

Position Description | Te whakaturanga ō mahi

Health New Zealand | Te Whatu Ora

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.

Title	Social Worker
Reports to	Clinical Manager Social Work
Location	Christchurch
Department	Social Work Service
Date	June 2026
Salary band (indicative)ⁱ	Allied, Public Health, Scientific & Technical, Core Salary Scale Step 1-7
Children's Worker roleⁱⁱ	Yes

Better Health, Better Care, Every Day.

Health New Zealand | Te Whatu Ora is committed to providing high-quality healthcare for all New Zealanders. We are focused on improving access to care, delivering better health outcomes, achieving national health targets, and ensuring the long-term sustainability of our health system.

We know that great healthcare starts with great people. That's why we are committed to building a high-performing, inclusive workplace where our people are supported to grow, contribute, and make a real difference for patients, whānau, and communities across Aotearoa.

About the role

The primary purpose of the role is to:

The Social Worker provides specialist clinical social work services that promote equitable health outcomes, enhance wellbeing, and support safe, timely patient journeys across Health New Zealand | Te Whatu Ora.

Working within a multidisciplinary team, the Social Worker undertakes comprehensive biopsychosocial assessments, provides evidence-informed interventions, advocates for patients and whānau, and coordinates access to health and community resources. The role is committed to whānau-centred, strengths-based, trauma-informed, and equity-led practice, with a particular focus on improving outcomes for Māori and other populations experiencing health inequities.

The Social Worker contributes to patient flow and discharge planning, supports complex decision-making, manages psychosocial risk, and works in partnership with patients, whānau, Māori Health teams, and community agencies to achieve sustainable health and wellbeing outcomes.

Key Result Area	Expected Outcomes / Performance Indicators
Assessment and engagement	Undertakes comprehensive biopsychosocial assessments that identify patient, whānau, environmental, cultural, financial, and psychosocial needs, strengths, risks, and protective factors.

	- Establishes effective therapeutic relationships with patients and whānau through culturally safe, person-centred, and trauma-informed practice. - Identifies barriers to health equity and access to services and implements interventions to address these barriers. - Identifies and responds appropriately to issues of vulnerability, abuse, neglect, family violence, mental distress, housing insecurity, substance use, and other psychosocial risks. - Completes safeguarding, risk assessment, and statutory reporting requirements in accordance with legal and organisational obligations.
Care Planning and Intervention	- Develops, implements, monitors, and reviews individualised social work intervention plans in partnership with patients, whānau, and the multidisciplinary team. - Provides psychosocial support, counselling, crisis intervention, advocacy, and practical assistance appropriate to patient needs. - Coordinates access to internal and external services to support safe discharge planning and continuity of care. - Supports patients and whānau to make informed decisions and participate actively in care planning.
Case Management and Collaboration	- Works effectively within multidisciplinary teams, contributing specialist social work knowledge to support holistic patient care. - Facilitates communication and coordination between health services, community agencies, government organisations, and whānau. - Maintains effective partnerships with key stakeholders to support positive patient outcomes. - Escalates complex clinical, ethical, and risk-related concerns appropriately.

Key Result Area	Expected Outcomes / Performance Indicators
Access and Outcomes	- Supports efforts to improve access to services and achieve better outcomes for the communities we serve. - Uses evidence and insights to identify barriers and opportunities for improvement. - Contributes to inclusive, responsive, and effective service delivery.
Te Tiriti o Waitangi	- Demonstrates a commitment to understanding and applying Te Tiriti o Waitangi in a practical and appropriate way. - Supports initiatives that improve outcomes for Māori and strengthen relationships with Māori partners and stakeholders. - Contributes to an inclusive workplace that values diversity and supports the attraction, development and retention of Māori employees.

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.

- Maintains registration and practice standards required by the Social Workers Registration Board.
- Participates in professional supervision, continuing professional development, and reflective practice.
- Maintains accurate, timely, and legally compliant clinical documentation.
- Contributes to service quality improvement, research, and evidence-informed practice initiatives.

Matters which must be referred to your manager

- Employees are expected to escalate matters early to ensure patient safety, service, continuity and compliance with organisational and legislative requirements.
- Complaints, incidents, or concerns that may result in legal, reputational, or organisational risk.
- Matters involving media enquiries, Official Information Act requests, or contact from external agencies requiring management involvement.
- Concerns relating to professional conduct, competency, or wellbeing of staff members.
- Any suspected breach of privacy, confidentiality, or professional standards.
- Significant service delivery issues that may impact patient care, flow, access, or discharge planning.
- Any actual or potential serious patient safety incident or adverse event.

Relationships

External	Internal
- Other National HNZ social work services and facilities - Ministry of Health - General Practitioners / Medical Centres - Community organisations and support groups - Oranga Tamariki - Work and Income - Accident Compensation Corporation (ACC)]	- Regional Social Work Services - Hospital Services - Clinical Nurse Managers of designated work area(s) - Medical, Nursing and Allied Health services staff - Clinical and Management Support Services staff - All other areas of the HNZ facilities]

About you – to succeed in this role

You will have

Essential:

- NZ-recognised Social Work qualification.
- Full SWRB registration and current Annual Practising Certificate.
- Demonstrated commitment to Te Tiriti o Waitangi and health equity.
- Experience in assessment, intervention, advocacy, and care coordination.
- Strong written and verbal communication skills.
- Competent with digital platforms including outlook, teams and excel.

Desired:

- Experience working within health, acute care, emergency department, mental health, addiction, or community settings.
- Demonstrated experience in crisis intervention and complex case management.
- Knowledge of health and disability systems, community resources, and relevant legislation.
- Experience working with Alcohol and Other Drug (AOD) presentations.
- Training and experience in trauma-informed care.
- Understanding of tikanga Māori, whakawhanaungatanga, and culturally responsive practice.
- Strong advocacy, negotiation, and problem-solving skills.
- Ability to manage competing priorities and work effectively under pressure.
- Experience working collaboratively within multidisciplinary teams.

You will be able to

Essential:

- Deliver results through effective planning, sound judgement, and personal accountability.
- Build trusted relationships and works collaboratively to achieve shared goals.
- Communicate clearly and adapts their approach to different audiences and situations.
- Demonstrate curiosity, adaptability, and a commitment to continuous improvement.
- Maintain high standards of professionalism, integrity, and ethical behaviour.
- Contribute to a positive, inclusive, and safe working environment.
- Take responsibility for their own development and supports the development of others where appropriate.

Desired:

- Build effective therapeutic relationships with patients and whānau.
- Undertake comprehensive biopsychosocial assessments.
- Develop and implement intervention and discharge plans.
- Advocate for patients and support equitable access to services.
- Work collaboratively within multidisciplinary teams.
- Manage complex situations using sound professional judgement.
- Maintain professional standards, registration requirements, and clinical documentation.

ⁱ Salary band reference is for internal benchmarking and role sizing purposes only. The salary band designation is not a term or condition of employment and may be changed by the HNZ. Changes to the salary band will not affect an employee's current salary or remuneration.

ⁱⁱ The Children's Act 2014 makes provisions for the protection of children and helping them thrive, achieve and belong. At Health New Zealand, we safety check every children's worker. The purpose of this safety check is to reduce the risk of harm to young people and is a legal requirement for those employed in work that involves contact with children and young people including face-to-face, over the phone, or email contact. It is part of our commitment to ensuring the wellbeing and safety of children and young people. Your continued employment with Health NZ is conditional on a satisfactory safety check.