

25<sup>th</sup> March 2022

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

### Official Information Act Request for – Occupancy Escalation

I write in response to your Official Information Act request received by us 25<sup>th</sup> February 2022, you requested the following information:

- **Does the DHB use a traffic light type alert mechanism to assess general busyness measures such as occupancy eg green, yellow, orange, red, black alerts, and if so, what were the alert colours from 1 Jan 2022 to the present listed by colour and dates ?**

#### Counties Manukau Health Response:

For context Counties Manukau Health (CM Health) employs over 8,500 staff and provides health and support services to people living in the Counties Manukau region (approx. 601,490 people). We see over 118,000 people in our Emergency Department each year, and over 2,000 visitors come through Middlemore Hospital daily.

Our services are delivered via hospital, outpatient, ambulatory and community-based models of care. We provide regional and supra-regional specialist services i.e. for orthopaedics, plastics, burns and spinal services. There are also several specialist services provided including tertiary surgical services, medical services, mental health and addiction services.

Counties Manukau Health monitors in real-time the demand for hospital beds and capacity across the entire system, with a focus on maintaining availability and flow through the hospital. We manage staffing levels proactively to match clinical needs, safe skill mix and use of additional resources as required.

Figure one below is a guide of our Bed Capacity Escalation Level Trigger Tool which uses a number of metrics to alert hospital management to potential areas of pressure. The tool takes into account different factors which can impact on bed pressure such as, the number of patients in the Emergency Department, the number of patients waiting to be admitted (requiring a bed), volume of isolation beds available and estimated acute theatre minutes waiting. This is the colour coding system used to assess busyness and occupancy in our acute setting.

Bed Capacity Escalation Level Trigger Tool								
Triggers by level	Patients in ED	Patients in MAU	Patients awaiting beds (excl. ward transfers)	Isolation Rooms Required	Covid Patients in Hospital	Med / Surg Capacity Occupancy	Staffing as per VIS	Estimated Theatre minutes
Purple	0-70	0-30	0-10	0-4	0	Less than 70%	Excess Capacity (available resource)	0-3500
Green	71-120	31-40	11-25	5-8	1-10	70%-74%	Capacity and Demand balanced	3500-4000
Yellow	121-140	41-45	26-40	9-11	11-20	75%-89%	Resources are stretched for more than 4 wards	4001-5000
Amber	141-160	46-48	41-56	12-15	21-24	90%-99%	Difficult to meet care demands, more than 6 wards struggling	5001-5500
Red	161+	49+	57+	16+	25+	100%+	Patient care demands not being met, patient risks high. More than 10 wards	5501+

- Does the DHB use a traffic light type alert mechanism to assess general busyness measures such as occupancy eg green, yellow, orange, red, black alerts, and if so, what were the alert colours from 1 Jan 2022 to the present listed by colour and dates?

There is variation from average occupancy rates on an hourly, daily and seasonal basis, and for different clinical areas. The hospital occupancy data and occupancy coding provided in appendix 1 combines all patients in hospital in our Adult Acute Wards (Medical, Surgical and Adult Rehabilitation and Treatment of Older People). We have not included specialist clinical areas (such as Women's Health, Paediatrics, Critical Care and Mental Health facilities etc) as these areas have different clinical parameters and occupancy requirements to 'typical acute wards' and the inclusion of these areas can appear to inflate available occupancy for acute adult patients.

I trust this information answers your request. 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](http://www.ombudsman.parliament.nz) or Freephone 0800 802 602.

Please note that this response or an edited version of this may be published on the Counties Manukau Health website. If you consider there are good reasons why this response should not be made publicly available, we will be happy to consider this.

Yours sincerely



**Dr Peter Watson**  
**Acting Chief Executive Officer**  
**Counties Manukau Health**

Appendix 1

Month	Date	Avg. Daily Occupancy
January	1/01/2022	78.0%
	2/01/2022	83.4%
	3/01/2022	87.9%
	4/01/2022	88.5%
	5/01/2022	88.8%
	6/01/2022	91.4%
	7/01/2022	92.1%
	8/01/2022	88.1%
	9/01/2022	89.3%
	10/01/2022	92.1%
	11/01/2022	91.8%
	12/01/2022	90.7%
	13/01/2022	92.5%
	14/01/2022	92.7%
	15/01/2022	89.3%
	16/01/2022	88.5%
	17/01/2022	91.6%
	18/01/2022	92.1%
	19/01/2022	92.0%
	20/01/2022	91.8%
	21/01/2022	92.1%
	22/01/2022	90.6%
	23/01/2022	89.7%
	24/01/2022	91.4%
	25/01/2022	92.5%
	26/01/2022	93.9%
	27/01/2022	90.4%
	28/01/2022	90.9%
	29/01/2022	89.9%
	30/01/2022	90.0%
	31/01/2022	92.3%
February	1/02/2022	93.4%
	2/02/2022	92.8%
	3/02/2022	91.3%
	4/02/2022	90.0%
	5/02/2022	88.1%
	6/02/2022	88.5%
	7/02/2022	91.6%
	8/02/2022	93.4%
	9/02/2022	93.2%
	10/02/2022	93.2%
	11/02/2022	92.8%
	12/02/2022	90.9%

	13/02/2022	92.0%
	14/02/2022	94.4%
	15/02/2022	92.8%
	16/02/2022	90.9%
	17/02/2022	92.8%
	18/02/2022	91.1%
	19/02/2022	86.5%
	20/02/2022	88.6%
	21/02/2022	90.7%
	22/02/2022	92.3%
	23/02/2022	91.4%
	24/02/2022	93.2%
	25/02/2022	89.0%
	26/02/2022	80.1%
	27/02/2022	80.4%
	28/02/2022	86.5%