

24 June 2019

Dear [REDACTED]

Re: Official Information Act request – Mental health doctor vacancies

Thank you for your Official Information Act request of 1 June 2019 seeking details from Waitematā District Health Board (DHB) in relation to Mental health doctor vacancies.

Before responding to your specific questions, it may be useful to provide some context about our services to assist your understanding.

Waitematā DHB serves a population of more than 630,000. Our Specialist Mental Health and Addiction Services are the largest of this kind in the country, by volume of service-users seen. The speciality comprises Adult Mental Health Services, Child Youth and Family Mental Health Services, Takanga a Fohe (Pacific mental health and addictions), Whitiki Maurea (Kāupapa Māori mental health and addictions), the Regional Forensic Psychiatry Service (covering Northland and greater Auckland regions) and Community Alcohol and Drug Services (CADS). All of our addictions services cover the Auckland region. Mental Health Services for Older Adults sits within Waitematā DHB's Speciality Medicine and Health of Older People Division.

Our responses to your questions are provided below.

1. What is the number and percentage (the total being full number of funded positions) of your vacancies in mental health doctors (registrars and consultants) in 2018 and 2019?

Year	Number of vacancies	% vacancies
2018	Consultants: 6.9 FTE	Consultants: 8%
	Registrars: 4.5 FTE	Registrars: 17%
2019 (year to date)	Consultants: 9.5 FTE	Consultants: 10%
	Registrars: 2.8 FTE	Registrars: 11%

2. Is there a strategic plan in place to increase the numbers of mental health doctors, given the increased demands for mental health services, and the recent government budget announcements?

The budget announcements released by the Ministry of Health describe national goals and, except for forensic services, do not go into detail about funding to increase medical staffing in DHB-provided mental health and addiction services^[1]. The Key Messages document released by the Ministry of Health (MoH) and the website (link below) indicate that across the forensic services nationally there will be nine more full-time equivalent Senior Medical Officers. These positions, alongside increased community nursing and allied health positions, will “facilitate treatment and management of people reintegrating into the community or needing court reviews”. Waitemātā DHB will undertake further strategic planning around medical staff when further details of the budget implementation are available.

Waitemātā 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 health care. 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 them.

We trust this reply satisfies your request.

Yours sincerely,



Fiona McCarthy
Director Human Resources
Waitemātā District Health Board

^[1] <https://www.health.govt.nz/our-work/mental-health-and-addictions/budget-2019-mental-health-wellbeing-and-addiction-initiatives#preventing>