



Position Description

Director

Team	Mental Health and Addiction			
Group	Regulatory Services			
Manager	Deputy Director-General – Regulatory Services			
Location	Wellington			
Direct reports	Direct	4	Indirect	80
Delegation authority	HR level	3	Finance level	3
Job band (indicative)	23D			
Security clearance	N/A			
Date	March 2026			

About the Ministry of Health (the Ministry) - Manatū Hauora

The Ministry of Health is the lead advisor to the Government on health and is responsible for ensuring the health system meets the current and future needs of all New Zealanders.

We fulfil this role through three key functions:

Policy: We support the Government to set health system priorities and develop policies. We collect evidence to understand the system and to get the best health outcomes for New Zealanders.

Regulation: We design rules and regulations for health services, products, and pharmaceuticals to protect public health and safety. We ensure health regulations are proportionate, effective and safe.

Monitoring: We monitor the performance of the health system by collecting data, checking performance and reporting to the Government. If issues arise, we work with others to address them. We assess both health outcomes and financial efficiency.

Group description - Tō mātou nei aka

Regulatory Services | Te Pou Tāhū ensures public safety and quality through the effective regulation of providers, therapeutic products, and services. Regulatory Services are responsible for delivering the regulatory strategy, ensuring compliance with legislation and maintaining public trust in the health system's regulatory frameworks. Regulatory Services also supports a number of statutory officer holders including the Chief Regulatory Officer, Medsafe and the Director Mental Health and Addiction.



Position purpose – Kōrero mō te tūranga

The Director of Mental Health and Addiction is a statutory, clinically qualified leadership role providing independent clinical, regulatory, and system stewardship across New Zealand's mental health and addiction services. The role exercises statutory functions under the Mental Health (Compulsory Assessment and Treatment) Act 1992 and performs the statutory duties of the Director of Addiction Services under the Substance Addiction (Compulsory Assessment and Treatment) Act 2017, with responsibilities to the Minister of Health and the Director-General of Health. The Director provides authoritative clinical and policy advice, leads national responses to complex and high-risk mental health and addiction issues, and ensures the lawful, safe, and humane operation of compulsory assessment and treatment services. The role shapes the long-term direction of the system, oversees major reform and assurance programmes, and upholds public confidence through strong governance, equity, Te Tiriti o Waitangi commitments, and lived-experience leadership

What you'll do – Ko tōu ake mahi

Statutory, clinical, and regulatory leadership

- Exercise the statutory functions of the **Director of Mental Health** under the Mental Health (Compulsory Assessment and Treatment) Act 1992 and associated legislation, and perform the duties of the **Director of Addiction Services** under the Substance Addiction (Compulsory Assessment and Treatment) Act 2017, exercising delegated powers on behalf of the Minister and Director-General of Health
- Provide independent, expert clinical and policy advice to the Minister of Health, Director-General, and senior Ministry leaders on mental health and addiction legislation, regulation, standards, and system performance
- Provide national clinical leadership on complex, high-risk matters, including compulsory care, rights, safety, quality, and the lawful, humane operation of assessment and treatment services
- Exercise all regulatory functions and powers related to the position, including inspection, monitoring, and assurance activities; undertaking visits to treatment services; accessing facilities and patients as required; addressing issues of quality, safety, and compliance; and, where necessary, contributing to or initiating a Commission of Inquiry.

System stewardship and performance assurance

- Lead delivery of Government priorities across the mental health and addiction portfolios, ensuring alignment with legislative obligations, Ministry strategy, and sector capability
- Shape and drive the long-term strategic direction of the system in partnership with the Senior Leadership Team, translating priorities into clear strategies, programmes, and implementation plans



- Lead and oversee complex, multi-year programmes of work, applying sound clinical judgement, evidence, and risk management
- Establish robust performance, assurance, evaluation, and reporting frameworks to demonstrate impact and system improvement

Senior leadership and people leadership

- Provide senior leadership to multidisciplinary clinical, policy, and advisory teams, fostering a culture of clinical excellence, accountability, collaboration, and continuous improvement
- Lead, mentor, and develop senior clinical and professional leaders, strengthening capability across the Ministry and the wider system
- Ensure consistently high standards of advice and delivery in complex, ambiguous, and politically sensitive environments

Sector, stakeholder, and public leadership

- Act as a senior representative and spokesperson for the Ministry on mental health and addiction matters, including media engagement where appropriate
- Oversee and make decisions on leave arrangements, and provide recommendations regarding changes to the legal or care status of special (forensic) patients
- Build and sustain trusted relationships across government, the health and disability sector, professional colleges, consumer and whānau organisations, and communities
- Appoint or recommend the appointment of Directors of Area Mental Health and Addiction Services, District Inspectors and designate and oversee approved providers, ensuring consistent, lawful application of legislation across regions
- Represent the Ministry at inter-agency forums and national and international engagements, influencing outcomes and advancing Government priorities

Te Tiriti o Waitangi, equity, and lived experience

- Uphold Te Tiriti o Waitangi obligations by embedding partnership, equity, and cultural responsiveness across policy, regulation, and service delivery
- Champion lived-experience perspectives in legislation, policy development, and system design
- Ensure strategies and services address inequities and improve outcomes for Māori, Pacific peoples, and other priority populations

This position description is intended as an insight to the main tasks and responsibilities required in the role and may be subject to change in consultation with the job holder.

What you'll bring to the role – Ko ngā pukenga ōu



Clinical and professional credibility

- Vocational qualification and registration in psychiatry, with national standing as a mental health specialist
- Deep clinical expertise across compulsory care, risk management, service quality, and patient and whānau rights
- Strong knowledge of New Zealand's mental health legislative and regulatory framework, with awareness of international practice

Statutory judgement and regulatory leadership

- Proven ability to exercise independent statutory judgement, including making and defending complex clinical, regulatory, and medical-legal decisions in high-risk and high-profile contexts
- Demonstrated capability to interpret and apply legislation, including the Mental Health (Compulsory Assessment and Treatment) Act and the New Zealand Bill of Rights Act, to real-world system decisions
- Confidence and resilience to stand by decisions under scrutiny, challenge, or judicial review
- Strong understanding of regulatory systems, governance, and accountability, with the ability to bridge clinical practice and regulation

Senior executive, strategic, and people leadership

- Proven experience operating at a senior executive level within large, complex health or public sector organisations
- Highly developed strategic and analytical capability, with the judgement to balance clinical, legal, political, and system considerations
- Ability to lead through influence, set clear boundaries, and operate effectively in politically sensitive environments
- Significant experience leading and developing senior clinical, professional, and multidisciplinary teams, and influencing across government, the health sector, and professional bodies

Leadership Success Profile – Angitūtanga

The Te Kawa Mataaho Leadership Success Profile (LSP) describes what effective leadership looks like across the New Zealand public sector. All roles at the Ministry are assigned to one of four leadership categories. Each category draws on selected capabilities, which combine both leadership competencies and character traits from the LSP, to reflect different types of leadership.

This role is assigned to the **'Senior Leader'** category, and the following capabilities outline what is required to be successful in this category:



Leading strategically	<i>Develop and implement strategies that position the Ministry and sector for long-term success, aligning initiatives with strategic priorities and engaging others in a compelling vision for the future.</i>
Leading with influence	<i>Communicate with impact and authority to inspire confidence, gain buy-in, and influence decisions across the Ministry and sector.</i>
Enhancing organisational performance	<i>Drive innovation and continuous improvement across groups to lift organisational performance, streamline processes, and deliver sustainable outcomes.</i>
Developing talent	<i>Take a proactive approach to coaching and developing leaders, building diverse capability and creating succession plans to strengthen organisational leadership.</i>
Enhancing system performance	<i>Work collectively across organisational boundaries to strengthen system-wide performance, leveraging relationships and collaboration to achieve outcomes for New Zealand.</i>
Curious	<i>Show curiosity, flexibility, and openness in analysing and integrating ideas, information, and differing perspectives; to make fit-for-purpose decisions.</i>

Your health, safety, and wellbeing – Oranga me te haumarū

At the Ministry of Health, we expect all of our people to:

- Ensure health and safety is integrated into business-as-usual activities
- Promote employee participation in health and safety by actively supporting employee health and safety representatives (HSRs)
- Acquire and keep up-to-date knowledge of work health and safety matters including the hazards and risks associated with operations
- Ensure staff are informed of and trained in safe practices and procedures in their specific areas of work

Diversity and inclusion – Kanorau me te whakauru

The Ministry of Health welcomes and supports people of all gender identities, ages, ethnicities, sexual orientations, disabilities, and religions. To support this we:

- Foster inclusive workplaces that value diverse perspectives and lived experience
- Attract and retain diverse talent by creating accessible, welcoming environments
- Apply the merit principle fairly, ensuring equitable opportunities for all