

2 April 2015

Ms Bowra-Dean
fyi-request-2548-ff8fe278@requests.fyi.org.nz

Dear Ms Bowra-Dean

I am writing in response to your request under the Official Information Act 1982 (the Act) received by the Ministry of Health (the Ministry) on 5 March 2015.

You requested the following information on the current waiting list for the Special High Cost Treatment Pool's allocation for gender reassignment surgery.

- What is the current size of the waiting list for male to female operations?
- What is the current status of funding for male to female operations since the retirement of Dr Peter Walker in 2014?
- If the funding is still on hold, are female to male operations still being provided overseas at the same rates as before (one every two years)?
- If the funding is still on hold, is the Ministry investigating overseas providers according to the Ministry's criteria for medical treatments?

Below are the questions and the information provided.

What is the current size of the waiting list for male to female operations?

There are 61 people waiting for final surgical assessment for male to female operations prior to being accepted for their gender reassignment surgery.

What is the current status of funding for male to female operations since the retirement of Dr Peter Walker in 2014?

Funding remains available for three male to female surgeries every two years and will remain available even if the planned volume of surgeries is not carried out in a specific two year period.

If the funding is still on hold, are female to male operations still being provided overseas at the same rates as before (one every two years)?

Female to male surgeries will continue to be provided overseas unless or until they are able to be provided in New Zealand.

If the funding is still on hold, is the Ministry investigating overseas providers according to the Ministry's criteria for medical treatments?

The Ministry, along with District Health Board specialist referrers, is assessing overseas providers to ensure that people are being sent to a safe, quality assured

provider. As soon as agreement is reached we will be sending people waiting for this surgery to an overseas provider.

You have the right, under section 28(3) of the Act, to ask the Ombudsman to investigate and review this response.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Cathy O'Malley', written in a cursive style.

Cathy O'Malley
Deputy Director-General
Sector Capability and Implementation