

Cairns and Hinterland HHS – Health Service Investigation 2025 Paediatric Gender Health Services

Purpose

The purpose of this health service investigation is to investigate and report on matters relating to the administration, management and delivery of public sector paediatric gender health services at the Cairns Sexual Health Service, Cairns and Hinterland Hospital and Health Service (CHHS) (Investigation).

Scope of Investigation

The Health Service Investigators must have regard to the Clinical Review report, and attach it to the Investigation Report, as required by section 199(2) of the HHBA.

The Health Service Investigators are to investigate matters relating to the administration, management and delivery of public sector paediatric gender health services to children and young people at the Cairns Sexual Health Service, CHHS, focussing on:

Establishment

- (a) the circumstances leading to CHHS commencing delivery of paediatric gender health services from the Cairns Sexual Health Service including, but not limited to:
 - (i) any consultation, both internal and external to CHHS, including with Children's Health Queensland (CHQ), in relation to the change made to the existing adult gender services delivered by CHHS to include delivery of separate paediatric gender health services within CHHS;
 - (ii) identifying and assessing the approval processes and oversight in place for CHHS to commence the delivery of paediatric gender health services, including hospital executive, Health Service Chief Executive and/or Hospital and Health Board knowledge and engagement;
 - (iii) whether clinically appropriate model/s of care were adopted for the commencement of the delivery of paediatric gender services at CHHS;
- (b) the arrangements put in place at the time CHHS commenced delivery of paediatric gender health services at the Cairns Sexual Health Service for the continued monitoring and evaluation of the suitability, performance, and rationale for the operation of those health services, including, but not limited to:
 - (i) whether regular service evaluation by CHHS occurred; and

- (ii) the adequacy of hospital executive, Health Service Chief Executive and/or Hospital and Health Board oversight associated with the operation and delivery of the paediatric gender health services at CHHHS;

Governance

- (c) the administration and management of paediatric gender services delivered at CHHHS from commencement and during the ongoing service delivery including:

Clinical governance

- (i) Responsibility for clinical governance within CHHHS in relation to the paediatric gender health services delivered and how this is monitored/assessed;
- (ii) assessing the adequacy of the clinical governance framework in place and compliance with that framework;
- (iii) the extent to which the clinical governance aligned with the endorsed Statewide model of care for the delivery of paediatric gender services through the Queensland Children's Gender Service (QCGS) or, any best practice clinical guidelines and/or service models applicable to the delivery of health services to trans and gender diverse children at the relevant time and where inconsistencies are identified, assessment of the reasons for those inconsistencies;
- (iv) whether any arrangements were formalised between CHHHS and QCGS, including in relation to:
 - (A) liaison between the CHHHS and QCGS about the delivery of paediatric gender health services (e.g. for CHHHS to seek advice from QCGS);
 - (B) referrals to QCGS; and/or
 - (C) QCGS having oversight of the paediatric gender health services delivered at the Cairns Sexual Health Service by CHHHS.

Professional governance

- (v) Assessing the adequacy of credentialing and scope of clinical practice processes;
- (vi) Identifying and assessing the framework in place in relation to training, clinical supervision and performance oversight of health practitioners (including Registrars);
- (vii) Determining the adequacy and appropriateness of documentation relating to the processes detailed at paragraphs 4.2(c)(v) and 4.2(c)(vi) above;

Operational governance

- (viii) Assessing the framework for eligibility to receive paediatric gender health services at CHHHS for children and young people, including referral processes and eligibility criteria;
- (ix) The adequacy of staffing to deliver the multidisciplinary services required by the endorsed Statewide model of care for the delivery of paediatric gender services through the QCGS or, any best practice clinical guidelines and/or service models

applicable to the delivery of health services to trans and gender diverse children at the relevant time;

- (x) Assessing the level of utilisation and adequacy of associated monitoring of the paediatric gender health services at CHHS, such as the collection of demographics (e.g. age) of patients accessing the paediatric gender health services delivered by CHHS.

Service delivery

- (d) Assessing whether paediatric gender health services delivered by CHHS aligns with the endorsed Statewide model of care for the delivery of paediatric gender services through the QCGS or, any best practice clinical guidelines and/or service models applicable to the delivery of health services to trans and gender diverse children.

Complaints

- (e) identifying whether any complaints or concerns have been received within the CHHS about the delivery of paediatric gender health services, including but not limited to, any Public Interest Disclosures made, and assess the adequacy of the CHHS complaints management processes, including responses provided to these complaints.