**1st August 2025**

**Expression of Interest (EOI)**

**Independent Researcher – Eastern Bay Primary Mental Health – Discovery, Definition and Design**

Tēnā koutou,

Eastern Bay Primary Health Alliance are seeking an experienced Independent Researcher to support the discovery, definition and initial design phase of primary mental health services in the Eastern Bay of Plenty, with a strong emphasis on early intervention, accessible care, and culturally safe support systems for whānau, particularly Māori, Rangatahi, and rural communities.

This work is a commitment to strengthening local mental health services and ensuring whānau receive the right support at the right time, in ways that reflect their uniqueness, aspirations, and needs.

**Context within the Continuum of Care**

This initiative supports the understanding and strengthening of the primary level of the mental health and addiction continuum, the point at which individuals and whānau typically first seek help.

It recognises that:

* Primary mental health operates as a preventive and early response layer
* It is connected to both community-based supports and specialist services, requiring clear referral, escalation, and step-down pathways
* A culturally safe, well-functioning primary mental health layer helps reduce pressure on secondary and acute services and enables earlier, more whānau-friendly care

This scoping work will clarify where primary services sit, how they connect, and what's missing in the current continuum especially for whānau Māori, rangatahi, and those living in rural and isolated communities.

**Purpose:**

* Define what primary mental health currently looks like in the Eastern Bay of Plenty
* Describe the target population, especially those with unmet need
* Understand how primary services link across the wider continuum of careIdentify opportunities to design or enhance services that are earlier, more connected, and culturally grounded

The work here will help inform a blueprint to undertake similar initiatives across the region.

**Scope of Work**

Discovery

* Map all primary-level mental health and addiction services (clinical and non-clinical)
* Identify current providers, roles, funding models, and entry/referral pathways
* Gather whānau, rangatahi, and kaimahi voice on lived experience of access, support, and gaps
* Examine how primary services link to community, kaupapa Māori, NGO, and secondary care providers

Definition

* Describe the function, coverage, and purpose of primary mental health in the local system
* Define who is being reached and who is being missed
* Clarify the intended role of primary services in the stepped care model
* Identify current inequities in access, quality, or cultural safety

# Design (Early Framing)

* Propose future service elements that reflect local needs and system integration
* Identify role-specific and cultural workforce needs
* Support a shift to earlier, whänau-centered, equitable responses
* Outline short-term and long-term options for development or investment
* Provide innovative insights and or recommendations into the use of Information technology and artificial technology

# Target Population

The discovery phase is expected to confirm the target population which:

* People with mild to moderate mental health and addiction needs, especially High needs population within urban settings
* People living in rural or isolated communities (e.g. Murupara, Tōrere, Ōpötiki surrounds)
* Populations with complex social need but not yet engaged in secondary care o Whānau experiencing distress, disconnection, or unmet wellbeing needs

# Alignment and Foundations

This discovery phase supports:

* Te Pae Tata — Integrated primary and community care
* Access and Choice Programme intent
* Whakamaua — Equity and whānau-centered care
* He Ara Oranga — Enabling community-led mental wellbeing
* Te Manawa Taki's regional model of care and equity commissioning principles

# Deliverables

* Current-state map of services, workforce, and referral points
* Summary of whänau and provider voice (themes, quotes, access insights
* Working definition of:
* What primary mental health looks like locally
* Who it is for, and who it is missing
* How it connects within the continuum of care
* Early design framework with investment options

Completion of work is expected by 1st June 2026, with staged deliverables agreed upon collaboratively.

**Reporting:**

* Monthly touchpoints with Eastern Bay Primary Health Alliance and Te Whatu Ora — Te Manawa Taki Mentally Well Team
* Final report and slide deck due by 1st June 2026
* Presentation Hui or workshop to share findings back with regional/local partners

**Budget:**

The budget allocated for this kaupapa is $60,000. All proposals must remain within the allocated budget. Details of the payment schedule will be discussed and agreed upon with the preferred candidate.

**How to Submit**

Please submit an Expression of Interest that includes:

* A cover letter outlining your suitability, approach, and understanding of the kaupapa.
* CV or bio with relevant experience.
* Examples of similar work (if available).
* Indicative budget (daily or project-based rate).
* High – Level Project Plan and timeframe inclusive of Methodology

We also note that this process will involve expressions of interest only. A preferred candidate will be selected in partnership with Te Whatu Ora.

EOIs are due by 29th August 2025 and can be emailed to:

**Contact**

For more information or a kōrero about the opportunity, please email:

contracts@ebpha.org.nz