



DHB Psychology Workforce Survey 2016.

Summary Report

The online survey has so far been completed by 15 of the 20 Psychology Professional Leaders across New Zealand, representing 14 of the 17 DHBs.

Key Findings so Far.

Long-term Vacancies. Forensic Mental Health (3 of 5 DHBs with these services), Acute Adult Inpatient services (3/9), Child & Adolescent Mental Health (3/12) were the specialties with the greatest number of long-term vacancies (more than 12 months). DHBs also reported significant long-term vacancies in kaupapa Maori services (2/5), Oncology (2/7) and Child Development services (2/8). Nearly all DHBs reported significant short-term (less than 12 months) unfilled vacancies, with multiple adverts, across a number of clinical areas.

However, vacancies appeared to be only part of the overall picture of shortages. Many DHBs noted that their levels of **psychology provision** were significantly **below recommended levels** for a number of areas:

- Adult Community Mental Health Teams, for 6 of 13 DHBs where there was a service.
- Older Person's Mental Health, for 5 of the 12 DHBs where there was a service (with one further DHB currently providing no psychology service to this group)
- Child Development Services, for 6 of the 11 DHBs where there was a service (with two further DHBs currently providing no psychology service to this group)
- Chronic Pain, for 7 of the 11 DHBs where there was a service (with two further DHBs currently providing no psychology service to this group)
- Paediatrics, for 6 of the 11 DHBs where there was a service (with three further DHBs currently providing no psychology service to this group)
- Oncology, for 6 of the 11 DHBs where there was a service (with three further DHBs currently providing no psychology service to this group)
- Crisis Resolution/Assessment Teams, for 6 of the 12 DHBs where there was a service (with five further currently providing no psychology service at all to this group).

This was seen as **partly due to a long term lack of suitable candidates.**

With regard to recruitment difficulties, qualitative responses suggested that there were significant challenges due to the interplay between a **lack of specialist skills** (e.g. neuropsych, DBT training, Forensic experience, inpatient care) in the workforce, **uncompetitive salaries** compared to other providers (e.g. ACC, Corrections, private sector), and **geography** (with 'location/rural' cited by 9/13 DHBs as a barrier).

Follow-up Actions

To seek published guidance on recommended staffing levels for psychology (e.g. BPS, APA) in areas common to the New Zealand health service, to further test the above findings.