

## Media Release

**From:** Jill Stringer, Communications Advisor

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**Subject:** Temporary reduction in Mental Health inpatient beds

The inpatient mental health unit at Masterton Hospital is reducing its beds from 6 to 4 for the next 12 weeks, to ensure the safety of patients while they wait for replacement staff to arrive.

After 12 weeks the situation will be reviewed and the service needs reassessed.

“Unfortunately, due to staff changes over the next few weeks we have no alternative but to temporarily reduce the number of beds”, says CEO David Meates. “We looked at all our options in consultation with staff, and this was the best one for maintaining safety and continuity of service for most people.”

Adult Mental Health Services would normally employ 24 people, and there are currently 7 vacancies in the two teams – Community Mental Health and Inpatient Services. Other parts of the Mental Health Service are fully staffed, but carry out specialist roles that they cannot leave to provide cross cover for the inpatient unit, like child and adolescent mental health, and Community Detox and Methadone services.

“We have completed our contingency planning for patients who present when all our beds are full”, says David Meates. “Which can include the use of community crisis respite beds, and exploring options for using beds we can access in our neighbouring DHBs for people with acute care needs. In addition, our Community Team is also doing everything they can to help people avoid the need for crisis admissions. ”

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