



Pay Rates for Psychologists Across the Public Sector

APEX represents over 800 psychologists employed across several employers. Each of our bargaining to date has been with the employer in question and whilst aware of the rates in other documents we negotiate, over time as documents come up for renewal adjustments can "leapfrog". At this stage, both Oranga Tamariki (OT) and Explore bargaining in June this year, Ministry of Education January 2023 and DHBs in May 2023.

It is important to be mindful of both the context within which the collective agreements operate, and how scales operate including the application of merit or skill progression pathways. In OT for example, the scale allows for automatic progression for years of service with that employer. Ironically, if initially placed higher on the scale to recognise experience outside of OT, psychologists are "frozen" until their OT experience catches up (a matter we will be seeking to get resolved in bargaining mid 2022!). There is also no connection between the senior psychologist (currently reserved for our colleagues employed in the

youth justice facilities) and team leader psychologist scales.

The DHB psychologists can go to the highest salary through merit progression, however the OT psychologists start at a higher level and get further, more quickly (recognition of prior service however noted above).

Explore is a non-governmental organisation (NGO) delivering psychological services to autistic children, families and high needs people through contracts with MoH, MoE and the like; the Ministry of Education (MoE), to children through schools. This latter collective agreement is a MUCA – a multi union collective agreement in which APEX negotiates alongside NZEI, who represents a wide range of other allied health professionals employed by the Ministry of Education including occupational therapists, speech language therapists etc.

As we consider our options for bargaining in 2023 and specifically an all of public sector (Explore could be included in this

by that time), where we are all at not just in terms of salary, but other terms and conditions of employment is relevant. CME funding as well as leave and payment for external supervision are quite variable across the documents for example.

As potentially relevant is the state of our workforce and what we can do to advance the pipeline from university into internships, a job and then add the potential flexibility to work across agencies where our skills are best used, our clients and whanau can be best served and where our job satisfaction can be maximised. Through these means, members enjoyment of work as well as the benefit you deliver to those who need your skills, can be enhanced

APEX has raised the possibility of embarking on an all of public sector collective agreement with you for consideration. We continue to see a lot of mobility by psychologists between employers, and the public and private sectors. Given the table below and your

knowledge of private rates, this is hardly surprising. If, however we can enable appropriate rates of pay for you all and allow some flexibility to work across the (public) sector providers, there could be real advantages for members of the profession.

We will continue to provide details of where psychologists sit now, and the pros and cons of forming the single agreement. Ultimately the decision will be yours, one we will be asking you to make towards the end of the year. As part of that decision, we will also have to ponder if we negotiate a collective agreement for psychologists alone, or if we include therapists / psychotherapists in that document. Currently OT and MoE have both groups in the single collective agreement, in DHBs and Explore the therapists and psychotherapists have their own (separate) agreement. Interestingly perhaps, the DHBs are the poorest payers amongst this group, things are better at Explore, then MoE and again best at OT.

	DHB	Oranga Tamariki	Oranga Tamariki - Senior and TLs	MoE	Corrections	Explore (NGO)
Step 17			\$147,821.63			
Step 16	\$136,000		\$144,536.70			
Step 15	\$131,200		\$141,251.78			
Step 14	\$125,521		\$137,966.85		\$112,657	\$114,095
Step 13	\$122,704		\$134,681.93	\$115,095		\$104,535
Step 12	\$116,691		\$131,397.00	\$105,535		\$98,861
Step 11	\$111,719		\$128,112.08	\$99,861		\$96,000
Step 10	\$108,058	\$124,144.88	\$124,827.15	\$97,000		\$95,000
Step 9	\$105,696	\$121,386.10	\$121,542.23	\$96,079		\$91,000
Step 8	\$101,451	\$118,627.33	\$118,257.30	\$92,192		\$88,000
Step 7	\$98,408	\$115,868.55		\$89,250		\$86,000
Step 6	\$93,834	\$113,109.78		\$87,464		\$82,000
Step 5	\$88,806	\$110,351.00		\$83,052		\$79,000
Step 4	\$85,165	\$107,592.23		\$80,005		\$75,000
Step 3	\$82,692	\$104,833.45		\$77,103		\$72,000
Step 2	\$79,708	\$102,074.68		\$73,952		\$69,000
Step 1	\$77,478	\$99,315.90		\$71,010	\$60,074	\$66,000

Key	Merit progression	Skills Progression Pathway
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Note: The Correction psychologists' rates are not negotiated by APEX and are accurate as to range, but we do not have knowledge of their salary structure.

"Our First Collective Agreement Is A Great Step"

An Interview with Sarah Williams, APEX Psychology Delegate at Oranga Tamariki

Where do you work and what do you do?
I work at Clinical Services (Central Auckland), Oranga Tamariki. As a service we provide psychological assessment and therapeutic services for tamariki and whānau who are supported by Oranga Tamariki. We also consult to social workers around psychological trauma, and child development matters in support of their front line care and protection work. We undertake psychological assessments and therapeutic need assessments with

tamariki, and also specialist assessments of parenting capacity. We are lucky to be able to undertake long term therapeutic work as needed. As we are located in a multiagency centre we are also involved in multi-disciplinary case conferences and consults with our colleagues across Police and DHBs. Clinical Services is one area where psychologists work but we also work in the Youth Justice space supporting clinical programmes at YJ residences.

What does a good day at work look like?
A good day would be a mix of assessment, consultation and therapeutic work. In addition to individual therapy for children I also provide Parent Child Interaction Therapy, an approach rooted in attachment and behavioural therapy to improve the parent-child relationship through interaction. Seeing the progress made by parents and children is hugely rewarding. It's also satisfying to be able to provide consultation clinics to Oranga Tamariki social workers and support a trauma informed approach to their work.

Why did you decide to become a psychologist?

I remember attending a careers day at secondary school and listening to a psychologist talk about her work. I was hooked from then! I've worked across multiple sectors beginning my career in educational psychology with the Ministry of Education, then working in a mental health NGO supporting refugees arriving in New Zealand, before coming to my current role with Oranga Tamariki.



When did you become involved with APEX?

I started at OT nearly three years ago and a number of my colleagues had been engaged in significant efforts to have the needs of psychologists and therapists recognised, particularly remuneration concerns which were leading to recruitment and retention difficulties. We were hitting a brick wall. We began thinking seriously about specialist union representation for psychologists and therapists. We were aware that DHB and MOE psychologists had shifted to APEX over the last few years. A group of us in Auckland explored this further and, with the expiry of our previous collective agreement, the time was right in early 2021 to join APEX. So I was part of that initial move to APEX and fell into becoming one of the delegates by virtue of organising a few meetings!

I like that APEX supports small but specialist disciplines within wider public sector organisations. APEX has helped us to identify what is specific and critical for us to support our clinical practice and then advocated strongly for us.

How have you found being involved in bargaining with OT and getting your first APEX collective agreement?

Although I'd been a member of other unions for many years, this was the first time that I had been at the bargaining table as a delegate. It was equally fascinating and frustrating. The ground shifted multiple times as Oranga Tamariki was concurrently implementing a new organisation wide

remuneration framework. This meant that new information came to the table about how this framework might apply to us as a smaller professional group within Oranga Tamariki and significant issues of equity became apparent. Being at the bargaining table was a chance to witness the power and importance of a collective approach. Our first APEX collective agreement is a great step and we've made significant gains. However, it's also a work in progress - we're not finished and we are going back into bargaining shortly.

What are the main challenges of being a psychologist at OT that APEX can support with?

Psychologists at OT are fortunate in that there are opportunities to practice psychology in ways that align with our training including providing trauma informed interventions. One challenge is implementing a system that is equitable in terms of placement on and progression through the salary scale. An organisation that can look to sustain both early career and experienced psychologists and therapists will have the best of both worlds.

What do you enjoy doing outside of work?

I have two kids and find my time outside work caught up in a flurry of their sport, activity, and school needs. I enjoy gardening and as a family we love spending time near the sea away from the craziness of Auckland.

148 Public Sector Psychologist Positions Unfilled Across the Country

Data released under the Official Information Act (OIA) shows there are 148 psychologist positions vacant across District Health Boards and the Ministry of Education nationally and not enough is being done to recruit and retain psychologists, says the APEX Union.

"The information we gathered through the OIA shows 20% of these public sector psychology positions are vacant nationwide and annual turnover of staff is as high as 60% in some regions. This information explains why so many New Zealanders cannot access the psychological care and support they need," said Dr Deborah Powell, national secretary the APEX Union.

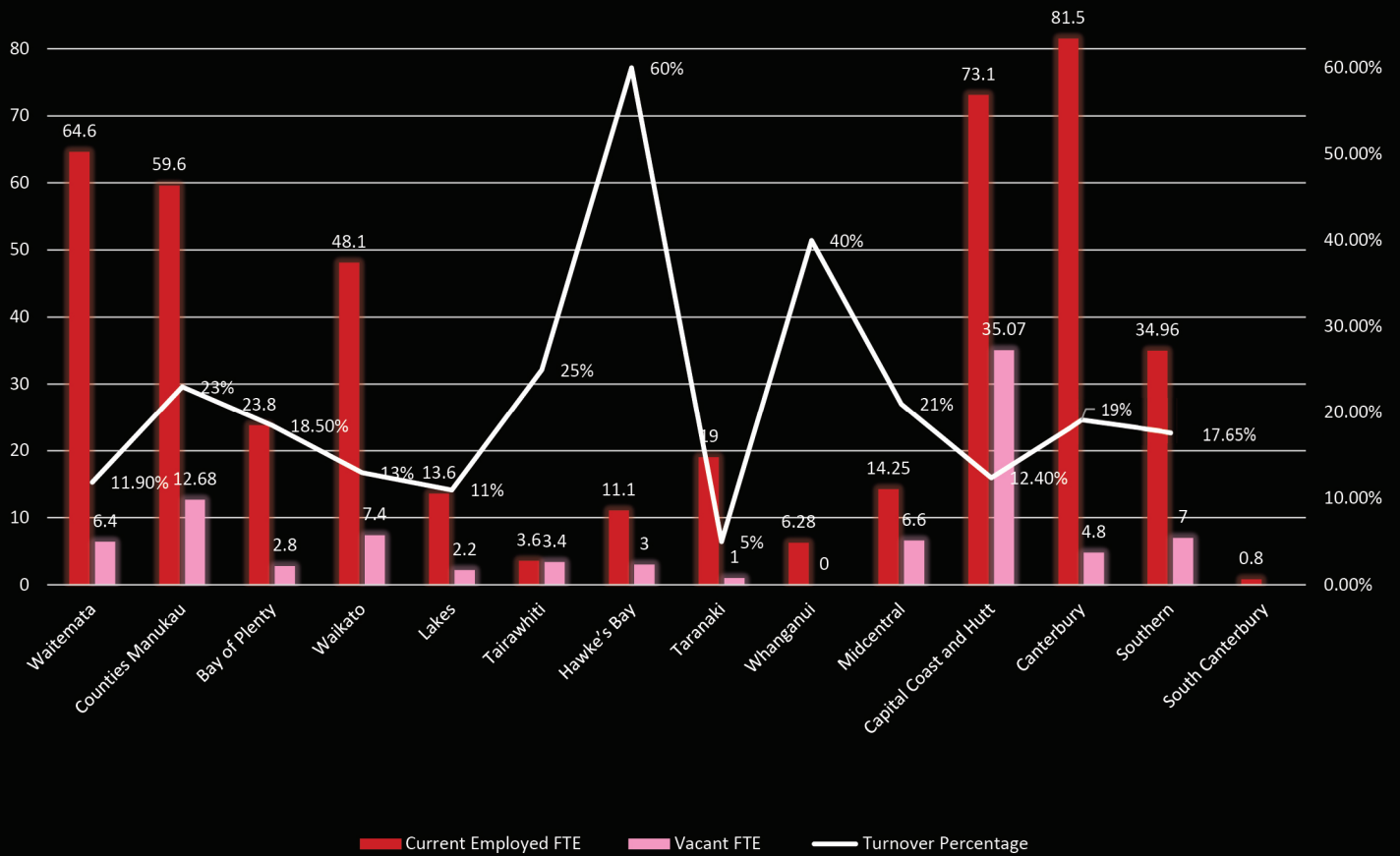
"Psychologists are a critical workforce in

our public health and education sectors. In DHBs psychologists provide treatment for physical and mental health conditions and psychologists at the Ministry of Education work directly with children at risk of exclusion from school because of developmental or behavioral challenges. But neglect and austerity has eroded the workforce and our public services ability to improve the lives of New Zealanders is being degraded," continued Dr Powell.

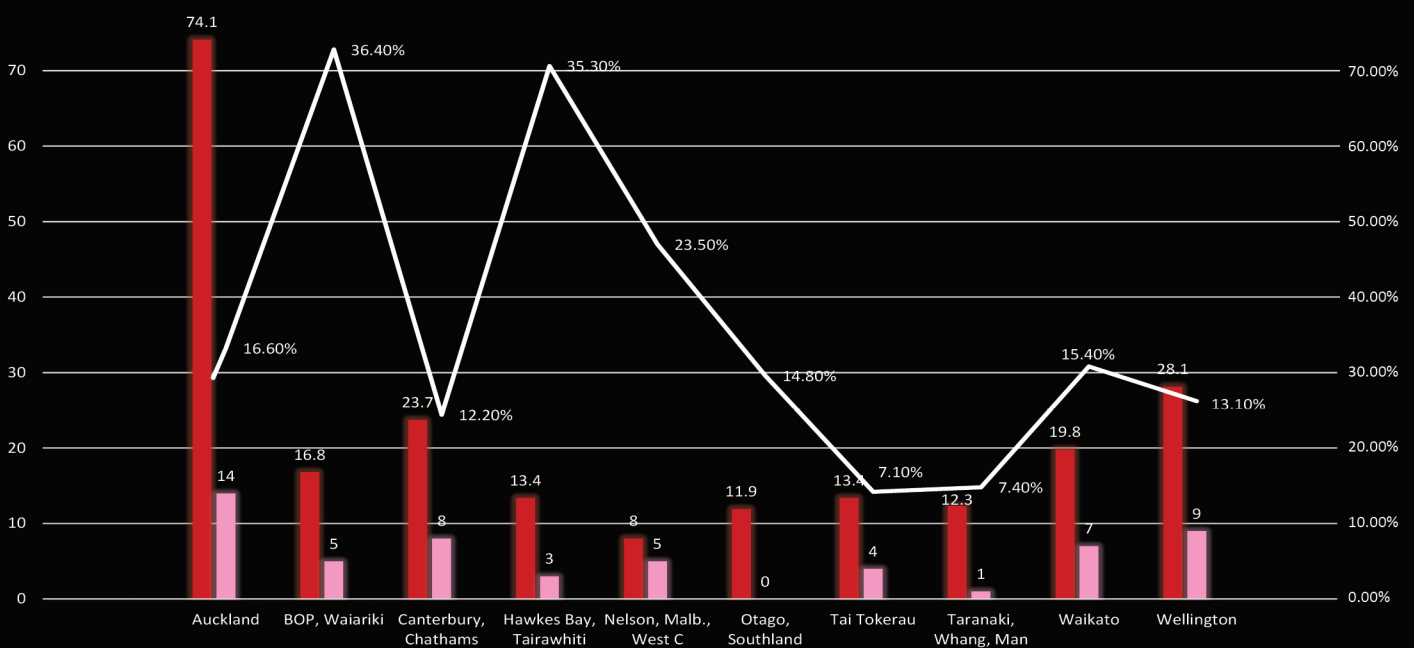
"Our members tell us the main reason they are leaving public sector roles is because of the Government pay freeze at a time of record cost of living increases. We are calling on the Government to engage directly with us on how we can secure investment to protect and preserve the health and education psychologist workforce," concluded Dr Powell, national secretary of APEX.

- There are currently **148.35 full-time equivalent (FTE) vacancies across all regions** in public sector psychology, **a 20% overall vacancy rate**.
- In **some DHBs, the turnover rate is over 50%**, while **the Wellington region has 32% vacancy rate**.
- Across all Ministry of Education Regions, there are 221.5 employed psychologist FTE, **56 vacancies (a 25% vacancy rate)**, and **the average of 17.4% turnover rate** at present.

District Health Boards' Psychologist Workforce Data



Ministry of Education Regions' Psychologist Workforce Data



All information was supplied to APEX under the Official Information Act in February 2022. Auckland, Northland, Nelson Marlborough, and Wairarapa DHBs did not supply the data within the time frame of the OIA request.

Thank You, Amber!

APEX would like to extend its thanks to Dr Amber Barry, the MidCentral APEX delegate and Psychology divisional secretary for her work over the last two years in the position. Amber has done a wonderful job representing psychologists on the last two DHB MECA bargaining teams and within Midcentral DHB. Amber has left the DHB sector to work at Massey University. All the best Amber, with teaching the next generation of psychologists.

Dr Em Edwards, of Waitemata DHB has been appointed as interim divisional secretary.



Nominations are now open until 5pm on 12 May 2022 for the position of Divisional Secretary.

As per the APEX rules nominations must be in writing, signed by the proposer and seconder (both of whom must be financial APEX members), accompanied by the candidate's signed consent to nomination. Scanned copies of these documents should be emailed to psychologist@apex.org.nz. A ballot on nominations, if necessary, will be held after 12 May.

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