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9(2)(a)

RE Official Information Act request CDHB 10599

I refer to your email dated 4 May 2021 requesting the following information under the Official Information Act from Canterbury DHB. Specifically:

- 1. How many cases of suspected sexual or physical abuse in children aged 0-17 has the CDHB treated so far in 2021 (from Jan 1, 2021 - May 5 2021).**

The Christchurch Hospital Paediatric Service currently sees children aged 12 years and under if a medical sexual abuse assessment is required.

The service for children 13 - 17 is contracted to Cambridge Clinic.

The Cambridge Clinic provides the opportunity for a general health and well-being check by specialised clinicians with expertise in this area of health care. A forensic examination may take place, if indicated. Assistance to access counselling or other support for the patient and / or whanau is also offered. An expert medicolegal report for court may be generated in some situations.

Canterbury DHB Paediatric Sexual Abuse Service (0-12 years old inclusive), suspected sexual abuse: 2021 = 15

Cambridge Clinic suspected sexual abuse (13 – 17 years old inclusive) 2021 = 15

Canterbury DHB (0- 15 years old), suspected physical abuse: 2021 = 25

Cambridge Clinic does not routinely see patients between 13 – 17 years for assessment following suspected physical abuse.

- 2. How many cases of suspected sexual or physical abuse in children aged 0-17 did the CDHB treat in 2020, 2019, 2018 and 2017? Can this please be broken down into the number of cases per each of the years.**

Please refer to **Table one** (overleaf) for Canterbury DHB Paediatric Sexual Abuse Service (0-12 years old inclusive), suspected sexual abuse:

Table one: Canterbury DHB Paediatric Sexual Abuse Service (0-12 years old inclusive), suspected sexual abuse:

2017	2018	2019	2020
30	33	50	32

Please refer to **Table two** (below) for the number of patients aged 13 – 17 years seen for evaluation by the Cambridge Clinic after alleged sexual abuse for each year requested.

Table two: 13 – 17-year-old patients seen for initial assessment at Cambridge Clinic 2017 – 2020.

	2020	2019	2018	2017
January	8	6	5	4
February	7	4	3	10
March	4	7	10	8
April	1	5	10	8
May	5	2	7	5
June	6	3	4	4
July	1	5	8	1
August	7	1	2	1
September	6	4	5	4
October	3	5	4	7
November	6	7	5	9
December	5	5	4	11
TOTAL	59	54	67	72

Please refer to **Table three** (below) for the number of patients aged 0-15 years seen by the Canterbury DHB Paediatric Service for suspected physical abuse.

Table three: Canterbury DHB Paediatric Service (0- 15 years old), suspected physical abuse:

2017	2018	2019	2020
110	69	78	103

As noted in response to Question 1, Cambridge Clinic does not routinely see patients between 13 – 17 years for assessment following suspected physical abuse.

3. Can you please provide information on what the CDHB does when treating a case of suspected child abuse or neglect?

Canterbury DHB's management of referrals for suspected child abuse or neglect

The individual clinician with a concern will consult with a senior colleague, and/or the Canterbury DHB Child Protection Specialist at the Child and Family Safety Service Christchurch Hospital to discuss their specific abuse or neglect concerns for a child and potential interventions. If the concerns are urgent/ serious and/or there is immediate risk of harm to a child/children a referral will be made to Oranga Tamariki and on occasion the police. Often if the concerned clinician is not a Social Worker and there is no immediate risk, they will make a referral to CDHB Social Work. The Social Worker will assess the situation which may result in a variety of outcomes. A Report of Concern to Oranga Tamariki may be made, and/or referrals to non-government Social Services. The CDHB Maori Health team may become involved to support a Kaupapa Maori response.

The Canterbury DHB also has multi-disciplinary meetings to discuss, manage and provide clinicians peer supervision and support for all cases of suspected child abuse and neglect.

Canterbury DHB's management of suspected physical abuse

The Canterbury DHB manages children with potential physical abuse from several referral sources. Physical abuse concerns can be identified by staff managing patients who present to CDHB hospitals with medical concerns. Children can be referred from primary care for further assessment of injuries. Referrals are also received from

Oranga Tamariki and/or the Police when they have received a Report of Concern/ referral where the referrer is concerned the child or young person has been physically abused.

In all cases where there are concerns about physical abuse of a child, a Paediatrician, Paediatric Social Worker and Child Protection Social worker will be involved. If a Report of Concern has not been made this will occur as per the Canterbury DHB Policies and the Canterbury DHB, Police and Oranga Tamariki Memorandum of Understanding.

The Paediatrician will oversee the health assessment and medical investigations required and discuss this with the child's guardians and seek their consent to proceed. This process is transparent, and family/whanau are kept abreast of all medical investigations and the medical opinion regarding their child's injuries. The Paediatrician, CDHB Social Worker, and Child Protection Social worker will participate in a strategy meeting with Oranga Tamariki and NZ Police following the medical assessment to jointly inform ongoing interventions and safety plans.

Canterbury DHB's management of suspected sexual abuse

Any child aged 12 years and under in the Canterbury and West Coast region can be referred to the Canterbury DHB Paediatric Sexual Abuse Service if there are concerns regarding sexual abuse requiring health assessment. Referrals are received from a variety of services but most commonly Oranga Tamariki, Police or GP's.

All referrals are triaged by a Paediatrician, Social Worker and Clinical Nurse Specialist. An appointment and / or specialist Social Work support is offered accordingly. Cultural consideration is a component of every triage and appropriate supports are routinely offered.

Medical appointments with the Paediatrician and Nurse can include a therapeutic physical and holistic health check and a forensic examination when required. A specialist Social Worker is also involved in the appointment and their support can be ongoing following the appointment.

The Canterbury DHB Paediatric Sexual Abuse team liaise with Police and Oranga Tamariki for each child referred to the service.

I trust this satisfies your interest in this matter.

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

Yours sincerely



Ralph La Salle
Acting Executive Director
Planning, Funding & Decision Support