

Information for stakeholders

Mental health & addiction NGO workforce data project

Project summary

The community health and social services' sector is diverse and comprised of hundreds of non-government organisations (NGOs), iwi-based providers, and other community providers like primary healthcare organisations (PHOs). Developing the workforce of such a devolved and distributed sector is challenging and requires access to high quality representative information.

Various agencies collate national mental health and addiction (MH&A) workforce information mainly by surveys. These data collections deliver highly summarised information about organisations and the health funded workforce only. The collections therefore do not fully represent the extent of the community health and social services workforce and duplicate information that many providers are regularly reporting to Health New Zealand | Te Whatu Ora (Te Whatu Ora) and other commissioners to meet contractual obligations.

Following the release of *A Sound Investment: A Spotlight on the Impact and Value of Mental Health and Addiction NGO Services in New Zealand*¹, Atamira Platform Trust (Platform) members discussed scoping collective approaches to NGO workforce information similar to the Te Whatu Ora employee dataset² or the better use of workforce returns for specific government contracts, as mentioned above.

Initial feedback indicates some desire for more collective approaches that are potentially owned or governed by NGOs, aligned to their needs and priorities, available to promote the interests of NGOs, tāngata whai ora, whānau, and communities, and takes a whole-of-workforce approach. This could potentially augment or replace the fragmented and repetitive data collections described above.

Organisations responsible for driving the project

Platform Trust is partnering with Te Pou to explore NGOs interest in a collective approach to workforce data, with financial support from Health New Zealand | Te Whatu Ora.

Platform Trust is a peak body for the NGO MH&A sector and is focused on the development of capable, strong and sustainable community MH&A organisations. The growth and development of the NGO workforce continues to be one of their priority areas, as evidenced by the significant amount of work that they have done over the years to find a long-term and

¹ Platform Trust (2025). *A Sound Investment: A Spotlight on the Impact and Value of Mental Health and Addiction NGO Services in New Zealand*.

² Te Pou. (2025). Health NZ | Te Whatu Ora mental health & addiction employee profile 2022 to 2024. Te Pou. <https://www.tepou.co.nz/resources/2024-health-new-zealand-te-whatu-ora-employee-profile>

sector-wide pay equity solution for the community support workforce. Much of that work has been heavily reliant on good data about that part of the MH&A workforce.

Te Pou is a national workforce centre for the addiction and mental health sectors. Te Pou brings their own relationships, and project and data expertise to support the aims and objectives of Platform Trust. Te Pou will support Platform Trust to discuss with NGOs what self-determination in workforce data might look like and make available their resources and relationships to the project. Te Pou will have equal input with Platform Trust in peer reviewing the final report based on their expertise.

In-scope for this project

The aim of the project is to test MH&ANGOs interests and views about the feasibility and desirability of developing a collective approach to NGO workforce data.

- This is a whole-of-workforce approach, so the project includes the workforce that is funded by other government agencies.
- It will also canvas NGO expectations about the ownership and governance arrangements for that data.
- The findings will be described in a report that will be made available to the NGO sector and Te Whatu Ora by the end of 2025.

Out-of-scope

This project is exploratory in nature and does **not** aim to obtain agreement from NGOs about the future development of a central data repository or collective approach. The project will also not venture into detailed issues related to workforce data collection design and reporting, but it may touch on these issues based on NGO feedback.

Key objectives – what do we want to achieve?

1: Data that promotes MH&A NGO self-determination.

- Atamira Platform Trust and Te Pou are scoping the possibility of developing collective approaches to MH&A NGO workforce information that is owned and controlled by NGOs. It would provide MH&A NGO workforce information for local, regional and national reporting purposes.
- MH&A NGOs could also generate their own reports to help focus attention on the MH&A NGO workforce issues that matter to them.

2: MH&A NGOs telling their own workforce story.

- MH&A NGOs present their own estimates of the MH&A NGO workforce in a way that makes sense to them - e.g., inclusive of roles that are not currently found in the Australian and New Zealand Standard Classification of Occupations (ANZSCO).
- MH&A NGOs develop their own narrative about the MH&A NGO workforce to help deepen the level of shared understanding about its size and role composition; highlight challenges such as vacancies and staff turnover; and profile employee characteristics such as age, ethnicity and job tenure.

3: A trusted and safe MH&A NGO data ecosystem.

- MH&A NGOs develop shared capacities and capabilities for handling and managing NGO workforce data.
- MH&A NGOs are easily able to supply reports to key stakeholders that request MH&A NGO workforce related information - in accordance with the relevant legislation and agreed best practice data management standards, policies and procedures.
- MH&A NGOs are supported by a shared data infrastructure and data experts (e.g. Te Pou).

What is our approach?

Platform Trust and Te Pou have commissioned Phillipa Gaines to manage the project. She will get in touch with MH&A NGOs via Platform's email list and Navigate networks. A short questionnaire will be sent to NGOs followed by more targeted activities based on the number and type of NGOs that complete the questionnaire, and the issues that are raised.

It is important that we make sure that the diverse nature of the NGO sector is well represented in the final report and that the project keeps equity considerations front of mind when summarising the issues. For this reason, we will also meet with a few key informants to investigate specific areas of interest.

The project will also establish a small reference group comprised of MH&A NGOs that have been selected because of their previous involvement and interest in the NGO workforce surveys conducted by Te Pou. This reference group will provide input and guidance at key points throughout the project.

Who do I contact if I want to know more?

You can contact the following people if you want to know more about this project:

- Memo Musa, CEO, Platform Trust - memo@platform.org.nz
- Richard Woodcock, Manager, Data, Information and Research, Te Pou - Richard.Woodcock@tepou.co.nz
- Phillipa Gaines – pgaines@lattice.co.nz

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