

2026 GENERAL ELECTION

KEY MESSAGES

Platform Trust

Platform is calling on the next Government to take four actions that will keep people well, prevent crisis, and strengthen community mental health and addiction support.

1

Back community mental health and addiction services that keep people well



2

Invest in solutions that work



3

Protect the relationships that make recovery possible



4

Act now to prevent crisis





Back community mental health and addiction services that keep people well

“Strong communities need strong community mental health and addiction services”

- **Back** mental health and addiction NGOs that support people, whānau and communities every day
- **Back** services that reach people early and help keep them well close to home
- **Back** solutions that prevent distress from becoming crisis
- **Back** an integrated system where NGOs connect people with the support they need



Invest in solutions that work

“The smartest investment is the one that prevents crisis before it happens”

- **Invest** in services that reduce pressure on hospitals, emergency departments, police and primary care
- **Invest** in proven community, peer-led and kaupapa Māori approaches
- **Invest** in outcomes that matter such as wellbeing, housing, employment, education and whānau strength
- **Invest** with confidence: Every dollar spent delivers significant social and economic returns



***Protect* the relationships that make recovery possible**

“Recovery happens through relationships, not transactions”

- **Protect** care that is continuous, holistic and person-centred
- **Protect** the trusted relationships that support long-term recovery
- **Protect** services that walk alongside people through setbacks, progress and hope
- **Protect** this work with sustainable, long-term funding



***Act* now to prevent crisis**

“The cost of inaction is greater than the cost of investment”

- **Act** on the reality that NGOs can support a large share of people with a much smaller share of funding
- **Act** to achieve pay parity for a skilled and culturally responsible workforce
- **Act** to address funding instability that threatens essential community services
- **Act** with the sector to build a stronger and more sustainable system

Background

In 2024/2025, the NGO and community sector delivered services to 83,000 tāngata whai ora - 45% of all people seeking support for their mental health and addiction needs.¹ Despite this, our sector receives only one third of overall funding for mental health and addiction services.

Successive governments have invested significant resources into improving mental health and addiction outcomes, including recent moves by Government to strengthen its focus on mental health and addiction through the introduction of five mental health and addiction health targets and the Mental Health and Addiction Workforce Plan. While these are important signals of commitment and accountability, many people continue to face barriers accessing timely support and experience inequities that are driven by wider social and economic factors including poverty, housing insecurity, discrimination and exclusion. Addressing these challenges requires more than structural reform. It requires sustained investment in people, communities and services that provide supports, and contribution from across the entire system, including community providers, primary care, specialist services, social services, iwi, hapū, and communities themselves.²

The evidence is clear that community organisations are a fundamental part of the mental health and addiction system and hold many of the solutions. These organisations are effective because they engage people early, respond flexibly to local needs, support recovery in real-world settings, and help reduce demand on crisis, hospital and justice services.³ A stronger mental health and addiction system is one that trusts and invests in community expertise, values lived experience and supports providers to deliver innovative and culturally responsive services. At the same time, a sustainable system requires a valued and adequately resourced workforce, equitable funding arrangements, and a commitment to ensuring that no one is excluded from support because of who they are or where they live.

Platform and its members support a future where communities are trusted as partners in creating solutions, where the mental health and addiction workforce is recognised and valued, and where investment decisions are guided by evidence, equity and population need. Building on existing government commitments these actions provide a clear roadmap for the future - one built on prevention, partnership, lived experience and investment in the services that are proven to work.

¹ Te Whatu Ora | Health New Zealand PRIMHD extract dated 23 July 2026.

² The World Health Organisation (2021) recommends shifting investment towards community-based mental health services because they improve recovery, social inclusion and human rights outcomes, while reducing reliance on institutional and hospital-based care.

³ Prickett, K.C. (2026) and McGeoch et al. (2019) found that early intervention and community-based supports improve mental health outcomes for young people and can reduce demand on specialist services.

Who we are

Platform is a membership organisation and peak body representing the mental health and addiction NGO and community sector. Platform actively collaborates with a network of 6 Regional Navigate Groups covering mental health and addictions services in the community. Currently 109 NGOs are members of Platform that provide support to tāngata whaiora (people seeking wellness) including Māori and Pasifika providers, and whānau and peer-led services.

Collectively across 2024/25, approximately 83,000 people accessed mental health and addiction NGO services, making up approximately 45% of all people accessing specialist support for their mental health or addiction needs in Aotearoa (Te Whatu Ora | Health New Zealand 2026 extract). NGO and community providers also work alongside primary care teams to support over approximately 92,250 people who used Access and Choice programme, for mild to moderate mental health needs (Te Hiringa Mahara, 2022)

There is a large and diverse workforce across the broader mental health and addiction NGO and community sector with a range of staff working across different occupational groups which in 2022 consisted of about 5,820 staff fulltime equivalents (Te Pou, 2023)

References

Health New Zealand (2026) Programme for the Integration of Mental Health Data (PRIMHD) data set, sourced 23 July 2026.

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Prickett, K.C. (2026). Research review on the effectiveness of youth and rangatahi mental health early intervention and secondary prevention approaches. Te Hiringa Mahara – Mental Health and Wellbeing Commission, Wellington, New Zealand.

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