



16 June 2022

[REDACTED]

Dear [REDACTED]

Official Information Act Request

You have asked for information about comprehensive AOD assessments.

1) Does the DHB have a "dedicated AOD clinician" in the Whangarei or Kaikohe district court?

There is a dedicated AOD clinician working at Whangārei District Court.

There is a dedicated AOD clinician working at Kaikohe District Court Kaikohe but under a different model. Following a hui between the local District Court Judge and the DHB AOD Professional Advisor, the AOD service agreed to move the resource allocated to the Court to support the Matariki court process. The Matariki Court is an option for offenders. They first have to plead guilty and then have to agree to engage with a plan set out by Te Mana o Ngapuhi Kowhaorau (TMONK) which may include AOD intervention. Once the plan is complete the individual goes go back to Court. This has been much more workable and satisfying for the client and the Court.

2) Is the clinician's role primarily focused on providing brief assessments (as in alcohol and drug screening which might take 15-20 minutes) or providing comprehensive AOD assessments (which would include background issues and circumstances - including mental health issues - which might predispose the offender to using alcohol and drugs?)

Whangarei

Brief assessments are provided to the Court. The AOD clinician works at Court only on Judge's list days and family violence days, that means 2 or 3 days a week. Other days the clinician is with the community team at Kamo and sees clients both Court related and other AOD clients. When at Court, the clinician receives referrals from judges or lawyers and a brief court assessment for the Court is completed. These assessments usually take 30 to 40 minutes and a report is submitted to the Judge immediately after the assessment. This means that it takes an hour to complete the process. Brief court assessment covers predisposing, precipitating, perpetuating and protective factors very briefly including screening for mental health, ADOM (Alcohol and Others Drug Outcome Measure) and risk but is more focussed on the offence and how it's linked with AOD. Brief court assessment also mentions current AOD use and recommended treatment. Sometimes a recommendation is made to the Judge for a comprehensive assessment if more details are required. We give a copy of brief court assessment to the Judge and lawyer with a consent from the client that includes treatment recommendations.

Kaikohe

Comprehensive AOD assessments are a component of the Matariki Court process for AOD service consumers noted above.

3) Does that dedicated clinician have any responsibilities other than providing alcohol and drug assessments to the courts? If so, what are those other responsibilities?

Whangarei

Following the brief court assessment or comprehensive assessment with client, in most cases the AOD clinician will complete a referral to an appropriate AOD service including Northland DHB for further treatment as clients don't have to wait for their sentencing to start a treatment programme. Court days usually cover 2 or 3 days a week and duties on other days are normal AOD clinician tasks including duty clinician role for the community team, doing assessments, participate in Multi-Disciplinary Team meetings), follow up with clients, 1:1 sessions and liaising with external AOD services if needed.

Kaikohe

Normal AOD clinical duties as per Whangarei clinician discussed above

*4) Can you please advise, how many **comprehensive** alcohol and drug assessments were provided to the courts in Whangarei and Kaikohe in 2021?*

Whangarei

None as the AOD clinician does brief court assessments. Many of the clients are seen for further comprehensive assessment at Community Mental Health and Addiction offices at a later date the completed comprehensive assessment report are not shared with the Court although the clinician provides recommendations or can recommended treatment options to the Court.

Kaikohe

None although as mentioned above in question 1, comprehensive assessments are a component of the collaborative Matariki Court process in the Mid North.

Northland DHB supports the open disclosure of information to assist public understanding of how we deliver our services. This includes proactive publication of anonymised Official Information Act responses on our website from 10 working days after they have been provided to you. Personal or identifying information will be redacted from any response published online. If you consider there are good reasons why this response should not be publicly available we will consider your views.

If you have any queries about Northland DHB's response to your information request please contact me.

Yours sincerely



Dr Nick Chamberlain
Chief Executive