

11 November 2024

David Adamson
fyi-request-27797-1c9c4590@requests.fyi.org.nz

Tēnā koe David

Your request for official information, reference: HNZ00057549

Thank you for your email on 24 July 2024, asking Health New Zealand | Te Whatu Ora for the following under the Official Information Act 1982 (the Act):

Can you please provide the date that the 'staff hiring freeze' started for Health NZ / hospitals (i.e. the date that additional approvals were needed for hiring or a change to previous recruitment/hiring processes that took place at some point in the last few months).

Can you also provide any data on total spend on overtime rates (additional payments for staff working overtime) for hospitals, by month, for the last 6 months. To be clear this is the total spend across all hospitals each month (trying to establish a month to month trend) - not for each hospital individually.

Lastly, are there any high level statistics available for safe staffing levels that can be released for hospitals (all hospitals across NZ) in the last 6 months?

Response

I apologise for the delay in providing our response. The time taken is not what we aspire to. This is something we are working to get on top of as we deal with a high volume of requests and the understandably high public interest in our work.

For the sake of clarity, I will address each question in turn.

Can you please provide the date that the 'staff hiring freeze' started for Health NZ / hospitals (i.e. the date that additional approvals were needed for hiring or a change to previous recruitment/hiring processes that took place at some point in the last few months).

I refer to our response to your previous request under ref: HNZ00052931 made on 13 June 2024.

In addition, Health NZ has proactively released some documents (including financial reports, briefings, aide mémoires and letters) to provide additional transparency around matters related to Health NZ's financial performance. Please refer to [Health NZ Financial Reporting from FY 2023/24 – Health New Zealand | Te Whatu Ora](#)

Can you also provide any data on total spend on overtime rates (additional payments for staff working overtime) for hospitals, by month, for the last 6 months. To be clear this is the total spend across all hospitals each month (trying to establish a month to month trend) - not for each hospital individually.

Health NZ engages with locum doctors through a range of commercial arrangements, including through recruitment agencies and by direct negotiation and contract with the locum

doctors. The engagements are based on a range of rates that reflect the different circumstances relating to each engagement.

We have introduced standard locum rates across the motu. It is important to also note we are prioritising recruitment to permanent roles and working with our locum workforce to support them into permanent employment if that is something that they would like to do.

The table details the total overtime spend extracted from the Qlik app that collates summary payroll data. This includes any costs in areas such as Corporate as well as costs directly incurred by 'Hospitals'. Health New Zealand cannot apply a filter to specify which RCs/functional data points we require; however, this will come in future development. The filters applied are for:

- All hours tagged as overtime
- All staff groups
- All districts/entities/payrolls captured
- All weeks for the 23/24 and YTD 24/25 years

The extract (table below) gives then the hours worked and the cost of these as per payroll data. As the data is returned in 'weeks' based on the 'week ending' date, the team have applied a daily average split across the week when this falls across two calendar days (e.g., three days in one month and four days in another).

There will be gaps, eg Taranaki report no Overtime hours at all, and neither Tairawhiti or Southern payroll data is yet captured by the system – the team have manually added in data from Taranaki, Tairawhiti and Southern based on costs noted as 'Overtime' in the financial data (not all districts use this analysis code, so it can't be used for a fulsome response by itself).

	Total Spend	Plus Missing Districts	Total
Mar-24	23,939,063	3,033,052	26,972,116
Apr-24	21,606,644	3,134,991	24,741,635
May-24	24,312,593	4,497,623	28,810,217
Jun-24	23,030,388	4,046,875	27,077,263
Jul-24	24,211,040	4,098,294	28,309,334
Aug-24	20,986,630	3,484,095	24,470,725

Lastly, are there any high level statistics available for safe staffing levels that can be released for hospitals (all hospitals across NZ) in the last 6 months?

Information you have requested is already available publicly. Please refer to [Nursing staffing levels \(HNZ00045948\) – Health New Zealand | Te Whatu Ora](#)

How to get in touch

If you have any questions, you can contact us at h.nzOIA@tewhatuora.govt.nz.

If you are not happy with this response, you have the right to make a complaint to the Ombudsman. Information about how to do this is available at www.ombudsman.parliament.nz or by phoning 0800 802 602.

As this information may be of interest to other members of the public, Health NZ may proactively release a copy of this response on our website. All requester data, including your name and contact details, will be removed prior to release.

Nāku iti noa, nā



Danielle Coe

Manager (OIA) Government Services
Health New Zealand | Te Whatu Ora