

11 September 2018



Dear 

Re: Official Information Act request – clinical psychology

Thank you for your Official Information Act request regarding psychological services provided by Waitemata District Health Board's (DHB) Specialist Mental Health Services, received 22 August 2018. Further clarification about the scope of your request being confined to our adult services was received on 24 August 2018.

Before responding to your specific questions, it may be useful to provide some context about our services to assist your understanding. The Waitemata DHB Specialist Mental Health and Addiction Service (SMH&AS) serves a population of 630,000 and is the largest service in the country by volume of service-users seen. Our total mental health and addiction services workforce numbers just over 1,260 permanent staff.

In answer to your questions, please see the responses provided below. We have endeavoured to show how we have interpreted your questions in providing this information. We have explained where information cannot be provided because it is not collected by Waitemata DHB. If you are dissatisfied with any of these decisions, you are entitled to make a complaint to the Ombudsman, whose details are available via www.ombudsman.parliament.nz.

The following information relates to Adult Mental Health, Isa Lei (Pacific mental health) and Moko (kaupapa Māori mental health) services. These services all work with adults aged 18-64 years.

1. As a percentage of patients of [SMHS] Adult, Isa Lei and Moko services, how many are receiving psychological therapy from a clinical psychologist?

As at 27 August 2018, 17.35% of people who were under the Adult, Isa Lei or Moko services were receiving, or received, at some time in their current episode of care, psychological therapy from a clinical psychologist, either as individual therapy or in a group setting or both.

2. For patients who are referred to a clinical psychologist for psychological therapy, how long is it between referral and their first appointment for therapy?

The length of time a person waits to see a psychologist is recorded in their personal clinical notes. To answer this question would require reviewing more than 400 clinical records. Therefore, we are refusing your request under s18(f) of the Official Information Act 1982.

We note that we have considered whether we could provide the information if we extended the time for responding to your request or charged to provide the information but have decided that this would not assist. The work required to collate this information from HCC (the electronic patient record system used by SMH&AS) would need to be done by a mental health professional used to working with HCC who would ordinarily be providing frontline mental health services. There is a national shortage of mental health professionals, which means that we would not be able to backfill the frontline position so that the information could be collated. This would compromise SMH&AS' ability to provide services to patients. We have therefore concluded that charging or extending time would not allow us to provide the information.

3. For patients receiving psychological therapy from a clinical psychologist, how many sessions on average does the patient receive?

The average number of either group or individual sessions in which people are receiving psychological therapy from a clinical psychologist in the Adult, Isa Lei and Moko services is 23.66 sessions as at 27 August 2018.

4. How many FTE clinical psychologists does your district health board employ?

As at 27 August 2018, the Adult, Isa Lei and Moko services had a total of 17.6 FTE (full-time equivalent) clinical psychologists employed.

5. How many FTE vacancies are there for clinical psychologists?

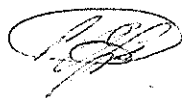
As at 27 August 2018, the Adult, Isa Lei and Moko services recorded 2.9 FTE vacancies for psychologists.

I trust that this information meets your requirements. Waitemata DHB, like other agencies across the state sector, supports the open disclosure of information to assist the public's understanding of how we are delivering publicly-funded healthcare.

This includes the proactive publication of anonymised Official Information Act responses on our website from 10 working days after they have been released.

If you feel that there are good reasons why your response should not be made publicly available, we will be happy to consider this.

Yours sincerely



Pam Lightbown
General Manager, Specialist Mental Health & Addiction Services
Waitemata District Health Board