

Briefing

Publication of crisis responses literature scan

Date due to MO:	19/08/2025	Action required by:	NA
Security level:	UNCLASSIFIED	Briefing number:	BN2025-016
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 Withdrawn	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:

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Purpose

1. On 26 August 2025, the Mental Health and Wellbeing Commission – Te Hiringa Mahara (the Commission) will publish the attached literature scan. This briefing provides an overview of key findings.

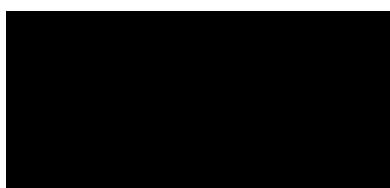
Executive summary

2. On 26 August 2025, the Commission will publish the attached *Crisis responses to mental health and/or substance use: What works? A literature scan for Te Hiringa Mahara / Mental Health and Wellbeing Commission* (the scan).
3. We have previously included content on crisis responses in other reports, including [*Kua Timata Te Haerenga*](#) and [*Acute options for mental health care insights paper*](#).
4. The scan reviews international and New Zealand evidence on crisis responses and models, and the findings will inform the monitoring report that will look at what a good crisis response system could look like for New Zealand. The scan covers evidence of what works for the general population, Indigenous communities, and youth.
5. A final draft version is attached for your information. The final scan will be published on 26 August 2025, and an embargoed copy will be shared with your office prior to publication. We plan to host a webinar in September to share and promote this work. We do not plan to undertake any proactive communications when publishing the scan.

Recommendations

We recommend you:

- a) Note the *Crisis responses to mental health and/or substance use: What works? A literature scan for Te Hiringa Mahara / Mental Health and Wellbeing Commission* literature scan will be published on 26 August 2025. Yes / No
- b) Note we intend to release this briefing under our proactive release policy. Yes / No



Chief Executive

Date: 19/08/2025

Hon Matt Doocey
Minister for Mental Health

Date:

Crisis responses to mental health and/or substance use: What works?

Background

1. The Commission is currently developing a monitoring report on crisis responses in Aotearoa New Zealand. We have previously reported on crisis responses in other reports, including [Kua Timata Te Haerenga and Acute options for mental health care insights paper](#). The 2025 monitoring report will be the first standalone report to review crisis responses.
2. To support the monitoring report, we commissioned a literature scan examining what works for crisis responses both internationally and domestically. The findings from the scan will be used in the monitoring report to compare what is happening in New Zealand with crisis response to what best practice looks like. This comparison will highlight current gaps in our system.

Findings

3. International evidence points to the importance of cohesive, nationally coordinated crisis response systems with 24/7 coverage, non-coercive care, cultural safety, peer roles, and youth-specific supports. These systems result in reduced emergency department (ED) use, reduced trauma, and improved outcomes for tāngata whaiora.
4. Our findings show that effective crisis response models provide timely, holistic support tailored to needs, are culturally grounded and locally led, uphold Indigenous rights and commitments, value lived experience, are collaborative and easily accessible and provide sustained and integrated support.
5. The literature scan provides examples of promising international models, including in Italy, Ireland and Australia. In New Zealand, locally led Kaupapa Māori and peer-informed services show promise for trust, safety, and engagement.
6. Despite these promising approaches, domestic responses remain fragmented, regionally variable, and lack robust evaluation. Additional gaps in New Zealand include lack of consistent access to 24/7, community-based crisis services across the country, inconsistent integration of digital helplines and walk-in hubs with in-person supports, and no shared definitions or metrics, making national benchmarking and service comparison difficult.
7. The scan examines what works for Indigenous communities as well as for young people.
8. For Indigenous populations, crucial aspects of responses include embedding whānau/family and community-led approaches, embedding Indigenous leadership and self-determination and integrating cultural practices.

9. For young people, crucial aspects of responses include engaging with whānau/family and youth-focused community settings.

How we will influence change

10. We will incorporate findings from the scan into the 2025 crisis response monitoring report, which will include recommendations on how crisis responses can be improved in New Zealand.
11. Following the publication of the monitoring report, we will continue engaging with key stakeholders to determine the best way to progress the changes we seek and follow up on the recommendations.
12. We will continue monitoring crisis responses through our regular monitoring and on-line dashboard.

Communications plan

13. Proactive communications are not planned for the scan. We will publish the scan on our website and include a link to it on our e-newsletter that is sent to stakeholders.
14. Key report findings will be shared in a webinar, which is currently being planned to occur around late September. Additionally, we will focus on sharing this scan with key decision makers in government and the mental health and addiction system.
15. Karen Orsborn, Chief Executive, 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

16. No external consultation was undertaken during the literature scan.

Next steps

17. A final draft version is attached for your information. The final scan will be shared with your office prior to publication. The scan will be published on 26 August 2025. We plan to host a webinar in September to share and promote this work.
18. The monitoring report is planned to be published in November 2025.

ENDS