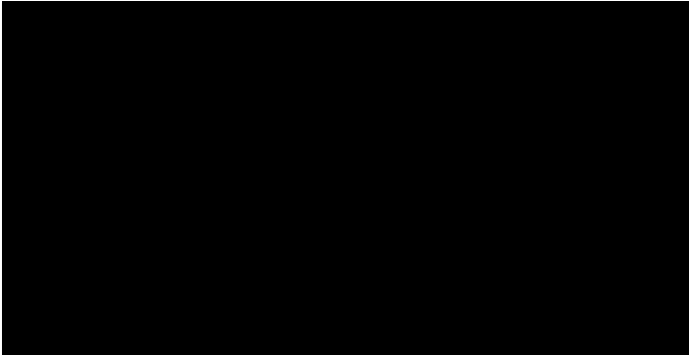


6 August 2020



**Re Official Information Request – Perinatal depression post Covid lockdown**

I refer to your official information request dated 23 July 2020 requesting the following information:

**I'm looking into whether wait times for perinatal depression assessments or programmes at the DHB have increased post the coronavirus lockdown.**

**I've spoken to Kristina Paterson from Mothers Helpers, an organisation that works to prevent perinatal depression and anxiety, who says the number of referrals has doubled again since lockdown began.**

**Wait times for an assessment are about a month and women are having to wait three months to take part in an online programme.**

**Can answers to the following questions please be attributed:**

- 1. Is this something the Auckland DHB is experiencing in maternal mental health (Aronui Ora)?**

In response to the Covid 19 pandemic, New Zealand went into Alert level 4 or "lockdown" at 11:59 pm on 25 March. The Alert Level was downgraded to Level 3 at 11:59pm on 27 April, and then to Alert Level 2 at 11:59pm on 13 May 2020.

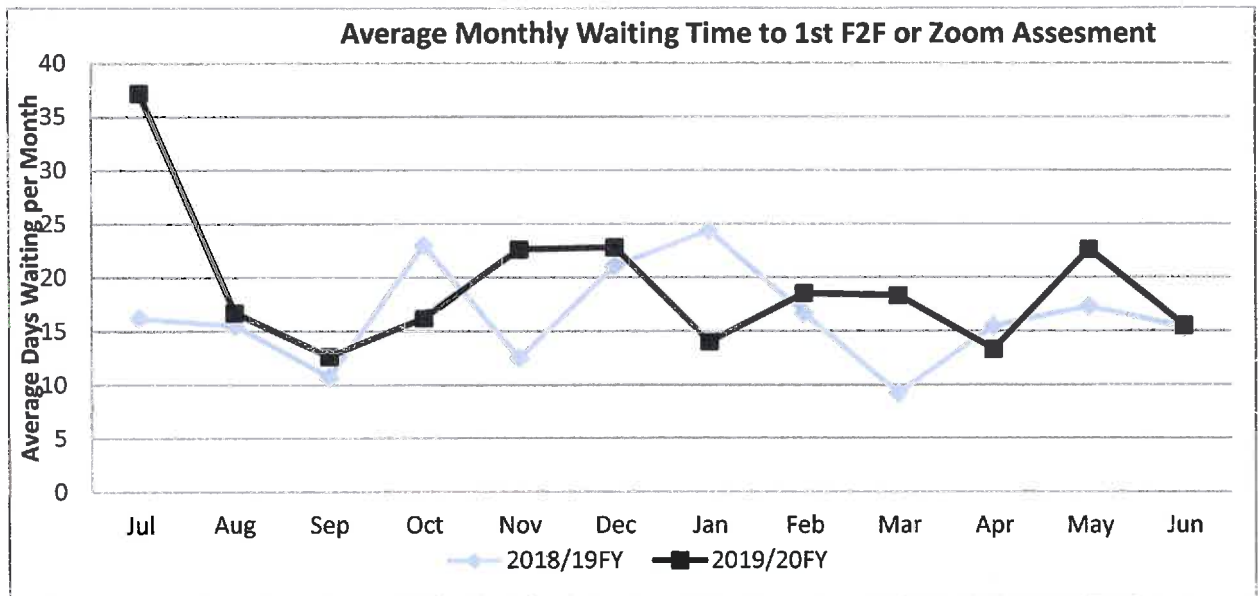
Aronui Ora is the specialist maternal mental health service of Auckland DHB. Aronui Ora has not been experiencing the increase in referrals since the "lockdown" as described above.

**2. What have wait times been in the last year? Can figures please be provided.**

We have provided the average wait time for Aronui Ora for the 2019/20 financial year, as well as the previous (2018/19) financial year's wait times as a comparator, in the below table and in the below graph. Please note that the information provided below relates to all referrals and referral issues into the service as Aronui Ora receives referrals for a range of mental health problems and not just "perinatal depression" or anxiety.

**Waiting Times (Average Days to 1st Face-to-Face or Zoom based Assessment per Month)**

	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	FY Av.
<b>2018/19FY</b>	16.2	15.5	10.7	23.0	12.5	21.1	24.4	16.7	9.2	15.5	17.3	15.4	16.4
<b>2019/20FY</b>	37.2	16.7	12.6	16.2	22.6	22.8	14.0	18.5	18.3	13.3	22.6	15.5	19.5



**3. Have these increased since lockdown? Can figures please be provided.**

While the overall average wait time for the 2019/20 year is higher than the previous year, this is skewed by the much higher wait time in July 2019. The data overall does not appear to support a conclusion of increased waiting times to be seen by Aronui Ora as a result of the "lockdown".

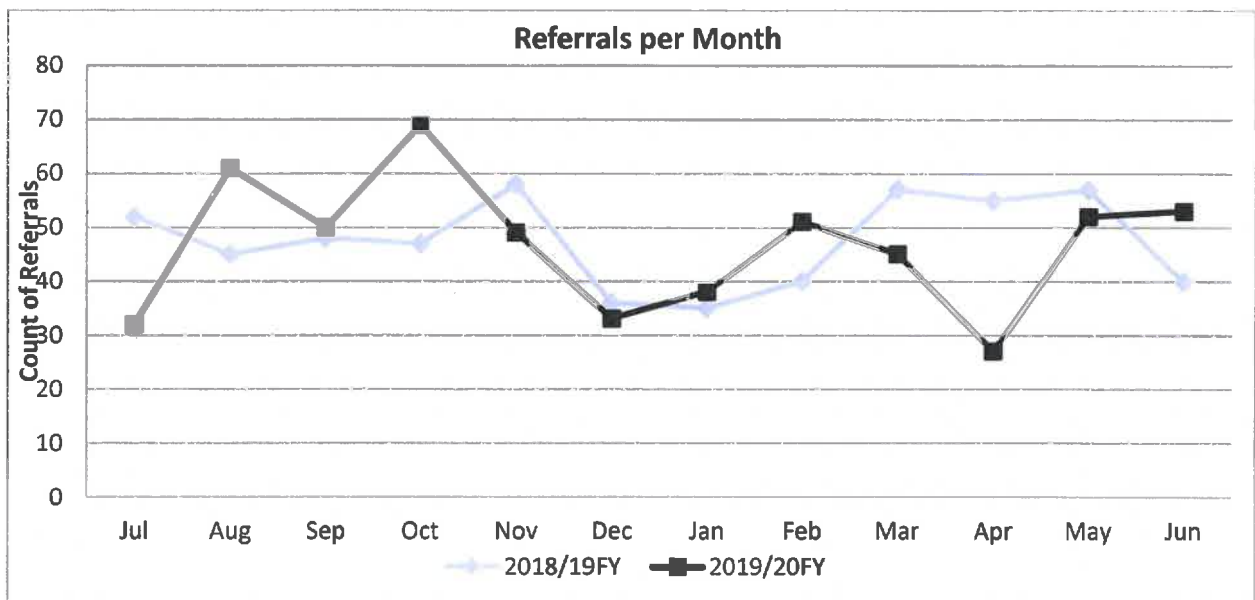
4. Have the number of referrals from GPs to Aronui Ora increased since lockdown? Can figures please be provided. Can the number of referrals in the last year also be provided.

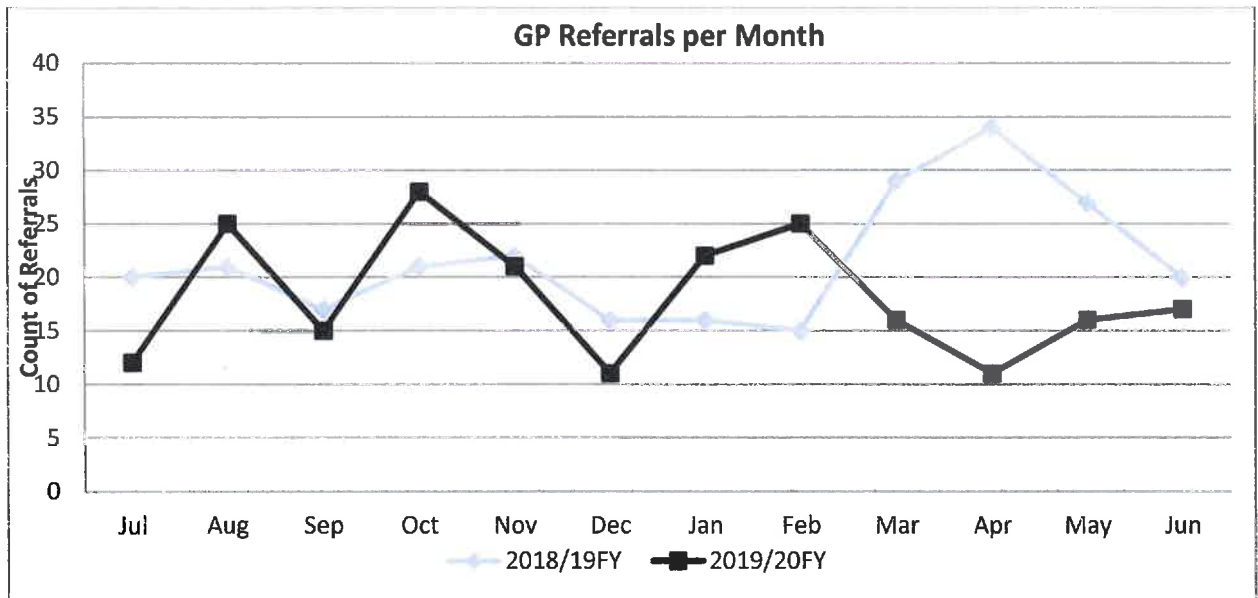
Please see the table below and the graphs of this table. As above, data has been provided for the past two financial years as shown. Data is shown for referrals from GPs, from other sources, and from all referral sources combined.

The data does not indicate that referrals from GPs have increased since the lockdown, and similarly referrals overall have not increased over this period.

### Referrals

FYear	Referrer Group	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	FY Total	FY Mthly Av
2018/19	GP - Referrals	20	21	17	21	22	16	16	15	29	34	27	20	258	22
	Other Referrers	32	24	31	26	36	20	19	25	28	21	30	20	312	26
	2018/19FY Total	52	45	48	47	58	36	35	40	57	55	57	40	570	48
2019/20	GP - Referrals	12	25	15	28	21	11	22	25	16	11	16	17	219	18
	Other Referrers	20	36	35	41	28	22	16	26	29	16	36	36	341	28
	2019/20FY Total	32	61	50	69	49	33	38	51	45	27	52	53	560	47





**5. Can the DHB confirm funding for maternal mental health is determined by the board, who are influenced by the CEO?**

The Auckland DHB Board has final approval of all Auckland DHB investment decisions. This is based on advice that incorporates clinical, financial and other considerations including legislative and DHB obligations to the crown for service coverage requirements.

**6. How does the DHB therefore respond to comment maternal mental health is low on the DHBs list of priorities?**

Auckland DHB is declining to answer this question under section 18(g) of the Official Information Act as the information requested is not held by Auckland DHB.

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 response, may be published on the Auckland DHB website.

Yours faithfully

Ailsa Claire, OBE  
Chief Executive