

Briefing for decision

Draft Cabinet paper: Regulations for puberty blocker prescribing and options for increasing accessibility of youth gender services

Date due to MO: 28 October 2025 **Action required by:** 28 October 2025

Security level: SENSITIVE **Reference:** H2025074052

To: Hon Simeon Brown, Minister of Health

Consulted: Health New Zealand:

Proactive release: This **title** is proposed by the Ministry of Health **not to be** proactively released until after decisions and announcements have been made.

Contact for telephone discussion

Name	Position	Telephone
Steve Barnes	Associate Deputy Director-General, Strategy and Policy	9(2)(a)
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Minister's office to complete:

Approved Decline Overtaken by events

Needs change Seen

See Minister's Notes Withdrawn

Comment:

Briefing for decision

Draft Cabinet paper: Regulations for puberty blocker prescribing and options for increasing accessibility of youth gender services

Security level: SENSITIVE **Date:** 28 October 2025

To: Hon Simeon Brown, Minister of Health

Purpose of report

1. This report:
 - a. provides a draft Cabinet paper for Ministerial consultation
 - b. reports to you on progress in engaging with Health New Zealand on increasing the accessibility of holistic gender services for young people.

Previous Cabinet decision

2. Cabinet decided in September 2025 to regulate to prohibit puberty blocker prescribing to treat gender incongruence and gender dysphoria in new patients, while making youth gender services more accessible (SOU-25-MIN-0104).
3. In its decision, Cabinet:
 - a. directed the Ministry of Health (the Ministry) to engage with Health NZ on increasing accessibility of holistic gender services for young people, and report to you on this, authorising you to make further decisions
 - b. noted you would report back to SOU on options including associated costs at the same time as you seek authorisation for regulations to be submitted to the Executive Council.

Regulations drafted for authorisation to submit to Executive Council

4. PCO has drafted the attached regulations. We have consulted with named persons in the Ministry (including Medsafe), the Crown Law Office (CLO) and Health NZ.
5. 9(2)(h)

Increasing accessibility of youth gender services

6. The draft Cabinet paper reports back on options to increase accessibility of holistic gender services for young people (including medical, psychological and social services). Three options are proposed based on increasingly localised service delivery models:
 - a. Option 1 – centre of excellence: a national centre and national clinical governance providing highly specialised expertise to clinicians in the community providing direct care and support to young people

- b. Option 2 – regional hubs: four regional hubs, each with a range of specialist expertise and care coordination, supported by national clinical governance with regional support provided for interprofessional community care
 - c. Option 3 – a locally-driven model with district hubs (Health NZ does not favour this option).
7. We consider that Option 2 would be the most effective model for providing youth gender services as it would enable young people to access care close to home by services that are supported by national clinical governance. A district-based model would risk fragmentation, while a national model may be less connected to local services that will be part of young peoples' care.
8. s 9(2)(g)(i)

9.

10.

11.

Draft Cabinet paper for Ministerial consultation

12. We understand you wish to progress without delay and with a high degree of confidentiality until decisions are ready to be announced. We will conduct departmental consultation during Ministerial consultation, restricted to named personnel only.
13. Attached is a draft Cabinet paper with the regulations drafted by PCO. The paper describes the three options for increasing service accessibility, s 9(2)(g)(i)
14. We understand Ministers wish to see the regulations in effect as soon as possible. Subject to authorisations, regulations could be in effect from 19 December if Ministerial

consultation is compressed for completion by 3 November and SOU considers the paper on 12 November.

Next steps

15. A final paper, with any amendments in response to feedback from Ministerial consultation, will be provided on 5 November for your authorisation to lodge for consideration by SOU on 12 November. Subject to authorisations, this timeframe would allow for regulations to be in effect from 19 December 2025.

Recommendations

We recommend you:

- a) **Note** the update on work with Health New Zealand on increasing accessibility of youth gender services **Yes / No**
- b) **Note** the draft Cabinet paper and attached draft regulation provided for Ministerial consultation **Yes / No**
- c) **Note** that Ministerial consultation will need to be completed by Tuesday 4 November in order that the paper be considered by SOU on 12 November **Yes / No**
- d) **Agree** that the attached draft Cabinet paper be circulated for Ministerial consultation **Yes / No**

Steve Barnes

Steve Barnes
Associate Deputy Director-General
Strategy and Policy

Hon Simeon Brown
Minister of Health
Date:

ENDS.