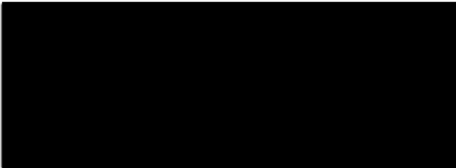




25 November 2021



Dear [REDACTED]

Re: OIA request – Number and merit levels of pharmacy staff

Thank you for your Official Information Act requests received 4 November 2021 seeking information from Waitematā District Health Board (DHB) about the number of employed pharmacists, technicians, interns, prescribers and merit applications.

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

Waitematā is the largest and one of the most rapidly growing DHBs in the country, serving a population of around 650,000 across the North Shore, Waitakere and Rodney areas. We are the largest employer in the district, employing around 8,600 people across more than 80 locations.

In addition to providing care to our own resident population, we are the Northern Region provider of forensic mental health services and child rehabilitation services, plus the metro Auckland provider of child community dental services and community alcohol and drug services.

In response to your request, we are able to provide the following information:

1. Pursuant to section 12 of the Official Information Act 1982, APEX requests the data and/or information held by your District Health Board, with regards to Pharmacy Assistants, Trainee Pharmacy Technicians, Pharmacy Technicians, Intern Pharmacists, and Pharmacists. Could you please provide the following information:
 - a. The actual number of Pharmacists – i.e. headcount and FTE.
 - b. The actual number of Pharmacy Technicians – i.e. headcount and FTE.
 - c. The actual number of Pharmacy Assistants – i.e. headcount and FTE.
 - d. The number of resignations and pending resignations since 4 November 2020 broken down into pharmacists, pharmacy technicians and pharmacy assistants.
2. With regards to Pharmacy Assistants, Trainee Pharmacy Technicians, Pharmacy Technicians, Intern Pharmacists, and Pharmacists. Could you please provide the following information:
 - a. The number of staff hired in the above positions since 1 November 2020 i.e. headcount and FTE.
 - b. How many years of experience in the same or substantially similar role of each new hire.
 - c. Where they started on the salary scale?
3. With regards to Pharmacy Assistants, Trainee Pharmacy Technicians, Pharmacy Technicians, Intern Pharmacists, and Pharmacists. Could you please provide the following information:

- a. The number of pharmacist prescribers employed at the DHB.
- b. The number of pharmacy technicians who hold a Pharmacy Accuracy Checking Technician (PACT) or a Level 6 (Pharmacy Technician - Specialist) qualification.
- c. The number of merit applications broken down into pharmacists, pharmacy technicians, and pharmacy assistants at your DHB.
- d. The number of successful merit applications broken down into pharmacists, pharmacy technicians, and pharmacy assistants at your DHB.

The following table provides the number of staff in various positions at Waitematā DHB, as requested in questions 1, 2 and 3.

As at 31 Oct 21	Headcount Oct 2021	FTE	Prescribers	PACT or Level 6	Starts since 1 Nov 2020	FTE starts	Resignations – headcount*
Pharmacist	92.0	75.5	3.0		9.0	8.0	7.0
Pharmacy Technician	29.0	26.3		3.0	6.0	6.0	3
Pharmacy Assistant	1.0	0.8					
Pharmacist Intern	2	2			2.0	2.0	

*Resignations occurred due to reasons such as: moving out of Auckland, change of career, return to academia, moving to other pharmacy-related roles within the DHB.

2b. How many years of experience in the same or substantially similar role of each new hire.

We do not hold prior employment work records to calculate or report on individual ‘years of experience’.

We are, therefore, refusing this aspect of your request under section 18(g) as the information you request is not held by us.

2c. Where they started on the salary scale?

We have withheld numbers where there are four or fewer pharmacists on a particular grade step to protect the privacy of individual staff members. This information is withheld under section 9(2)(a) of the Official Information Act. We have considered whether the public interest in releasing the information outweighs the need to protect the privacy of individual staff members and have determined that it does not.

Releasing the information about the grade step individual pharmacists started on in the last 12 months where there four or fewer pharmacists that have started on a particular step is highly likely to make the individual pharmacists and their salaries identifiable. Salary and grade step information is highly sensitive and its confidentiality should be preserved.

You will note from the following table that the DHB has not had more than four new appointments in any category in the 12 months to October 2021.

Grades of new starts for 12 months ending October 2021			
Grade	Pharmacist	Intern	Technicians
1		s9(2)(a)	
2			s9(2)(a)
3	s9(2)(a)		s9(2)(a)
4	s9(2)(a)		s9(2)(a)

5			
6			
7	s9(2)(a)		
8	s9(2)(a)		
9	s9(2)(a)		
10			
11			
12			
13			
14			
15	s9(2)(a)		
16			
17			

3c. The number of merit applications broken down into pharmacists, pharmacy technicians and pharmacy assistants at your DHB.

3d. The number of *successful* merit applications broken down into pharmacists, pharmacy technicians and pharmacy assistants at your DHB.

We have provided a combined response for question 3c and 3d. To do so, we have analysed grade changes for the 12 months to October 2021.

All staff who have applied for a merit application in the 12 months to October 2021 have been successful in having their applications progressed via career and salary progression (CASP). This includes two pharmacists, with three more currently underway. Waitemata DHB's pharmacy technicians and assistants have not applied to undertake CASP in the 12 months to October

Merit and CASP applications involve a significant professional undertaking and staff commitment the process must be confident they have the capacity to take on the additional workload. All staff receive annual performance appraisals which record agreed professional development plans.

I trust that the information we have been able to provide is helpful.

You have the right to seek an investigation and review by the Ombudsman regarding the decisions taken in providing this response. Information about how to seek a review is available at www.ombudsman.parliament.nz or Freephone 0800 802 602.

Waitemata DHB supports the open disclosure of information to assist community 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 consider there are good reasons why this response should not be made publicly available, we will be happy to consider your views.

Yours sincerely



**Executive Director Finance, People and Planning
Waitemata District Health Board**