

20 January 2020

Re: Official Information Act request - Correspondence between DHB and NZNO re bullying and harassment

I refer to your official information request dated 20 November 2019 and clarified on 29 November 2019 for the following information:

- *Reports, meetings, agendas and letters that have been shared between the DHB senior leadership and NZNO on bullying and harassment in the 2018/19 financial year.*
- *Reports/minutes/agendas and letters that have been shared between the DHB senior leadership and NZNO on nurse staffing numbers including those relating to the Safe Staffing/Care Capacity Demand Management programme in the 2018/19 financial year.*

For context I note that our nurses and midwives are the largest staff group at Auckland DHB. As at 31 December 2019 we employed 3,784 FTE (full time equivalent) nurses, midwives and healthcare assistants, the vast majority being nurses.

In response to your request please find attached copies of the ADHB-NZNO Operational Meeting Agenda and Minutes of meetings held between DHB Senior Leadership and NZNO held in May and June 2019.

These are regular monthly meetings held between the parties to identify and discuss operational matters and to resolve issues of mutual interest that relate to nursing. You will see from the minutes of those two meetings that one agenda item was to discuss the results of the ADHB staff engagement survey which was conducted earlier in the year.

As part of that survey, respondents were asked whether they had ever experienced bullying or harassment at work. Those responses along with all the other responses to the survey were presented to the meeting. The minutes reflect how the survey results would be shared across the organisation how key items for attention would be identified and actioned at a ward/department level.

The ADHB-NZNO Operational Meeting Agenda dated Friday 10 May includes the April Datix Unsafe Staffing Report for discussion. This is a document that provides an overview of 48 reports submitted to our safety reporting system in April 2019 by nursing staff.

The 48 individual reports are all cases where a staff member reports that the number of staff on their ward is not adequate to care for the number of patients on that ward and the severity of their illness. Common reasons are unexpected illness of staff members, an influx of patients, and the hospital as a whole being so busy that staff from other areas cannot be redeployed to help. The consequences to staff include concern for the safety of their patients and the associated stress for staff members, meal breaks being missed or delayed due to high workload, and concerns that staff are not able to deliver the standard of care they aspire to provide.

None of the 48 individual reports includes any mention of concerning behaviour – there are no reports that include any description of bullying, harassment or other inappropriate behaviour.

The Report itself is being withheld. This is consistent with our response to other OIA requests we have received for the raw incident reports filed by our staff, withholding by ADHB being legally justified under several of the subsection set out in s9(2) of the OIA.

There are no other reports or letters shared between the DHB leadership team relating to bullying and harassment in the 2018/19 financial year.

Also attached are the agenda and minutes of the Auckland DHB Care Capacity Demand Management Council established to develop and implement CCDM overall in partnership with the health unions. CCDM is the basis for ensuring safe staffing and a healthy workplace for nurses, midwives and healthcare assistants. The NZNO is an active member of this Council. The minutes from the meetings reflect the methodology used to calculate staffing numbers (FTE) and the discussions and recommendations regarding staffing levels.

Please note that we have redacted the cost of a contract with an external provider, ThinkPlace, from the 22 November 2018 minutes under section 9(2)(b)(ii) of the Official Information Act. Releasing this information would unreasonably prejudice ThinkPlace's commercial position.

You are entitled to seek a review of the response by the Ombudsman under section 28(3) of the Official Information Act. Information about how to make a complaint is available at www.ombudsman.parliament.nz or freephone 0800 802 602.

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

Yours faithfully



Ailsa Claire
Ailsa Claire, OBE
Chief Executive