

# PLATFORM



– MEDIA RELEASE –

## Threat of staff exodus looming in mental health and addictions sector

The mental health and addictions sector is warning that a serious staff skill loss is looming.

Platform Trust is being advised that, as a result of the recent pay rise awarded to their aged care and disability sector colleagues, many staff in non-government mental health and addiction organisations are considering leaving to join these workforces.

“The message we are being given is: ‘why would we stay for lower pay and more stress when we can now earn more in the aged care or disability sector?’ and that’s understandable” says Marion Blake, CEO of Platform Trust.

The aged care and disability sectors have just received a significant wage boost because of the successful TerraNova pay equity claim brought by E tū (previously the Service and Food Workers Union) on behalf of care worker Kristine Bartlett. From 1 July, these workforces will receive a pay rise of between 15 and 50 percent, depending on their qualifications and experience. Minister Coleman has stated that the \$2.048 billion settlement over five years will be funded through an increase of \$1.856 billion to Vote Health and \$192 million to ACC.

Platform Trust understands that originally the mental health and addictions sector workers were included in this claim, but that a decision was made at some point not to continue to include them.

“The result of this decision for the mental health and addictions sector will be devastating. With the state of mental health and addictions services in New Zealand, we do not have the luxury of time. We must act now to avoid a serious skills exodus to the aged care and disability sectors,” says Ms Blake. “This is not a time for the Government to wait and see, or to delay any decisions while mental health and addictions employees take this through the courts. The Government, the unions, the providers and employees must work together with urgency to get a resolution.”

In response to the serious and rising concerns, Platform Trust will be seeking urgent talks with the Government this week.

Platform Trust is the national network of community organisations that support New Zealanders by providing a wide range of mental health and addiction services and creating a positive place for people experiencing mental health and addiction issues to live and work.

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Reference <http://www.scoop.co.nz/stories/PA1704/S00214/2-billion-pay-equity-settlement-for-health-care-workers.htm>

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