

Job Title: Head of Equity and System Influence

Function: Māori and Health Equity

Reports to: General Manager Māori and Health Equity

Last review date: August 2026

*Ngā hapori pakari. Ngā whānau māia. Ngā tamariki houkura.
Strong communities. Confident whānau. Thriving children.*

Whānau Āwhina Plunket – who we are and what we are about

Whānau Āwhina Plunket is a charity organisation and the largest service supporting the health and wellbeing of tamariki under-five and their whānau in Aotearoa. We're proud to visit over 80% of all newborn babies in Aotearoa and to support pēpē, tamariki and their whānau.

We aim to be a cohesive and effective national organisation grounded in evidence and best practice, with the needs of New Zealand whānau/families at the centre of everything we do.

Our Whānau Āwhina Plunket Goals are:

Pae Ora: Healthy Futures:

- **Mauri Ora:** Healthy babies and children
- **Whānau Ora:** Healthy confident families
- **Wai Ora:** Healthy environments and connected communities

We are on a pro-equity journey where we strive to give life to Te Tiriti o Waitangi principles of Tino Rangatiratanga, partnership, active protection, equity and options in our mahi/work to ensure healthy tamariki, confident whānau and connected communities.

Whānau Āwhina Plunket Values

In this role you will be expected to operate in a way that embodies and demonstrates Whānau Āwhina Plunket values as follows:

- **Māia** – to be courageous and lean into discomfort and challenge as we walk the path of pro-equity
- **Tūhono** – to connect and stand in relationship in calm and safe spaces (āhuru Mōwai)
- **Manaaki** – to care, love, nurture, support and mana enhancing. Respects mana atua, mana tīpuna, mana whenua, mana tangata
- **Māhaki** – to be humble as we share our knowledge experience to understand and learn from each other and foster trust.

Overview of the Māori and Health Equity Function

The Māori and Health Equity Portfolio/Directorate provides strategic leadership and specialist expertise to embed Te Tiriti o Waitangi and equity across Whānau Āwhina Plunket. We work across the organisation to shape the systems, capability, relationships, intelligence and decisions that enable equitable outcomes, with a focus on sustainable, system-level change rather than standalone advice or interventions.

Our distinctive contribution is bringing together Te Tiriti and Māori leadership, priority population insights, organisational capability, equity intelligence, assurance and system influence to drive change. We build organisational capability and accountability and use evidence, evaluation and learning to understand what is changing, whether it is making a measurable difference, and what needs to happen next.

Purpose of the Position

The Head of Equity and System Influence provides strategic leadership and direction for health equity, priority population outcomes, equity intelligence and assurance, advocacy and system influence across Whānau Āwhina Plunket - ensuring that initiatives to address health inequities are rooted in evidence-based data and population health approaches.

The Head of Equity and System Influence leads Whānau Āwhina Plunket's collective understanding of equity and impact – bringing together evidence, data, evaluation, lived experience and priority population insights to understand what is happening, what is making a difference, for whom and why, and what the organisation should do next.

The role leads the development of the organisation conditions, systems and ways of working required to embed equity into how Whānau Āwhina Plunket plans, makes decisions, invests, designs and delivers services, measures impact and continuously improves.

Working alongside Māori leadership within the directorate, and other T3 leaders, the role provides systems change leadership, ensures Whānau Āwhina Plunket can demonstrate progress against its Te Tiriti and equity commitments, and translates organisational learning into improved practice, stronger accountability, advocacy and wider system influence. In this regard, the Head of Equity and System Influence will keep abreast of our operating context, by analysing global and national trends, initiatives and research, and maintaining relationships with key government and non-government stakeholders.

The role leads a high-performing team to deliver integrated and prioritised programmes of work that build organisational capability and create sustainable change.

Key Dimensions of the Position

Responsible to: GM, Māori and Health Equity

Responsible for:	Principal Advisor Pasifika Principal Advisor Priority Populations Senior Advisor Priority Populations and Advocacy
Delegations:	The position's full delegations are set out in the Schedule of Delegations and may be amended from time to time.
Functional relationships:	<i>To follow are the main positions that this role will coordinate with; they are not meant or intended to be exhaustive, exclusive or limiting:</i>

Internal:

- Board
- Executive Leadership Team
- Regional Operations Manager
- Head of Communications
- Ngā Pou Hihiri
- Education Team
- Community Services Manager
- Regional Support Services Team Leaders
- Clinical Services Manager
- Clinical Leaders
- Plunket Nurses
- Health Workers
- Volunteers

External:

- Central government agencies, e.g (Te Whatu Ora, Ministries of Health, Social Development and Oranga Tamariki)
- Iwi and Māori organisations
- Interagency groups and bodies
- Key stakeholders in the sector, including child health and social service agencies, not-for-profits and NGOs
- Tertiary education institutions

Accountabilities

Equity and Systems Change Leadership

- Provides strategic advice and support to the General Manager Māori and Health Equity, Chief Executive, ELT, governance and senior leaders on health equity, priority population outcomes and equity implications of organisational decisions and resource allocation.
- Champions equity as a core organisational responsibility and leads its integration into planning, investment, service design, transformation, workforce, digital, commissioning and performance.
- Works with T3 leaders to identify systemic barriers to equity and designs organisation-wide responses.
- Lead and support the design of frameworks, methodologies and processes that embed equity into organisational practice from the outset.

Advocacy and System Influence

- Responsible for developing and delivering, in collaboration with other functions, Whānau Āwhina Plunket's advocacy strategy and work programme
- Strengthens Whānau Āwhina Plunket's role as a thought leader and influential voice in child health and wellbeing, using evidence, equity intelligence and lived experience to shape policy, system settings and wider sector change.
- Initiates, develops and maintains external strategic relationships with advocacy partners, including with key sectors (both government and non-government) within child and family health and wellbeing.

- Develops and implements accessible mechanisms to leverage our geographical reach, and amplify the voices of our clients, our kaimahi and our supporters and partners, to ensure our advocacy strategy and work programme addresses lived issues and experiences of whānau, with a particular focus on priority populations.
- Monitors legislative developments, the Select Committee process and other sector changes impacting our advocacy and strategy work.
- Responsible for writing submissions and other advocacy material on behalf of the CE and Whānau Āwhina Plunket.

Equity Intelligence and Priority Population Leadership

- Provides leadership and guidance over the priority population work programme to ensure it aligns to and informs strategy, advocacy and service delivery objectives, and supports organisational decision-making.
- Provides strategic leadership for Whānau Āwhina Plunket's approach to priority populations, ensuring that initiatives aimed at reducing health inequities are underpinned by sound evidence-base and population health approaches.
- Builds and strengthens strategic relationships with priority population partners and communities to enable meaningful engagement, co-design and shared understanding of what matters.
- Builds organisational capability to understand and respond to priority population needs, enabling leaders and teams to develop effective relationships and apply equity insights in their own decision-making and practice.

Assurance and Accountability

- Alongside Māori leadership within the directorate, co-leads the development and implementation of Te Tiriti and equity assurance frameworks that strengthen organisational accountability for commitments and outcomes.
- Establishes meaningful measures and evaluation approaches to track progress, assess impact and understand whether change is making a difference, for whom and why.
- Provides evidence-based assurance and critical insight to senior leadership and governance on progress, impact, persistent inequities and areas requiring further action.
- Translates evaluation, assurance and organisational learning into continuous improvement, informing future priorities, investment, service design and organisational change.

People Leadership and Delivery:

- Demonstrates organisational leadership by being a positive agent of change, and role modelling the desired culture and ways of working
- Translates strategic priorities into clear, integrated and achievable work programmes, with defined outcomes, responsibilities and measures of success
- Provides effective oversight of delivery, actively managing priorities, resources, dependencies and risks to maximise team impact and organisational value
- Leads and develops a high-performing Health Equity and System Influence team, building the capability, confidence and accountability required to deliver the portfolio/directorate's priorities and operating model
- Foster a collaborative, adaptive and learning-focused culture that supports cross-directorate working, continuous improvement and collective accountability for equitable outcomes

Relationship Management:

- Works cross functionally and collaboratively with others to achieve the right outcomes for Whānau Āwhina Plunket.
- Able to have difficult conversations, and challenging thinking and behaviours in a respectful manner so as to get the right outcome for the organisation, while also maintaining the relationship.

- Partners with the wider Māori and Health Equity portfolio/directorate, as well as other leaders, to ensure Te Tiriti and equity is integrated into frameworks, policies and tools aligned to key organisation processes.
- Builds and maintains a wide range of connections, both internal and external, and looks for opportunities to facilitate connections between others.
- Quickly establishes credibility and working relationships to be an effective coach of managers.
- Works as an active member of cross functional teams to bring their expertise and experience to organisational problems, and thus develop long term solutions that are outcomes focused.
- Seeks feedback about the service they provide and self-reflect on ways to improve.

Health & Safety

- Manage own personal health and safety, and takes appropriate action to deal with workplace hazards, accidents and incidents.
- Ensures safety for own and others at all times and observes health and safety practices in all workplace activities.
- Understand the responsibility individuals and their manager play in health and safety.
- Team training is up-to-date and all team members can demonstrate actions in an emergency that are specific to the workplace and are designed to keep individuals safe.
- Comply with relevant safety legislation, policies, procedures, safe systems of work and event reporting.
- Identify and report all incidents, accidents, and near misses in accordance with policy.

Position Description and Scope of Duties

The job holder is expected to perform such other duties as can reasonably be regarded as incidental to the position description, and such other duties reasonably within their experience and capabilities as may be from time to time assigned following consultation.

Once appointed a programme of work will be developed with the appointee that will set out the specific tasks and time frames to achieve the key deliverables for this position. Progress will be monitored through Whānau Āwhina Plunket's performance and development programmes.

Person Specification

Qualifications:

- Relevant tertiary qualification(s) in a relevant discipline (e.g. public health, social sciences, public policy, community development).

Experience:

- Previous experience in a senior-level strategy, public policy and/or advocacy role
- Proven experience of building strong relationships and credibility at senior levels within an organisation, including engagement and workshop facilitation at ELT and Board level.
- A strategic thinker who understands the bigger picture, can think laterally about issues, risks and opportunities and uses these insights to drive timely, quality and evidence-based deliverables.
- Proven ability to analyse and translate complex concepts and themes into easy to understand and meaningful insights that can be practically applied to Whānau Āwhina Plunket's work.
- A 'hands on', practical leader who relishes close involvement with developing and delivering strategies and advocacy material and resources.
- Health sector experience preferred.
- Understanding of NZ machinery of Government preferred.
- Proven ability to lead, coach and mentor others and to share knowledge and expertise in a reciprocal way that builds overall capability.

Skills

- A clear and concise communicator with excellent writing skills
- Strong stakeholder relationship building and engagement skills to effectively bring about solutions to challenges by gaining the cooperation and commitment of others.
- Proven ability to influence others to achieve the required outcomes through their sound evidence-based knowledge, impartial advice and professional credibility.
- Able to manage and drive delivery through times of ambiguity and based on incomplete information.
- Understands diverse business requirements and tailor services to meet these needs.
- Exercises judgement and takes a pragmatic approach in problem solving.

I have read and understood the above position description and accept all the above responsibilities incorporated herein.

Head of Equity and System Influence

Date

General Manager Māori and Health Equity

Date