

SUBMISSION ON OUR COMMUNITY PLAN

To Freepost 178
Our Community Plan
Christchurch City Council
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From Mental Health Foundation of New Zealand
(An organization with around 45 employees.)

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I wish to present my submission at the hearing to be held between May 25 and June 7.

SUBMISSION

This submission mostly comments on the health priorities underpinning this LTCCP. We believe not including a specific mental health component is a serious omission as there is no health without mental health. The community outcome "a city of diverse and inclusive communities" aims for a city where " ... Everyone is able to participate – particularly those who are most vulnerable". We support this measure but believe that the LTCCP does not show how the voices of those most vulnerable are able to be heard. Social inclusion is vital during and after a time of illness for recovery and the CCC needs to show more clearly how the above community outcome is to be achieved over the term of this LTCCP.

Community Outcomes - Health Priorities

1. We support the identification of Health as a key outcome for Christchurch.
2. We note the current outcomes do not have the focus on improving mental health which was in the previous Community Outcomes.
3. Mental illness accounts for 15 percent of the total illness in the developed world, with depression set to become the second leading cause of disability in the world by 2020, according to the World Health Organization. In New Zealand, at any one time an estimated 20 percent of the population have a mental illness and/or addiction and 3 percent are severely affected.¹

¹ Ministry of Health. 2003. Health and Independence Report: Director-General's annual report on the state of public health. Wellington: Ministry of Health.

4. Improving Mental Health was identified as a key issue/challenge in the previous community outcomes (2004/14). Mental Health is an important health issue and is a priority health area for the Government, as reflected in The New Zealand Health Strategy and The New Zealand Disability Strategy and as set out in Te Tāhuhu - Improving Mental Health 2005– 2015: The Second New Zealand Mental Health and Addiction Plan. The CDHB has identified mental health as one of the top five health priorities for Canterbury.
5. We note that the Community Mapping Project report, sponsored by Christchurch City Council and a number of other agencies and used as a background for the community outcomes, concluded that:

The consultation and data available suggested that mental illness is a major health challenge facing health services and the community as a whole²

The Council's Contribution to Mental Health

6. The WHO identifies lack of housing, transport, isolation, neighbourhood disorganisation and social disadvantage (among other factors) as risks for mental illness. It identifies social participation, social services and social support and community networks (among other factors) as being protective of mental / emotional wellbeing.³ These are all factors which the Council can and does influence.
7. Housing is important given the mental wellbeing needs of the population. The link between poor housing and depression is well recognised. Having a mental illness can result in different housing requirements, and those with mental illness are more likely to encounter housing problems and the negative impacts of poor housing.⁴
8. Increasingly, the CDHB's approach to mental illness is to focus on community based care, backed up by specialist services.⁵ This magnifies the need for appropriate housing for those with mental illness. Housing solutions need to ensure people with mental illness:
 - have access to affordable quality housing;
 - are not disadvantaged by housing tenure;
 - have choice of a range of housing options according to their needs and preferences within reasonable economic constraints;
 - are not in serious housing need;
 - are free from discrimination in relation to housing;
 - are assured of accommodation which provides for privacy, personal; dignity and safety.⁶

² Christchurch City Council et al 2004. *Christchurch Community Mapping Project Summary Report*. Christchurch. Page 33

³ World Health Organization. 2004. *Prevention of Mental Disorders: Effective Interventions and Policy Options*. Geneva. WHO. Page 21

⁴ Mental Health Commission. 1999. *Housing and Mental Health*. Wellington. MHC. Page 3.

⁵ Canterbury District health Board. 2004. *Canterbury Needs Assessment 2004*. page 86.

⁶ Mental Health Commission. 1999. *Housing and Mental Health*. Wellington. MHC. Page 3.

9. We support the Council's ongoing provision of social housing for people with mental illnesses.
10. We understand the Council intends to develop a housing strategy. We would like to be involved in the development of that strategy.

Recommendations

The Mental Health Foundation

- supports the identification of health as a key component of the well-being of Christchurch residents in the Community Outcomes 2006 to 2016.
- recommends that *mental health* be specifically reintroduced as a focus in the Community Outcomes.
- recommends that the council show more clearly how the community outcome "*a city of diverse and inclusive communities*" aims for a city where "*... Everyone is able to participate – particularly those who are most vulnerable*" is to be achieved over the term on the LTCCP.
- recommends that the Council, as a sponsor of Healthy Christchurch, works with its Healthy Christchurch partners to develop measurable health goals and strategies for action.
- supports the Council's ongoing provision of social housing for people with mental illnesses.
- would like to be involved in the development of the Housing Strategy.