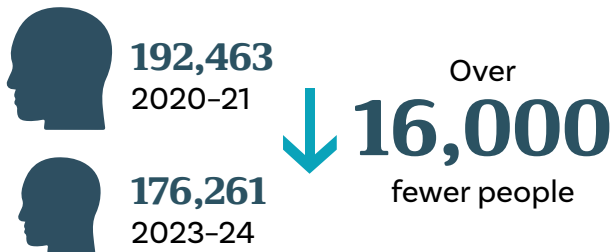


Access to specialist mental health and addiction services, 2023/24

This factsheet provides supplementary information about the number of people accessing specialist mental health and addiction services, with data up to June 2024.¹

Specialist mental health and addiction service use



Latest data to June 2024, shows the number of people using specialist mental health and addiction services continues to decrease. In 2023/24, there were 176,261 people who used specialist services. This is over 3,000 fewer people than in 2022/23 (179,472 people) and over 16,000 fewer people than 2020/21.

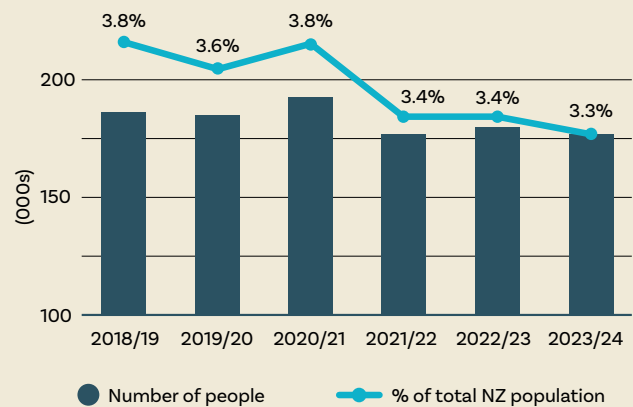
Over the last year, the decrease in access is related to mental health services rather than addiction services (addiction services saw slightly more people in 2023/24 than 2022/23). NGO services experienced a bigger relative decrease (76,069 people seen in 2022/23 to 70,134 people seen in 2023/24) along with Te Whatu Ora services (141,415 people seen in 2022/23 to 139,536 people seen in 2023/24).

These numbers are at the national level, and the changes over time vary by region.

Young people (aged 19-24) experienced the largest relative decrease (from 21,030 in 2022/23 to 19,662 in 2023/24 – 1,368 fewer young people over the last year).

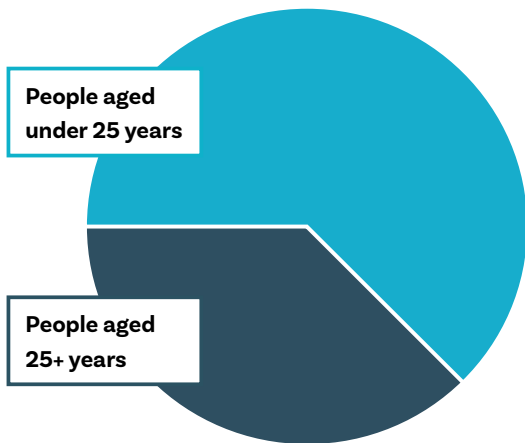
In terms of the total population in New Zealand, this represents an access rate of 3.3 per cent, down from 3.4 in 2022/23 and 3.8 per cent in 2018/19.

Number and percentage of people using specialist services, 2018/19 to 2023/24



¹ Data source: Data in this factsheet is sourced from the PRIMHD dataset. We used an extract date of 23 October 2024, in line with the best practice of waiting 3 months or more from reference year end. PRIMHD is a living data collection which continues to be updated. For this reason, previously published data may be liable to amendments, and data will differ based on the PRIMHD extract date.

Of the over **16,000 fewer people** who used specialist services from the peak of 2020/21 to 2023/24, **nearly 10,000 of these were young people (aged under 25 years).**



Background

Earlier this year, we published a monitoring report **Kua Tīmata Te Haerenga | The Journey Has Begun** which focused on access to mental health and addiction services and options available. It covered data over the five years to June 2023.

This earlier report showed that the number of people accessing specialist mental health and addiction services reduced over the five-year period from 186,929 people (3.8 per cent of the total population) in 2018/19 to 179,472 people (3.4 per cent) in 2022/23.²

We reported the reduction in access to specialist services is not due to decreasing need but due to significant workforce shortages in specialist services, and services focusing on caring for those with higher and more severe needs.

While the Access and Choice programme has improved access for people with mild to moderate needs, people with higher needs are having difficulty accessing specialist services.

Broader performance story

Understanding access to specialist services requires a broad set of measures to bring together a range of factors such as workforce vacancies, investment into services, wait times and service intensity. It also relates to access to other mental health and addiction services, including through primary care. The number of people using the Access and Choice programme services continues to increase over time.

This factsheet has information on only one of these measures, as an update to the wealth of data in our last monitoring report Kua Tīmata Te Haerenga. We are also working on our monitoring of a broader set of measures which will be published by June 2025. This will include a package of products including:

- a report on the roll-out of the Access and Choice programme
- updating the online He Ara Āwhina dashboard with data to June 2024
- an infographic on access to specialist and primary care services³ including a broader measure set
- a report on our approach to system performance monitoring, with data on key shifts we are monitoring
- an infographic on wellbeing outcomes for people who interact with mental health and addiction services.

Published: February 2025.

² These numbers differ to those published in Kua Tīmata Te Haerenga since this factsheet uses a more recent extract of the PRIMHD dataset (see footnote 1).

³ Primary mental health service data will cover use of the Access and Choice programme services. Data on use of other primary mental health services will be available in the online dashboard.