

Clinical : Mental Health
Proactive Release: 10 July 2019



28 June 2019



Dear [REDACTED]

Official Information Act (1982) Request

I write in response to your Official Information Act request, dated 18 June 2019. You requested the following information:

- 1. How many DHB staff (measured in FTE) were allocated to the Mental Health/Alcohol and Other Drug Watch-house Nurse Pilot Initiative in Counties Manukau in each of the months of 2017, 2018, and to date in 2019?**
- 2. How many hours were worked by staff allocated to the Mental Health/Alcohol and Other Drug Watch-house Nurse Pilot Initiative in Counties Manukau in each of the months of 2017, 2018, and to date in 2019?**

Our responses are below each question:

1. How many DHB staff (measured in FTE) were allocated to the Mental Health/Alcohol and Other Drug Watch-house Nurse Pilot Initiative in Counties Manukau in each of the months of 2017, 2018, and to date in 2019?

In the Counties Manukau district, the 'Watch-House Nurse Pilot Initiative' became business as usual in 2014, following the pilot evaluation. Between 2017 and the current date,

- The FTE allocated has remained constant. There are 2.0 FTE allocated to the DCU (Watch-House) service.
- During 2017, only one of these FTE positions was able to be recruited to, with the second position only filled in April 2018.
- For the period January - November 2018, the 2.0 FTE remained allocated, with both FTE filled from June – November 2018.
- In December 2018, the 2.0 FTE roles were incorporated into the core "Intake and Acute Assessment Team", as part of Mental Health Services Acute and Hospital Services at Counties Manukau Health (CM Health).
- Both the staff who were employed to these designated FTE roles resigned in March 2019, and have not yet been replaced.

The decision to incorporate this Watch House Nurse FTE allocation into the Assessment and Intake Team was due to a combination of factors, including existing Mental Health staffing pressures, and also concurrent changes in the profile of the acute mental health presentations to the NZ Police District Custody Unit (DCU) at Manukau. The changes observed by the Watch House Nurses for fewer acute presentations requiring a nurse were attributed to positive changes in the NZ Police approach to both management of intoxicated, behaviourally disturbed offenders, and to obligations under the Mental Health (CAT) Act 1992.

We continue to allocate 2.0 FTE to the DCU during 2019; within the Mental Health community services - Intake and Acute Assessment Team. This service is also supporting a mental health presence at the Emergency Department at Middlemore Hospital, to enable effective clinician-led responses to acute mental health and addiction presentations, including via NZ Police from across our community.

Despite the current vacancies, and the changes in acute referral numbers at NZ Police Manukau DCU, the CM Health Acute Intake and Acute Assessment do respond to any acute mental health referrals received from the Manukau Police Station. We acknowledge there continues to be a need to support NZ Police in responding effectively to acute mental health cases. We work closely with our Counties Manukau counterparts at NZ Police to improve the timeliness of mental health assessments, and to ensure that people detained due to mental health concerns do not unduly remain in custody.

2. How many hours were worked by staff allocated to the Mental Health/Alcohol and Other Drug Watch-house Nurse Pilot Initiative in Counties Manukau in each of the months of 2017, 2018 and to date in 2019?

Hours/month	Jan	Feb	Mar	April	May	Jun	July	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec
2017	160	190	180	150	113	150	170	179	160	146	130	130
FTE 1	160	190	180	150	113	150	170	179	160	146	130	130
FTE 2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
2018	140	10	157	300	210	300	319	337	290	260	0	0
FTE 1	140	10	157	160	20	160	160	167	110	170	0	0
FTE 2	0	0	0	140	190	140	159	170	180	90	0	0
2019	0	0	0	vacant	vacant	vacant	~	~	~	~	~	~
FTE 1	0	0	0									
FTE 2	0	0	0									

- November 2018 – role re-deployed to the Acute Intake/Assessment Team, no hours worked designated at DCU. Responded to NZ Police as required.
- March 2019 – both employees resigned
- Note that any monthly variation in hours worked reflects use of employee leave, and variable service demands.

The totals in the table do not include ongoing responses to referrals from NZ Police/ Manukau DCU to the Mental Health Assessment and Intake team to since December 2018.

I trust this information satisfactorily answers your query. If you are not satisfied with this response you are entitled to seek a review of the response by the Ombudsman under section 28(3) of the Official Information Act.

Please note that this response or an edited version of this may be published on the Counties Manukau DHB website.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'F. Apa', with a stylized flourish above the name.

Fepulea'i Margie Apa
Chief Executive Officer
Counties Manukau Health