



Position Description

Principal Advisor

Team	Executive Advisory & Ministerial Support
Group	Performance & Governance
Manager	Director – Executive Advisory & Ministerial Support
Location	Wellington
Job band (indicative)	19G
Security clearance	N/A
Date	April 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

The Performance & Governance group brings together the Ministry's monitoring, assurance, executive advisory and ministerial support functions, all of which are critical to lifting system performance, supporting effective decision-making, and maintaining Government and public confidence in the health system.

The Group is responsible for ensuring the Ministry understands how the health system is performing, identifies emerging risks and issues early, and provides clear, credible advice to Ministers and the Director-General. This includes monitoring the performance of Crown entities, the wider health system and significant work programmes, supporting high-



quality statutory appointments and strengthening accountability and governance across the system. The Group also acts as the link at the centre of the Ministry, coordinating executive priorities, supporting Ministers' offices, and providing independent advice and assurance to the Director-General. Through these functions Performance & Governance helps align system performance, ministerial priorities and executive leadership, enabling, timely and coherent decision-making.

Position purpose – Kōrero mō te tūranga

The Principal Adviser, DGA provides senior, independent second opinion advice to the Director General, supporting confident decision making, effective stewardship and sound delivery across the Ministry. The role operates at the intersection of policy, regulation, monitoring and corporate functions, helping the Director General to understand performance, risks and interdependencies, and to maintain a clear line of sight through complex and fast moving issues.

The role does not own end to end delivery or management accountability. Instead, it brings judgement, synthesis and assurance, testing advice, identifying emerging risks and alignment issues, and ensuring priority matters are being progressed in line with intent and expectations.

What you'll do – Ko tōu ake mahi

Provide second opinion and assurance advice to the Director General

- Provide senior, independent advice to the Director General on the quality, coherence and risks of advice and delivery across the Ministry.
- Test assumptions, surface trade offs, and identify gaps or misalignment in advice being provided to the Director General.

Support system level oversight of priority matters

- Maintain oversight of priority issues, risks and commitments from the Director General's perspective, ensuring there is clarity on ownership, progress and emerging concerns.
- Act as a conduit between the Director General and responsible teams on priority matters, supporting clarity and follow through.

Identify emerging risks and opportunities

- Identify cross cutting and emerging risks, issues or opportunities that may not be visible within individual business areas.
- Support early escalation and problem definition where necessary.

Strategic synthesis and insight

- Synthesize information from across policy, regulatory, monitoring and corporate domains into concise, system level insight for the Director General.



- Support a clear “golden thread” from Ministerial expectations through to organisational delivery.

Support Director General decision making

- Support the Director General to make timely, well informed decisions by providing clear framing of issues, options and implications.
- Assist with preparation and testing of decision material where required.

Internal governance and coordination support

- Provide advice and support on internal governance effectiveness, including clarity of roles, escalation pathways and accountability.
- Support coherence across Director General level forums and decision making processes.

Model professionalism and judgment in sensitive contexts

- Operate with discretion, sound judgement and political awareness in highly sensitive and confidential environments.
- Build trust through the quality, neutrality and reliability of advice.

Stakeholder engagement on complex issues

- Engage credibly with Crown entity leadership and other senior stakeholders on complex or sensitive service-performance matters, supporting constructive challenge and “no surprises” monitoring.
- Test emerging insights and ensure monitoring conclusions are well-grounded and transparent.

Technical leadership and uplift of monitoring practice

- Provide technical leadership and mentoring to Senior Advisers and Advisers, lifting the quality, consistency, and confidence of infrastructure monitoring practice across the group.
- Contribute to continuous improvement of monitoring tools, templates and approaches, ensuring infrastructure monitoring remains disciplined, risk-based and system-focused
- Ensure all work reflects a commitment to equity and upholds Treaty of Waitangi obligations in planning, delivery, and stakeholder engagement.

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 – Ko ngā pukenga ōu

- Tertiary qualification in a health or relevant field and/or equivalent experience
- Proven thought leadership and expertise in senior policy, monitoring, regulatory or corporate functions.



- Strong system level thinking, with the ability to understand and connect policy, regulation, monitoring and corporate delivery.
- Proven ability to apply critical thinking and sound judgement to develop options and provide high-quality second opinion advice.
- A proven track record of producing high quality, well reasoned advice for Ministers and senior leaders on complex or sensitive issues, shaping system level outcomes.
- Extensive experience with proactively and successfully building and maintaining effective working relationships and collaborating with others to achieve outcomes.
- Extensive communication (written and verbal) and influencing skills, to communicate and influence effectively to diverse audiences and situations demonstrating political nous.
- Excellent judgement in complex, ambiguous and politically sensitive contexts.
- Political awareness and strong risk management skills, with an understanding of what matters to key stakeholders.
- Extensive experience with effectively building the capability of others.
- Commitment to cultural competence, with a strong understanding of Treaty of Waitangi obligations and commitment to uphold these.

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 people 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