

12 October 2021

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Dear [REDACTED]

YOUR OFFICIAL INFORMATION ACT (1982) REQUEST HBDHB REF: OIA2021116

I refer to your Official Information Act request dated 7 September 2021 where you requested information from Hawke's Bay District Health Board (HBDHB). Your questions and HBDHB's response is provided below:

1. How many surgeries, planned procedures, including MRI and CT scans, and appointments were postponed at level 4 and 3?

In Alert level 4 2021 the following appointments continued and/or were postponed:

Imaging appointments: A total of 460 imaging appointments were postponed. These cover MRI, CT, Ultrasound, plain film, angio, interventional, tomography, nuclear medicine. *Note: appointments were rebooked based on clinical needs with all patients seen by October 2021.*

*HBDHB continued imaging of all urgents and referrals noting a suspicion of cancer during Alert Level 4.

Planned care surgeries: 145 planned care surgeries were postponed. However, the DHB continued with urgent and acute surgeries.

In Alert level 3 2021 the following services continued and/or were postponed:

Imaging appointments: All appointments went ahead.

Planned care surgeries: Eight planned care surgeries were postponed.

2. How many colonoscopies were delayed at level 4 and 3?

During Alert level 4 2021 there were 136 Endoscopies postponed and four were postponed in Alert Level 3.

3. How many mental health outpatient appointments were delayed under level 4 and 3?

Mental Health outpatient appointments carried on during Alert Levels 3 and 4 in 2021. The Mental Health service changed the way it delivered services and enabled appointments to continue by using phone, video conference and Zoom.

4. At the time of the announcement of a second nationwide level 4 lockdown on August 17, was your DHB still dealing with a backlog of planned care due to the first level 4 lockdown which began in March 2020?

The Mental Health service did not experience any notable backlog of planned care.

In regards to planned care surgeries the DHB is unable to digitally extrapolate the data to determine which patients were postponed from the first lockdown in March 2020 and are still waiting for treatment as at the second lockdown in August 2021. It would take a manual search through individual patient files to ascertain this information. Therefore this portion of your request is declined under Section 18(f) of the Official Information Act relating to substantial collation or research.

5. How long do you expect it will take to clear these backlogs (assuming we have no more lockdowns)

Imaging patients: Backlog cleared by October 2021.

No backlog for Mental Health & Addiction Service.

For planned care surgeries patients who have been triaged as having urgent clinical need are prioritised first. The DHB is unable to give a timeframe given the nature of acute/emergency surgeries which require priority theatre space on any given day.

6. How will you prioritise those people who had their appointments postponed at level 3 and 4?

Patients who were postponed were noted in the radiology information system and prioritised into the next available spaces. Additional out-source capacity was sourced for CT and MRI to ensure patients could be seen in a timely manner, and additional in house ultrasound sessions were undertaken to accommodate people postponed.

For planned care surgeries, patients are always prioritised based on clinical urgency for treatments.

7. Please break this information down into: type of procedure (e.g surgeries, MRI scans, colonoscopies etc) number delayed, and lockdown level (i.e 3 or 4)

Please see responses outlined above.

I trust this information meets your needs. If you would like any further information or clarification please phone me. If you are not satisfied with this response you may contact the Office of the Ombudsman, phone 0800 802 602.

Please note that this response, or an edited version of this response, may be published on the Hawke's Bay DHB website after your receipt of this response.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'Chris Ash', written in a cursive style.

Chris Ash

Chief Operating Officer

cc: *Ministry of Health via email: SectorOIA@moh.govt.nz oia@hbdhb.govt.nz*