

# Aide-Mémoire

## Meeting with the New Zealand Drug Foundation on 9 April 2024

<b>Date due to MO:</b>	5 April 2024	<b>Action required by:</b>	9 April 2024
<b>Security level:</b>	IN CONFIDENCE	<b>Health Report number:</b>	H2024035254
<b>To:</b>	Hon Matt Doocey, Minister for Mental Health		
<b>Consulted:</b>	Health New Zealand: <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Māori Health Authority: <input type="checkbox"/>		

### Contact for telephone discussion

Name	Position	Telephone
<b>Robyn Shearer</b>	Deputy Director-General, Clinical, Community and Mental Health   Te Pou Whakakaha	s 9(2)(a)
<b>Kiri Richards</b>	Associate Deputy Director-General, Mental Health and Addiction, Clinical, Community and Mental Health   Te Pou Whakakaha	s 9(2)(a)

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**Date due:** 5 April 2024

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**To:** Hon Matt Doocey, Minister for Mental Health

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**Security level:** IN CONFIDENCE

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**Details of meeting:**

On 9 April 2024, you are meeting with representatives of the New Zealand Drug Foundation | Te Puna Whakaiti Pāmamae Kai Whakapiri (the NZ Drug Foundation).

The meeting will be from 3:15pm to 3:45pm in your office (4.1R EW).

Attendees from the NZ Drug Foundation will include:

- Sarah Helm, Chief Executive
- Tuari Potiki, Chairperson of the Board
- Ben Birks-Ang, Deputy Executive Director, Programmes
- Jacek Kolodziej, Policy Director.

Their biographies are attached as Appendix A.

Officials from the Ministry of Health | Manatū Hauora (the Ministry) are available to support your attendance at this meeting, if required.

**Purpose of Meeting:**

This meeting was originally scheduled for 29 February 2024, and follows your address at the NZ Drug Foundation's Annual General Meeting (AGM) on 1 December 2023.

Officials understand that the NZ Drug Foundation wishes to discuss:

- your priorities as Minister for Mental Health
- the NZ Drug Foundation's priorities (as outlined in its briefing to you as the incoming Minister for Mental Health)
- pressures on the mental health and addiction sector
- harm reduction services
- youth mental health.

Suggested talking points to support you at this meeting are attached as **Appendix B** and further information on the NZ Drug Foundation's priorities can be found below.

**Comment: The NZ Drug Foundation is a charitable trust that works to prevent and reduce drug-related harm in New Zealand**

- For the past 30 years, the NZ Drug Foundation has been working to reduce and prevent drug harm in New Zealand through:
  - advocating for health and evidence-based drug laws and policies
  - developing solutions and innovations to reduce drug harm
  - co-ordinating cross-sector groups to prevent and respond to acute harm
  - delivering harm reduction services and advice to communities.
- The NZ Drug Foundation is focussed on supporting a health-based response to drug harm and is actively engaged in cross-sector substance use surveillance, along with promoting open and constructive relationships with all stakeholders working in this field.

**Recent publications by the NZ Drug Foundation**

- On 6 March 2024, the NZ Drug Foundation released a report titled '*Drug use in Aotearoa 2022/23*'. This report focusses on the prevalence of substance use and describes the patterns of drug consumption in Aotearoa. It found a significant increase in cocaine use over the past year (a 93% increase<sup>1</sup>), however overall, the use of cocaine in New Zealand still remains low. The report also found that MDMA and methamphetamine use has decreased slightly.
- In October 2022, the NZ Drug Foundation was licensed by the Ministry as a drug checking provider and is now in its second year of delivering drug checking services. On 3 April 2024, the NZ Drug Foundation released their 2023 Drug Checking report, summarising the 2023 findings from drug checking clinics, festivals, and events.

**NZ Drug Foundation's relationship with the health entities**

- The Ministry has a positive working relationship with the NZ Drug Foundation. Following your approval for the Ministry to develop an overdose preparedness plan [H2024035468 refers], officials have met with the NZ Drug Foundation to inform the planning of this project.
- The NZ Drug Foundation is contracted by Health New Zealand | Te Whatu Ora (Health New Zealand) to deliver a range of national contracts including public health policy, supporting community action, information services, school-based initiatives, and drug checking services.
- Contracts the NZ Drug Foundation has with Health New Zealand include:

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<sup>1</sup> New Zealand Drug Foundation. (2024). Drug use in Aotearoa 2022/23.

- Tūturu Service – a school-based harm reduction service  
s 9(2)(b)(ii)
- Health Promotion s 9(2)(b)(ii)
- Licensed drug checking services s 9(2)(b)(ii)
- Coordination of acute drug harm responses and associated communities of practice s 9(2)(b)(ii)
- Drug health information service – including ‘The Level’ harm reduction website s 9(2)(b)(ii)
- ReWired – reducing drug-related, sexual health and mental health harms for gay and bisexual men who use methamphetamine  
s 9(2)(b)(ii)
- s 9(2)(b)(ii)  
[Redacted]
- However, Health New Zealand share that they have advised all four funded drug checking providers that it is anticipated their contracts will be rolled over for an additional 12 months, through to 30 June 2025.

**NZ Drug Foundation priorities**

- In December 2023, the NZ Drug Foundation provided your office with a briefing outlining its priorities to prevent drug harm in New Zealand. These include:
  - emerging risks and increasing volatility in the illicit drug market
  - preventing overdose deaths
  - alcohol and other drug workforce
  - mutual aid and peer support networks
  - response to methamphetamine
  - preventing harm through diagnosis and treatment of ADHD
  - innovations in psychedelic-assisted therapy.

**Other NZ Drug Foundation priorities**

- As signalled in the previous aide-mémoire for the NZ Drug Foundation’s AGM [H2023033290 refers], there are some other topics of interest to the NZ Drug Foundation that may be raised in the meeting. These include:
  - seeking commitments from the government to bulk purchase Nyxoid (an unfunded nasal spray form of naloxone). The NZ Drug Foundation put forward an application for Pharmac to fund Nyxoid. A decision is expected later this year




- establishing a pilot for a safe consumption space/overdose prevention centre to provide a safe, clean space for people to bring their own drugs to use, in the presence of trained staff (in an effort to reduce harm, prevent accidental overdoses, and reduce the spread of infectious diseases)
- setting up a specific National Mortality Review Committee that explores deaths from substances and overdoses.
- The NZ Drug Foundation has also signalled priorities related to pursuing a review of the Misuse of Drugs Act 1975 to decriminalise the use of illicit drugs.
- Please see additional talking points in **Appendix C** for suggested responses to these topics, should they arise.



Robyn Shearer  
**Deputy Director-General**  
**Clinical, Community and Mental Health |**  
**Te Pou Whakakaha**

Date: 5 April 2024

## Appendix A: Biographical information

	<p><b>Sarah Helm, Executive Director   Tumu Whakarae</b></p> <p>Sarah (Pākehā/Ngāi Tahu) is the main spokesperson for the NZ Drug Foundation, with a focus on drug policy and other drug-related issues.</p> <p>Sarah has worked for the Alcohol Advisory Council, Health Promotion Agency, and NZ AIDS Foundation. She was head of the NZ Association of Adolescent Health &amp; Development (Ara Taiohi) for a number of years.</p> <p>Most recently, she worked for the Department of Prime Minister and Cabinet as Strategic Communications Manager for the COVID-19 response.</p>
	<p><b>Tuari Potiki, Chairperson of the Board, NZ Drug Foundation</b></p> <p>Tuari (Kāi Tahu, Kati Māmoe, Waitaha) has been involved in the Māori health, mental health, education, and justice sectors for over 25 years.</p> <p>He has worked in a number of different roles as a Māori alcohol and drug clinician and tutor before moving into management roles in both the public and non-government sector.</p> <p>He has served on the boards of Southern District Health, Canterbury District Health, the Canterbury Community Trust, Ngāi Tahu’s Health, and Social Service agency, He Oranga Pounamu, and Whānau Ora Independent Reference Group</p>
	<p><b>Ben Birks-Ang, Deputy Executive Director, Programmes</b></p> <p>Ben has worked with young people in the drug and alcohol sector for over a decade.</p> <p>He has many years of experience in developing and delivering treatment services for young people, including establishing and overseeing school-based, community, and residential drug and alcohol treatment programmes.</p> <p>He is a registered addiction practitioner and accredited clinical supervisor and is the Chair of the Addiction Practitioners Association of Aotearoa New Zealand (DAPAANZ).</p>



**Dr Jacek Kolodziej, Policy Director**

Jacek moved to Aotearoa from Poland over 6 years ago to pursue his doctoral studies on HIV prevention and has extensive background in health research and policy.

At the Drug Foundation, he works on a range of policy issues spanning from drug law reform to influencing system polices to improve access to harm reduction for all people who use drugs in Aotearoa.

PROACTIVELY RELEASED

s 9(2)(g)(i)

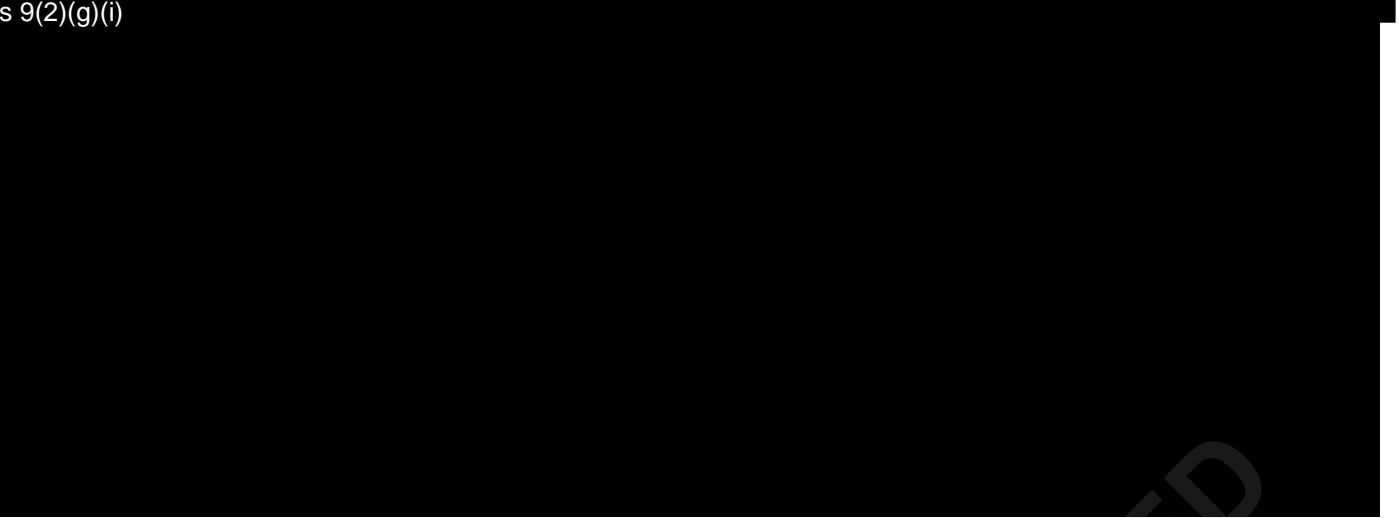
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