



NZ College of Clinical Psychologists

Te Whare Wānanga o te Mātauranga Hinengaro

17th June 2024

Hon Matt Dooney, Minister for Mental Health

Dear Minister,

Urgent: Impact of Health NZ Hiring Freeze Impact on Clinical Psychology Workforce Plans

We are writing urgently to make you aware of the potentially huge implications of Te Whatu Ora/Health NZ's recent announcement to freeze recruitment of all 'non-frontline' roles for the foreseeable future.

We know that the National Government has committed to doubling the number of Clinical Psychology intern training placements and, to do so, to further roll-out of the Clinical Psychology training hubs that have been developed around the country. These **intern hubs are vital to realising your commitment to increasing the clinical psychology workforce**, but are staffed by clinical educators who would not be considered 'frontline'.

Unfortunately, we are already hearing from clinical psychologists around the country that intern hub staff, as well as psychology professional leadership roles, are being considered to be 'non-frontline' and therefore subject to the recruitment freeze. Indeed, we understand that **some staff have already been advised that their temporary contracts will not be renewed**. We also are hearing concerns that, in some areas where intern roles are funded internally, that these positions are also frozen.

We believe **this prevents a significant threat to your efforts to increase the psychology workforce**. Intern hubs play an enormous role in training of clinical psychologists and they would be vital to the implementation of other workforce models such as the 'assistant' or 'associate' psychology roles.

We understand that Health NZ's announcement is a blanket policy and is not specifically targetted at roles such as these. We would therefore appreciate it if you and Health NZ's managers could make it clear that **this hiring freeze must not impact on psychology workforce roles**- in particular, psychology interns, intern hub staff and psychology professional leaders.

Yours faithfully,

Dr Paul Skirrow
Strategic Advisor NZCCP

Angus Maxwell
President NZCCP

Tricia Stuart
President NZCCP

c.c. Margie Apa, Chief Executive, Te Whatu Ora Health New Zealand