

Monday, 25 January

Re: Official Information Act Request - Breastfeeding and tongue tie support services

Kia ora [REDACTED]

Thank you for your request for information under the Official Information Act 1982.

Hauora Tairāwhiti's response to your request is as follows:

Breastfeeding Support Services

Regarding the breastfeeding support provided and funded by your DHB, please detail the following:

- *Number of FTE lactation consultants in the hospital(s):*

Hauora Tairāwhiti has five hospital midwives who have completed lactation consultant training and maintain their certification requirements.

- *Number of FTE lactation consultant in the community:*

The Tairāwhiti community has one full time lactation consultant who runs the Wai U Tairāwhiti community lactation consultant service on a contract basis through the DHB.

- *Age of baby at which this funded support becomes available:*

Referrals for lactation support are accepted antenatally and throughout the entire breastfeeding journey as needed.

Tongue Tie Services

- *Is there a dedicated tongue tie clinic for outpatient babies?*

Frenotomy clinics are provided as needed for babies in the Tairāwhiti community. For anterior and non-complicated ankyloglossia, clinics are run frequently as needed, each with the aim of treatment being provided as soon as possible. For posterior ankyloglossia ENT accepts referrals and provides treatment slots once a week as needed.

- *Is there a formal inpatient service/what would the inpatient service entail?*

Inpatient service:

During 2020, Hauora Tairāwhiti completed a local accreditation pathway for core midwives to provide frenotomies to babies in Gisborne Hospital's Puawai Aroha Maternity Unit. The goal of this additional service, which is now available, is to have a protective effect for the breastfeeding journey of babies who are tongue-tied, and ultimately increase the initiation and continuation of breastfeeding for Te Tairāwhiti whānau.

This pathway, and the Hauora Tairāwhiti guideline for the management and referral of tongue-tie (ankyloglossia) align with the National Guidance for the Assessment, Diagnosis and Surgical Treatment of Tongue-Tie in Breastfeeding Neonates, published by the Ministry of Health in November 2020.

- *Are these services fully funded by the DHB?*

Community frenotomy services are not funded by Hauora Tairāwhiti. For parents struggling financially, funding can be applied for through E Tipu E Rea.

- *How many hours a week are they available?*

Hours per week vary depending on community needs.

- *Who runs them? (lactation consultant/doctors/...)*

Hauora Tairāwhiti midwives and lactation consultants.

- *Up to what age of the baby are they available?*

As per NZCOM guidelines: anterior, uncomplicated ankyloglossia can be treated by a certified midwife up until 6 week postnatally. For posterior ankyloglossia there is an age limit of 13 weeks due to anaesthetic requirements.

- *Is there a waiting list?/Approx. how long would the patient have to wait for the service?*

A waiting list depends on demand and availability of certified frenotomy providers. For anterior ankyloglossia there is generally a maximum 1 week wait. For posterior ankyloglossia the wait can be up to 5 weeks but is generally 2 -3 weeks. Full lactation support is provided during the waiting time to preserve and protect breastfeeding.

ENT Service – (if it provides tongue tie treatment)

- *Is the ENT service fully funded by the DHB?*

Yes, ENT service is fully funded.

- *If so, is there an age limit for this?*

Referrals for frenotomy not requiring general anaesthetic are accepted from birth to 13 weeks

██████████ Babies requiring frenotomy between the age of 13 weeks and 6 months are accepted and referred to Waikato or Starship as appropriate.

- *Is there a set number of hours allocated to be available for tongue tie services each week?*

There is one clinic spot per week allocated through ENT.

- *Is there a waiting list/how long would the patient have to wait to be seen?*

As above.

If you are not satisfied with this response you may contact the Office of the Ombudsmen, phone 0800 802 602.

Please note this response or an edited version of this response may be published on the Hauora Tairāwhiti DHB website. Your personal/identifying information will be redacted from any responses published. If you feel that there are good reasons why your response should not be made publicly available, we will be happy to consider this.

Ngā mihi

Jim Green
Chief Executive
Hauora Tairāwhiti