

6<sup>th</sup> December 2021

s9(2)(a)

[z](#)

Dear s9(2)(a)

### Official Information Act Request for – ADHD Diagnosis and Services

I write in response to your Official Information Act request received by us 8<sup>th</sup> November 2021, you requested the following information:

1. Do you diagnose ADHD for those under the age of 18, and for those over 18? If so, what is the process to getting a diagnosis, and who does the diagnosis? If not, please explain why not.
2. What is the waiting list/average time frame to be diagnosed over the last 12 months? (for under and over 18)
3. What support do you provide once they are diagnosed?
4. Do you have the ability to cope with an ADHD person in crisis? What care is provided?

### Counties Manukau Health Response:

For context Counties Manukau Health (CM Health) employs over 8,500 staff and provides health and support services to people living in the Counties Manukau region (approx. 601,490 people). We see over 118,000 people in our Emergency Department each year, and over 2,000 visitors come through Middlemore Hospital daily.

Our services are delivered via hospital, outpatient, ambulatory and community-based models of care. We provide regional and supra-regional specialist services i.e. for orthopaedics, plastics, burns and spinal services. There are also several specialist services provided including tertiary surgical services, medical services, mental health and addiction services.

1. Do you diagnose ADHD for those under the age of 18, and for those over 18? If so, what is the process to getting a diagnosis, and who does the diagnosis? If not, please explain why not.

Yes, CM Health has pathways and processes for both children and adults.

When a referral is received for those under the age of 18, it is most common that the person is assessed face to face and screening tools are sent to both parents and schools. It is important that some level of learning support and parenting support has been accessed including seeking observations from teachers and that vision and hearing checks are conducted before an

assessment for ADHD is considered. A formal diagnosis is made by a child Psychiatrist or Paediatrician.

For those referred for assessment over the age of 18, we follow the Auckland Regional Clinical Pathways "ADHD in Adults" pathway. This pathway outlines that accurate diagnosis of ADHD requires a comprehensive assessment, including longitudinal information.

**2. What is the waiting list/average time frame to be diagnosed over the last 12 months? (for under and over 18)**

In youth, the waiting list is approximately 6 months. If there are extenuating circumstances, such as risk of harm, then people are seen sooner, often within 6 weeks.

For Adults, referrals for diagnostic clarification of ADHD are processed in the same week they are received. Depending on how much additional information still has to be provided by the service user or referrer a medical review will be booked within 1-2 months

**3. What support do you provide once they are diagnosed?**

We provide, psychoeducation, links with community supports and parenting, medication, specialist advice to GPs on medication; follow-up medication reviews including Special Authority renewals; Carer Support applications (as needed).

In addition, there is a range of publicly available information and additional support available at the following links:

For youth and family:

- ADHD Association - <https://www.adhd.org.nz/>
- Incredible Years - <https://pb4l.tki.org.nz/Incredible-Years-Parent>
- Health Navigator - <https://www.healthnavigator.org.nz/health-a-z/a/adhd-children/>
- Kids Health - <https://www.kidshealth.org.nz/attention-deficit-hyperactivity-disorder-adhd>

For adults:

- ADHD Association - <https://www.adhd.org.nz/>
- Health Navigator - <https://www.healthnavigator.org.nz/health-a-z/a/adhd-adults/>
- Mental Health Foundation - <https://mentalhealth.org.nz/conditions/condition/adhd-in-adults>

**4. Do you have the ability to cope with an ADHD person in crisis? What care is provided?**

This is on a case-by-case basis and the intervention depends on the degree of risk and protective factors related to the person. An after-hours mental health response is available over the phone.

Urgent life-threatening intervention includes admission to the Emergency Department for a Psychiatric review should this be needed. The ADHD diagnosis is considered in developing a safety plan and follow-up intervention for the young person and their family.

All patients presenting in Crisis are supported by our dedicated Crisis team, regardless of underlying diagnoses

I trust this information answers your request. 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](http://www.ombudsman.parliament.nz) or Freephone 0800 802 602.

Please note that this response or an edited version of this may be published on the Counties Manukau Health website. If you consider there are good reasons why this response should not be made publicly available, we will be happy to consider this.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'Fepulea'i Margie Apa', enclosed in a thin black rectangular border.

**Fepulea'i Margie Apa**  
**Chief Executive Officer**  
**Counties Manukau Health**