



Lauren Doocy

[fyi-request-29026-6393def4@requests.fyi.org.nz](mailto:fyi-request-29026-6393def4@requests.fyi.org.nz)

Dear Lauren,

## Response to your request for official information

Thank you for your request under the Official Information Act 1982 (the Act) on 5 November 2024 about the phased plan to reduce police service from mental health callouts. I will respond to each of your questions in turn.

*The minister's plan to adequately resource mental health and ambulance services, including the breakdown of additional budget allocation for personal protective equipment, training and education, additional funding for increased workload, and funding assigned to legal protection and aid for ambulance workers.*

The Ministry of Health and Health New Zealand (Health NZ) are working closely with Police to implement the changes. Police will continue to respond to mental health events with immediate risks to life and safety.

Many of Health NZ's mental health and addiction teams have strong relationships with Police at local, regional, and national levels. As this change progresses, it will be important that the health sector continues to support the respective roles of each of the workforces to serve our communities to do what they each do best, while maintaining their valued relationships.

Please note that the Act does not require me to form an opinion or create new information to answer a request. This part of your request is therefore refused under section 18(g) of the Act. However, I am advised that Health New Zealand is closely monitoring the impact of the changes to ensure they are being implemented as intended and to the agreed timelines – they are in daily contact with Police.

I am further advised that additional resources are not required during the first phase of changes and that there will be a clear process to review the impact of the changes in the early stages to ensure there are no unintended consequences and to allow for processes to be adjusted if needed. I have been receiving updates from officials on the preparedness of mental health services as these changes progress.

Furthermore, I understand that Health NZ will be implementing additional guidelines and training to support security and Emergency Department (ED) staff with this change. My expectation is that Health NZ will continue closely monitoring the impact of the changes to ensure they are being implemented as intended and to the agreed timelines.

*Briefings the minister has received concerning ambulance and mental health services preparedness.*

This part of your request is refused under section 18(e) of the Act as the information you have requested does not exist in the form you have requested.

*Confirm whether you as Minister for Mental Health, are in agreement with the Minister of Police with this withdrawal going ahead without publicly available plans for how mental health and ambulance services will manage the unilateral withdrawal from police.*

*Confirm whether your public statements have been based on advice or reflect your own views on the matter.*

Please note that the Act does not require me to form an opinion or create new information to answer a request. This part of your request is therefore refused under section 18(g) of the Act. However, I can advise that I am frequently in contact with Police Minister Hon Mark Mitchell, as well as Health and Police officials, to monitor the progression of the phased changes.

I am confident this health-led response to these changes will ensure people experiencing mental distress receive care from those most qualified to assess their needs and provide any appropriate treatment.

*Confirm whether ambulance services have agreed to a protocol for transfer of the service from police to ambulance services, and provide that protocol.*

I am advised that Health NZ is in consultation with ambulance services to understand their models of care and where their ability to support might be appropriate. I am further advised that there is a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) being developed between Hato Hone St John, Wellington Free Ambulance, and NZ Police. Should you require further information, I recommend you submit a request for Official Information to Police.

*Release minutes and briefings related to advice the minister has received concerning preparedness, including any policy impact statements.*

I have been receiving updates on the preparedness of mental health services via weekly and fortnightly reporting updates. As such, this part of your request is refused under section 18(e) of the Act as the information you have requested does not exist.

*Release any minutes or briefings from either Te Whatu Ora or the Ministry of Health, which raise concerns about the safety of patients or workers, including any PCBU risks.*

This part of your request has been refused under section 18(d) of the Act as this information will soon be made publicly available.

*Provide any advice ACC has given concerning PCBU risks in the context of the police withdrawal.*

This part of your request is refused under section 18(e) of the Act, as the information requested does not exist.

*Release any risk assessments undertaken by the Ministry of Health, Te Whatu Ora, ACC or Ambulance Organisations concerning the likelihood of excess mortality arising from both the withdrawal itself and also how the police have decided to withdraw.*

This part of your request is refused under section 18(e) of the Act as the information you have requested does not exist as this information was not documented and has so far largely been through conversations. Additionally, Police will continue to respond to health sector requests for assistance involving an immediate risk to life and safety, just as they always have.

Health officials tell me this first tranche of changes relates to interactions Police have with people needing mental health support that are largely of a non-urgent nature. There is an impact on EDs with Phase One focusing on a more streamlined approach to the handover of voluntary patients brought in by Police.

Health NZ advises me that interim standard operating procedures will be reviewed as part of an ongoing review process, between and during each phase, to monitor the impact of the changes to ensure there are no unintended consequences and to allow for processes and procedures to be updated as appropriate.

Finally, Health NZ takes all reported incidents of harm to staff or other persons seriously, or where there appears to have been a possibility for serious harm to have occurred, I am advised they are actively investigated and findings recorded to inform the review process. If Health NZ staff believe events of this nature have occurred as a result of Police withdrawing services early, I encourage them to raise any concerns through the usual escalation process.

*Release any consultation documents developed with ambulance services and workers, including Hato Hone St John, Life Flight and Wellington Free Ambulance.*

This part of your request is refused under section 18(e) of the Act as the information you have requested does not exist, as consultations between Health NZ officials and Hato Hone St John, Life Flight and Wellington Free Ambulance staff are ongoing as decisions are still being made on how Health services can best work together, following the review of the Phase One changes.

*Explain the absence of any such documents, and why there wouldn't have been such a document produced before implementation if one doesn't exist.*

Please refer to my response to your previous question.

Under section 28(3) of the Act, you have the right to ask the Ombudsman to review any decisions made under this request. The Ombudsman may be contacted by email at: [info@ombudsman.parliament.nz](mailto:info@ombudsman.parliament.nz) or by calling 0800 802 602.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Matt Dooney". The signature is written in a cursive style with a long, sweeping tail on the final letter.

Hon Matt Dooney  
**Minister for ACC**  
**Minister for Mental Health**