

Six shifts to improve mental health & wellbeing outcomes

Te Hīringa Mahara has brought together a shared view of what a good mental health and addiction system looks like.

The change we want to see for an improved mental health and addiction system can be realised by implementing the six key system shifts. Realising these six shifts for the mental health and addiction system will contribute to better mental health and wellbeing outcomes for New Zealanders.

Our work to identify the shifts built on many voices, plans, strategies and recommendations since the 2018 He Ara Oranga Inquiry. All six shifts are grounded in the experience of people with living and lived experience of mental distress and addiction.

As an independent Commission we will monitor progress towards the six key shifts. In June 2025 we published the first, initial assessment against a set of performance measures that help us understand current system performance. See the: [System Performance Monitoring Report](#).

Towards an ideal mental health and addiction system that:

Shift 1

realises the potential of **lived and living experience**

Shift 2

prioritises **effective services** for people with the **highest need**

Shift 3

provides effective **primary prevention** and **early interventions**

Shift 4

provides **equitable access** to services and supports that **improve outcomes** for people

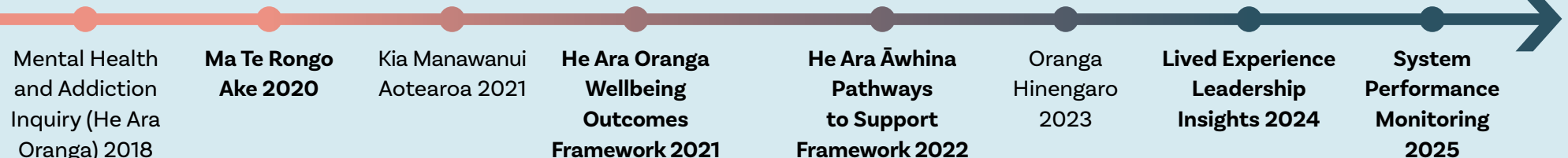
Shift 5

upholds **human-rights** based practices

Shift 6

is supported by a **workforce** with the capability, competencies, and capacity to meet needs now and in the future

How we got here



What the shifts mean – Measurable actions for each shift

Shift 1: Lived experience

- A commitment to develop and support more lived experience leadership roles
- Continued growth and investment in peer support services

Shift 2: Prioritising need

- Increased investment in Kaupapa Māori mental health and addiction services
- A cross-agency focus on rangatahi and youth mental wellbeing

Shift 3: Prevention and early intervention

- Increased investment in primary prevention and public health approaches
- Faster access to more primary options
- Actions across agencies to address social determinants

Shift 4: Equitable access to effective services

- Equity embedded across all actions
- New approaches to address unmet need
- Actions to address wait times for specialist mental health and addiction services, particularly for rangatahi and youth

Shift 5: Upholding human rights

- A commitment to ending coercive practices
- A focus on reducing stigma
- Ensuring agency of tāngata whaiora in decisions about their own care

Shift 6: Workforce

- Actions to support a skilled and sustainable workforce
- Increased diversity of the workforce

Applying the shifts

In July the Government will make available a draft Mental Health and Wellbeing Strategy. Our six shifts are the changes we want to see in a transformed mental health and addiction system, and we will advocate for their reflection in the Strategy. It's something that needs collective action.

This summary of the shifts has been prepared to ensure they are widely understood ahead of public consultation on the draft Mental Health and Wellbeing Strategy.

We are calling for a Strategy that is:



Grounded in lived experience. We want to see the voices, perspectives and aspirations of people with lived experience centred in the Strategy. We want to see genuine partnership with lived experience communities in the development and delivery of the Strategy and Implementation Plan.



Prioritises need. We want to see tailored solutions for populations that experience the greatest needs including Māori, Pacific, youth and disabled people.



Underpinned with a monitoring and learning approach that is informed by better data. We want to see a comprehensive plan to improve the collection of prevalence, experience and outcome data to support improvement.

Consultation on the draft Strategy is open from **July 2025**.

Have your say on the Ministry of Health | Manatū Hauora website:

www.health.govt.nz

About us

Te Hīringa Mahara – Mental Health and Wellbeing Commission is an independent Crown entity with oversight of the mental health and wellbeing system.

Our vision for mental health and wellbeing in Aotearoa New Zealand is Tū Tangata Mauri ora – Thriving together.