

Healthy Futures for New Zealand

Two Lives. Two Futures. One Choice This Election.

People with ME and Long COVID know the truth: **outcomes depend on the system — not the person.** This election, we're asking our members, whānau, and allies to help ensure the system protects people rather than abandons them.

When the system works

Some people become unwell after a viral illness and receive **early recognition**. Their clinician understands **PEM, orthostatic intolerance, and pacing**. They avoid deterioration, stay connected to whānau, and access community support early. They remain independent, safer, and visible to the system.

When the system fails

Others are told to “push through,” exercise more, or stay positive. Every crash makes them worse. Within months, they may be unable to stand, tolerate light or sound, or access care. Their whānau carry everything alone. They become invisible to the system.

This difference is preventable.

It is the difference between **early recognition** and **preventable deterioration**. Between **community care** and **postcode lotteries**. Between **long-term planning** and **falling through the cracks every election cycle**.

The Three Pillars for Long-Term Conditions

These pillars are the foundation of a fair, effective system:

1. Prevention & Early Recognition

Training clinicians to recognise PEM, dysautonomia, and post-viral conditions. Coding and tracking so people don't disappear. Harm-prevention as the first principle of care.



2. Long-Term Investment in Community Care

Crisis care, home support, respite, and regional equity. NGOs funded to meet need – not just survive.

3. A 10-Year Bipartisan Plan for Long-Term Conditions

Stability across election cycles. A national LTC registry. Annual reporting and accountability. ME and Long COVID included from the start.

Why this matters now

The increasing prevalence of post-viral conditions makes it clear that current gaps can no longer be sustained. Conditions with far lower prevalence already receive dedicated services, research funding, and government commitment. People with ME and Long COVID deserve **equitable access** to the same level of coordinated care.

Early recognition and intervention reduce diagnostic delays, prevent deterioration, and lower hospitalisation rates. The cost of doing nothing is increased pressure on GPs, a shrinking workforce, exhausted carers, and avoidable hospitalisation.

Your voice matters

This election, we're asking you to contact your MP and say:

"We need a long-term plan for long-term conditions – and ME and Long COVID must be included."

Use the questions and template letter on the next page to help guide your conversation.

Your Election Toolkit

Five Questions to Ask Your MP

1. Disability Definition vs Access

ME and Long COVID meet the Government's own definition of disability, yet people with these conditions are excluded from Disability Support Services. What will your party do to resolve this discrepancy and ensure equitable access across all disabilities?

2. Prevention & Early Recognition (Pillar 1)

Early recognition prevents deterioration and reduces hospitalisation. What is your party's plan to ensure clinicians are trained to recognise PEM, dysautonomia, and orthostatic intolerance so people receive safe, timely care?

3. Community Care & NGO Funding (Pillar 2)

NGOs are essential health infrastructure, yet most are funded to survive rather than meet need. Will your party commit to sustainable funding for NGO-delivered community care, including crisis care and home support?

4. Long-Term Planning (Pillar 3)

Will your party support a 10-year, cross-party Long-Term Conditions Strategy – including a national LTC registry – so ME and Long COVID are not left out of planning every election cycle? And will you meet with ANZMES to discuss this opportunity?

5. Cross-Cutting Equity & Prioritisation

What is your manifesto position on supporting *all* long-term conditions – not just the 'big four'? And how will your party ensure people with invisible or poorly understood conditions are not deprioritised?

Template Letter for Your MP

(Members can copy/paste or print)

Subject: A Request for Action on Long-Term Conditions in Aotearoa

Kia ora [MP Name],

I am writing as a constituent and as someone affected by ME, Long COVID, or other long-term conditions. These conditions currently have no consistent coding, no tracking, no care pathways, and no crisis support. People like me – and thousands of others – are falling through the cracks.

I am asking you to support the Three Pillars for Long-Term Conditions:

1. **Prevention & Early Recognition** – training clinicians to recognise PEM, dysautonomia, and post-viral conditions; ending harmful advice; and embedding harm-prevention as the first principle of care.
2. **Long-Term Investment in Community Care** – crisis care, home support, respite, regional equity, and sustainable NGO funding.
3. **A 10-Year Bipartisan Plan** – a national LTC registry, annual reporting, and ME and Long COVID included from the start.

I also ask you to address the equity gap where ME and Long COVID meet the Government's own definition of disability but are excluded from Disability Support Services.

ANZMES the National Advisory body on ME and associated conditions, who represents our sector, is ready to partner with government to develop a cross-party parliamentary group - please meet with them urgently.

Please confirm your commitment to raising these issues within your caucus and supporting a fair, evidence-based approach to long-term conditions.

Ngā mihi,

[Your Name]

[Your Electorate]