WILL YOUR PARTY...

	act	Green	Labour	National	NZ First	Opportunity	māori
Invest in mental wellbeing promotion for all New Zealanders?	?	✓	✓*	✓*	✓*	✓*	⊖
Expand access to mental health and wellbeing services in all schools and education settings?	?	✓	?	✓*	✓	✓*	⊖
Expand access to youth health and wellbeing hubs, so they are available in every region?	?	✓	?	✓*	✓*	?	⊖
Increase investment in, and scale up, kaupapa Māori mental health and addiction services?	?	✓	?	✓*	✗	✓*	⊖
Increase access to specialist mental health and addiction services?	?	✓*	?	✓	✓	✓*	⊖
Expand programmes that combine mental health and addiction services with housing and employment support?	?	✓	?	✓*	✓*	✓*	⊖
Increase investment in community-led suicide prevention initiatives?	?	✓	?	✓*	✓*	✓*	⊖
Invest in, and develop, a joined-up response for people in distress who need immediate support?	?	✓	?	✓	✓*	✓*	⊖
Commit to growing and sustaining a strong, diverse mental health and addiction workforce?	?	✓	?	✓*	✓	✓*	⊖

Authorised by Shaun Robinson, Mental Health Foundation of New Zealand, 16 Normanby Road, Auckland 1024

✓ Yes | ? Undecided | ✗ No | ⊖ Did not respond | ✓* Yes, but party's explanation either did not include an explicit future commitment to implement the policy OR did not fully align with the question

2026 ELECTION POLICY SCORECARD

WHERE THE PARTIES STAND ON MENTAL HEALTH AND WELLBEING

Mental Health Foundation OF NEW ZEALAND
mauri tū, mauri ora

Authorised by Shaun Robinson, Mental Health Foundation of New Zealand, 16 Normanby Road, Auckland 1024

OUR SCORECARD METHOD

PARTIES COMPLETED A SELF-ASSESSMENT

The responses presented on this scorecard were collected via a nine-question survey that we sent to the following political parties in June 2026: ACT, the Green Party, New Zealand First, Labour, Te Pāti Māori, National and the Opportunity Party.

Parties were given the option to answer 'yes', 'no' or 'undecided' to each question and were asked to explain their position and future commitment.

WE REVIEWED PARTIES' RESPONSES AND INTRODUCED AN ASTERISK

If a party answered 'yes' but their explanation did not include an explicit future commitment to implement the policy, or did not fully align with the question, we gave their response an asterisk.

We have edited the written responses for grammatical correctness but have otherwise not changed them.

This information is accurate as of 17 September 2026 and may be updated if parties publish any new, relevant policy commitments.

THE MENTAL HEALTH FOUNDATION IS POLITICALLY NEUTRAL

The Mental Health Foundation of New Zealand is an independent charity advocating for a better mental health system and society, and we are proudly politically neutral. We do not accept money from political parties, endorse candidates, or tell people how to vote. All our advocacy work is supported by our donors across the motu – ngā mihi nui ki a koutou.

KEY:


Yes


Undecided


No


Did not respond


Yes, but party's explanation either did not include an explicit future commitment to implement the policy OR did not fully align with the question

1. MENTAL WELLBEING PROMOTION FOR ALL NEW ZEALANDERS

WHAT PARTIES SAID:

act	Green	Labour	National	New Zealand First	Opportunity	Māori
?	✓	✓*	✓*	✓*	✓*	⊖

WHY THIS MATTERS:

Mental wellbeing promotion improves lives, prevents crises, relieves pressure on services and saves money, with many initiatives showing return on investment after only a short period of time. It can also have a positive impact on other social outcomes, such as educational performance, employment rates, productivity, and social inclusion, while preventing mental health prejudice and discrimination, workplace accidents, and bullying.

✓ Yes | ? Undecided | ✗ No | ⊖ Did not respond | ✓* Yes, but party's explanation either did not include an explicit future commitment to implement the policy OR did not fully align with the question

1. Will your party invest in mental wellbeing promotion, such as population-level social marketing campaigns and localised initiatives in schools, kura, workplaces and communities?

ACT

ACT believes that funding should be directed towards outcomes that work and have measurable outcomes, such as getting people treatment quickly, rather than simply promotional material. Frontline services should always come first when it comes to funding.

ACT supports the work of non-profits and NGOs in their initiatives in getting into schools and communities. Running them from a central spend often means it is not clear whether it is working and smaller communities miss out, especially in rural communities where there is a critical need for mental health support.

Mental health is an absolute priority for ACT, we need to make sure that we get it right so we are not simply throwing money into the wind without meaningful change.

Green

Yes, the Green Party is committed to implementing recommendations from the Every Life Matters – He Tapu te Oranga o ia Tangata Suicide Prevention Strategy, which includes promoting wellbeing as a specific action on the suicide prevention continuum, and in its recommendations.

Labour

Labour believes that mental wellbeing promotion is a worthwhile investment.

National

The National-led Government has taken a proactive approach to mental wellbeing by launching the Top Up campaign, a national initiative encouraging New Zealanders to take simple everyday actions that support and maintain good mental health. The campaign is based on the evidence-based Five Ways to Wellbeing framework and promotes practical steps individuals and communities can take to strengthen their mental wellbeing. In its first three months the campaign has reached more than 3.2 million New Zealanders and driven over 115,000 visits to the Top Up website.

New Zealand First

New Zealand First views health as a "critical investment" rather than a balance sheet item. The party supports localised wellbeing through initiatives like daily exercise programmes for children in schools and community-based coordinators who encourage participation in physical activity, sports, and arts.

Opportunity

The Opportunity Party supports evidence-based investment that prevents poor outcomes before they occur. We support cost effective mental wellbeing promotion and early intervention initiatives that improve long-term health, education and productivity outcomes. Specific programme design would be guided by evidence.

---

māori

[Did not respond]

Yes | Undecided | No | Did not respond | Yes, but party's explanation either did not include an explicit future commitment to implement the policy OR did not fully align with the question

2. MENTAL HEALTH AND WELLBEING SERVICES IN ALL SCHOOLS

WHAT PARTIES SAID:

act	Green	Labour	National	New Zealand First	Opportunity	Māori
?	✓	?	✓*	✓	✓*	⊖

WHY THIS MATTERS:

Experiences in childhood, adolescence, and young adulthood can affect a person's lifelong mental wellbeing trajectory. Most mental health conditions begin before age 25 – with almost half appearing before age 18, and a third before age 14. Schools and education settings are a key touchpoint to teach children and young people skills for maintaining good mental health, and to prevent, identify and address emerging challenges before they escalate. Effective health, mental health and wellbeing services in schools can have a positive impact on educational engagement and achievement, social inclusion, bullying, and suicide risk, and generate long-term intergenerational gains, including higher productivity rates and reduced health care costs.

✓ Yes | ? Undecided | ✗ No | ⊖ Did not respond | ✓* Yes, but party's explanation either did not include an explicit future commitment to implement the policy OR did not fully align with the question

2. Will your party expand access to mental health and wellbeing services in all schools and other education settings? [Part 1]

ACT supports practical and evidence based access to mental health support for students. We know many groups work with schools on both a national and local level to ensure students have timely access to mental health services. ACT supports this work and would support more of this work being done.

However, we must be careful not to turn teachers into quasi-clinicians or schools into quasi-clinics. The core job of school is education and we must ensure that it remains the core focus.

The Green Party is committed to providing more support in schools, including expanding the criteria for access to learning support for learners with mental health needs, and providing increased wellbeing support for children and young people in places of learning.

We agree in principle that mental health and wellbeing support needs to be more accessible. Labour will release its mental health policy closer to the election campaign.

There are a range of initiatives and programmes that support student mental health and wellbeing in schools, including Ministry of Education-funded supports such as:

- Counselling in schools
- Guidance counsellors in secondary schools.

Additional mental health and wellbeing support is also funded through the Ministry of Health and Oranga Tamariki. This includes school-based mental wellbeing programmes, school-based health services, and Social Workers and Youth Workers in Secondary Schools.

How the curriculum supports mental health and wellbeing:

- We are updating the national curriculum to provide clearer expectations for what students learn at each year level. This will support greater national consistency in how key concepts, including mental health and wellbeing, are taught through the Health and Physical Education curriculum.
- This means that, regardless of where they attend school, all students will build a shared foundation in understanding wellbeing, recognising challenges, and knowing how and when to seek support.

Students also have access to a range of wellbeing supports through schools, including guidance counselling, pastoral care services, and Ministry-funded initiatives designed to strengthen access to support when it is needed. Examples include:

- Awhi Mai, Awhi Atu – Counselling in Schools – provides access to evidence-based counselling in selected schools, with a focus on early support.
- Mana Ake – Stronger for Tomorrow – supports younger students and their whānau to build resilience and strengthen wellbeing.
- School guidance counsellors, nurses, and wider pastoral care teams – continue to provide ongoing support for students throughout secondary schooling.

2. Will your party expand access to mental health and wellbeing services in all schools and other education settings? [Part 2]

NEW ZEALAND FIRST

The party proposes to deliver the full tranche of Learning Support Coordinators to all schools. Specifically, regarding mental health, we intend to "progress counsellor/student ratios at secondary schools" and build on pilots providing counsellor access for primary students. We as part of the coalition government have secured funding for charities like Gumboot Friday to provide free counselling for young people.

OPPORTUNITY

The Opportunity Party supports improving access to mental health support for young people and recognises schools as an important place for early intervention. We support expanding effective services where evidence demonstrates positive outcomes.

māori

[Did not respond]

3. YOUTH HEALTH AND WELLBEING HUBS IN EVERY REGION

WHAT PARTIES SAID:

act	Green	Labour	National	New Zealand First	Opportunity	Māori
?	✓	?	✓*	✓*	?	⊖

WHY THIS MATTERS:

Community-based, integrated youth primary care services (or 'one-stop shops') that provide health, mental health, addiction and social services in one place align closely with what young people ask for in mental health care. Youth consistently ask for free services specifically designed for them, readily available near where they live, study or work, with the flexibility to meet their holistic health and wellbeing needs. There is emerging evidence that integrated youth primary health services can relieve mental distress and improve social functioning, and they are highly rated by young people who can access them. However, youth one-stop shops and other community-based primary care models are sparsely located across Aotearoa New Zealand, due to piecemeal and unsustainable funding.

✓ Yes | ? Undecided | ✗ No | ⊖ Did not respond | ✓* Yes, but party's explanation either did not include an explicit future commitment to implement the policy OR did not fully align with the question

3. Will your party expand access to integrated youth primary health services, such as youth one-stop shops, so they are available in every region?

ACT	?	ACT supports models that work, and if that model provides the best service possible to youth at the best cost, then it's something that funding should follow. What is clear is that simply throwing money at the problem is not and has not been working. Decisions should be driven by outcomes and what works best for local communities.
Green	✓	The Green Party has a proud history of advocating and securing funding for youth one-stop shops, and we will continue advocating for these to be funded across Aotearoa so all young people can access these services.
Labour	?	We agree in principle that there should be better access to mental health and addiction services across the motu, particularly for Māori and youth.
National	✓*	We want more young people to be able to access the support they need, in ways that suit them. We are investing in new youth mental health hubs for people aged 16–25 in Hamilton, Nelson and Hawke's Bay, enhancing youth acute respite services in Waikato and Hawke's Bay, and establishing a new youth acute respite service in Northland. These services are being designed around the needs of young people and will provide more coordinated, community-based support. We are taking practical steps now to expand integrated youth mental health services in regions with the greatest need. We are working with young people and sector to design these changes as demonstrated by hosting the Youth Mental Health Summit at Parliament this year.
New Zealand First	✓*	New Zealand First supports developing community prevention and early intervention programmes to address issues that bring children into state care. We have specifically proposed introducing Mental Health Response Units to address distress and harm within the community.
Opportunity	?	We would welcome learning more about the benefits and costs of this model.
Māori	⊖	[Did not respond]

✓ Yes | ? Undecided | ✗ No | ⊖ Did not respond | ✓* Yes, but party's explanation either did not include an explicit future commitment to implement the policy OR did not fully align with the question

4. MORE KAUPAPA MĀORI SERVICES

WHAT PARTIES SAID:

WHY THIS MATTERS:

Māori experience significant inequities in the mental health and addiction system, including higher rates of coercive practices like compulsory treatment and solitary confinement in mental health units and higher, and rising, rates of mental distress. Māori have long advocated for equitable funding for kaupapa Māori services that reflect whānau, hapū and iwi aspirations, use Māori healing and treatment options, and deliver better outcomes for Māori while offering holistic care options for non-Māori. Māori currently make up around 30% of specialist mental health and addiction service users, but less than 10% of specialist service expenditure is allocated to kaupapa Māori services, and only a third of tāngata whaiora Māori* can access them.

* 'Māori people seeking wellness' (used here to mean Māori using mental health and addiction services).

✓ Yes | ? Undecided | ✗ No | ⊖ Did not respond | ✓* Yes, but party's explanation either did not include an explicit future commitment to implement the policy OR did not fully align with the question

4. Will your party increase investment in, and scale up, a wide range of kaupapa Māori mental health and addiction services nationwide?

ACT		ACT believes that funding should follow the individual to the provider that meets their needs the best. Where kaupapa Māori providers are delivering strong outcomes, youth should be able to use those services without being forced into a one-size-fits-all model. Providers should be able to compete for funding on the same terms as any other provider. A model where funding follows the individual means if someone believes kaupapa Māori, or any other values such as Pasifika, best meet their needs, then there is no reason that they should be excluded. ACT does not support funding organisations simply because it is a specific ethnicity. It should be based on individual needs and outcomes for those people.
Green		The Green Party is committed to funding more kaupapa Māori mental health and addiction programmes and ensuring rangatahi Māori voice is represented in policy. We are committed to working with Iwi Māori Partnership Boards and Hauora Māori to simplify and improve funding arrangements for providers, and end overly prescriptive contracts that do not fund the wrap-around support, whanaungatanga and trust that these services provide.
Labour		We agree in principle that there should be better access to mental health and addiction services across the motu, particularly for Māori and youth.
National		National is supportive of kaupapa Māori services by Māori, for everyone. National is committed to improving mental health and addiction outcomes for Māori through a needs-based approach that targets support to communities with the greatest need. Funding for Māori health providers has increased significantly in recent years, and we will continue to invest in services that deliver results.
New Zealand First		New Zealand First's core principle is that all policy-making must be based on "need and not on race, creed or colour". As part of the 2023 Coalition Agreement, the party successfully campaigned and delivered on abolishing the Māori Health Authority to focus on a single healthcare system based on clinical need. The party believes public services should be prioritised based on need rather than race.
Opportunity		We support effective, culturally appropriate health services.
Māori		[Did not respond]

✓ Yes | ? Undecided | ✗ No | ⊖ Did not respond | ✓* Yes, but party's explanation either did not include an explicit future commitment to implement the policy OR did not fully align with the question

5. BETTER ACCESS TO SPECIALIST SERVICES

WHAT PARTIES SAID:

ACT	Green	Labour	National	New Zealand First	Opportunity	Māori
?	✓*	?	✓	✓	✓*	⊖

WHY THIS MATTERS:

There are high levels of unmet need for specialist mental health and addiction services, particularly for Māori and young people. As people wait, their mental health and wellbeing can deteriorate and their needs can become more complex, stalling recovery and requiring additional resources to support them. Over the past five years, the access rate for specialist mental health and addiction services decreased by 8% for all New Zealanders – and by almost 20% for 19–24-year-olds – mostly due to workforce challenges and higher access thresholds.

✓ Yes | ? Undecided | ✗ No | ⊖ Did not respond | ✓* Yes, but party's explanation either did not include an explicit future commitment to implement the policy OR did not fully align with the question

5. Will your party increase access to specialist mental health and addiction services?

ACT	?	ACT acknowledges that many people unfortunately have to wait too long in the public system to get access to specialist or addiction services. ACT believes the best approach is to open up the system so that people can take their individual funding to where suits them. This would allow people to access the help they need when needed. Pouring more money into the existing structures without reform tends to produce diminishing returns.
Green	✓*	The Green Party is committed to linking primary health and secondary specialist mental health services with clear referral pathways in every health board district with a focus on areas which have disproportionate need, such as rural communities.
Labour	?	We agree in principle that there should be better access to specialist mental health and addiction services across the motu, particularly for Māori and youth.
National	✓	We have increased access to specialist mental health and addiction support since National has been in Government. Quarter three data has seen 82.2 percent of people now accessing specialist mental health support within three weeks, against an 80 percent target. We have seen real results being delivered as a result of measuring how fast different regions have groups are accessing specialist mental health support. National is committed to ensuring more New Zealanders get faster access to specialist mental health support, no matter where you live, your age or ethnicity.
New Zealand First	✓	The party plans to "rebuild New Zealand's public health service" and prioritise "health services sector immigration" to fill shortages of specialists and nurses. We aim to reprioritise government expenditure to provide funding increases for primary healthcare and reassign resources to urgently deal with hospital waiting lists.
Opportunity	✓*	The Opportunity Party supports improving access to effective mental health and addiction services. We support evidence-based investment that reduces waiting times and improves timely access while ensuring funding is directed toward interventions that achieve measurable outcomes.
Māori	⊖	[Did not respond]

✓ Yes | ? Undecided | ✗ No | ⊖ Did not respond | ✓* Yes, but party's explanation either did not include an explicit future commitment to implement the policy OR did not fully align with the question

6. COMBINING MENTAL HEALTH AND ADDICTION SERVICES WITH HOUSING AND EMPLOYMENT SUPPORT

WHAT PARTIES SAID:

ACT	Green	Labour	National	New Zealand First	Opportunity	Māori
?	✓	?	✓*	✓*	✓*	⊖

WHY THIS MATTERS:

We know that access to good, stable housing and meaningful employment improves mental health. Yet, in 2023/24, fewer than half of people accessing specialist mental health and addiction services were in employment, education or training, and 6% of specialist service users were homeless. To support wellbeing and recovery and reduce demand on crisis and specialist services, we recommend expanding integrated models with strong evidence and solid return on investment, such as Housing First and Individual Placement and Support (IPS).

✓ Yes | ? Undecided | ✗ No | ⊖ Did not respond | ✓* Yes, but party's explanation either did not include an explicit future commitment to implement the policy OR did not fully align with the question

6. Will your party expand programmes that integrate mental health and addiction support with housing and employment assistance?

ACT	ACT recognises that there can be a correlation between mental health and addiction problems and housing instability and unemployment. ACT supports the works of initiatives from community groups and NGOs that are able to demonstrate they can move people towards independence such as stable employment and tenancies.
Green	The Green Party has been unequivocal that the drivers of mental distress must be addressed to support wellbeing for all in Aotearoa. We are committed to expanding immediate wraparound support through integrated models, including those specifically mentioned in the survey.
Labour	We agree in principle that mental health and addiction programmes which also provide housing and employment assistance are important to supporting rehabilitation.
National	The Government is focused on improving coordination between mental health, addiction and housing and employment services to better support people with complex needs. Current work includes improving coordination between health and housing services, and continuing programmes such as Housing First. The Government has also funded key elements of the Oranga Mahi work programme through Budget 2025, including extending Individual Placement and Support (IPS) services for a further two years with additional funding. The National Government has also helped support Mahitahi Trust to deliver Rapua, a multi-agency response which provides housing to people living with serious mental illness and high and complex needs in Auckland. The contract was due to expire on 30 June this year and they now have funding from Health New Zealand to continue operating.
New Zealand First	New Zealand First supports resilient communities by providing prevention and early intervention services. Our housing policy includes building more social housing and providing low-cost government funding for public rental projects. We also emphasise employment as a "first planning priority" to reduce the "human and economic waste" of unemployment.
Opportunity	The Opportunity Party recognises that secure housing and meaningful employment are major determinants of mental wellbeing. We support integrated approaches that address the underlying drivers of poor mental health alongside clinical care.
Māori	[Did not respond]

Yes | Undecided | No | Did not respond | Yes, but party's explanation either did not include an explicit future commitment to implement the policy OR did not fully align with the question

7. COMMUNITY-LED SUICIDE PREVENTION

WHAT PARTIES SAID:

act	Green	Labour	National	New Zealand First	Opportunity	Māori
?	✓	?	✓*	✓*	✓*	⊖

WHY THIS MATTERS:

Last year, 630 New Zealanders died by suspected suicide. For every suicide, an average of 135 people are affected. Preventing suicide requires sustained investment in community-led prevention and postvention initiatives that are safe, effective, culturally responsive, and grounded in lived experience perspectives. These initiatives play a critical role in supporting bereaved whānau, reducing distress and preventing further harm.

✓ Yes | ? Undecided | ✗ No | ⊖ Did not respond | ✓* Yes, but party's explanation either did not include an explicit future commitment to implement the policy OR did not fully align with the question

7. Will your party increase investment in community-led suicide prevention initiatives that are safe, effective, and culturally responsive?

ACT		ACT believes that communities are often better placed to deal with real people than a centralised system. Trust and local knowledge often matter hugely when it comes to suicide prevention.
Green		The Green Party is committed to implementing all the recommendations from the Every Life Matters – He Tapu te Oranga o ia Tangata Suicide Prevention Strategy, and policies that address the drivers of mental distress.
Labour		We agree in principle that evidence-based suicide prevention initiatives should be adequately invested in.
National		National has recently increased investment in suicide prevention through the launch of the Government's new Suicide Prevention Action Plan, backed by an additional $16 million per year on top of existing annual suicide prevention funding of $20 million. The Plan includes a new community suicide prevention fund to support local initiatives focused on populations experiencing higher rates of suicidal distress. We recognise that communities are often best placed to support their own people. That is why the Plan invests in community-led prevention, expands suicide prevention training, grows the workforce, and introduces new services such as crisis recovery cafés and peer support roles.
New Zealand First		The party has committed and delivered on funding Mike King's Gumboot Friday/I Am Hope charity at $6 million per annum. We have previously called for reviews to ensure suicide prevention funding is spent on "face-to-face solutions and interventions" across all geographical areas.
Opportunity		The Opportunity Party supports investment in evidence-based suicide prevention initiatives, including community-led approaches that are culturally responsive and informed by lived experience where they demonstrate effectiveness.
Māori		[Did not respond]

Yes | Undecided | No | Did not respond | Yes, but party's explanation either did not include an explicit future commitment to implement the policy OR did not fully align with the question

8. A BETTER RESPONSE SYSTEM FOR PEOPLE IN CRISIS

WHAT PARTIES SAID:

act	Green	Labour	National	New Zealand First	Opportunity	māori
?	✓	?	✓	✓*	✓*	⊖

WHY THIS MATTERS:

Crisis services are fragmented, hard to navigate and inconsistent nationwide, meaning many people do not receive timely or appropriate support. Māori and young people are disproportionately affected by wait times and complex need, and are more likely to need urgent support. A nationally cohesive crisis response system that offers timely access to a range of coordinated options, including peer-led, kaupapa Māori and youth-specific responses, is needed.

✓ Yes | ? Undecided | ✗ No | ⊖ Did not respond | ✓* Yes, but party's explanation either did not include an explicit future commitment to implement the policy OR did not fully align with the question

8. Will your party invest in and develop an integrated mental health crisis response system for people in distress who need immediate support?

ACT		ACT supports a better crisis response system. The status quo, where people in acute distress often end up in emergency departments or in contact with police because no other option exists, is failing both patients and frontline workers.
Green		The Green Party is committed to ensuring every district health board has clear referral pathways to reduce fragmentation in the system, with a focus on those with disproportionate need, and recruiting and retaining a skilled workforce to meet demand, with strong pay and working conditions.
Labour		We agree in principle that support should be available to people in distress when they need it, no matter where they are.
National		Part of the Government's mental health plan is delivering a better crisis response, and that is exactly what we have started to deliver in our first term. National has funded 10 new mental health co-response teams. We have also funded 8 new crisis recovery cafés, with several already open and more to come. We have also expanded peer support services, including funding peer support workers in emergency departments, with 11 emergency departments funded and 8 already delivering the service. We know the system is far too fragmented and needs to be more joined up. [We are] committed to continuing to work across the continuum whether it be through promotion, primary or specialist mental health support to join it up so people can receive faster access to support, no matter where they are.
New Zealand First		New Zealand First supports the introduction of Mental Health Response Units to adequately address distress and life-threatening harm. We are also delivering on out commitment to train 500 new frontline police and adequately resourcing community policing to ensure public safety.
The Opportunity Party		The Opportunity Party supports improving coordination across the mental health system so people experiencing crisis receive timely, appropriate support. We favour integrated, evidence-based service design over fragmented provision.
Māori		[Did not respond]

Yes | Undecided | No | Did not respond | Yes, but party's explanation either did not include an explicit future commitment to implement the policy OR did not fully align with the question

9. GROWING AND SUSTAINING A STRONG, DIVERSE WORKFORCE

WHAT PARTIES SAID:

act	Green	Labour	National	New Zealand First	Opportunity	māori
?	✓	?	✓*	✓	✓*	⊖

WHY THIS MATTERS:

Workforce shortages are limiting access to care, particularly in specialist services. Our nation has less than half the recommended number of child and adolescent psychiatrists, and the workforce does not reflect the communities it serves – Māori make up around 30% of people accessing specialist services, but only around 16% of the workforce.

✓ Yes | ? Undecided | ✗ No | ⊖ Did not respond | ✓* Yes, but party's explanation either did not include an explicit future commitment to implement the policy OR did not fully align with the question

9. Will your party commit to growing and sustaining a strong, diverse mental health and addiction workforce?

ACT	?	ACT's view is that if you allow funding to follow the individual it means that the workforce will be placed best where it is needed. A top-down model with 'aspirational goals' often does not solve workforce issues, particularly when it comes to misallocation of resources.
Green	✓	The Green Party is committed to boosting the health and mental health workforce, boosting retention, and ensuring the workforce is well supported with decent conditions to prevent burnout. The Green Party supports specific funding to increase the Māori mental health workers so whānau can get culturally responsive mental health care.
Labour	?	We agree that a stretched workforce helps no one. Labour believes that workforce shortages should not be a barrier for people seeking mental health and addiction support.
National	✓*	Under this Government, the frontline mental health and addiction workforce has grown by more than 11 percent. Importantly, it is not just the size of the workforce that has grown, but also its diversity. The Mental Health and Wellbeing Commission recently highlighted that the ethnic diversity in the mental health and addiction workforce has been steadily increasing and is now largely reflective of the wider population's ethnic group proportions. National published and refreshed New Zealand's first Mental Health Workforce Plan, which helped us exceed our workforce training target, with 514 new mental health and addiction workers trained against a target of 500. We have also seen increases in key workforces such as the child and adolescent workforce, which has grown by 19 percent. We are on track to double clinical psychology internships, have increased psychiatry registrar intake by 50 percent, and have established a new psychology assistant role – all of which will help us to continue growing the frontline workforce.
New Zealand First	✓	The party's strategy focuses on a "health services sector immigration" priority to immediately fill vacancies. We also plan to increase the number of medical students and explore "foundationally sustainable" working conditions to retain existing staff. While supporting a strong workforce, we would ensure recruitment is based on merit and clinical need rather than race-based quotas.
Opportunity	✓*	The Opportunity Party supports strengthening New Zealand's mental health workforce to improve access to care. Workforce planning should focus on addressing shortages, improving training pathways and ensuring services meet community needs.
Māori	⊖	[Did not respond]

✓ Yes | ? Undecided | ✗ No | ⊖ Did not respond | ✓* Yes, but party's explanation either did not include an explicit future commitment to implement the policy OR did not fully align with the question

REFERENCES

1. MENTAL WELLBEING PROMOTION FOR ALL NEW ZEALANDERS

- Knapp, M., McDaid, D., & Parsonage, M. (2011). *Mental health promotion and prevention: the economic case*. London: Department of Health.
- Deloitte. (2022). *Mental health and employers: The case for investment – pandemic and beyond*.
- Wyllie & Associates. (2024). *Farmstrong Ninth Year Monitoring Technical Report*.
- Malatest International. (2021). *Final Evaluation Report: Mana Ake – Stronger for Tomorrow*.
- Te Whatu Ora Health New Zealand. (2022). *Sparklers Evaluation 2022*.

2. MENTAL HEALTH AND WELLBEING SERVICES IN ALL SCHOOLS

- Solmi, M., et al. (2022). Age at onset of mental disorders worldwide: large-scale meta-analysis of 192 epidemiological studies. *Mol Psychiatry, 27*, 281–295. https://doi.org/10.1038/s41380-021-01161-7.
- Ministry of Education. (2017). *Te Pakiaka Tangata: Strengthening student wellbeing for success*.
- Denny, S., et al. (2014). *Health Services in New Zealand Secondary Schools and the Associated Health Outcomes for Students*. Adolescent Health Research Group, Faculty of Medical and Health Sciences, University of Auckland.
- McGorry, P. D., & Mei, C. (2018). Early intervention in youth mental health: progress and future directions. *Evidence-based mental health, 21*(4), 182–184. https://doi.org/10.1136/ebmental-2018-300060.
- Health Quality & Safety Commission. (2020). *Te Mauri The Life Force: Rangatahi suicide report.*

3. YOUTH HEALTH AND WELLBEING HUBS IN EVERY REGION

- Te Hiringa Mahara – Mental Health and Wellbeing Commission. (2026). *Evidence Brief: Effective early intervention and secondary prevention approaches for young people experiencing early signs of distress*.
- *Hetrick, S.E., et al. (2017). Integrated (one-stop shop) youth health care: best available evidence and future directions. Medical Journal of Australia, 207: S5-S18.*
- Whāraurau. (2019). *Deep and Meaningful Conversation Report: Youth-Informed Transformation*.
- Prickett, K. (2026). *Research review on the effectiveness of youth and rangatahi mental health early intervention and secondary prevention approaches.*
- Haycock, I.G. (2024). *Is the mental health system in Aotearoa New Zealand providing quality care to young people? A critical analysis utilising the perspectives of mental health professionals and sociological insights* (Doctoral dissertation, The University of Waikato).
- Cross-party Mental Health and Addiction Wellbeing Group (2023). *Under One Umbrella: Integrated mental health, alcohol and other drug use care for young people in New Zealand*.

4. MORE KAUPAPA MĀORI SERVICES

- Ministry of Health. (2026). *Office of the Director of Mental Health and Addiction Services: Regulatory Report 1 July 2023 to 30 June 2024*. Wellington: Ministry of Health.
- Te Hiringa Mahara – Mental Health and Wellbeing Commission. (2024). *More kaupapa Māori services*.
- Ministry of Health. (2025). *Annual Data Explorer 2024/25: New Zealand Health Survey*.
- Russell, L. (2018). *Te Oranga Hinengaro: Report on Māori Mental Wellbeing Results from the New Zealand Mental Health Monitor & Health and Lifestyles Survey*. Health Promotion Agency/Te Hiringa Hauora.
- McMeeking, S. & Pierre, S. (2019). *Whanau ora: building Maori self determination in Aotearoa/New Zealand. Reclaiming Indigenous Governance: Reflections and Insights from Australia, Canada, New Zealand, and the United States*, 155-171.
- Te Hiringa Mahara – Mental Health and Wellbeing Commission. (2026, April). *He Ara Āwhina dashboard – Data about mental health and addiction services in Aotearoa New Zealand.*

REFERENCES

5. BETTER ACCESS TO SPECIALIST SERVICES

- Te Hiringa Mahara – Mental Health and Wellbeing Commission. (2026, February). *Access to mental health and addiction services (data summary).*
- Government Inquiry into Mental Health and Addiction. (2018). *He Ara Oranga: Report of the Government Inquiry into Mental Health and Addiction.*
- Te Pou. (2024). *Approaches to reducing wait times in mental health and addiction services: Key performance indicator literature review, March 2025*. Key Performance Indicator (KPI) Programme, Mental Health and Addictions.

6. COMBINING MENTAL HEALTH AND ADDICTION SERVICES WITH HOUSING AND EMPLOYMENT SUPPORT

- Te Hiringa Mahara – Mental Health and Wellbeing Commission. (2025). *Monitoring mental health and addiction system performance in Aotearoa New Zealand: Our approach and initial findings.*
- Wise Group. (2025). *Integrated Housing First and IPS employment support: A model of impact.*

7. COMMUNITY-LED SUICIDE PREVENTION

- Health New Zealand | Te Whatu Ora. (2026). *Suicide data web tool.*
- Cerel, J., et al. (2019). How Many People Are Exposed to Suicide? Not Six. *Suicide & life-threatening behavior, 49*(2), 529–534. https://doi.org/10.1111/sltb.12450.

8. A BETTER RESPONSE SYSTEM FOR PEOPLE IN CRISIS

- Te Hiringa Mahara – Mental Health and Wellbeing Commission. (2025). *Urupare mōrearea: Crisis responses monitoring report.*

9. GROWING AND SUSTAINING A STRONG, DIVERSE WORKFORCE

- RANZCP. (2019). *Child and adolescent psychiatry: meeting future workforce needs (Discussion Paper prepared by the Faculty of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry)*.
- Te Hiringa Mahara – Mental Health and Wellbeing Commission. (2026, April). *He Ara Āwhina dashboard – Data about mental health and addiction services in Aotearoa New Zealand.*

mauri tū, mauri ora
Mental Health Foundation
OF NEW ZEALAND

mentalhealth.org.nz/election

policyandadvocacy@mentalhealth.org.nz

Eden 3, Ground Floor
16 Normanby Road
Mount Eden
Auckland 1024

Authorised by Shaun Robinson, Mental Health Foundation of New Zealand, 16 Normanby Road, Auckland 1024