

7 June 2024

Hon Matt Doocey
Minister of Mental Health
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Tēnā koe Minister

One-year deadline to put in place a mental health plan

This week I spoke to the media about the latest monitoring report of mental health and addiction services, and I emphasised the need for an integrated, whole-of-system mental health and wellbeing implementation plan to address significant, interrelated systemic issues. We need to move away from single action approaches, such as the establishment of the Access and Choice programme without a wider plan for the sector.

The Mental Health Foundation's (MHF) support for a long-term implementation plan for mental health, wellbeing and addiction has been a cornerstone of our advocacy for the last five years. That's because what has been missing since the delivery of the *He Ara Oranga* report is a clear, long-term implementation plan with milestones, timeframes and accountabilities. What we've seen instead is a series of positive but unfocused and piecemeal actions coupled with high-level commitments that have not successfully delivered the paradigm shift our mental health and wellbeing system needs. This approach has lost traction, public and sector buy-in and direction.

The development of any new mental health and wellbeing strategy mandated under the Pae Ora (Healthy Futures) Act 2022 can solidify your priorities and direction of travel, but you will need a more detailed plan to ensure the strategy is implemented in a concrete and transparent way across all areas of need. Only by outlining your commitment to a clear timeline for change, with sequenced actions, and designated people responsible for delivering work will you secure the confidence of the sector and the public.

To that end, I challenge you, Minister, to deliver this plan within one year to maximise your Government's impact and to coincide with Budget 2025 investment.

As always, the MHF is here to provide support and advice to you, your office and the Ministry of Health/Manatū Hauora as we strive towards a common goal to lift the mental health and wellbeing of all people in Aotearoa New Zealand.

In the interest of supporting the development of a plan I would be grateful for a meeting with you at your earliest convenience.

Mauri tū, mauri ora,

Shaun Robinson

Chief Executive

Cc:

Hon Dr Shane Reti, Minister of Health

Robyn Shearer, Deputy Director-General, Clinical, Community and Mental Health/Te Pou Whakakaha, and Deputy Chief Executive, Ministry of Health/Manaū Hauora