

Briefing

He Ara Āwhina dashboard and supplementary infographics

Date due to MO:	20/05/2025	Action required by:	28/05/2025
Security level:	UNCLASSIFIED	Briefing number:	BN2025-007
To:	Hon Matt Doocey, Minister for Mental Health		

Contact for Telephone Discussion

Name	Position	Telephone

Minister's Office to Complete

- | | | |
|--|------------------------------------|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Approved | <input type="checkbox"/> Decline | <input type="checkbox"/> Noted |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Needs change | <input type="checkbox"/> Seen | <input type="checkbox"/> Overtaken by event |
| <input type="checkbox"/> See Minister's note | <input type="checkbox"/> Withdrawn | |

Comment:

He Ara Āwhina dashboard and supplementary infographics

Security level:	UNCLASSIFIED	Date:	20/05/2025
To:	Hon Matt Doocey, Minister for Mental Health		

Purpose

1. In late May and early June, Te Hiringa Mahara – Mental Health and Wellbeing Commission (the Commission) will publish an update to the online He Ara Āwhina service monitoring dashboard and two supplementary infographics. This briefing summarises key points from the dashboard and infographics.

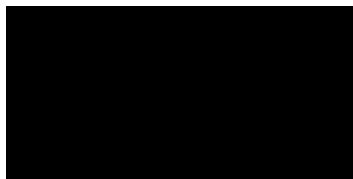
Summary

2. We are publishing an update to the online He Ara Āwhina dashboard to refresh data to cover the period to June 2024, including some additional measures.
3. We are also publishing supplementary infographics to tell a visual story of selected monitoring findings using data in the He Ara Āwhina dashboard. The two infographics are: (1) access to mental health and addiction services; and (2) addiction specialist services.
4. The infographics highlight that access to mental health and addiction services has decreased. There were over 16,000 fewer people using specialist mental health and addiction services in 2023/24 than in 2020/21. The population access rate in 2023/24 was 3.3 per cent, which is lower than the historical 10-year trend between 3.5 and 3.8 per cent. We are seeing continued pressures in the system including rising vacancy rates for medical practitioners. Access to services by rangatahi and young people is an area we have called out where significant improvement is needed.
5. This is the first time we have reported specifically on specialist addiction services. Addiction specialist services are seeing a similar decline in people accessing these services, and a proportionate decrease in investment compared to mental health services. Wait times into specialist addiction services are below the Government target, and the percentage of referrals that are declined has increased over the last five years.
6. Final draft content of the undesigned infographics and the high-level communications plan are attached for your information. The final publications will be shared with your office prior to publication.

Recommendations

We recommend you:

- | | | |
|----|---|----------|
| a) | note the two infographics will be published on 28 May 2025 | Yes / No |
| b) | note the updated He Ara Āwhina dashboard will be published on 11 June 2025 | Yes / No |
| c) | note the Commission intends to proactively release this briefing as part of our proactive release policy | Yes / No |



Chief Executive

Date: 20/05/2025

Hon Matt Doocey

Minister for Mental Health

Date:



He Ara Āwhina dashboard and supplementary infographics

Context

1. Since our establishment we have had a longstanding focus on access to mental health and addiction services. Our 2024 monitoring report, [Kua Timata Te Haerenga | The Journey Has Begun](#), focused on access to mental health and addiction services and options available, and we have also published several other monitoring reports. While we have reported addiction measures as part of our annual monitoring, this will be the first time we have provided a separate snapshot of addiction services.
2. In late 2023, the Commission launched the He Ara Āwhina online dashboard which publicly reports a breadth of mental health and addiction service measures in a visual format. This year's update of the He Ara Āwhina dashboard reflects more recent data and additional measures.
3. The supplementary infographics tell a visual story of selected monitoring findings on two topics: (1) access to mental health and addiction services and (2) addiction specialist services.

Approach to monitoring of mental health and addiction targets

4. As noted in our previous briefing last year [refer BN2024-020], we are positioning the mental health and addiction targets within a wider view of system performance, and to provide deeper analysis of key issues and trends.
5. The infographics and online dashboard include the specialist wait times target. The infographic on access to specialist services includes this target alongside a broader set of balancing measures (to monitor unintended consequences) and contributory measures (the operation of the system to achieve the target). The addiction infographic also includes the wait times to specialist addiction services.
6. In the online dashboard we will be reporting two measures of specialist wait times: the Government target on specialist wait times alongside the previous specialist wait times measure. This previous measure is one we have reported since our dashboard was published, using an established sector definition. Our earlier briefing [refer BN2024-020] summarises the calculation changes. Both methods of calculating wait times to specialist services show that wait times are longer in 2023/24 than five years earlier. The Government target measure shows a more positive view of performance for mental health services (closer to the target of 80 per cent) and less positive view for addiction services.

He Ara Āwhina service monitoring dashboard

7. The online He Ara Āwhina dashboard is being refreshed with data to June 2024 (where available).
8. We currently use 76 measures to monitor mental health and addiction services against the 12 He Ara Āwhina framework domains. We have refreshed this measure set to ensure it remains relevant and current. The additional measures include measures relating to referrals, access, new and long-term tāngata whaiora, Kaupapa Māori access, safety, peer support, equity, unmet need, and workforce. The mental health and addiction ringfence amount has also been added to the measure set to monitor expenditure in comparison to the ringfence.
9. The online dashboard refresh will be published alongside our system monitoring performance report [refer BN2025-009].
10. The accompanying infographics tell a visual story of selected monitoring findings from the relevant measures in the He Ara Āwhina measure set.

Access to mental health and addiction services infographic

11. The number of people using specialist mental health and addiction services has decreased over the last five years, largely due to workforce constraints and changing needs rather than decreasing demand. People are waiting longer to access specialist services, with particularly concerning wait times for children, young people, tamariki, and rangatahi aged 0-18 years.
12. While there are positive signs of workforce shortages are being addressed in the last year largely due to increases in nurses and support workers, there are increasingly high vacancy rates for medical practitioners.

Access to specialist addiction services infographic

13. The number of people accessing specialist addiction services has decreased over the last five years. In 2023/24 there were nearly 45,000 people accessing specialist addiction services (over 5,000 fewer people than five years earlier).
14. Around a quarter of people accessing specialist mental health and addiction services are seen by addiction services, with access to specialist addiction services relatively evenly spread across Health NZ and NGO provided services. While there is increasing use of peer-support over the last five years, use is relatively low and there is an opportunity for greater use.
15. There are signals of service constraints. Wait times into specialist addiction services are below the Government target, and the percentage of referrals that are declined has increased over the last five years.
16. Specialist addiction services continue to show improved recovery outcomes for people, with consistently high ratings on the Alcohol and Drug Outcome Measure.

17. These findings are particularly concerning when considered alongside increasing substance use, including recently reported wastewater testing data that shows methamphetamine consumption has doubled in the last year.

Communications

18. A high-level communications plan is attached for your information. Key points are:
 - a. A media release and LinkedIn post will be made alongside publication on our website.
 - b. We will focus on sharing the findings of the infographics with key decision makers in the government and mental health and addiction system.
 - c. Karen Orsborn, Chief Executive, Maraea Johns, Director Māori Health and Sonya Russell, Director Mental Health and Addiction Sector leadership will be the spokespeople for any media interest. We will keep your office informed of media activity.

Consultation

19. The infographics have had rigorous peer review, followed by external expert review. Health NZ has undertaken an accuracy check. The dashboard has had detailed review, and we have clarified some data issues with the source agencies to ensure its accuracy.
20. To ensure alignment and consistency, we have also consulted with Atamira | Platform Trust who will also be releasing an addiction infographic. The infographics have a different scope and complement each other well.

Next Steps

21. The infographics are subject to minor editorial changes and are currently being designed. Embargoed copies of the final designed publication-ready infographics will be shared with your office on 26 May 2025.
22. The two infographics will be published on 28 May 2025, and the refreshed online dashboard on 11 June 2025.

ENDS

