Nursing Practice (INP) Medical Clinic
Chest reconstruction (double mastectomy for men)		N	
Breast augmentation for transgender women		N	
Fertility preservation for sperm		N	
Fertility preservation for eggs		N	
GnRH Puberty suppressants (puberty blockade)	Y		
Readiness assessment for hormone therapy		N	Delivered by INP Medical Clinic
Hormone therapy (estrogen, progesterone, testosterone)	Y		
Hysterectomy and oophorectomy		N	
Orchidectomy/orchiectomy		N	
DHB public pathway to care	Y		

- 2. Are gender-affirming healthcare services under your DHB based on the Guidelines for Gender Affirming Healthcare for Gender Diverse and Transgender Children, Young People and Adults in Aotearoa New Zealand (2018)? If not, which guidelines are they based on, if any?***

NMH response:

No, the enclosed *Gender Dysphoria and Trans-gender Health* extract from the *Nelson Marlborough Community HealthPathway* website provides guidance, and includes the *INP Medical Clinic* pathway and link to the Ministry of Health *Delivering Health Services for Transgender People: Advice for Health Professionals*.

¹ Nelson Marlborough District Health Board

- 3. Are there transgender training programmes routinely provided or promoted through your DHB? If so, which training programmes or materials are used, and which organisations provide these? If not, do you have mechanisms for providing or promoting such training, and is there a date by which you plan to provide these?**

NMH response:

Training has been provided jointly by NMH and the NZ College of Clinical Psychologists. Further training can be arranged as indicated.

This response has been provided under the Official Information Act 1982. You have the right to seek an investigation by the Ombudsman of this decision. Information about how to make a complaint is available at www.ombudsman.parliament.nz or free phone 0800 802 602. If you have any questions about this decision please feel free to email our OIA Coordinator OIArequest@nmdhb.govt.nz

NMH, like other agencies across the state sector, supports the open disclosure of information to assist the public's understanding of how we are delivering publicly-funded healthcare. This includes the proactive publication of anonymised Official Information Act responses on our website from 10 working days after they have been released. If you feel that there are good reasons why your response should not be made publicly available, we will be happy to consider.

Yours sincerely



Lexie O'Shea
Chief Executive

Encl: *Nelson Marlborough Community HealthPathway – Gender Dysphoria and Trans-gender Health*

Nelson Marlborough Community HealthPathway

Gender Dysphoria and Trans-gender Health

Background

[About gender dysphoria and trans-gender health](#)

About gender dysphoria and trans-gender health

- Gender dysphoria is when a person, who identifies as a gender that is different from their biological sex, experiences discomfort or distress about this discrepancy.
- Gender nonconformity (or gender incongruence) refers to a person who identifies with a gender that is different to their biological sex.
- Some people do not gender identify as either male or female, but feel they are both, or somewhere in between, and are considered "gender variant".
- Check with your patient about their preferred term (he/she).
- If required, treatment for gender dysphoria may involve psychological assessment and support, or hormonal or surgical treatment. Treatment is individualised.

For further information, see [WHO ICD-10 – Gender Identity Disorders](#) and [Delivering Health Services for Transgender People: Advice for Health Professionals](#).

Assessment

1. History – Ask about:

- [gender-specific history](#).

Gender-specific history

- Duration of awareness of gender identity issues.
- How they would describe their gender to others.
- Who they have disclosed to and their main support (family or others).
- How comfortable or distressed they are with currently living in the gender they are expressing.
- Any care or treatment received to date.
- medical, drug and alcohol, and sexual history.
- mental health issues, including bullying, self-harm and suicidality.
- family support, including functioning and dynamics.
- social, vocational, and educational situation.
- [medications](#) – prescribed and non-prescribed.

Medications

- Ask about:
 - complementary therapies.
 - self-medicating with hormones.
 - previous or current use of puberty blockers.
- The patient may already be buying and taking unregulated hormonal therapy products, often via the internet.
- Discuss risks if the patient is self-medicating.

2. Determine whether your patient is seeking general reassurance, education and support, or active treatment:

- [Psychological therapy](#).

Psychological therapy

- Psychological therapy should ideally be provided by a psychologist with appropriate experience in gender dysphoria.
 - In the absence of serious mental health issues this is not available in the public system.
 - [Hormone manipulation](#)
- Hormone manipulation

- Endocrine hormone manipulation is not undertaken lightly. It is usually only considered in those aged > 18 years, and after a full psychological assessment, which is only available privately and may take several sessions.
- If a patient is accepted for hormone treatment, this will be directed by an endocrinologist, with appropriate monitoring by general practice.
- [Gender reassignment surgery \(GRS\)](#)
Gender reassignment surgery (GRS)
 - Patients seeking gender reassignment surgery must first have a full psychological assessment, which is only available privately and may take several sessions.
 - Surgery is not funded by the Nelson Marlborough DHB, but there are a small number of gender reassignment surgeries (GRS) funded privately through the Ministry of Health High Cost Treatment Pool.
 - Only male to female surgery is performed.
 - Referrals can only be made by an endocrinologist.
 - Female to male "bottom" surgery can be obtained through private overseas facilities at the individual's cost.

3. Consider STI screening and bloods for hepatitis B, hepatitis C, HIV.

Management

1. Provide patient information and support, and address any specific health needs. This may be all that is required.
2. For more in-depth gender care, or if the patient is seeking active treatment, offer referral for a [transgender assessment](#) at [INP Medical Clinic](#).

Transgender assessment

- A limited number of funded assessments are available for young people up to and including age 21 years. From age 22, fees may apply.
- The assessment will explore the patient's history and gender needs, and result in a care plan and support framework.
- Onward referral for a psychological assessment may be made as part of the care plan, or if the patient is seeking further treatment.

Request

Paediatrician or endocrinology services are currently unavailable for patients under age 16 in Nelson-Marlborough.

- If serious mental health issues, refer directly to Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service (CAMHS) if service [criteria](#) are met.
- If required, refer to [INP Medical Clinic](#) for a [transgender assessment](#).

Transgender assessment

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- The assessment will explore the patient's history and gender needs, and result in a care plan and support framework.
- Onward referral for a psychological assessment may be made as part of the care plan, or if the patient is seeking further treatment.
- In some circumstances, a direct [private psychologist](#) referral can be made, although a prior transgender assessment via INP Medical Clinic is preferred.

Private psychologist

Psychological assessment or therapy should ideally be provided by a psychologist with appropriate experience in gender dysphoria.

In Nelson Marlborough the only provider is Hannah Blakely. See Well & Good – [Psychology](#).

Information

[Clinical Resources](#)

[Patient Information](#)

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