



Whakarongorau
Aotearoa//
New Zealand
Telehealth
Services//

NATIONAL TELEHEALTH SERVICE

Annual Plan 2021-2022



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Foreword from the CEO

**Kāore au e whakaae ana ki ngā mea
kāore e taea e au te whakarerekē.
Kei te whakarerekē i ngā mea
kāore i te tika ki a au.**



I am no longer accepting the things I cannot change.
I am changing the things I cannot accept.

DAME WHINA COOPER
Te Whāaea o te Motu ("Mother of the Nation")

As we enter our sixth year of the National Telehealth Service (NTS) contract, it is with immense pride and privilege that we reflect on how far the service has come in such a short time.

Despite the many challenges the health sector and nation have faced, particularly in the last 18 months, the service has adapted to the constantly changing landscape and introduced new services and capability. This is all while remaining committed to providing clinically-driven physical, mental and social health care, advice and support to whānau, communities and partners across Aotearoa.

Along with the rest of Aotearoa, NTS has had to adapt and accept the 'new normal' environment that the COVID pandemic has orchestrated. However, what hasn't changed is that our unwavering commitment since the beginning of the pandemic has been to ensure Aotearoa could continue to access health care and information, and support our valued partners, particularly when they couldn't deliver the in-person mahi they normally would.

In the 'new normal', this focus quickly saw NTS become (and continue to be) a central front door for any COVID-related health advice and information to the public (including the vaccination programme from February 2021) and operate at a pace and scale we had never imagined.

Our whānau has now expanded to more the 2,500 people across our own kaimahi and those who deliver services in partnership. This workforce expansion allowed us to introduce new roles, processes and capabilities.

We are particularly excited by the new partnerships we have developed with iwi as part of our commitment to reducing health inequities and working with kaupapa Māori, Pasifika and community-based organisations that have the experience and expertise to reach into their communities and connect with vulnerable whānau.

These partnerships will not only help connect and engage whānau, iwi and communities with key COVID and health information, these partnerships are enabling job creation, skills development and real opportunities for many people in these communities, which will provide lasting change for the individual, their whānau, their iwi and their future.

So, while the last 18 months have been challenging and far different from the landscape of 2015, we are immensely proud of the enormous effort, commitment, and resilience of the entire team to embrace and adapt to the 'new normal' while continuing to deliver exceptional service to the people of Aotearoa.

As the new year begins, NTS continues to balance service demands (both through supporting the COVID response as well as our core services) while trying to remain relevant and innovative to meet changing consumer and sector needs and ultimately, provide greater access and reach to more New Zealanders, particularly those in vulnerable communities.

The 2021/22 Annual Plan centres around four key focus areas that, over the next 12 months, will collectively see NTS deliver integrated solutions across the physical, mental and social health sectors, while continuing to provide more equitable and sustainable health outcomes for every person in Aotearoa.

To meet the uncertainties influencing our future landscape, we are committed to reducing health inequities for vulnerable populations by increasing access to and engagement with equity-centred services, advance our service solutions to improving access and outcomes while meeting the changing needs of our users, deliver sustainable clinical excellence and capability to provide exceptional care and health outcomes, and invest in strengthening our infrastructure to ensure security, continuity and integrity.

I am confident that this year's plan will continue to build on the strong foundations and capabilities developed over the past six years as well as leverage our learnings from the last 18 months to deliver more equitable and sustainable health outcomes for every person in Aotearoa in the year ahead.

With our unrelenting arotahi, manawanui and aroha for the mahi we do, I know we are ready to meet this year's challenge.

Andrew Slater
Chief Executive Officer

Ko te pae tawhiti, whāia kia tata,
Ko te pae tata, whakamaua kia tina.

Seek out the distant horizons,
while cherishing those achievements at hand.



Photo by Aaron Birch

The National Telehealth Service

In November 2015, the Ministry of Health (the Ministry) partnered with social enterprise Whakarongorau Aotearoa (owned by primary health organisations ProCare and Pegasus Health) to develop and deliver the enhanced, integrated, national telehealth service for Aotearoa.

The National Telehealth Service ('NTS' or 'service') provides the public with access to free physical, mental and social support and information, 24 hours a day, seven days a week across seven digital channels, including voice, webchat and text.

NTS is co-funded by the Ministry, the Accident Compensation Corporation (ACC), Ministry of Social Development (MSD), and the Department of Corrections. The service is underpinned by a 10-year contract that commenced in 2015 and is governed by a Service Improvement Board.

Ko wai mātou

WHO WE ARE

Whakarongorau Aotearoa (Whakarongorau), a social enterprise, is a virtual health and social services organisation with a proven record of connecting people seamlessly with care when they need it. Whakarongorau's aim is to be there when face-to-face health and social services cannot, providing consistent, clinically supported access to services for those in need, or when people are unable to access other options due to location, time of day, financial or cultural barriers.

Interacting with more than 1,000,000 New Zealanders in the last 12 months, Whakarongorau operates many of Aotearoa's national telehealth services.

Whakarongorau Aotearoa works collaboratively with Government and other health partners to understand what problems we can solve, how we can reach more people and respond better, smarter, and faster by delivering deep, cross-functional service integration.

Whakarongorau has the established and unique capability to deliver the NTS contract through providing:

- A unique service in Aotearoa with virtual clinical (physical, mental, and social health) expertise available 24/7
- Deep contact centre and digital expertise, offering robust and reliable systems, and the ability to work across multiple channels (e.g., social media) to reflect the changing needs of society and those who may prefer non-phone channels of interaction
- Strong management and clinical oversight, assuring the quality of the services we offer and the reliability of the counselling and advice irrespective of time of day or which staff member responds
- Existing national directory of services, giving frontline staff access to available support organisations in every region in Aotearoa

- Offering end-to-end support across our network of services – no matter which service they enter through. Where a caller may need mental health or social support in addition to physical care, they can be seamlessly connected with our other services to ensure they are fully supported, and their holistic needs are met
- A network of services that includes mental health, family violence and sexual harm specialist services
- A culturally diverse workforce, offering both culturally appropriate and language support, including Te Reo and Pasifika languages. We also have access to interpreters 24/7 for a wide range of languages – including sign language (limited hours) – allowing them to work with people from a diverse range of backgrounds, in their chosen language
- An existing, robust infrastructure and comprehensive Privacy and Security policies, procedures and systems.

Thirteen clinical teams work around the clock to provide people with the best quality telehealth advice and care, delivered by registered nurses, mental health nurses, emergency triage nurses, general practitioners, mental health and addictions advisers and professionals, service and support advisors, poisons officers, sexual harm and family violence professionals, life mentors, and non-clinical advisors as part of our COVID response.

Our whānau includes more than 1,300 kaimahi, with a further 1,200 doing their mahi as part of our Partner Call Centre model. They are based in contact centres in Auckland, Wellington, and Christchurch as well as working from their home offices, from Kaitaia to Bluff.

Ō mātou hoa pakihī

OUR PARTNERS

NTS is co-funded by the Ministry of Health (the Ministry), the Accident Compensation Corporation (ACC), the Ministry of Social Development (MSD), and the Department of Corrections.

Ministry of Health

The Ministry works across the health sector to deliver better health outcomes for New Zealanders, through implementation of the New Zealand Health Strategy and achievement of the Government's priorities.

The Ministry works closely with agencies across Government to improve social outcomes for vulnerable children and other population groups at risk of poor outcomes. This includes sharing and using health data (including within the Integrated Data Infrastructure) to support cross-government priorities such as Whakamaua Māori Health Plan, Ola Manuia Pacific Health and Wellbeing Plan.

ACC

ACC's vision is to "create a unique partnership with every New Zealander, improving their quality of life by minimising the incidence and impact of injury". This is achieved through pursuit of three outcomes:

- Reduce the incidence and severity of injury
- Rehabilitate injured people more effectively
- Ensure Aotearoa has an affordable and sustainable scheme.

Ministry of Social Development

The Ministry's key purpose is to "help New Zealanders to be safe, strong and independent". The key outcomes it wants to achieve are:

- New Zealanders get the support they require
- New Zealanders are resilient and live in inclusive and supportive communities
- New Zealanders participate positively in society and reach their potential.

Department of Corrections / Ara Poutama Aotearoa

The goal for the Department of Corrections is to “keep our communities safe and changing lives”. Its strategy focuses on six key areas for change:

- Partnership and leadership
- Humanising and healing
- Whānau
- Incorporating a Te Ao Māori worldview
- Whakapapa
- Foundations for participation.

Growing atu hoa

Whakarongorau believes in developing strong partnerships to collectively deliver the best solutions for Aotearoa, recognising that we can do more together.

In addition to the NTS atu hoa, Whakarongorau has also connected with trusted, experienced and values-based providers that can provide expanded capability, diversity, and expertise (both clinical and local) to the service over the long-term.

Whakarongorau partners with other government agencies and organisations to deliver additional services and clinical support, including the Ministry of Social Development, the Department of Corrections, the National Screening Unit, Plunket, Immunisation Advisory Centre, District Health Boards and Primary Health Organisations (GPs), Women’s Refuge, Presbyterian Support Network, Ambulance and Police services and the New Zealand Defence Force.

Ō mātou moemoeā

OUR VISION

The NTS vision reflects the collaborative, forward-focused approach to the health of Aotearoa:

Deliver care, support, and advice to people in Aotearoa to positively impact and improve their wellbeing and health outcomes through phone and digital channels.

The service achieves this by:

- Providing access to health advice and information to populations with otherwise low health-system engagement, improving outcomes as a result of accessing services earlier
- Delivering the right care at the right time by the right person in the right place
- Reducing acute and unplanned care, improving self-care, support for clients, and health literacy
- Building and maintaining public trust and confidence in the service
- Integrating with local, regional and national health, social and injury services
- Being adaptable, flexible and evolving over time to meet the changing needs of consumers and technology, and enabling additional services and government agencies to utilise its infrastructure and relationships, as required
- Having a strong focus on continuous quality improvement
- Taking responsibility for the clinical quality of all the services NTS delivers. Clinical governance mechanisms, including structures and processes, have been established enabling NTS to provide high quality, current and accountable telehealth services, through telephone and digital channels
- Supporting increased use of self-care, care at home or in the community with the same or better outcomes
- Accessing, using and contributing to shared patient records that will be viewed and updated by those providing care or advice
- Providing prompt assistance with public health incidents and national disasters
- Promoting evidence-based approaches, activities, information and resources that contribute to protecting and improving the health and wellbeing of New Zealanders.

Our purpose and objective

NTS, as a key player in the broader health and social system, is guided by the Ministry's priorities and supports achievement of the related key objectives of its funding partners.

The overarching purpose and objectives of NTS are to:

- Be a trusted part of the health care system that offers a confidential, reliable and consistent source of advice on health care in order to enable consumers to manage their health care in an appropriate manner
- Facilitate the right person delivering the right care at the right time and right place
- Increase cost-effectiveness in the health care sector and reduce demand on other health services
- Have the flexibility to adapt and develop over time to meet the changing needs of users and technology.

Our partnership values

Based on the principle of 'pokohiwi ki pokohiwi' (shoulder to shoulder), the collaborative commitment, partnership and expertise shared by government agencies and Whakarongorau has been a catalyst for opportunities to integrate care services across the health continuum.

The following values guide the service and how we work with partners:

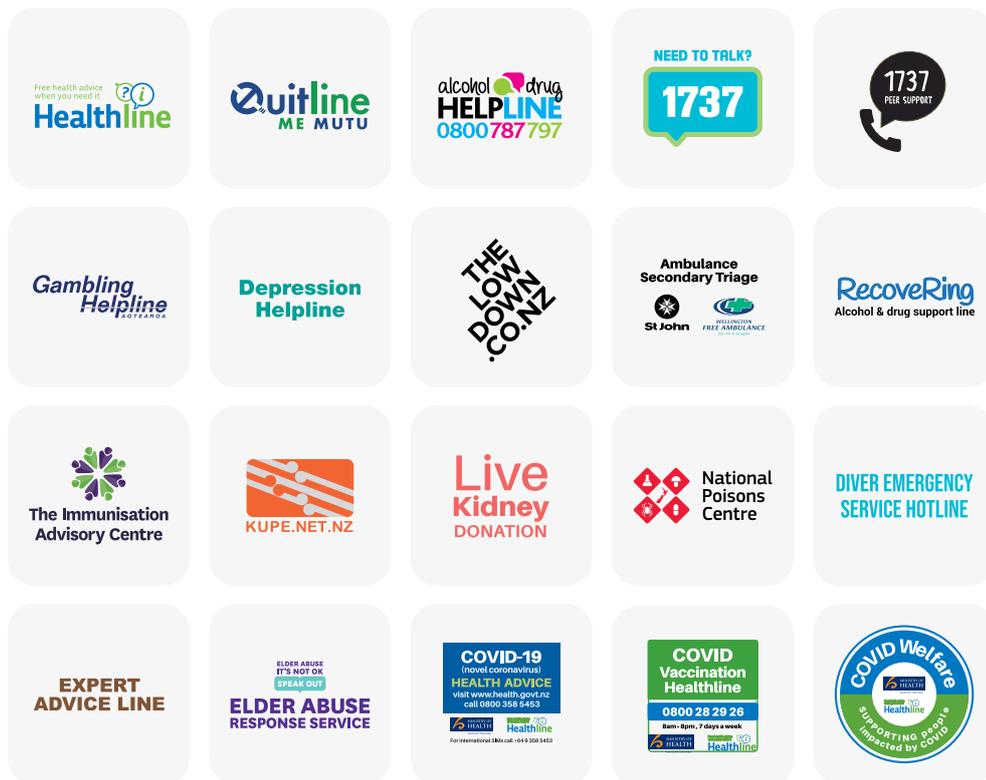
- **Service user focus:** our decisions will be based on what is best for – and what works for – New Zealanders
- **Partnership:** work together as partners in areas of mutual interest, proactively seeking input, valuing the expertise and opinions of others. We will encourage innovation and keep an open mind
- **Good faith:** to, at all times, act openly with honesty, trust and sincerity, and treat information provided by others with care and in confidence
- **No surprises:** provide early warning to our partners on matters that may require a response, may be contentious in any way, or may attract attention from shared stakeholders, media or the public.

Ā mātou mahi

WHAT WE DO

NTS enables people to access health information, support and advice from trained health advisors and professionals through physical and virtual services on an integrated platform. Using a range of communication channels, people can receive the right care at the right time and in the right place.

Most services fit under the umbrellas of our Health Services (including COVID) and our Mental Health Services teams.



A description of each service is provided in Appendix A.

Whakarongorau Aotearoa also runs several other services independent of the NTS service:

GP AFTER HOURS	After hours support for over 600 primary care practices around Aotearoa
DHB MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES	Registered mental health nurses support 12 local DHB mental health teams by answering their calls when they are not available to provide 24/7 support to those in mental health distress
SCREENING PROGRAMMES	The National Coordination Centre supports both the National Bowel Screening Programme (including driving Active Follow Ups with priority population groups) and the National Cervical Service Programme Register
PUĀWAITANGA	Launching in October 2018 in partnership with MSD, Puāwaitanga is a phone and web-based service providing mental health and addiction services for people with mild to moderate symptoms of stress, depression, anxiety and related issues. The service is available to all MSD clients (by case manager referral or self-referral) and by referral through contracted agencies, such as Canterbury DHB, universities of Auckland and Otago, Abuse in Care - Royal Commission of Inquiry, and Surf Lifesaving
WHĪTIKI TAUĀ	A video-based mentoring service where mentors provide phone and video mentoring for the Ministry of Social Development's Mana in Mahi young clients who may need some extra support to reach their work goals
FAMILY AND SEXUAL HARM SERVICES	In February 2018, the Safe to Talk national sexual harm service was launched in partnership with MSD as Whakarongorau's first social health service. The team was extended in March 2020 to include a range of Family Violence services in partnership with MSD, Presbyterian Support Northern / Shine. The service was further extended in June 2021 to provide after-hours support for Women's Refuge, which now has the specialist team operating 24/7.

Ngā mahi i whakatutukihia 2020-21

OUR 2020-21 PERFORMANCE

In the last 12 months, the National Telehealth Service (NTS) had:

A total of

733,140*
contacts answered

in the year more than **8,000** contacts above forecast in the NTS annual plan

THOSE CONTACTS
CAME FROM

583,665
people

(1 in 9 people in Aotearoa)

IN ADDITION TO THE
ANSWERED CONTACTS,

75,000+
outbound contacts

were also made across the NTS services in the year

A FURTHER

794,239
contacts

were answered across our three COVID services

With the addition of COVID contacts, taking the total contacts answered through NTS services during FY21 to

over 1.5 million contacts*

In spite of the exponential increase in demand during the year,

97%
of calls

were answered within 10 minutes

IN ADDITION

307
formal compliments

were received from service users

NEARLY

10,000
people engaged in co-design

activities and responded to our experience forums

343 service user complaints

were received which were all investigated and contributed to our quality improvement programme

932 break glass events

occurred over the year

9,383 "at risk" contacts

were supported in the last 12 months (up **40%** on the previous year).

**NO SAC 1 OR SAC 2 EVENTS WERE RECORDED OVER THE YEAR

*Note that aside from where specified, all numbers exclude contacts received through the COVID-19 line.

**The Severity Assessment Code (SAC) is a numerical rating (1-4) which defines the severity of an adverse event and as a consequence, the required level of reporting and investigation to be undertaken for the event https://www.hqsc.govt.nz/assets/Reportable-Events/Publications/National_Adverse_Events_Policy_2017/SAC_rating_and_triage_tool_WEB_FINAL.pdf

At a key service level:

THE **HEALTH SERVICES**
TEAM ANSWERED

397,806
Healthline contacts

from **312,317** people

THE **MENTAL HEALTH**
TEAM ANSWERED

206,278
contacts

supporting **110,701** people

AS PART OF THIS, THE **1737**
SERVICE ANSWERED OVER

131,619
contacts

supported **63,275** people
in distress. This is an annual
growth of **7%** in contacts and
includes over **50,000** text
exchanges

THE **DEPRESSION**
SERVICE ANSWERED

50,568
contacts

supporting more than
29,131 people in distress

THE **ALCOHOL AND OTHER**
DRUGS TEAM ANSWERED

19,028
contacts

supporting **14,894**
people with addiction
within their family

THE **GAMBLING** TEAM
ANSWERED

5,063
contacts

supporting **3,401** people
dealing with the effects of
problem gambling

THE **QUITLINE** TEAM
ANSWERED OVER

46,253
contacts

supporting **27,929** people
to start their quit journey,
with **23%** reporting they
were smoke free after four
weeks

THE **POISONS** TEAM
ANSWERED OVER

25,454
people

with **76%** of contacts
requiring no further
medical treatment or
self-care information

THE **EMERGENCY TRIAGE**
NURSES TRIAGED OVER

45,127
incidents

redirecting **46%** of contacts
to non-emergency services,
which helps keep our
hospitals and ambulances
available for emergencies

THE **EMERGENCY MENTAL HEALTH RESPONSE** TEAM TRIAGED ALMOST

11,000 contacts from Police and Ambulance to support **7,504**
people in social and psychological distress.

Refer to Appendix B for full end of year performance for the financial year ending 30 June 2021.

Our whakapapa

CONNECTING OUR PAST AND OUR FUTURE

Homecare Medical began in 1994 as the after-hours nurse triage division of Auckland Primary Health Organisation, ProCare Health. Homecare Medical nurses supported Aotearoa general practices by answering their phones and supporting their patients when they were not available. In 2014, ProCare Health and Canterbury Primary Health Organisation, Pegasus Health, formed a partnership, and the organisation was renamed Homecare Medical Limited.

In 2013, an opportunity was identified to initially consolidate seven health-funded helpline services under one provider, saving almost \$100 million over ten years. A comprehensive open procurement process from 2013 to 2015 led to one provider being contracted. In September 2015, the contract was awarded to Homecare Medical, and the National Telehealth Service (NTS) was established.

NTS was co-designed with the sector to enable service components, services and agencies to change over time, 'sharing' the capabilities of the funded platform with the broader sector for the benefit of end user. The existing helpline services were successfully transitioned from the former individual providers and went live on 1 November 2015.



Our new name

In the last 12 months, our name has been changed from Homecare Medical to Whakarongorau Aotearoa. The purpose driving the change was to find a name that would better describe the work we do and reflect our commitment to equity.

Whakarongorau is a word to describe the many ways to listen – whakarongo (to listen) and ā-rongorau (a modern word for multimedia, the many ways of communication or media). It is derived from the old Māori word whakarongorua (to listen with great intent and purpose). The English version of our name is New Zealand Telehealth Services.

Our role

The NTS agreement differs from usual Ministry contracting models in both the contract length and the open and agile partnership. The Ministry and funders work collaboratively with Whakarongorau to develop and shape the services in partnership.

Whakarongorau remains strongly committed to partnering with the Government to co-design and deliver a National Telehealth Service that better meets people's immediate needs, supports self-management, and integrates with the wider health system. This continues to be enabled through a strong, transparent working relationship, and supports continuous transformation, service improvement and world leading innovation.

FROM



TO



Over recent years, NTS has also played a key role in supporting the health sector through many unplanned events, including the Christchurch terror attacks, the Kaikoura earthquakes, annual flu seasons, the measles epidemic in 2019, the Whakaari explosion and most recently, has been at the forefront of providing the telehealth response to the global COVID pandemic.

These events have been pivotal in demonstrating how vital NTS has become in supporting the people of Aotearoa, the wider health system and the Government in quickly responding to the needs of the nation.

It is this speed, agility and innovative approach that has changed the size, capability, and dynamics of the organisation and the mahi we now deliver. Our whānau (and waka) has exponentially grown over the last 18 months, allowing NTS to deliver scalability, new capability, and develop innovative solutions at pace to ensure we continue to provide our full breath of physical, mental and social support to whānau, communities and partners across Aotearoa.

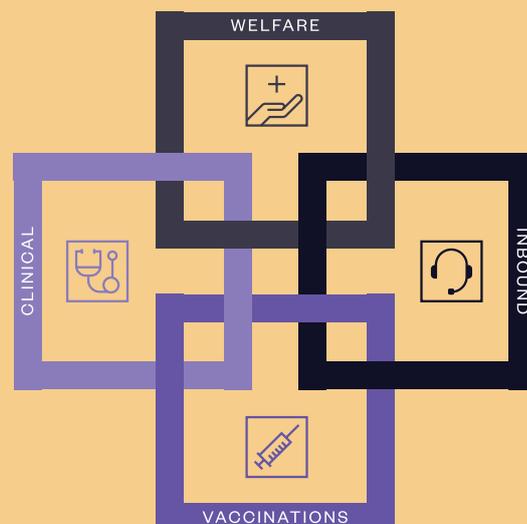
Learning and growing from these experiences has allowed NTS and Whakarongorau to build on the strength of our past and pave a new future for telehealth services to help every person in Aotearoa access the health care they need, when they need it.

NTS COVID Response

The NTS COVID response began on 7 February with the establishment of a dedicated phone service available 24/7 providing a central front door for COVID-related health advice and information to the public.

The COVID 0800 number has been widely promoted in all Ministry of Health (Ministry), media and wider government communications about COVID-19 since the beginning of the pandemic.

Over time, this service has extended to management of people and data crossing the border, support with contact tracing as required, provision of mental health support, advice to clinicians, supporting the national vaccination programme and people in self-isolation. Further extension is intended to provide an additional focus on priority and vulnerable populations.



COVID Healthline (Inbound)

The COVID Healthline call team handles all **inbound calls** from service users who have any queries or are seeking information related to COVID, or inbound calls from those service users who believe they have been in contact with someone who has COVID.

Welfare

The Welfare team covers the **COVID Contact Tracing Process**. This consists of calls informing a service user that they are a Close Contact and will need to self-isolate for 14 days and calls for daily health and wellbeing check on those in isolation. These calls focus on ensuring people understand why they need to isolate, the rules for isolation, and making sure they and their whānau have what they need while isolating.

Vaccinations

Our Vaccinations team provides support in making and managing **bookings, general advice**, and reports adverse events and clinical issues for Aotearoa's vaccination programme against COVID. It also runs various outbound campaigns designed to increase participation and decrease barriers to vaccination.

Clinical

The clinical team are qualified nurses and doctors who provide **clinical support** with detailed questions on COVID exposure, appropriate ways to isolate if they suspect they have COVID, support with COVID symptoms, and any complex advice relating to whether someone is eligible or appropriate to receive a COVID vaccination.

Our commitment to equity

Whakarongorau Aotearoa's commitment to understanding and improving mana taurite (equal status) starts with the understanding of self and how we, as health professionals, think and behave each minute of each day to serve the health needs for Aotearoa.

As kairahi in the hauora sector, Whakarongorau is mindful of an approach to mana taurite that is strengths-based. We actively remind ourselves of what mana taurite needs to look like for whānau, hapū and iwi Māori, as we provide added care and support for whānau to achieve the same outcomes as for everyone else.

Growing our reach and engagement with priority populations underpins everything we do, and the impact of this equity focus has translated into greater reach and engagement with these communities month on month. The importance of what our actions mean for all communities in our population, in particular what they mean in order to meet the unmet needs for Māori, is understood and acknowledged.

It is also clear there is no one single approach that will help deliver these strategic results, and this is weaved into every part of our organisation and through every service, from co-designing with Māori and Pacific Peoples first, to driving cultural diversity across our frontline teams to deliver culturally appropriate services, to prioritising our marketing spend.

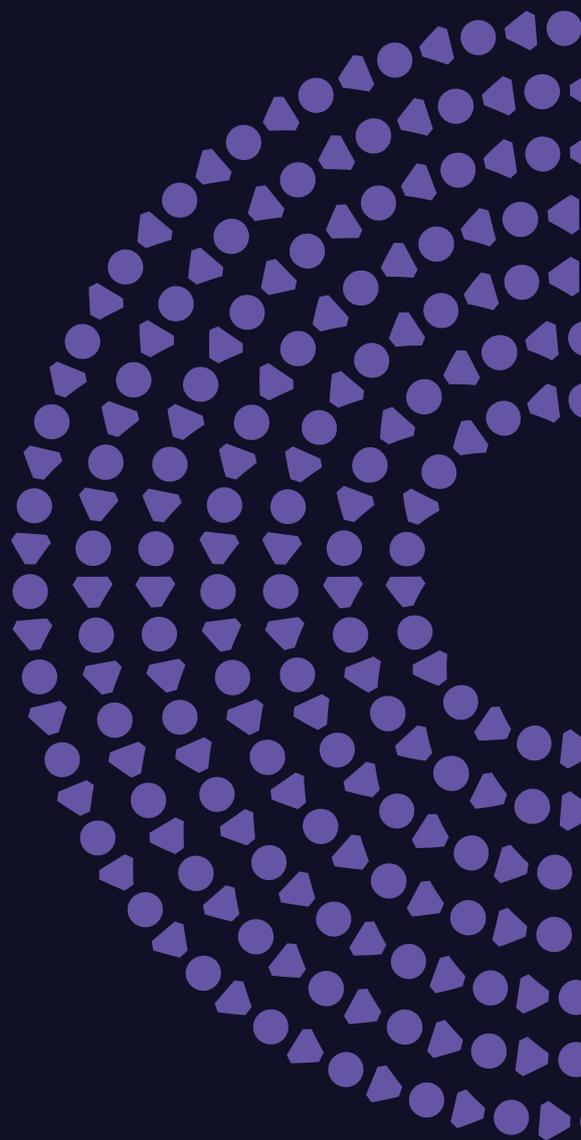
A key strategic priority for Whakarongorau is to directly influence and drive better health and wellbeing outcomes for priority populations, disadvantaged people and vulnerable communities. Our equity action plan is about ensuring every day we take the actions we need to ensure that we are relentlessly focussed on achieving better outcomes.

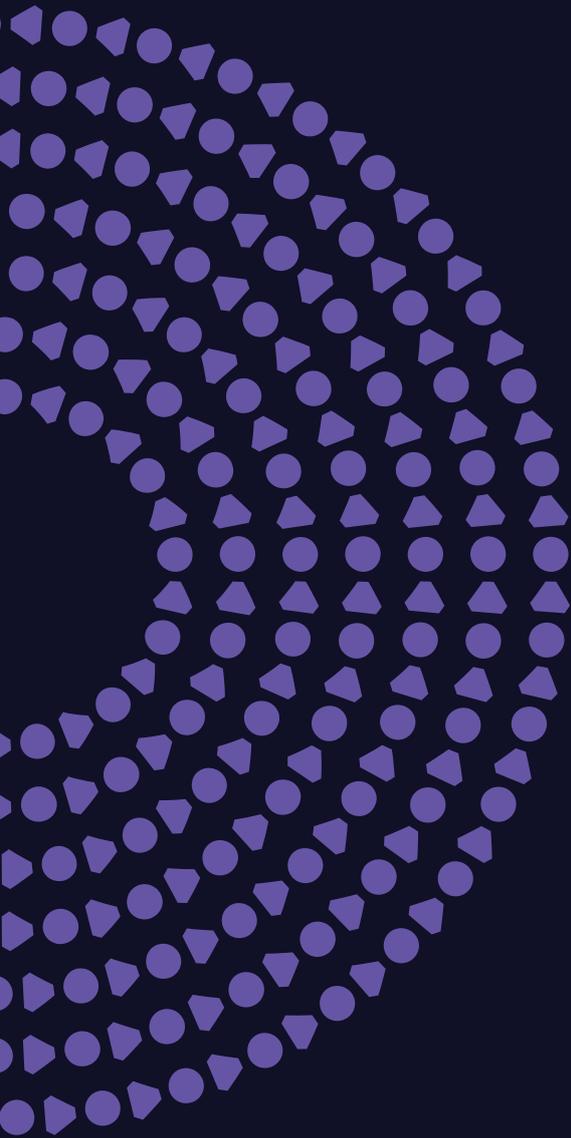
In the last 12 months, Whakarongorau has made strong advancements in embedding this strategic priority, including renaming the organisation to *Whakarongorau Aotearoa* (meaning 'many ways to listen') or New Zealand Telehealth Services, which better describes the work we do and reflects our commitment to equity.

Internally, we continue to build a culturally appropriate workforce, delivering our cultural diversity programme – Tikanga – to grow cultural and language diversity across all our services, and partnering with iwi to deliver equity-led partner call centres to support and deliver services closer to local communities.

Continuing this commitment to equity, the service is underpinned by equity, valuing the complexity of relationships within a whānau, acknowledging the role of community and iwi, and recognising the significance of these relationships to either help or hinder a person's wellbeing. This approach will enable whānau to decide and lead their own journey, including what services and support they want, in order to attain the safest outcomes for all whānau members.

Embedding and extending our cultural awareness, capabilities and reach into local iwi and communities is our Chief Customer Experience Officer, Mary Losé. Mary is Rereahu ki Ngāti Maniapoto/Ha'apai and brings unique cultural insights and mahi to build connections and partnerships in Māori and Pacific communities and organisations to ensure all Māori and Pacific Peoples know that all our help lines are free, offer a caring health 'front door' they can call anytime to get good health advice, and provide seamless, local connections to other support if needed, in a way that is culturally sound.





2021-2022 Plan

Tā mātou pae tawhiti

2021-2022 PLAN

This plan provides a comprehensive outline of the key areas the NTS and the Ministry plan to focus their efforts on over the 2022 financial year.

Details of the 2021-22 work programme have been determined through a collaborative effort from all co-funding partners, who are committed to achieving alignment and advancement of the Government's health and wellbeing priorities.

It centres around four key focus areas that will collectively enable NTS to deliver integrated solutions across the physical, mental and social health sectors, while continuing to provide more equitable and sustainable health outcomes for every New Zealander.

- **Achieve equitable health and disability outcomes**
- **Enhance whānau-centred services**
- **Strengthen an integrated, connected, innovative system**
- **Provide sustainable and safe services.**



The pou

Through the development of this year's annual plan, it is also acknowledged that multiple health sector reviews* have been released in the last 12 months, all of which have helped guide and realign the 2021-22 plan with four new pou (pillars).

The new hexagon model represents the interconnectedness required to deliver our plan and our commitment to supporting the priorities of the sector, with our pou centring around:

Manaakitanga

Centred in equitable outcomes for every person, whānau and iwi of Aotearoa

Mahi tahi

Highly interdependent and collaborative

Kotahitanga

Uniting and integrating across physical, mental and social sectors

Refer to Appendix C for the full 2021-22 work programme and identified initiatives.

*Health & Disability System Review / Ola Manuia Pacific Health and Wellbeing Action Plan / Kia Manawanui Aotearoa Mental Health Strategy / Whakamaui Maori Health Plan / Pae tū, pae ora, Healthy Futures

Achieve equitable health and disability outcomes

This focus aims to reduce health inequities for priority populations by increasing access to and engagement with equity-centred services. It prioritises advancing NTS's initiatives and capabilities to enable an integrated, transformative and sustainable approach to New Zealand's most inequitable areas of health.

NTS will achieve this through:

- **Growing tikanga** – strengthening our own internal cultural awareness and connecting information and people to inform and transfer knowledge to develop innovative ways to improve equity and prioritise equity engagement across all areas of our operations
- **Iwi partnerships** – partnering with iwi to deliver services for Māori, by Māori, closer to Māori and the communities they live in
- **Māori health workforce** – continuing to grow and embed student placement programmes with Whitireia tertiary education centre to support and encourage Māori and Pacific students in developing their health qualifications, and building a potential future health workforce pipeline
- **Equity-first** – growing and supporting an inclusive workforce, which represents all peoples in Aotearoa, and expanding our bi-cultural, bi-lingual approach across all NTS services and channels
- **Measure the impact** – optimising analytics capability and developing qualitative and quantitative metrics to accurately and effectively measure the impact on improving equity access and overall health outcomes for priority populations.



What success looks like:

Working collaboratively across the health ecosystem to support delivery of the Whakamaui Māori Health Action Plan, NTS is focused on improving access, choice and health outcomes for Māori, Pacific people, and people living in vulnerable communities. This is achieved by acknowledging that these communities may benefit from different approaches to enabling greater access, engagement, and experience of care for all people and whānau.

NTS has strong partnerships alongside iwi, whānau, and community to co-design solutions, use data to support decision-making, drive innovation, and lay the foundation to connect communities for better health outcomes.

With sustainable student placement programmes through Whitireia, NTS is supporting the development of the Māori and Pacific health workforce while building a future pipeline of kaimahi that represents all peoples of Aotearoa and delivers greater cultural capability and community matching to priority populations.

Information is readily available and consistently utilised to reduce and remove health inequities and barriers to access, drive engagement and inform service enhancements and innovation. Whānau, iwi and Māori organisations have access to powerful insights and data to transform local services and improve health outcomes and wellbeing for individuals, whānau and communities.

Enhance whānau-centred services

This focus ensures that all NTS services continue to advance, with more services designed around people's needs, demographics and innovative technologies.

NTS will achieve this through:

- **Mental Health pathways** – develop Mental Health & Addictions care pathways to identify, integrate and deliver user continuity across virtual, primary and secondary services to provide a more linked up, informed experience and ultimately, greater support for those most in need
- **Digitised models of care** – leverage digital infrastructure and channels to deliver new Healthline models of care and improve earlier engagement with the health system
- **Gambling partnerships** – explore partnerships with face-to-face providers to pilot virtual, full intervention gambling support by leveraging the Puāwaitanga platform, particularly for remote or under-resourced regions
- **Quitline enhancements** – continue delivery of Quitline enhancements, focusing on vaping support, improving Māori/Pacific success rates, website optimisation, and increasing engagement and referrals with the sector
- **Immunisation programme** – explore opportunities to work with the Immunisation Team and Immunisation Advisory Centre (IMAC) to develop scripts, define any system and data requirements and identify key referral pathways to support the immunisation programme
- **Nationalise Whīteki Tauā** – in partnership with MSD, roll out the youth mentoring programme nationwide for all 18–24-year-olds to access
- **Empowering disabled communities** – embed channel capability to better support service accessibility for disabled communities, across physical, mental and social telehealth services
- **ACC opportunities** – explore future opportunities with ACC, including mechanisms to appropriately refer and track injury-related patient pathways across all our services, leverage services to meet capacity gaps (e.g., sensitive claims), and tools for telehealth services to access (pre) claim numbers through telehealth services.



What success looks like:

Sophisticated digital platforms and service improvement programmes enable NTS to bring relevant services and innovative tools to market quickly, delivering integrated experiences and efficiencies that enable cross-sector care pathways and information flow. Leveraging our digital infrastructure, NTS has identified and delivered additional service channels that meet changing health and vulnerable community needs.

The new digitised Healthline model engages service users that are low users of the health system, and resolve their issues at point of first contact, including dispensing medication, booking appointments and integrating with the new platform. Our whānau-based approach allows Healthline to stand alongside or behind community members and enable group conversations and support plans.

These platforms embrace and promote te reo Māori and Pacific languages as well as those people with disabilities, to increase awareness and engagement with vulnerable communities and make it as easy as possible for all people and their whānau to access and connect with their health and wellbeing.

NTS continues to actively contribute to successfully achieving key government action plans, including the National Immunisation Programme, Smokefree 2025, Whakamaua Māori Health Action Plan, and the Kia Manawanui Aotearoa Mental Health Strategy.

Partnering with people, community and our partners to collectively support communities' aspirations is fundamental to our success. Our continuous improvement programmes are built in full collaboration with our key stakeholders, understanding the changing needs of their business while sharing in our commitment to deliver better continuity of care while reducing inefficiencies. These programmes aim to balance our focus on strengthening core foundations while leveraging emerging technologies and data-driven insights to deliver new opportunities.

Strengthen with integrated, connected, innovative systems

This focus aims to strengthen infrastructure and software, optimise innovative, integrated platforms and connected data ecosystems to enable high-quality insights and decision making.

NTS will achieve this through:

- **Platform upgrades** – automate, simplify, and digitise processes with more innovative, leading cloud-based infrastructure and software solutions. This includes implementing sophisticated data platforms capable of delivering key data insights into patient journeys and engaging in collaborative discussions on a future National Health Information Platform
- **Workforce mobility** – create workforce mobility for Emergency Triage and Earlier Mental Health Response services by defining and enabling secure infrastructure to be used inside and outside of the Emergency communication centres
- **Prioritising privacy** – complete Privacy Impact Assessment and any policy updates to ensure the strength of our service user data and privacy frameworks are maintained at all times
- **Identity management** – develop identity management framework to connect, link and integrate data insights to drive better health outcomes and user engagement
- **Digital support** – continue web and digital support for pending Ministry programmes – National Screening Unit (inc. Cervical and Breast Screening) / End of Life Choice / Palliative Care / Abortion Law Reform / Immunisation.



What success looks like:

Every door truly becomes the right door for our service users, who can be correctly identified as they move between our services and channels. Sophisticated, innovative systems enable data integration and identification, meaning the team can understand and address caller needs quickly, and linking through the NHI, data and insights can be aligned across the sector. Ultimately, our users receive more valued experiences, call time is saved as data is already collected, our processes are simplified, and data is aligned with the future national health platform.

Greater engagement and flexible technology with our emergency service teams delivers stronger referral pathways and enhanced continuity to meet the needs of those seeking emergency or crisis support.

Robust governance, privacy and quality assurance defines our clinical excellence while the integrity, continuity, interoperability, and performance of our systems provides confidence in our digital infrastructure and security mechanisms.

This is complemented by our connected data ecosystem and advanced data capabilities enabling high-quality insights and decision-making, resulting in new value that can be delivered to our stakeholders.

These successes have resulted in NTS being a key contributor to national architecture design that enables data translation to knowledge and connectivity across the health ecosystem.

Provide sustainable and safe services

This focus prioritises delivery of consistent, sustainable clinical excellence and capability (learning from our COVID response) to provide exceptional care and health outcomes at all times.

NTS will achieve this through:

- **Expanding clinical workforce** – leverage medical capability for funded GP (or equivalent) workforce to internally deliver COVID clinical support, medical exemptions and clinical escalations, with additional opportunities identified and agreed with Clinical Governance Committee
- **COVID operationalisation** – operationalise the COVID services and processes while building a sustainable, flexible workforce to support across the COVID and NTS health services, where appropriate
- **Future kaimahi** – formalise tertiary placement programme to support development of the clinical workforce and build future workforce pipelines
- **Evidence-led decisions** – continue delivering research insights and publications to support clinical research strategies
- **Open source** – explore opening Poisons TOXIN database to the sector to enable greater support for low acuity toxicology consults.



What success looks like:

Our clinical capability has extended to an in-house GP/senior clinical team, initially delivering clinical support, advice, and escalations but with a future roadmap to include virtual consultations (where required) and the provision of over the counter and some prescription medicines.

At the other end of the spectrum, supporting the development of the next generation of clinicians ensures our future kaimahi strategy is driven by understanding and adapting to emerging demands and capabilities, and building those capabilities through a future-focused workforce pipeline.

With the demands of COVID stabilising, resource and capabilities developed through the response have been operationalised and leveraged across all NTS services.

NTS's clinical expertise is enhanced by its dedicated research capability and collaboration with global research partners, delivering evidence-based insights to improve patient experiences and outcomes. This has positioned NTS as an indispensable clinical leader across the physical and mental health sectors.

2021-22 innovation initiatives

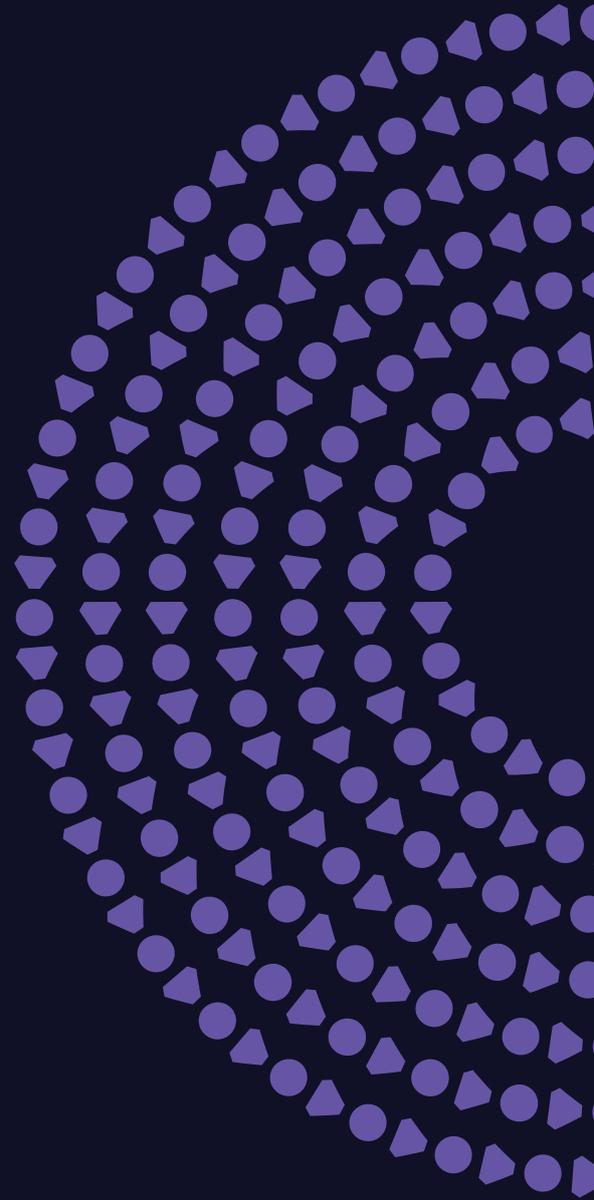
NTS continues to focus on driving health innovation, particularly technology-enabled solutions, to deliver high-quality, multi-disciplined, clinically driven programmes that adapt with the changing needs and expectations of the population. The NTS Innovation Fund has been set up to support these innovative service enhancements and developments.

As at 30 June 2021, the innovation fund balance was \$1,000,000.

Use of the fund requires the Designated Representative and Whakarongorau Aotearoa Board to agree and approve the funding. When funding requirements and project briefs are established, formal requests for innovation funding will be made to the Whakarongorau Board and Ministry of Health.

As part of the FY22 Annual Plan, eight initiatives that have a future-focused, innovative lens have been identified and have been approved for funding through the Innovation Fund.

Refer to Appendix C for the identified 2021-22 initiatives to deliver innovation and service enhancements.



2021-21

Measures

of Success

Forecasted contacts by service

Our service contact forecasts are based on current levels of demand, our planned marketing activity, as well as potential impact from upcoming market and Ministry opportunities.

In the year ahead, given the ongoing impact of COVID-19 and potential movements in the market and health sector, most services are forecasted to remain flat or a small uplift in the year ahead.

NTS CONTACTS By service line	FY 2020-2021 Annual forecast	FY 2020-2021 Actual	FY 2021-2022 Annual forecast
Demand driven service lines			
Health Services	359,097	397,806	359,097
Mental Health & Addictions	223,187*	206,278	200,196
Quitline	55,102	46,253	55,102
Poisons	24,557	25,454	24,557
Capacity referral services			
Emergency Triage	52,479	46,395	52,479
Earlier Mental Health Response	10,637	10,954	11,701
Unplanned health events	20,000	0	20,000
Unforecastable volumes			
Health System	12,500	0	12,500
Mental Health & Addictions	5,000	0	5,000
Population Health	2,500	0	2,500

*Includes the Mental Health & Addiction psychosocial uplift

Other measures of NTS performance will be developed and monitored by NTS during the year, including delivering to internal equity goals, driving engaging digital interactions as well as excelling in clinical quality management.



Photo by Thomas Rose



Workforce by service type

NTS is led by an experienced and knowledgeable board of seven, a passionate and innovative chief executive and a well-rounded leadership team. Since NTS is dealing with the health of people every day, our Clinical Governance Committee ensures every interaction is clinically safe, effective, patient-centred, culturally sensitive, equitable and timely.

Thirteen clinical frontline teams work around the clock to deliver our telehealth services and provide the best quality health advice and care. Our teams include registered nurses, mental health nurses, emergency triage nurses, general practitioners, mental health and addictions advisers and professionals, service and support advisors, poisons officers, sexual harm and family violence professionals, life mentors, and non-clinical advisors as part of our COVID response.

In the last two years, our kaimahi has quadrupled in size in response to COVID and sector demands, to over 1,300 people within Whakarongorau with a further 1,200 people across our Partner Call Centres.

Operationalising the plan

Considerations

In preparing this year's annual NTS plan, a high-level, preliminary risk assessment has been undertaken to compare key initiatives against the Whakarongorau Aotearoa risk register.

The likelihood of increases in the risk position is, on the outset, deemed to be low. However, considerations have been identified in the following areas:

- **Workforce pressures**, including pay parity, workforce shortages, changing climate and retention
- **Workforce health and safety** employee wellbeing and work from home safety
- **Market risk** as levels of uncertainty relating to COVID, the health sector (and Health Reform), government leadership and the economy remain heightened
- **Execution risk**, through project dependencies, prioritisation and fatigue
- **Reputational risk**, including negative media and the high visibility of COVID response
- **Cyber risk**, including risk to or failure of data, platform and digital asset management
- **Demonstrating value** of the NTS contract across the greater health and social systems.

Individual risks will be assessed and addressed with each key initiative. Refer to Appendix E for the high-level risk register.

Continuous improvement

It is acknowledged that initiatives may continue to evolve throughout the year to maintain momentum and capture opportunities as both sector priorities and technology innovations emerge, while always remaining within the context of the overall agreed strategic priorities.

This is particularly dependent on the trajectory and longevity of the COVID response, and work programmes that are still to emerge from the Health and Disability System Review.

If necessary, NTS will re-prioritise the plan in consultation with the Whakarongorau Aotearoa Board and NTS Service Improvement Board for any potential additions or re-prioritisations impacting the 2021-2022 Annual Plan.

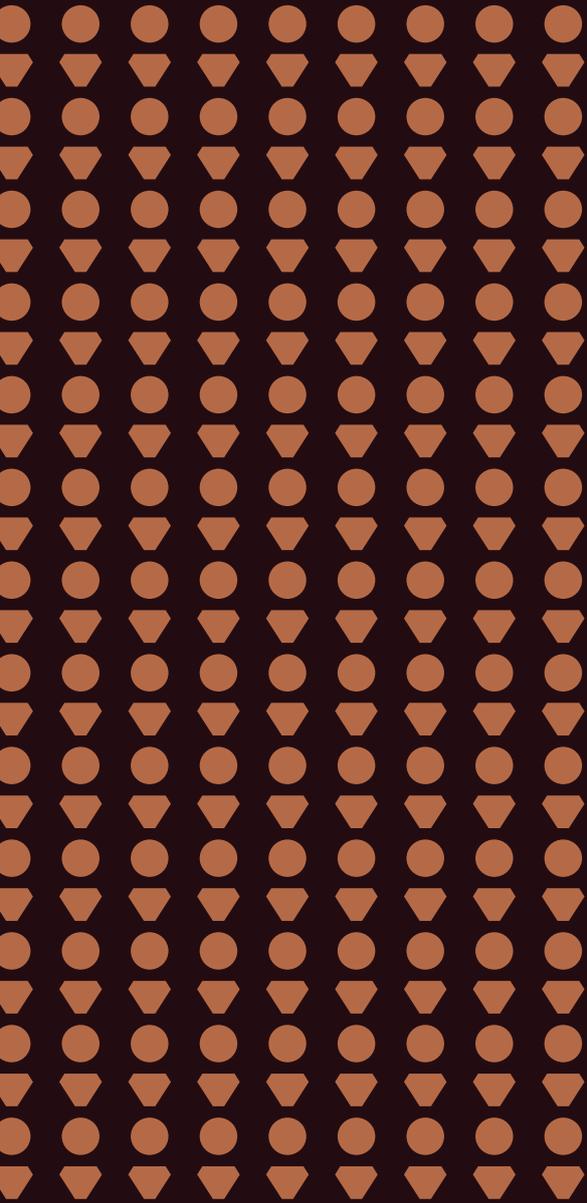
Strategic direction and governance

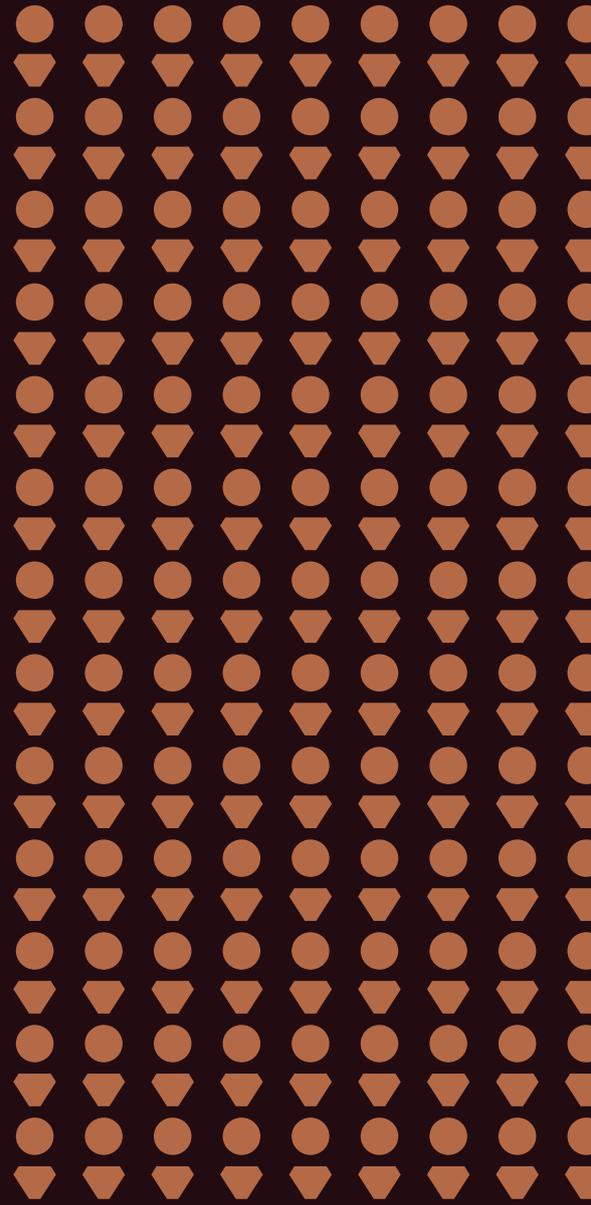
Successful delivery of the 2021-22 Annual Plan requires clarity and prioritisation about what needs to happen, when, with what resource / investment and by defining shorter-term milestones to monitor progress towards our desired future state.

The Whakarongorau Aotearoa governance framework provides clear and regular oversight by :

- **The Whakarongorau Aotearoa Board**
- **The Clinical Governance Committee**
- **The NTS Service Improvement Board**
- **The COVID Governance forums.**

This framework ensures all key stakeholders have regular engagement and transparency with the Plan, so action and re-prioritisations can be taken early, should the needs of the organisation or market change.





Appendices



Appendix A

National Telehealth Services

SERVICE	TEAM	DESCRIPTION	CHANNELS
Healthline	General Nursing	Health triage, advice and information	0800 611 116 www.healthline.govt.nz
Immunisation advice	General Nursing	Immunisation advice provided to the public in partnership with the Immunisation Advisory Centre (IMAC)	0800 IMMUNE www.immune.org.nz
Live Kidney Donation	General Nursing	A 'front door' for people enquiring about being a kidney donor	0800 LIVE DONOR
The Diver Emergency Service (DES)	General Nursing	Advice on diving related incidents, accidents or injuries, including the emergency management of decompression illness	0800 4-DES 111
Emergency Triage	Emergency Nursing Team	Clinical telephone assessments by registered nurses for low-acuity 111 calls to St John and Wellington Free Ambulance	111 calls to St John and Wellington Free Ambulance
Poisons Advice	Poisons Information Officers	Poisons advice delivered through the National Poisons Centre	0800 POISON www.poisons.co.nz
1737 Need to talk?	Mental Health Support Specialists	Front door for anyone dealing with stress, anxiety, depression, or just a need to talk to access support from a trained counsellor	Call or text 1737 www.1737.org.nz
The Depression Helpline	Mental Health Support Specialists	Support tools and information for emotional and psychological issues	0800 111 757 Text 4202 www.depression.org.nz
The Lowdown	Mental Health Support Specialists	Support to help young people recognise and understand depression or anxiety	www.thelowdown.co.nz Text 5626
Earlier Mental Health Response	Mental Health Nursing	Faster and more appropriate support for people in social and psychological distress who call 111 for Police or Ambulance. Includes Expert Advice Line, supporting the mental health workforce	111 Calls
Alcohol Drug Helpline	Mental Health Support Specialists	Advice, information and support about drinking or other drug use	0800 787 797 Text 8681 www.alcoholdrughelp.org.nz
Gambling Helpline	Mental Health Support Specialists	Support for those worried about gambling or the gambling of others	0800 654 655 Text 8006 www.gamblinghelpline.co.nz
Quitline	Service and Support Advisors	Support for those who want to quit smoking and stay quit	0800 778 778 Text 4006 www.quit.org.nz
RecoverRing	Mental Health Support Specialists	Support for offenders and prisoners (and their whānau who are helping them) regarding alcohol or drug use	0800 678 789

Appendix B

2021-22 NTS END OF YEAR PERFORMANCE

Total contacts answered by service line — 1 November 2015 to 30 June 2021

TOTAL CONTACTS Answered by service line	FY16 Total	FY17 Total	FY18 Total	FY19 Total	FY20 Total
Healthline	233,366	356,748	366,168	351,082	393,354
Mental health and addiction	50,128	86,684	131,731	161,643	200,493
Depression	34,603	61,264	64,568	52,015	53,834
Need to Talk / 1737	-	-	40,307	86,425	123,025
Alcohol and other drugs	10,982	18,576	20,596	19,022	19,394
Gambling	4,543	6,844	6,260	4,181	4,240
Quitline	65,364	78,999	51,004	51,192	49,614
National Poisons Centre	19,369	23,230	23,133	23,903	24,650
Emergency Triage	21,522	31,036	46,983	53,990	44,473
Earlier Mental Health Response		200	5,379	7,261	11,109
TOTAL	389,749	576,897	624,398	649,071	723,693

*Includes Mental Health & Addictions psychosocial uplift.

Individual users by service line — 1 November 2015 to 30 June 2021

TOTAL CONTACTS Answered by service line	FY16 Total	FY17 Total	FY18 Total	FY19 Total	FY20 Total
Healthline	213,832	327,056	330,233	317,763	331,800
Mental health and addiction	25,968	50,586	79,435	102,970	118,821
Depression	14,207	31,530	36,575	34,131	33,670
Need to Talk / 1737	-	-	21,467	48,779	65,251
Alcohol and other drug	8,392	14,271	17,033	16,555	16,610
Gambling	3,369	4,785	4,360	3,505	3,290
Quitline	48,324	59,796	36,359	33,421	30,890
National Poisons Centre	19,246	23,096	22,436	21,625	24,182
Emergency Triage	21,048	30,324	45,897	52,540	43,248
Earlier Mental Health Response	-	157	3,589	5,026	8,106
TOTAL	328,418	491,015	517,949	533,345	557,047

*The total number of individual people in the year is the sum of unique service users each month, so may include users who have contacted the service in multiple months.

FY21 NTS forecast	FY21 NTS actual	FY20 Variation	Since inception
359,097	397,806	39,752	2,098,524
*223,187	206,278	-16,909	836,957
63,378	50,568	-12,810	263,018
139,901	131,619	-8,282	258,351
23,079	19,028	-4,051	88,204
5,852	5,063	-789	26,891
55,102	46,253	-8,849	342,426
24,557	25,454	897	139,739
52,479	46,479	-6,084	244,483
10,637	10,954	317	34,903
725,059	733,224	9,124	3,697,032

	FY21 NTS actual	Since inception
	312,317	1,833,001
	110,701	488,481
	29,131	179,244
	63,275	198,772
	14,894	87,755
	3,401	22,710
	27,929	236,719
	24,880	135,465
	45,127	238,184
	7,504	24,382
	528,458	2,956,232

Appendix C

2021-22 WORK PROGRAMME

Pou:

Achieve equitable health & disability outcomes

Outcome:

Reduce health inequities for priority populations by increasing access to and engagement with equity-centred services

Embed internal equity capability and complete the diversity and inclusion programme roll out

Build iwi / NGO partnerships to deliver services closer to iwi and community

Formalise and embed placement programme with Whitiorea to support future Māori / Pacific health workforce pipeline*

Partnering with iwi to build te ao Māori workforce capability in local communities (e.g., leveraging the model with Ngāpuhi)

Optimise analytics capability and metrics to quantify impact on improving equity access and health outcomes

Expand Māori / Pasifika workforce in all NTS services & channels (inc. COVID, physical & mental health)

Pou:

Enhance whānau-centred services

Outcome:

Services continue to advance, with more services designed around people's needs, demographics, and innovative technologies

Develop Mental Health & Addictions care pathways to identify, integrate and deliver user continuity across virtual, primary, and secondary services*

Leverage digital infrastructure and channels to deliver new Healthline model of care (aka Healthline 2.0)*

Implement remaining Gambling 'deep dive' recommendation. Plus, explore partnerships with face-to-face providers to pilot virtual, full intervention gambling support by leveraging the Puāwaitanga platform, particularly for remote or under-resourced regions*

Deliver Quitline enhancements, focusing on vaping support and improving Māori / Pacific success rates*

Exploring opportunities within NTS for prompts, reminders and data capture to support immunisation catch up, especially for tamariki*

Nationwide roll out of youth mentoring (Whitiki Tauā) programme

Embed channel capability to better support service accessibility for disabled communities, across physical, mental and social health services

Explore future opportunities with ACC, including mechanisms to appropriately refer and track injury-related patient pathways across all our services, leverage services to meet capacity gaps (e.g. sensitive claims), and tools for telehealth services to access (pre) claim

*indicates initiative that has / may request funding from the NTS Innovation Fund.

Pou:

Strengthen an integrated, connected, innovative system

Outcome:

Innovative, integrated platforms and connected data ecosystem enable high-quality insights and decision making

Upgrade key platforms to new, more innovative infrastructure and software

Create workforce mobility for Emergency Triage and Earlier Mental Health Response services by enabling Emergency Services infrastructure*

Complete Privacy Impact Assessment and any policy updates to ensure the strength of our service user data and privacy frameworks are maintained at all times

Continue web and digital support for pending Ministry of Health programmes - National Screening Unit (including Cervical and Breast Screening) / End of Life Choice / Palliative Care / Abortion Law Reform / Immunisation

Pou:

Provide sustainable & safe services

Outcome:

Consistent, sustainable clinical excellence and capability ensures exceptional care & health outcomes

Leverage medical capability for funded GP workforce to internally deliver COVID clinical support, medical exemptions and clinical escalations, with additional opportunities identified and agreed with Clinical Governance Committee

Operationalise COVID response, including surge capacity, contact tracing and vaccination programme

Build a sustainable, flex workforce to support across the COVID services

Formalise tertiary placement programme to support development of workforce and build future workforce pipeline

Publish abdominal pain research

Optimise automatic phone dialling system to support calling more people as part of Active Follow Up

Explore opening Poisons TOXIN database to the sector to enable greater support for low acuity toxicology consults

Appendix D

2021-22 CONSIDERATIONS

Workforce Pressures

Risk/Challenge

The initial National Telehealth Service (NTS) funding model was based on employing staff on higher remuneration levels compared to the DHBs. Sector wide year-on-year pay parity increases, individual DHB negotiations along with nurse pay equity disputes are all putting pressure on NTS being able to maintain pay parity rates, amplifying recruitment and retention challenges.

Compounding the issues is that NTS is operating with a significantly larger workforce to support the COVID response, many of which, are short, fixed-term contracts. These contracts must align to the respective funding contracts, which are also short-term, making it challenging to provide assurance and certainty for this workforce and service partners.

Sector-wide workforce shortages are also providing a challenge across the organisation, particularly in recruitment for qualified nurses and mental health professionals. Given the limited pool of resources and increasing need across the sector, the market is highly competitive with pay rates, working environment and professional development opportunities being key negotiation points.

The greatest risk of not addressing these workforce pressures is that the calibre of our clinicians will erode, increasing our clinical risk and ability to meet our contractual terms, including decreasing service performance.

Whakarongorau Aotearoa Action Plan

Workforce cost pressures will be managed through re-prioritisation and service efficiencies.

The NTS change request to support our COVID response allows NTS to leverage different levels of workforce (clinical and non-clinical) and scale up quickly, while also providing capacity and succession opportunities, which will support retention of quality clinicians.

The dedicated COVID team creates operational delineation between different services, relieving some pressure on base activity while still providing surge capacity and cross-functional opportunities across our Health Services team.

Ministry of Health support required

The Ministry works with NTS to address pay parity issues.

Expedite change and funding contracts for rapid and ongoing resource uplifts and provide early indications of changes or extensions to these contracts.

Market Risk

Risk/Challenge

Multiple factors have the potential to influence both the sector and the landscape NTS will operate in over the next 12 months. The ongoing uncertainty and socio-economic impacts of the COVID pandemic as well as the transition of the Health and Disability System Review could change the shape of the health sector and how NTS is preparing its strategic outcomes in the coming year.

Whakarongorau Aotearoa Action Plan

Our strategic roadmap focuses on a three-year horizon, providing a more sustainable, future-focused view of all service lines. Our strategic goals help define our desired future outcomes. However, the team's agility and scalability allow the delivery of these outcomes to pivot and adapt to meet the needs of the sector and the community.

Our close relationship with the Ministry, other key agencies and partners means market disruption can be identified early and responded to quickly.

Ministry of Health support required

Ongoing support and guidance from the Ministry and key partners on early identification of activities that could cause potential organisational, market and/or media risks, and then collaborating on comprehensive plans to front-foot our response.

Execution Risk

Risk/Challenge

Our key challenge in achieving sustainable growth this year will be our continued ability and agility to strengthen service line innovations and achieve efficiencies within the core processes. Our ability to achieve these improvements in the timeframes relies on:

- Third parties to prioritise and improve integrations into their systems
- Minimising programme interdependencies, including resource conflicts
- Robust prioritisation and business communication plans
- Business capacity to adopt and implement new projects and technologies
- Our ability to define and deliver long term measures of success.

The organisational wide response to COVID has resulted in key programmes of work to be paused or slowed, with resources redirected to COVID. This has a flow on effect for delivering service improvements, integration and increases interdependencies for some future projects (particularly in digital innovation).

Whakarongorau Aotearoa Action Plan

Extension of the Programme Management team (both COVID and base services) to deliver the capacity, capability and attention to programme management disciplines to reduce business distraction and / or resource conflicts through forward-focused project planning and prioritisation. The schedule of programmes has also been defined to add clarity and focus across the organisation for our specified programme deliverables in 2021-22.

Implementing strong, regular governance processes as well as business engagement meetings are established to balanced programme priorities, mitigate risks and drive cadence to keep critical deliverables on track.

Leverage strong relationships and collaboration with key partners, iwi and providers to deliver seamless, integrated solutions.

Ministry of Health support required

Ongoing engagement and prioritisation from the Ministry to build clear, forward-focused project expectations and outcomes, including providing scope and scale for future work programmes.

Creating opportunities and opening doors to for cross-sector collaboration and system integration.

Reputational Risk

Risk/Challenge

Heightened public awareness and demand of NTS service and the role we play in the COVID response is likely to continue with the increased public visibility and expectation surrounding key Ministry priorities and the COVID Vaccination programme.

COVID call surges lead to excessive wait times and/or high numbers of abandoned calls, which could compromise callers being able to (or the perception of) access the necessary clinical advice they need, within COVID services or the other NTS services. This also increases the risk of heightened media interest and potentially negative media mentions.

Whakarongorau Aotearoa Action Plan

Strong relationships with key partners, agencies and media allows quick communication and response to any reputational threat or epidemic and provide communication leadership and guidelines to our stakeholders.

Internally, this is supported by our formal feedback, our Reputational Risk Management Framework and communication processes and guidelines for team members to respond to issues and feedback.

Ministry of Health support required

Appropriate level of liaison and protocols in place with the Ministry, kaimahi and key partners on early identification of activities that could cause a potential organisational, market and/ or media risks, and then collaborating on comprehensive plans to front-foot our response.

Cyber Risk

Risk/Challenge

With the volume of personal health data captured across NTS services and the increasing volume of (successful) cyber-attacks both domestically and globally, keeping in front of the exponential growth in cyber security and digital asset management is a key priority for the IT team.

The rapid and exponential expansion of our work from home platform resulted in new infrastructure developed and released at pace. Any outages risk service users being unable to access services when required, particularly during surges, and could potentially risk clinical safety.

Whakarongorau Aotearoa Action Plan

The continuous uplift in security and information controls is key to mitigating future-proofing against cyber risks. Our annual penetration audit is completed by independent specialist agency, while additional support from our IT partners helps mitigate any short-term risks.

Continuous improvements in capability and cloud-based infrastructure will deliver strength and stability to our IT foundations and security practices.

These mitigants complement our quality management platform and clinical governance, which regular review our policies, procedures, and clinical safety.

Ministry of Health support required

Strong partnership with the Ministry's Data and Digital team to leverage nationwide platforms and insights.

Demonstrating sustainable value

Risk/Challenge

Expectations for NTS to deliver increased reach and value across the NZ health system through enhanced patient experiences, pathway integration and delivering service solutions to reduce demand on the wider health sector. However, providing evidence of success and the direct impact of NTS services remains a challenge.

A growing number of requests are also being received from the sector for quantitative and longitudinal data. This puts additional pressure on our stretched data analytics resources and does not allow for value-driven insights to be developed on the data required.

Whakarongorau Aotearoa Action Plan

Ministry of Health support required

Continue to grow and optimise the new reporting platform supported by building new insights and decision support capability.

Strong partnership in delivering a value-driven performance framework and enhanced regular reporting-based data-driven insights.

Contribute to service reviews and advance implementation of any improvement recommendations, including incorporating insights from the NTS and other service evaluations.

Support in evaluating and sharing the impacts of NTS.

Advance discussions with the Ministry of Health to collaboratively evolve and enhance reporting and insights requirements.

Regular stakeholder engagement and governance ensures expectations are managed, priorities are agreed, and relevant information and insights are shared in a sustainable way.

Glossary of Terms

Abandoned call	A phone call that has been terminated by the caller before it has been answered by a staff member. A short message is played to callers as the call is connected, and some calls are abandoned during or soon after the message. Other calls are abandoned after the caller has waited for some time.
Call	A contact from a service user made by phone.
Call transfer	A call that is transferred to another staff member (e.g. from Healthline to Depression) or to another service (e.g. emergency services, GP practice).
Chat conversation	A contact made via web chat. Often leads to a series of exchanges between the service user and NTS staff, but the initial chat contact from the service user is counted as a conversation.
Contact	An occasion when a service user has contacted one of the NTS services via any channel. There may be multiple contacts from one service user.
Email conversation	A contact made by email. Often leads to a series of email exchanges between the service user and NTS staff, but the initial email from the service user is counted as a conversation.
Email interaction	An inbound or outbound email message that forms part of an email conversation. An email conversation may include more than 10 email interactions.
Frequent user	A service user who contacts one or more than one NTS service on multiple occasions, usually more than 20 times a month.
Hang-up	A call that is terminated by the caller as soon as a staff member answers the call, without the caller saying anything.
Individual service user	A person who has used an NTS service in a given time period. May have used the service more than once in that time period.
Interaction	An inbound or outbound message or communication that forms part of an email, chat or SMS conversation. An email conversation may include more than 10 email interactions, and an SMS conversation may contain more than 20 interactions.
Outbound call	A phone call made by staff to a service user as part of service provision.
Phone queue	A queue within the NTS phone system of calls waiting to be answered.
SMS conversation	A contact made by SMS messaging often leads to a series of text exchanges between the service user and NTS staff, but the initial message from the service user is counted as a conversation.

