



Position Description

Policy Director

Team	Sector Policy
Group	Strategy and Policy
Manager	Group Manager, Sector Policy
Location	Wellington
Job band (indicative)	21PA
Security clearance	Confidential
Date	January 2026

About the Ministry of Health (the Ministry) - Manatū Hauora

The Ministry of Health is the lead advisor to the Government on health and is responsible for ensuring the health system meets the current and future needs of all New Zealanders.

We fulfil this role through three key functions:

Policy: We support the Government to set health system priorities and develop policies. We collect evidence to understand the system and to get the best health outcomes for New Zealanders.

Regulation: We design rules and regulations for health services, products, and pharmaceuticals to protect public health and safety. We ensure health regulations are proportionate, effective and safe.

Monitoring: We monitor the performance of the health system by collecting data, checking performance and reporting to the Government. If issues arise, we work with others to address them. We assess both health outcomes and financial efficiency.

Group description - Tō mātou nei aka

Strategy and Policy | Te Pou Rautaki leads strategy and policy development to improve the health and wellbeing of all New Zealanders. It provides high-quality, evidence-informed policy advice to Ministers and government to support decision-making across the health portfolio and legislative programme. They draw on clinical advice, undertake engagement with health sector professionals and work with other stakeholders.

Position purpose – Kōrero mō te tūranga



The Policy Director provides strategic policy leadership within the Strategy and Policy Group of the Ministry, supporting the relevant Group Manager to shape and align the policy agenda and work programmes. Policy Directors are experts, with broad and deep policy experience, that provide thought leadership and senior expertise in policy advice, managing issues and relationships, to support GMs and their managers. Policy Directors work with GMs to lead and develop the work of the relevant Group, and to work across the Ministry, broader government, and the health system.

What you'll do – Kotōuakemahi

- Work with the Group Manager and Managers to drive the strategic policy direction and ensure alignment across the Group.
- Connect across teams and groups to identify priorities and address emerging needs.
- Provide DDGs and Group Managers support in the stewardship and improvement of the Ministry's policy capability in terms of the frameworks and skills/expertise required for policy.
- Act as a trusted advisor to DDGs, Group Managers, Managers, and policy teams.
- Provide thought leadership on priorities, on complex and sensitive issues, and support identification and management of risk.
- Partner with Group Managers to maintain the authorising environment and build strategic stakeholder relationships.
- Enhance capability through mentoring and guide managers and principal advisors.
- Lead programmes of work as required.
- Build collaborative and positive relationships across the Group, Ministry, the wider health sector, government and other external stakeholders.
- Provide leadership for projects and areas, working with others to ensure all work is well planned, using work planning tools and methods which includes taking strategic and tactical approaches to achieve results through high quality advice.
- Represent the Ministry at government agency meetings and other agreed forums.
- Ensure all work reflects our responsibilities including meeting Treaty Of Waitangi obligations.

This position description is intended as an insight to the main tasks and responsibilities required in the role and may be subject to change in consultation with the job holder.

What you'll bring to the role – Kongāpukengaōu

- Tertiary qualification in a relevant field and/or equivalent experience



- Significant experience in developing and advising on complex policy issues, including a strong understanding of relevant legislative and regulatory frameworks, and working with, influencing and leading a range of stakeholders
- Extensive senior policy leadership experience, with a proven ability to set strategic direction and influence policy agendas at a portfolio level.
- Deep understanding of public policy, including experience operating at the political interface and managing complex, sensitive issues.
- Exceptional relationship management and influencing skills, able to build trust and collaborate effectively across the Ministry, health sector, government agencies, and external stakeholders.
- Strong communication and advisory capability, with the ability to provide clear, evidence-based advice and represent the Ministry confidently in high-level forums.
- Strategic thinking and planning expertise, with experience leading programmes of work that align with organisational priorities and government objectives.
- Proven ability to manage risk and complexity, ensuring robust governance and decision-making in dynamic environments.
- Commitment to equity and cultural competence, with a strong understanding of Treaty of Waitangi obligations and ability to embed these principles in all work.
- Experience in capability development, including mentoring and guiding senior advisors and managers to strengthen policy quality and expertise.
- Resilience and adaptability, with demonstrated ability to lead through ambiguity and change while modelling the Ministry's values.
- Innovative thinking and a demonstrated ability to think about issues in new and different ways.
- Ability to lead programmes of work and projects, applying strategic approaches to achieve results through high-quality advice and effective planning.
- Deep understanding of the machinery of government and political nuance, with an understanding how issues play out and what is important to key stakeholders and the Government of the day.
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Leadership Success Profile – Angitūtanga

The Te Kawa Mataaho Leadership Success Profile (LSP) describes what effective leadership looks like across the New Zealand public sector. All roles at the Ministry are assigned to one of four leadership categories. Each category draws on selected capabilities, which combine both leadership competencies and character traits from the LSP, to reflect different types of leadership.

This role is assigned to the 'Technical Leader' category, and the following capabilities outline what is required to be successful in this category:



Leading strategically	<i>Develop and implement strategies that position your technical area to meet future needs, aligning initiatives with organisational priorities and engaging others in a clear and compelling vision.</i>
Leading with influence	<i>Communicate with authority and clarity to influence decisions, inspire confidence, and gain buy-in for complex technical initiatives across teams and stakeholders.</i>
Enhancing organisational performance	<i>Drive innovation and continuous improvement within your technical area to strengthen organisational performance and deliver sustainable outcomes.</i>
Engaging others	<i>Build strong relationships by connecting with stakeholders, listening actively, and adapting your approach to foster collaboration and trust across technical and non-technical audiences.</i>
Achieving ambitious goals	<i>Show determination and optimism to achieve challenging technical objectives, focusing on opportunities and solutions that deliver significant impact.</i>
Curious	<i>Show curiosity, flexibility, and openness in analysing and integrating ideas, information, and differing perspectives; to make fit-for-purpose decisions.</i>

Your health, safety, and wellbeing – Oranga me te haumarū

At the Ministry of Health, we expect all of our managers to:

- Ensure health and safety is integrated into business-as-usual activities
- Promote employee participation in health and safety by actively supporting employee health and safety representatives (HSRs)
- Acquire and keep up-to-date knowledge of work health and safety matters including the hazards and risks associated with operations
- Ensure staff are informed of and trained in safe practices and procedures in their specific areas of work

Diversity and inclusion – Kanorau me te whakauru

The Ministry of Health welcomes and supports people of all gender identities, ages, ethnicities, sexual orientations, disabilities, and religions. To support this we:

- Foster inclusive workplaces that value diverse perspectives and lived experience
- Attract and retain diverse talent by creating accessible, welcoming environments
- Apply the merit principle fairly, ensuring equitable opportunities for all