



**New online perinatal mental health support
for whānau in Waikato**

What's launching?

A free, online perinatal mental health service supporting parents and caregivers who are experiencing mild to moderate distress, anxiety or depressive symptoms and who have children aged up to 5 years.

The new service is fully funded for its first year through Health New Zealand's Mental Health and Addictions Innovation Fund, with generous support from the Wright Family Foundation and the Masfen Foundation.

Location: Online
(initially focussed on the Waikato region)

Why this matters

- ♥ Up to 18% of māmā and around 10% of pāpā experience perinatal mental health challenges
- ♥ The consequences of unmet mental health needs are significant and life-threatening
- ♥ Many whānau do not meet criteria for specialist services, and existing services are significantly under-resourced
- ♥ Early intervention and responsive support can reduce escalation and mental health risk for whānau.

How the service works

- ♥ Free, early intervention, short term, non-acute mental health support
- ♥ A multidisciplinary team providing online services (i.e. video call)
- ♥ Strengths-based, holistic assessment and care planning
- ♥ Individual therapeutic sessions, whānau support, group programmes and workshops
- ♥ Advocacy and referral to other services with navigation support as required
- ♥ Integrated with Plunket services including Well Child Tamariki Ora, Community Services and PlunketLine, including breastfeeding and sleep support.

This service does not replace specialist services or crisis care.

Access and referrals

- ♥ Referrals will be accepted from 2 March 2026
- ♥ Referrals can be made by health and social service professionals, including Plunket and PlunketLine kaimahi
- ♥ At this time, self-referrals to the new service will not be accepted.



Eligibility criteria

The Whānau Āwhina Plunket online perinatal wellbeing service supports whānau who:

- ♥ are experiencing challenges adjusting to parenting and/or mild to moderate distress/depression and / or anxiety
- ♥ during the perinatal period (i.e. we are focussing on mental health challenges that are related to the antenatal period and/or having a child/children under 5 years old)
- ♥ live in the Waikato region
- ♥ can access the service (i.e. have a phone or computer with internet)
- ♥ consent to the service.

Working together

Plunket is committed to collaborating with iwi, hauora, health, social and community providers, and supporting whānau-centred transitions in care.

Any questions? For more information please contact:

Maree Eales

Service Manager

Maree.Eales@plunket.org.nz

Maria Van Der Plas

Regional Operations Manager, Central & Southern

Maria.VanDerPlas@plunket.org.nz

Nat Hornyak

Head of Service Development

Nat.Hornyak@plunket.org.nz

With support from:

Health New Zealand
Te Whatu Ora



MASFEN
FOUNDATION



whānau āwhina
plunket