

Position Description | Te whakaturanga ō mahi

Health New Zealand | Te Whatu Ora

Title	Improvement Lead			
Reports to	Group Director of Operations (GDO)			
Location	Canterbury			
Department	Office of the Group Director of Operations			
Direct Reports	Nil		Total FTE	Nil
Budget Size	Opex	Nil	Capex	Nil
Delegated Authority	HR	Nil	Finance	Nil
Date				
Job band (indicative)				

The Health System in Aotearoa is entering a period of transformation as we implement the Pae Ora/Healthy Futures vision of a reformed system where people live longer in good health, have improved quality of life, and there is equity between all groups.

We want to build a healthcare system that works collectively and cohesively around a shared set of values and a culture that enables everyone to bring their best to work and feel proud when they go home to their whānau, friends and community. The reforms are expected to achieve five system shifts. These are:

1. The health system will reinforce Te Tiriti principles and obligations.
2. All people will be able to access a comprehensive range of support in their local communities to help them stay well.
3. Everyone will have equal access to high quality emergency and specialist care when they need it.
4. Digital services will provide more people the care they need in their homes and communities.
5. Health and care workers will be valued and well-trained for the future health system.

Te Mauri o Rongo – The New Zealand Health Charter

The foundation for how we ensure our people are empowered, safe and supported while working to deliver a successful healthcare system, is Te Mauri o Rongo – the New Zealand Health Charter. It guides all of us as we work towards a healthcare system that is more responsive to the needs of, and accessible to all people in Aotearoa New Zealand.

It applies to everyone in our organisation and sits alongside our code of conduct as our guiding document.

Te Mauri o Rongo consists of four pou (pillars) within it, including:

Wairuatanga – working with heart, the strong sense of purpose and commitment to service that health workers bring to their mahi.

Rangatiratanga – as organisations we support our people to lead. We will know our people; we will grow those around us and be accountable with them in contributing to Pae Ora for all.

Whanaungatanga – we are a team, and together a team of teams. Regardless of our role, we work together for a common purpose. We look out for each other and keep each other safe.

Te Korowai Āhuru – a cloak which seeks to provide safety and comfort to the workforce.

These values underpin how we relate to each other as we serve our whānau and communities.

Together we will do this by:

- caring for the people
- recognising, supporting and valuing our people and the work we all do
- working together to design and deliver services, and
- defining the competencies and behaviours we expect from everyone.

About the role

The primary purpose of the role is to:

The Improvement Lead (Operational) is responsible for the leadership, coordination, and delivery of hospital-wide improvement initiatives that enhance patient flow, access, and operational performance across Christchurch Hospital and the wider Canterbury District.

The role will programme manage complex improvement and innovation workstreams to ensure that all objectives, milestones, and deliverables are achieved in alignment with organisational and national health targets. Working collaboratively with clinicians, managers, and support services, the Improvement Lead will champion system-wide change that supports shorter stays in the Emergency Department, earlier discharges, and a continuous flow model across hospital and community interfaces.

This position will provide expert leadership in change management, improvement methodologies, and data-informed decision making, enabling clinical and operational teams to deliver sustainable service improvements. The role will ensure that all improvement initiatives are well-scoped, resourced, governed, and evaluated for measurable impact.

The Improvement Lead will foster a leadership culture of continuous improvement and innovation, building capability across teams and ensuring evidence-based best practice informs all initiatives. This role will own and advise governance stakeholders but also as an expert contribute to other programmes or projects within Hospital and Specialist Services as required.

Key Result Area	Expected Outcomes / Performance Indicators
Flow Improvement and Coordination	• Provide strategic advice to the GDO on project selection, resourcing, sustainability, and prioritisation, contributing to decision-making around new initiatives. • Develop and implement programme strategies, tools, and systems to ensure projects are clearly scoped, resourced, and supported by effective stakeholder engagement and change management processes. • Collaborate with project managers, operational leaders, and local teams to establish structured programme and project plans, including deliverables, milestones, timelines, and measures aligned with hospital priorities. • Facilitate and coach teams in the use of programme management, project management, and improvement methodologies to build internal capability and consistency of practice. • Collect and analyse baseline and operational data to track progress, outcomes, risks, and cost-benefit, using visual tools such as dashboards and control charts to support learning and decision-making. • Monitor and report on project and programme performance, ensuring timely updates to sponsors, stakeholders, and governance groups, and acting as a liaison to maintain clear communication. • Identify and manage risks and interdependencies across workstreams, developing mitigation strategies and ensuring alignment with a whole-of-system perspective. • Champion a culture of continuous improvement and co-design, engaging clinicians, operational teams, consumers, and equity partners to deliver sustainable, system-wide benefits.
Change Management	• Lead change management processes to support adoption of new operational practices. • Engage and influence multidisciplinary teams to drive improvements across the system. • Communicate change objectives clearly, building understanding and ownership at all levels. • Evaluate the effectiveness and sustainability of implemented changes.
Stakeholder and Relationship Management	• Build strong, collaborative relationships with ED and inpatient teams, clinicians, commissioning as well as community and primary care teams. • Partner with other Improvement Leads, site managers, and clinical leaders across Canterbury to ensure aligned system flow improvement. • Maintain clear and proactive communication with the GDO and relevant governance groups. • Engage with Hauora Māori regional and local teams to ensure that Māori, Pacific and other priority population partners ensure an equity-focused improvement approach to initiatives. • Models good team player behaviour, working with colleagues to not allow siloed thinking and behaviour at decision making level

	to get in the way of doing our best and collegially supports others to do the same. • Works with peers in Hauora Māori Service and Pacific Health Business Unit to ensure Māori and Pacific People are reflected in planning and delivery of services. • Works closely with the Manaaki Mana team within ED to ensure the equity approach is enacted • Works closely with the consumer and whānau voice representative at governance level to ensure areas of improvement are fed back to clinical teams
Performance, Data and Reporting	• Provide timely, executive-level updates and reports to governance and leadership on improvement initiatives, offering clear visibility into programme status, key performance indicators, benefits, risks, and resource utilisation. • Collect, analyse, and interpret operational data to identify trends, monitor flow patterns and delays, equity monitoring, and to uncover opportunities for improvement. • Develop and present reports and dashboards that track progress, risks, and outcomes related to flow. • Foster a culture of continuous improvement and operational excellence across hospital and community interfaces. • Support teams to test, implement, and sustain new models of care that reduce ED demand and length of stay as well as ensure alignment with both organisational and national health targets.
Professional Development	• Maintain knowledge of best practice in operational improvement and flow management. • Participate in relevant networks, forums, and learning opportunities to strengthen expertise. • Coach and mentor others to build improvement capability within operational teams.
Te Tiriti o Waitangi	• Remains focused on the pursuit of Māori health gain as well as achieving equitable health outcomes for Māori. • Supports tangata whenua- and mana whenua-led change to deliver mana motuhake and Māori self-determination in the design, delivery and monitoring of health care. • Actively supports kaimahi Māori by improving attraction, recruitment, retention, development, and leadership.
Equity	• Commits to helping all people achieve equitable health outcomes. • Demonstrates awareness of colonisation and power relationships. • Demonstrates critical consciousness and on-going self-reflection and self-awareness in terms of the impact of their own culture on interactions and service delivery. • Shows a willingness to personally take a stand for equity. • Supports Māori-led and Pacific-led responses.

Health & safety	- Exercises leadership and due diligence in Health and Safety matters and ensures the successful implementation of Health and Safety strategy and initiatives. - Takes all reasonably practicable steps to eliminate and mitigate risks and hazards in the workplace that could cause harm, placing employee, contractor and others' health, safety, and wellbeing centrally, alongside high-quality patient outcomes. - Leads, champions, and promotes continual improvement in health and wellbeing to create a healthy and safe culture.
Compliance and Risk	- Takes responsibility to ensure appropriate risk reporting, management and mitigation activities are in place. - Ensures compliance with all relevant statutory, safety and regulatory requirements applicable to the Business Unit. - Understands, and operates within, the financial & operational delegations of their role, ensuring peers and team members are also similarly aware.

Relationships

External	Internal
Primary and community care providers	- GDO - Clinical Chiefs
National and regional flow improvement networks	General Managers
Consumer and whānau representative	Clinical Nurse Manager – Acute Flow
	Emergency Department Clinical Leads
	Allied Health, Nursing, Medical and Maternity Clinical leads
	Data and Analytics teams
	Māori Health and Pacific Health services
	Hauora Māori Regional Lead
	Acute Flow Governance Group
	Operational Flow Working Groups
	Inpatient Service Managers

About you – to succeed in this role

You will have

Essential:

- Relevant tertiary qualification (e.g., Health, Management, Quality, Operations).
- Minimum 5 years' experience in health operations, improvement, or service redesign.
- Demonstrated success in implementing change and improving hospital flow.

- Proven ability to work collaboratively with clinical and operational teams.
- Strong data analysis and reporting skills.
- Understanding of Te Tiriti o Waitangi and commitment to equitable health outcomes.

Desired:

- Formal experience and or training in improvement and change methodologies
- Experience in emergency and acute care flow management.
- Postgraduate qualification in health management or improvement methodologies.
- Relevant health system experience

You will be able to Essential:

- Demonstrate an understanding of the significance of and obligations under Te Tiriti o Waitangi, including how to apply Te Tiriti principles in a meaningful way in your role.
- Maximise the quality and contributions of individuals and teams to achieve the organisation's vision, purpose and goals.
- Demonstrate a strong drive to deliver and take personal responsibility.
- Demonstrate the highest standards of personal, professional and institutional behaviour through commitment, loyalty and integrity.
- Address the psychology of change to support successful programme project outcomes.
- Work with people and multidisciplinary teams.
- Work independently and lead a team.

This position description is intended as an insight to the main tasks and responsibilities required in the role and is not intended to be exhaustive. It may be subject to change, in consultation with the job holder.