

Aide-Mémoire

Meeting with the Mental Health Foundation – 6 December 2023

Date due to MO:	6 December 2023	Action required by:	N/A
Security level:	IN CONFIDENCE	Health Report number:	H2023033439
To:	Hon Matt Doocoy, Minister for Mental Health		
Consulted:	Health New Zealand: <input type="checkbox"/> Māori Health Authority: <input type="checkbox"/>		

Contact for telephone discussion

Name	Position	Telephone
Robyn Shearer	Deputy Director-General, Clinical, Community and Mental Health Te Pou Whakakaha	s 9(2)(a)
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To: Hon Matt Doocey, Minister for Mental Health

Security level: IN CONFIDENCE

Health Report number: H2023033439

Details of meeting: 6 December 2023, 9.30am

Purpose of meeting: You are meeting with Shaun Robinson, Chief Executive of the Mental Health Foundation. Suggested talking points are appended.

Comment: **Background information on the Mental Health Foundation**

- The Mental Health Foundation of New Zealand is a charity that works towards creating a society free from discrimination, where all people enjoy positive mental health and wellbeing.
- Its work covers five main areas including suicide prevention, improving wellbeing, information and advice, campaigns and programmes, and policy and advocacy.
- Shaun has worked in social and health services for over 30 years and is open about living with bipolar disorder. He has held four other Chief Executive positions in not-for-profit organisations, addressing issues from care and protection of children to HIV and AIDS. He has served on commercial and not-for-profit boards and on a range of government working parties and advisory groups.

Health agencies' relationship with the Mental Health Foundation

- Health New Zealand has a contractual relationship with the Mental Health Foundation with funding for activities including:
 - mental health and wellbeing promotion activities and suicide prevention services
 - the psychosocial campaign "All Sorts" with time-limited funding invested as part of the response to COVID-19 and the North Island Weather Events.
- The Ministry of Health, including the Suicide Prevention Office, has a strategic relationship with the Mental Health Foundation as a key stakeholder in the mental health, addiction and suicide prevention sectors. We have regular meetings with the Mental Health Foundation.

Previous statements made by the Mental Health Foundation

- The Mental Health Foundation has been publicly supportive of the direction set by *He Ara Oranga: Report of the Government Inquiry into Mental Health and Addiction*, and of the approach outlined in *Kia Manawanui Aotearoa: Long-term pathway to mental wellbeing*.
- In particular, the Mental Health Foundation is supportive of the whole-of-government, whole-of-continuum approach to supporting mental health and wellbeing. This includes a focus on wellbeing promotion, prevention and equipping individuals and communities to look after their own wellbeing, alongside provision of services.
- While supportive of the strategic direction, the Mental Health Foundation has called for additional detail on implementation planning and delivery milestones to ensure visibility and public understanding of progress.
- The Mental Health Foundation advocates for a stronger focus on mental wellbeing promotion, including the need for a more coordinated approach across government to investment in this area as well as sustainable funding. Historically, mental wellbeing promotion has been resourced with time-limited funding, most recently as part of the psychosocial response to the North Island Weather Events.
- The Mental Health Foundation has also been supportive of the work to repeal and replace the Mental Health (Compulsory Assessment and Treatment) Act 1992 (the Mental Health Act) and the need for legislative reform.

Mental Health Foundation's General Election Statement

- The Mental Health Foundation's General Election Statement set out its vision of: *We all want Aotearoa to be a place where people enjoy a good level of mental wellbeing, where people who experience mental illness and distress are treated with dignity and given holistic, effective support to recover and regain their wellbeing.*
- It also set out 12 actions to create meaningful change across a number of areas including increasing support for children and young people, investing in community-based suicide prevention initiatives, strengthening the harm reduction approach to alcohol and other drugs, replacing the Mental Health Act, and thinking broadly about housing, education and employment as contributors to mental health and wellbeing.



Robyn Shearer

Deputy Director-General

Clinical, Community and Mental Health | Te Pou Whakakaha

Appendix: Suggested talking points

- Thank you for meeting with me today. I appreciate the ongoing leadership and advocacy role the Mental Health Foundation plays in strengthening our mental health and addiction system.
- I am aware that the Mental Health Foundation has played a key role in the psychosocial response to COVID-19 and the recent North Island weather events – delivering the “All Sorts” campaign and other supports. I’d like to express my appreciation for your work in this area.
- I would like to hear more about your priorities and your views on the priorities for improving our approach to mental health and addiction in New Zealand.
- I agree with your focus on wellbeing promotion and prevention as a key part of our continuum of care, alongside ensuring people have access to early intervention and timely services when they experience mental distress.
- Workforce is another priority for me and will be critical to ensuring people can access the supports and services they need.
- I also agree with your calls for a whole-of-government approach to mental health and addiction. I am looking forward to strengthening our cross-government approach through this new dedicated Ministerial portfolio.
- I have requested advice from officials on a range of priorities and key areas within my portfolio.
- I encourage you to continue to engage with the Ministry of Health and Health New Zealand, and I look forward to working with you to improve mental health and wellbeing in New Zealand.