Te Hiringa Mahara | Mental Health and Wellbeing Commission

Improving crisis responses – service map

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This map shows the progress made towards increasing access and support for people experiencing a mental health crisis.

On the map and accompanying table we have listed existing peer-led acute alternatives as well as new initiatives announced by the government from early 2024 as part of its commitment to strengthening services for those requiring crisis mental health support.

Te Hiringa Mahara—Mental Health and Wellbeing Commission has published this information to help track progress towards a nationally cohesive, networked crisis response system.

Assessing the crisis responses system

Crisis responses[1] are a critical part of an effective mental health and addiction system and in November 2025, Te Hiringa Mahara published **Urupare mōrearea: Crisis responses monitoring report**. The purpose of this report was to deepen our understanding of how crisis responses are working across Aotearoa New Zealand.

We found that crisis response pathways are hard to navigate, fragmented, and patchy, and many people don't get the help they need. In Aotearoa, we have a collection of services rather than a coordinated national framework.

People experiencing crisis need to have someone to call, someone to respond, and somewhere safe, welcoming, and supportive to go, when and where they need it.

We need a connected system that is easy to navigate regardless of where people live. The earlier people can access support that works for them, the better the chances of preventing distress before it develops into crisis. People experiencing acute distress need more options, including peer-led, community-based, and kaupapa Māori services, which have been shown to be highly effective.

We need a system that works for everyone: one that provides support early, responds effectively in crisis, is easy to access, and delivers equitable outcomes. For people and their whānau, that means getting help earlier, closer to home, in ways that reflect their culture, identity, and community, with care that is timely and respectful.

About us

Te Hiringa Mahara—Mental Health and Wellbeing Commission (Te Hiringa Mahara) is an independent Crown entity with the mandated function to monitor mental health and addiction services in Aotearoa and to advocate for improvements to those services.

We also have legislated functions to assess and report publicly on the effectiveness, efficiency, and adequacy of approaches to mental health and wellbeing.

[1] Forms of urgent support, assessment, or intervention for people experiencing a crisis event that requires additional support to that provided in primary care or planned specialist care.

Recommendations to improve crisis responses

Te Hiringa Mahara made two recommendations to improve crisis responses. We're pleased to see increased investment into a range of options including crisis cafés, co-response teams, and peer support in EDs and look forward to further developments to meet the needs of people experiencing crisis across Aotearoa.

Find our more: **www.mhwc.govt.nz/crisis-responses**

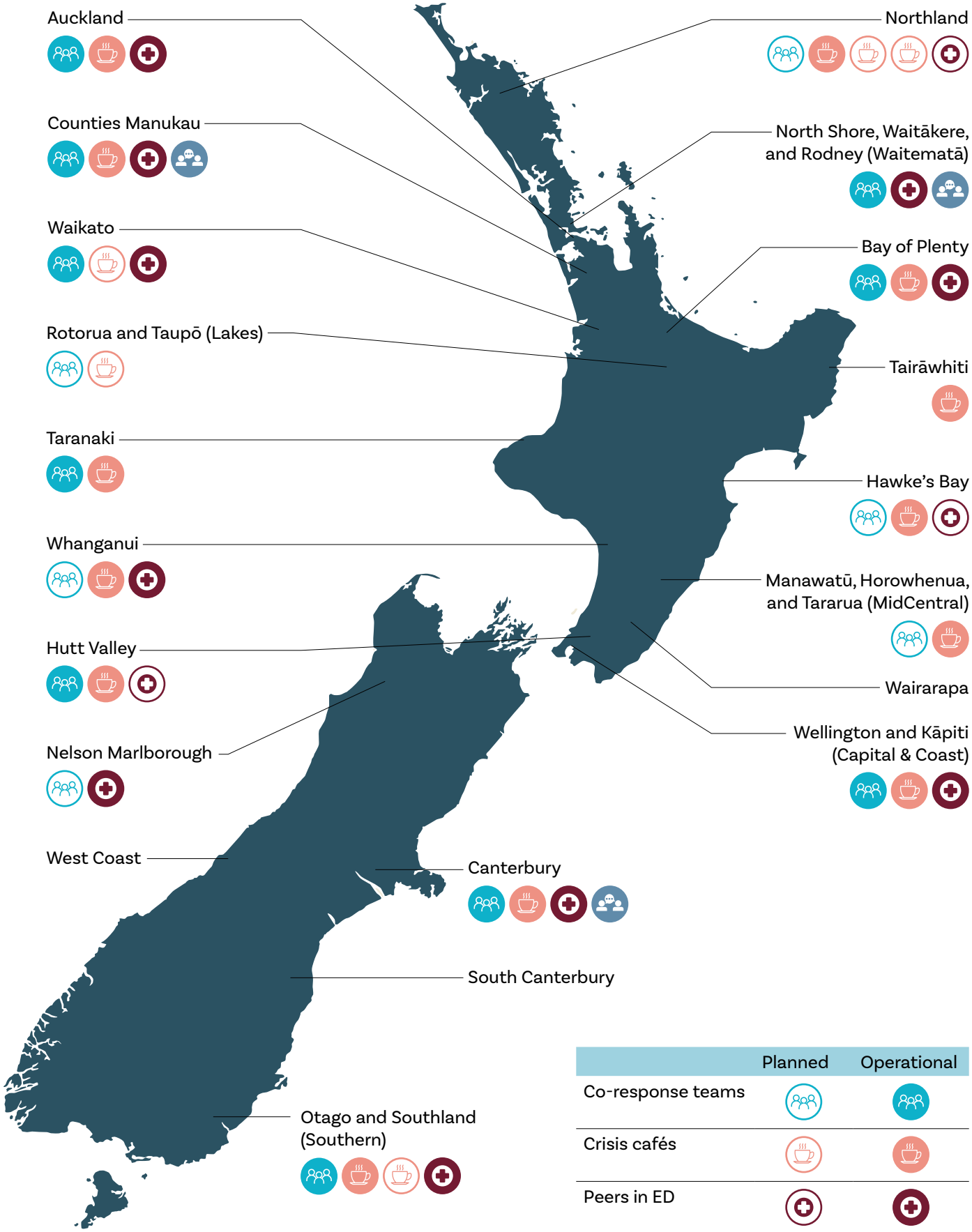
Recommendations

1. Health NZ develops a nationally cohesive, networked crisis response system by 30 June 2027. This system needs to:
   - enable access to a range of options, including 24/7 phone-based crisis support in every district, virtual options, crisis community teams, crisis cafés, crisis respite, acute alternatives, as well as inpatient services when needed. Needs to include youth-specific, peer-led, and Kaupapa Māori options be led by lived experience, embed peer support, be culturally responsive, rights-based, and trauma responsive
   - ensure the provision of a timely and compassionate response as well as safe and welcoming places to go
   - ensure tāngata whaiora and whānau have access to information about what they can expect when they are experiencing crisis, regardless of where they live
   - ensure that responses match the patterns of demand, with comparable quality and timeliness in the evenings and weekends.
2. Health NZ to progress shorter-term actions by 30 June 2026.
   - enable nationwide access to 24/7 phone-based crisis support
   - develop clear, consistent pathways to crisis services from primary care
   - evaluate the outcomes and impact of peer support in ED and crisis cafés.

Notes

1. The map and table do not cover the full range of crisis services offered in each district and nor does it assume that all four components should be offered in every district.
2. This map is accurate as at 10 November 2026 and is based upon announcements by the Government from early 2024 and information provided by New Zealand Police, Ministry of Health, and Health NZ.
3. Access to crisis cafes is by self or whānau referral.

Crisis responses service map



	Planned	Operational
Co-response teams		
Crisis cafés		
Peers in ED		
Peer-led acute alternatives		

Region and districts	Co-response teams	Crisis cafés	Peers in ED	Peer-led acute alternatives
Northern				
Northland	Planned	Kaitaia-Operational Whangārei-Planned Kaikohe-Planned	Whangārei-Planned	
North Shore, Waitākere, and Rodney (Waitematā)	Operational		North Shore Hospital-Operational	Rodney-Operational
Auckland	Operational	Central Auckland-Operational	Auckland City Hospital-Operational	
Counties Manukau	Operational	Papatoetoe-Operational	Middlemore Hospital-Operational	Papatoetoe-Operational
Midland | Te Manawa Taki				
Waikato	Operational	Planned	Waikato Hospital-Operational	
Rotorua and Taupō (Lakes)	Planned	Planned		
Bay of Plenty	Operational	Whakatāne-Operational	Tauranga Hospital-Operational	
Taranaki	Operational	New Plymouth-Operational		
Tairāwhiti		Gisborne-Operational		
Central | Te Ikaroa				
Whanganui	Planned	Whanganui-Operational	Nelson Hospital-Operational	
Hawke's Bay	Planned	Hastings-Operational	Hawke's Bay Fallen Soldiers' Memorial Hospital-Planned	
Manawatū, Horowhenua, and Tararua (MidCentral)	Planned	Palmerston North-Operational		
Wairarapa				
Hutt Valley	Operational	Lower Hutt-Operational	Hutt Hospital-Planned	
Wellington and Kāpiti (Capital & Coast)	Operational	Wellington-Operational	Wellington Regional Hospital-Operational	
South Island | Te Wai Pounamu				
Nelson Marlborough	Planned		Nelson Hospital-Operational	
Canterbury	Operational	Christchurch-Operational	Christchurch Hospital-Operational	Christchurch-Operational
South Canterbury				
West Coast				
Otago and Southland (Southern)	Operational	Queenstown-Planned Dunedin-Operational	Dunedin Hospital-Operational	

Authored by Te Hiringa Mahara – Mental Health and Wellbeing Commission. November 2026.

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