

14 August 2019

[REDACTED]

E-mail: [REDACTED]

Dear [REDACTED]

Official Information Act (1982) Request

I write in response to your Official Information Act request, received by us on 23 July 2019. You requested the following information:

- 1. The number of full and part time staff currently employed in the maternity ward at your District Health Board.**
 - a. Please separate these by job title (i.e. midwife, senior midwife, obstetrician, nurse etc.)*
 - b. I also request the number of positions that exist or need to be filled –
 - i. (i.e. If there are 20 midwife position's but 10 are currently filled, please state this, and the length of time the position has been open for).**
- 2. Please also provide any reports or information - including internal memos etc - into staffing problems within the maternity ward, and any issues with recruitment, in the past two years.**
 - a. This includes reports of any adverse events where staffing was identified as an issue.*
- 3. I also request any complaints or matters of concern raised by maternity ward staff to management, about problems or incidents arising from or related to a lack of staffing within the maternity ward.**

Much of the detail sought in your request related to our maternity services and workforce is included in the Women's Health and New Born Annual Report for 2017/18, which is publicly available:

- <https://countiesmanukau.health.nz/assets/Our-services/attachments/CM-Health-Womens-Health-and-Newborn-Annual-Report-2017-2018-v15-HR-final-digital.pdf>

The 2018/19 Women's Health and New Born Annual Report due to be published in the next few months.

For context, Counties Manukau Health (CM Health) provides health services to in excess of 569,000 people, in an ethnically diverse community. It is estimated there are more than 120,000 women of childbearing age (15 to 44 years) living in the area serviced by CM Health, and we see more than 7,300 births per year at our facilities. We continue to see a rise in the clinical complexity of births occurring in Counties Manukau.

The Middlemore Hospital Maternity ward has 45 beds. We also have a Middlemore Birthing Unit, and three Primary Birthing Units (Botany, Pukekohe, Papakura), that provide a mix of birthing and postnatal care. As noted below, the configuration of our maternity services is currently changing,

with the phased opening of an additional 22 beds to provide new postnatal, transitional neonatal care, and gynaecology capacity.

By way of caution, we note that variations in DHB size, population and demographic factors impact on appropriate levels of staffing and FTE, and current FTE should not be compared between DHBs.

In response to your queries for Counties Manukau Health services, we note the following:

1. Staff numbers in the maternity wards:

As of 30 June 2019, the combined midwifery/ nursing staffing numbers more Middlemore Hospital maternity ward (antenatal & postnatal) are:

Role	FTE
Senior Midwife	2.00 FTE
Registered Midwife	33.83 FTE
Registered Nurse	31.53 FTE
Health Care Assistant	10.86 FTE

The medical Obstetric team are fully staffed, and cover all areas of the Womens Health service, not the Maternity Wards specifically. There are also admin and support staff, (e.g. Ward Clerks, Cleaners etc.) deployed to support the maternity ward.

As of 30 June 19, Midwifery/ Nursing vacancies being recruited to on the Maternity Wards are 12.79 FTE. Please note: The service uses internal bureau staff, and external agency Registered Midwives and Registered Nurses to cover unexpected sick-leave or periods of high acuity or service demand. Some vacancies are able to be covered by the 6.57 FTE bureau staff available. We actively recruit, on a continuous basis for Registered Midwives and Nurses to fill any vacancies.

2. Reports and information on Women’s Health including recruitment of staff:

Like many DHBs, CM Health needs to enhance the retention and years of experience of our midwifery workforce, and is looking at a range of initiatives to support junior midwives into hospital midwifery practice. The annual intake of new graduate midwives bolstered the midwifery staffing levels in both the antenatal ward, and Birthing and Assessment, and we expect to support further new graduates in 2020. Many of newly approved positions now recruited are for Registered Nurses, with oversight of Senior Midwives, Lactation Consultants and Educators. Again, there is more detail on our workforce recruitment and development approaches in the Annual Report.

CM Health is also currently undertaking a proactive recruitment campaign to enable a phased opening of additional maternity beds at Middlemore Hospital. These additional beds were approved as part of the “*Women’s Health Services - Workforce and Capacity Report and Plan - September 2018*” submitted to the Executive Leadership Team in September 2018. The report outlined our service capacity, including recruitment needs in 2018, and made clinically-led recommendations to address concerns.

This report has recently been released under the Official Information Act, and is available on our website:

<https://countiesmanukau.health.nz/about-us/official-information-act-requests/publicly-released-oias//show/158>

Some of the current vacancies noted above are a consequence of the approval for expansion of maternity services, with the opening of additional maternity beds. CM Health is actively recruiting as part of this implementation. To date, we have employed 13.10 FTE Registered Nurses, and 4.24 FTE Health Care Assistants specifically for this expansion, which are included in the numbers above.

The entire sector, including the Midwifery Union acknowledges that many DHBs are currently contending with midwifery staffing shortages. CM Health has seen a large number of new midwives commencing work at CM Health over the last three years, with resignations mostly due to midwives moving to LMC practice (frequently in Counties), parental leave, a move from permanent FTE to casual, or due to moving out of area - for cheaper housing, or to work closer to home.

As you are aware, the DHB proactively publishes the summary details, findings and recommendations of all Serious Adverse Event each year. The 2018/19 report is being completed currently, including finalisation of any recommendations as to contributing factors, and will be published in December 2019. The last report covering 2017/18, which included cases in Women's Health, is available on our website:

<https://countiesmanukau.health.nz/about-us/performance-and-planning/serious-adverse-events/>

3. Complaints raised by staff re lack of staffing within Maternity Wards:

CM Health has an incident reporting system staff to enable staff to formally log any incidents affecting clinical care. These are not formal complaints by staff. One incident category is "Staff-inadequate/ unavailable". We note that any reported incidents are automatically sent to the service and clinical leader for review, investigation and feedback to staff.

For the Maternity Wards, for the first 6 months of 2019, there have been nine incidents formally reported using this system and category. Of note, for most of these incidents staffing levels were at current agreed "roster" levels, but the staff noted that higher acuity of the mothers and babies in the ward on that shift created risk to care.

CM Health looks forward to the introduction of TrendCare tool in 2020, a tool to more accurately measure acuity/ complexity of patients and resulting workloads, to determine most appropriate staffing levels.

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,



Fepulea'i Margie Apa
Chief Executive Officer
Counties Manukau Health