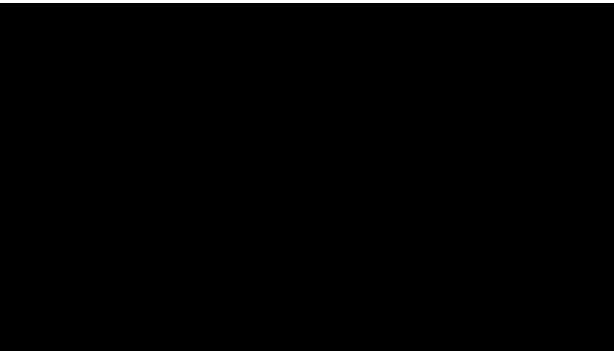


18 March 2020



Re Official Information Request – Ophthalmology waitlist

I refer to your official information request dated 24 February 2020 requesting the following information.

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

The information you requested is below.

I thought it would first be helpful to provide you with some context.

Auckland DHB's Ophthalmology Service is one of the region's busiest, with more than 100,000 outpatient episodes a year. The service provides the majority of outpatient ophthalmologic services for central, west and north Auckland (covering Auckland DHB and Waitemata DHB catchment areas).

Capacity issues in the Ophthalmology Service have emerged over the past few years, due to our increasing population, our aging population, and the development of innovative new treatments where previously no treatment could be offered.

A service improvement plan, including a recovery plan to address waiting list times prioritising those who have waited the longest, was put in place in 2016. A risk score system was introduced where the current volume of patients waiting beyond their intended follow-up date for ophthalmology services by sub-specialty and risk score were tracked.

The follow up risk score is the amount of time the patient is waiting for an appointment compared to the intended follow up time. 1 = due date, 1.5 is one and a half times their intended wait time. If they have waited double the time they were intended to be seen they would be allocated a 2. For example if the clinician planned to see you in 2 months, and your appointment was booked in 3 months, it would be a 1.5 risk score.

The Health and Disability Commission and the Ministry of Health have recognised that a patient waiting up to a maximum of 1.5 their follow up time is an acceptable way of managing follow up appointment timing in a busy public ophthalmic service. The service achieved zero patients over 1.5 from March to October 2018, following significant investment by ADHB in staff to increase capacity. Following this, the number of patients waiting more than 1.5 times their follow up time has risen as the service has reached capacity, and Ophthalmologist and Orthoptist vacancies have taken more than 12 months to recruit to due to the specialist nature of the roles. It is anticipated that the remaining vacancies will be filled in August 2020 and the number of patients over 1.5 will reduce back to zero by the July 2021.

1. The number of patients currently on the DHB's ophthalmology wait list (as at February 1, 2020)

First Specialist Appointment waitlist = 2504 patients (as at 5 February 2020)

Follow up waitlist = 15942 patients (as at 3rd February 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)

FSAs Waiting		Follow ups Waiting	
Days Waiting	Count of NHI	Risk Score	Count of NHI
0 - 30	933	> 9	0
31 - 60	474	6 - 9	0
61 - 90	605	3 - 6	0
91 - 120	421	1.5 - 3	605
121 - 150	60	1 - 1.5	3303
over 150	11	< 1	12034
Grand Total	2504	Total	15942

As outlined above, 96% of the patients on the follow-up waitlist are waiting within clinically appropriate timeframes.

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

Outsourced procedures by calendar year

Cal Year	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019
Grand Total	77	0	0	0	0	0	0	5	84	480	1207	1400

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

Additional clinics have not been recorded. Saturday clinics have been held as business as usual for the last 8 years but the subspecialty is altered according to demand where possible. The total number of patients show the increase of numbers of patients seen by calendar year. The 2019 decrease is due to 2 senior medical officer (SMO) vacancies through the year which have now been recruited to, with these employees due to start in the second half of 2020.

Cal Year	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019
Grand Total	55376	56001	57647	59387	68382	78666	79381	81711	80255	88772	97843	95852

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

Cal Year	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019
Grand Total	1	5	12	7	8	2	3	9	31	23	12	11

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

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Ailsa Claire'.

Ailsa Claire, OBE
Chief Executive