IN-CONFIDENCE

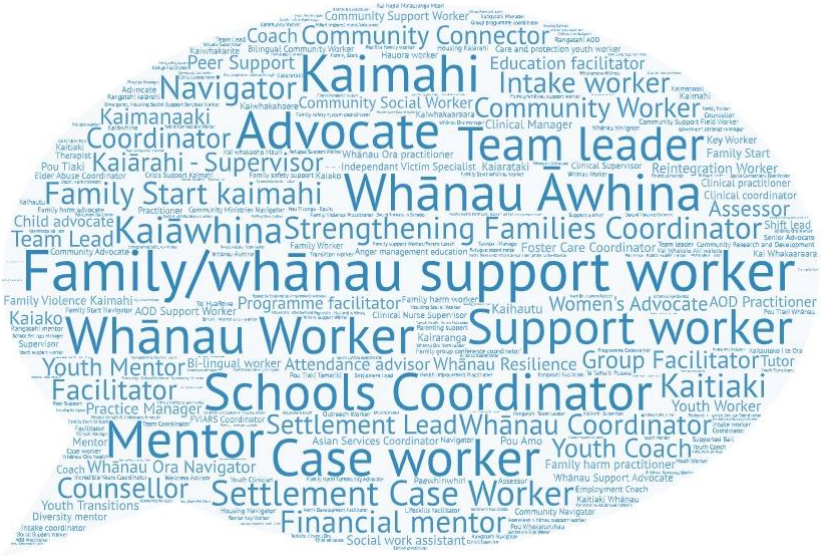
Appendix One

Social Workers Registration Board

Kāhui Whakamana Tauwhiro

ADDRESSING PUBLIC SAFETY FOR SOCIAL WORKER-LIKE KAIMAHI

Engagement with the social work and broader sector between March 2023 and February 2024



Contents

Purpose of the paper

1. The purpose of this paper is to inform you of the work the Social Workers Registration Board (SWRB) has done to better understand social worker-like roles, with a focus on public safety considerations. It provides detail and insight into the engagement that has taken place with social work sector leaders, registered social workers, social worker-like kaimahi, and social worker-like kaiwhakahaere/managers.

Executive summary

2. Engagement with the social work sector has been an important part of the work the SWRB undertook to better understand social worker-like roles. In this report we refer to category 3 workers (defined for the purposes of the pay equity claim[1]) as either 'social worker-like kaimahi' (worker) or 'social worker-like kaiwhakahaere' (team leaders and managers of social worker-like kaimahi). Where workers, team leaders and managers might fall outside a pay equity category, we refer to them as simply 'kaimahi' or 'kaiwhakahaere'.

3. We took three distinct approaches for the engagement:
   - Kōrero with government and NGO sector leaders, and experts.
   - A survey of category 3 kaimahi and kaiwhakahaere.
   - Targeted stakeholder engagement in the form of hui with service-specific kaimahi and kaiwhakahaere.

4. We gained considerable insight into the category 3 worker as a result of such diverse engagement. We know that this group of workers carries out very similar mahi to that of registered social workers. We also found that most of this group is supervised (although not always by a registered social worker), and nearly all work within recognised social worker frameworks.

5. However, through the engagement, we have learnt that not all practice aligns with social worker regulation and legislation, as in the Social Workers Registration Act 2003 (the Act), and this potentially puts the public at risk.

Background

6. In November 2022, Cabinet agreed to extend the pay equity benefits to all social workers and other workers undertaking substantially similar work in community and iwi organisations. The Public Service Commission Te Kawa Mataaho led the pay equity extension process and completed work with the sector to assess and cost eligibility for the pay equity extension. Four categories were applied to define eligibility of the social worker and social worker-like workforce.

7. At the same time, Cabinet agreed to fund the SWRB to undertake a project to engage with, scope and identify public safety considerations for the category 3 workforce, those unregulated workers that carry out work substantially similar to social work.

8. Category 3 is the only category where professional registration with an occupational regulator is not a requirement. The key screening criteria for identifying category 3 workers were that:
   - 80 percent of their day-to-day work overlaps with the same tasks as a registered social worker
   - they are supervised or overseen by a registered social worker
   - their main activity cannot be budgeting, youth work, financial mentoring, administration or needs assessment.

[1] In 2019, the Public Service Association raised a claim with five NGOs for social workers and people doing the same or substantially similar work. This identified four categories of work: category 1: Registered social workers; category 2: Registered professionals (but not registered social workers) employed in a social work role; category 3: Professionals undertaking work substantially similar to social work, but not regulated; and category 4: Registered social workers or other registered professionals leading social work practice.

Methodology

9. We know that social worker-like kaimahi are doing important mahi and engaging with the same whānau and communities as registered social workers. To help us better understand the social worker-like workforces, the SWRB engaged with government and NGO sector leaders, and experts.

10. Alongside this engagement, we surveyed employers and workers to help us identify and recognise the workforces within category 3.

11. We also carried out service-specific engagement (mostly in the form of online hui) with kaimahi and kaiwhakahaere to find out:
    - what sort of work they do
    - who the communities are that they work with
    - what their collective skills, qualifications and experience are
    - what other training and professional development support (including supervision) they receive, and what else might be required
    - potential pathways and barriers to becoming a registered social worker
    - how public safety considerations are addressed
    - how they/their managers safeguard against unsafe practice.

Engagement with sector leaders and experts

12. SWRB engagement began by holding kōrero with social worker sector leaders and experts. These included government officials and NGO leaders who gave us insight into the complexities of the social worker-like workforce/s.

13. From government we met with:
    - Public Service Commission Te Kawa Mataaho
    - Ministry of Social Development
    - Oranga Tamariki
    - Te Kāhui Kāhu
    - Health New Zealand Te Whatu Ora
    - Community, Health, Education and Social Services Workforce Development Council Toitū Te Waiora
    - Kāiawhina Workforce Programme team
    - Ministry of Health
    - Independent Children's Commissioner.

14. NGO sector leaders and experts we met with[2] include:
    - Dr Clare Achmad and Rose Ryan – Social Service Providers Aotearoa
    - Brenda Pilott – independent contractor who worked on the pay equity claim
    - Mike Munnelly – Barnados Aotearoa
    - Braden Clark – Aotearoa New Zealand Association of Social Workers
    - Miriama Scott and June Edwards – Tangata Whenua Social Workers Association
    - Nikki Hurst – New Zealand Council of Christian Social Services
    - Dr Ang Jury – Women's Refuge
    - Sally Dalhousie – The Fono
    - Rose Henderson – Director, Allied Health, Te Whatu Ora/SWRB
    - Rory Truell – International Federation of Social Workers
    - Shannon Pakura – Chair, Social Workers Registration Board

[2] Some of those named no longer work for the organisations they represented at the time of the engagement.

- Dalice Prebble, Social Work Supervisor
- Te Kāhui Ringa Rehe – Māori Board Advisory Group, Social Workers Registration Board.[3]

15. Our discussions highlighted the valuable mahi these unregulated workers are doing in their communities. There is a need to identify, acknowledge and support these workers, some of whom may be eligible to apply to the SWRB for registration as a social worker. Discussions also highlighted considerable gaps in the regulatory framework.

16. The regulatory regime for social workers was a direct response to the assessed risk of harm of poor practice. The intent of the Act is to protect the safety of members of the public by prescribing or providing mechanisms to ensure that social workers are competent to practice. The regulations also ensure that social workers are accountable for the way in which they practice.

Survey

17. There is currently a lack of data and information about the unregulated social worker-like workforce. The survey was designed to better understand the characteristics and needs, and how the social worker-like workforce might be better supported to deliver high quality, safe services.

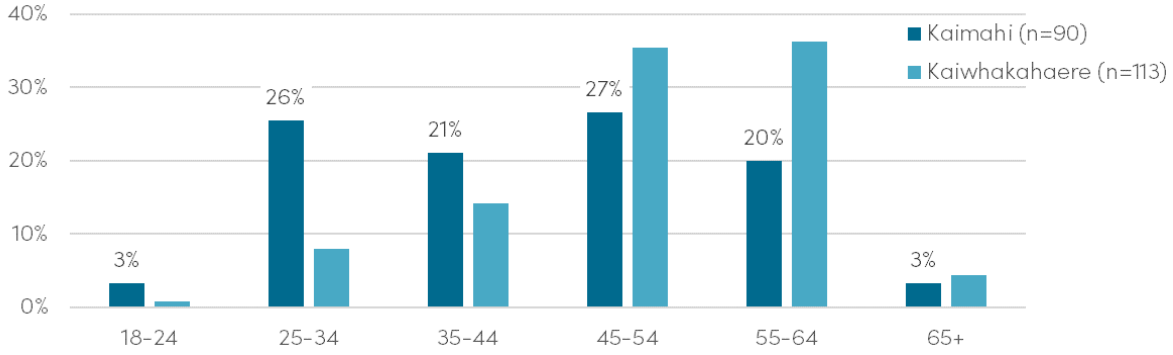
18. The SWRB worked with the Public Service Commission Te Kawa Mataaho (PSC) to inform the social worker-like workforce about this project. They were invited to participate in the survey and/or additional hui and follow-up conversations. Organisations that employ social worker-like kaimahi and kaiwhakahaere were invited to participate through an open invitation from the PSC.

19. The online survey was open from 1-19 June 2023. Respondents who did not answer any survey questions beyond three first demographic questions were excluded from analysis. This meant that although 266 respondents accessed the survey, the analysis was based on a total of 204 after the exclusion of 19 out of 109 from the kaimahi sample and 44 out of 157 from kaiwhakahaere sample[4].

20. No identifying information was collected from or about respondents, and all data files were password protected. Ethnicity responses were coded into categories for the demographic table below.

21. The sample description and summary statistics in this document reflect a total of 203 respondents who completed the survey beyond the first three demographic questions – a total of 90 kaimahi and 113 kaiwhakahaere.

FIGURE 1: AGE DISTRIBUTION – OVERALL SAMPLE



[3] Mahanga Maru (Chair), Graham Warren, Hori Ahomiro, Caroline Herewini.
[4] Not all respondents identified as category 3 kaimahi or kaiwhakahaere, so for the purposes of the survey findings, all respondents are referred to as simply kaimahi or kaiwhakahaere.

FIGURE 2: ETHNICITY – OVERALL SAMPLE

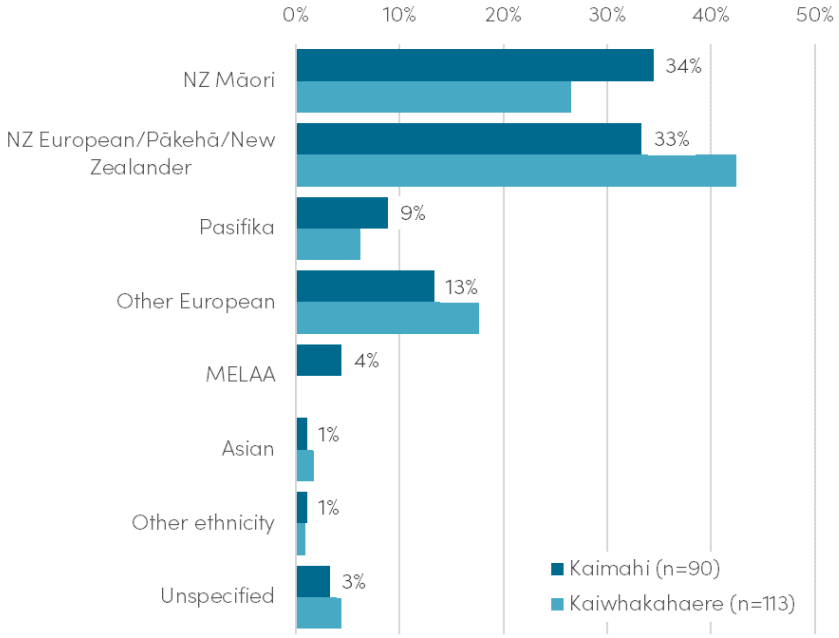
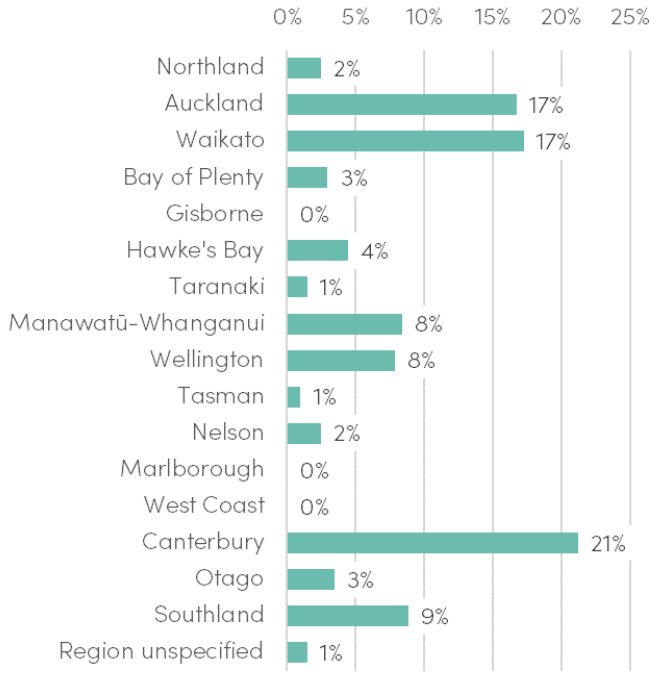


FIGURE 3: GEOGRAPHIC REGION – OVERALL SAMPLE



Kaimahi role

22. Kaimahi were asked questions about the following:
    - job title, length of time and focus of role, primary client group, parts of the job they enjoy and do not enjoy;
    - qualifications, use of frameworks, membership with professional associations or bodies;
    - training and professional development;
    - safety, supervision in role, handling of complaints, confidence in following policies and procedures.

23.

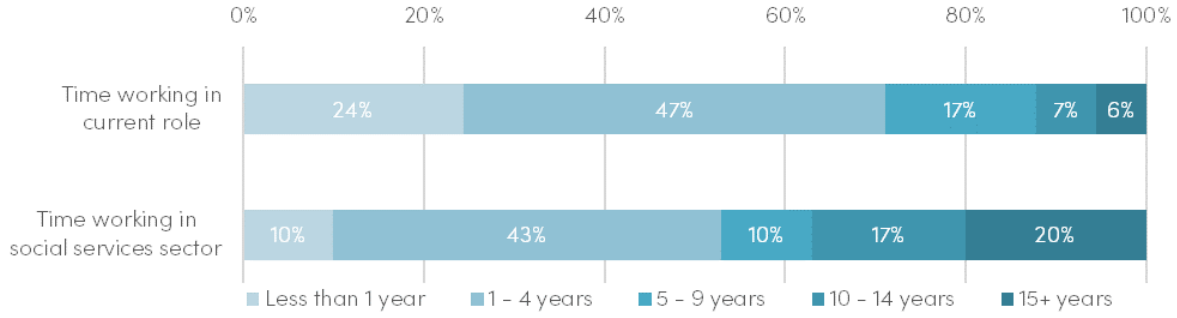
A significant number of questions asked of kaimahi were open-ended, allowing respondents to describe their role, experience or feedback in their own words. Some of these survey questions have been thematically coded to allow for analysis and reporting here.

Job title, length of time in role, focus of role and primary client group

24. Kaimahi were asked an open-ended question where they were invited to describe their job title in their own words.

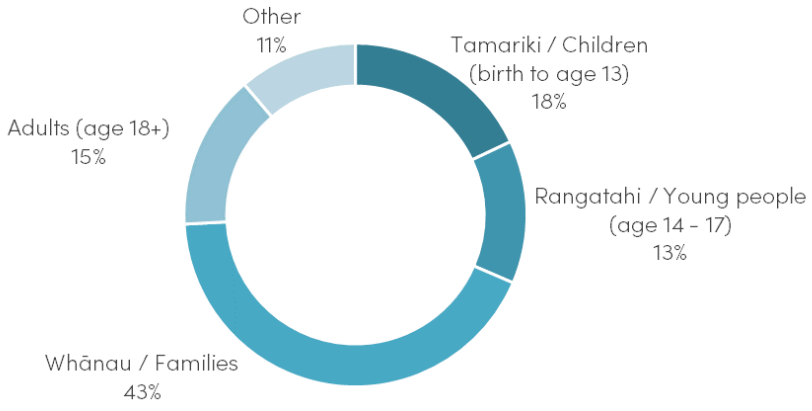
25. Commonly occurring terms within role titles included:
    - Kaimahi
    - Whānau
    - Family support worker
    - Case worker
    - Community connector
    - Worker
    - Navigator
    - Kaiwhakarite
    - Kaiāwhina
    - Advocate
    - Coordinator
    - Mentor

FIGURE 4: TIME KAIMAHI HAVE SPENT IN ROLE



26. Just under half of kaimahi respondents have worked in the social services sector for 1-4 years (43%), and a fifth have worked in the social services sector for 15 or more years (20%).

FIGURE 5: KAIMAHI PRIMARY CLIENT GROUP

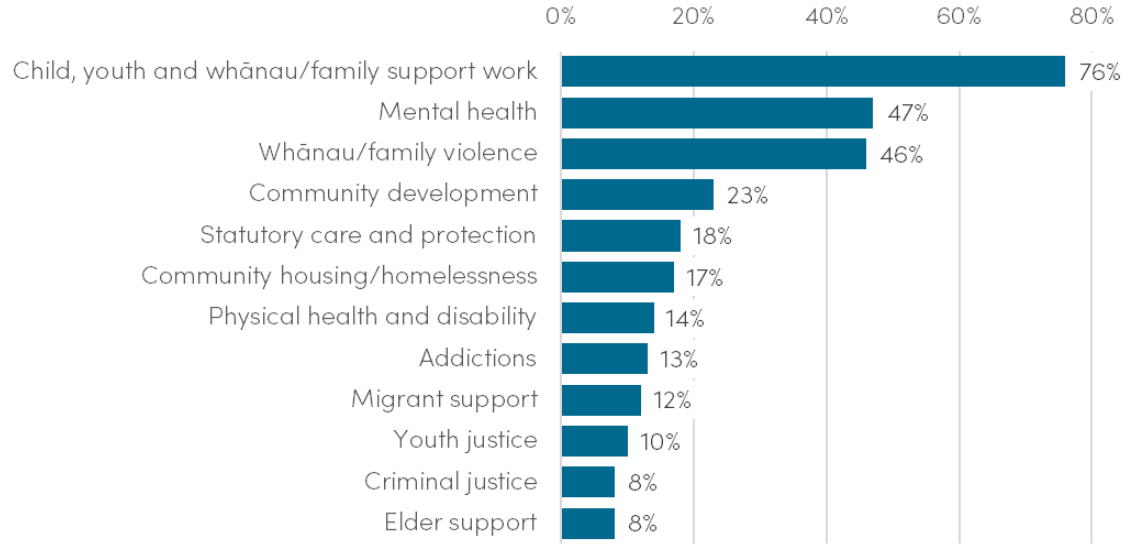


Other responses include 'all ages'; pepe, tamariki and whānau; hapu māmā.

27.

Three quarters of kaimahi respondents identified the main focus of their mahi is child, youth and whānau family support work (76%).

FIGURE 6: MAIN FOCUS OF KAIMAHI WORK



Survey allowed participants to select more than one category, so totals may exceed 100%

Parts of mahi that are rewarding for kaimahi, and parts they do not enjoy

28. Almost all kaimahi respondents (96%) said the most rewarding part of their job is serving/working with/supporting whānau and their community, and 94% agreed that making a difference to people's lives is the most rewarding part of their job.

TABLE 1: MOST REWARDING PARTS OF JOB FOR KAIMAHI

Most rewarding parts of job	Number of kaimahi	Kaimahi %*
Serving/working with/supporting whānau and my community	86	96%
Making a difference to peoples' lives	85	94%
Positive client relationships	77	86%
Positive working environment	66	73%
Continuous learning/professional development	66	73%
Support from the people I work with	64	71%
Varied nature of the role	62	69%
Culturally safe environment	61	68%
Being part of a profession	46	51%
Career growth opportunities	44	49%
Salary	10	11%
Total	**90**	

*Kaimahi were able to select more than one area, so the total is more than 100%

29. Two thirds of kaimahi respondents said that poor pay is the foremost part of their job they do not enjoy (67%), with a third not enjoying a high workload (37%) or lack of career progression (32%).

TABLE 2: PARTS OF THE JOB KAIMAHI DO NOT ENJOY

Parts of your job you do not enjoy	Number of kaimahi	Kaimahi %*
Poor pay	60	67%
High workload	33	37%
Lack of career progression	29	32%
Imbalance of administrative duties and contact time with clients	27	30%
Workplace morale	15	17%
Lack of professional support and training opportunities	14	16%
Unsafe work practices that could affect the public	7	8%
Bullying, discrimination, and harassment in the workplace	7	8%
Total	**90**	

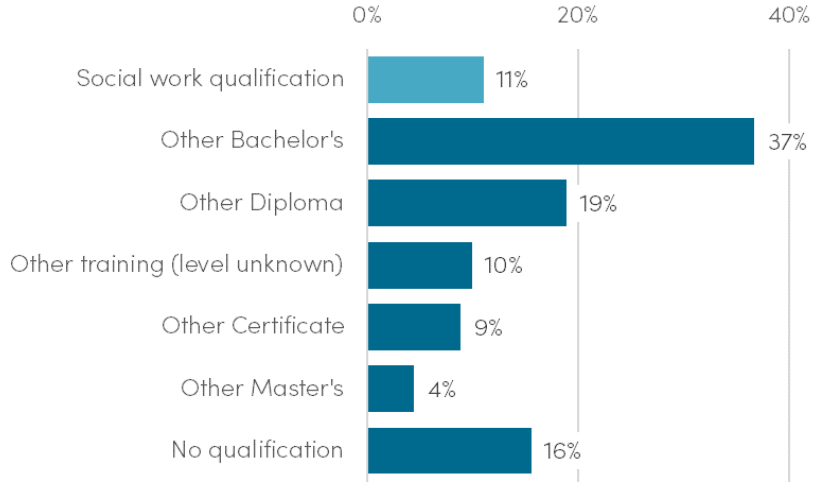
*Kaimahi were able to select more than one area, so the total is more than 100%

Qualifications, use of frameworks, professional affiliations

30. One in ten kaimahi respondents said they have a social work qualification (11%), and over two thirds of the kaimahi respondents said they have other qualifications (79%).

31. The most common specialities for those with other qualifications are education (specifically early childhood education), and psychology. The table below shows the highest education level achieved for the 71 kaimahi respondents who reported having other qualifications.

FIGURE 7: QUALIFICATIONS THAT KAIMAHI BRING TO THE ROLE



Five kaimahi participants have both a social work and other qualification(s), so the total is more than 100%

32. Almost three quarters of kaimahi respondents said they use te ao Māori frameworks in their role (74%). A small number of kaimahi respondents said they use Pacific frameworks in their role (8%). Close to half of respondents consider themselves to be 'indigenous practitioners' (47%).

TABLE 3: KAIMAHI USE OF FRAMEWORKS

Use of frameworks in role	Number of kaimahi	Kaimahi %
te ao Māori	67	74%
Pacific	7	8%
Other*	10	11%
No	6	7%
Total	**90**	**100%**

*Other frameworks described include holistic; strengths-based approach; Te Whare Tapa Wha.

Kaimahi training and professional development

33. Close to one third of kaimahi respondents belong to a professional association or professional body (31%), and just over a tenth said their employer requires them to be a member of a professional association or body (13%).

34. Of those kaimahi that belong to a professional association or body, fewer than half said their employer pays the fees (45%), just under a third pay for membership themselves (31%), and a quarter reported another process where membership is free, or is paid for by a government agency, for example (24%).

35. Almost all kaimahi respondents receive training and professional development related to their job (99%). The table below shows the frequency of training and professional development received.

TABLE 4: FREQUENCY OF TRAINING FOR KAIMAHI

Training frequency	Number of kaimahi	Kaimahi %
Daily	1	1%
Weekly	9	10%
Monthly	47	53%
Occasionally	32	36%
Total	**89**	**100%**

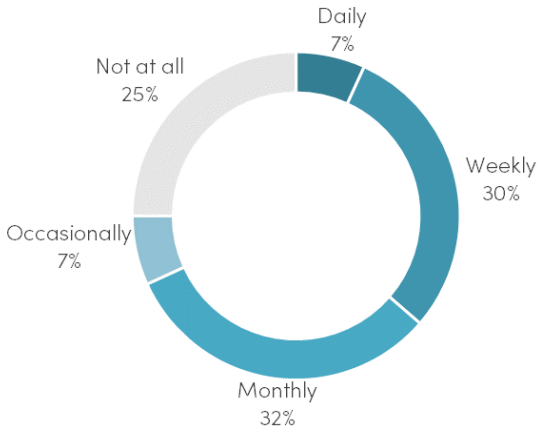
36. Three-quarters of kaimahi respondents said 'yes' when asked if there was any area of training they would like to do (74%). The dominant themes in specified areas of training that kaimahi described include mental health, family violence and harm, social work, cultural competence, leadership/management.

Kaimahi policies and procedures around safety and complaints

37. One third of kaimahi respondents said they are supervised by a registered social worker monthly (32%), as shown on the table below.

38. One quarter of kaimahi respondents said they are not supervised at all by a registered social worker (25%). Of this group of 22 kaimahi, over half (14) report that their employer provides 'professional work supervision' in another question. However, this supervision may not always be by a registered social worker.

FIGURE 8: HOW OFTEN KAIMAHI ARE SUPERVISED IN THEIR ROLE BY A REGISTERED SOCIAL WORKER



39. Fewer than half of kaimahi respondents said they always feel safe in the work that they do (47%).

TABLE 5: HOW SAFE KAIMAHI FEEL AT WORK

Feel safe at work	Number of kaimahi	Kaimahi %
Always	41	47%
Usually	42	48%
Sometimes	5	6%
Total	**88**	**100%**

40. Some kaimahi respondents said they have witnessed work practices that would raise public safety concerns (14%). Most kaimahi respondents said they are confident that their employer has an adequate process in place to handle serious issues with staff practice/conduct (81%). A high number of kaimahi respondents said they have a process for handling complaints from clients (91%).

Kaiwhakahaere role

41. As with kaimahi, a significant number of the questions for kaiwhakahaere were open-ended, allowing respondents to describe their role or experiences in their own words. Some of these survey questions have been coded further to allow for analysis and reporting here.

Size and client focus of organisation

42. Almost half of the kaiwhakahaere respondents work for an organisation that employs more than 30 staff (48%).

TABLE 6: SIZE OF THE ORGANISATIONS KAIWHAKAHAERE WORK FOR

Organisation size	Number of kaiwhakahaere	Kaiwhakahaere %
Fewer than 10 staff	19	17%
10 to 20 staff	23	20%
20-30 staff	16	14%
More than 30 staff	54	48%
No response	1	1%
Total	**113**	**100%**

43. Almost half of the kaiwhakahaere respondents said their organisation is mainly focused on whānau/families (47%).

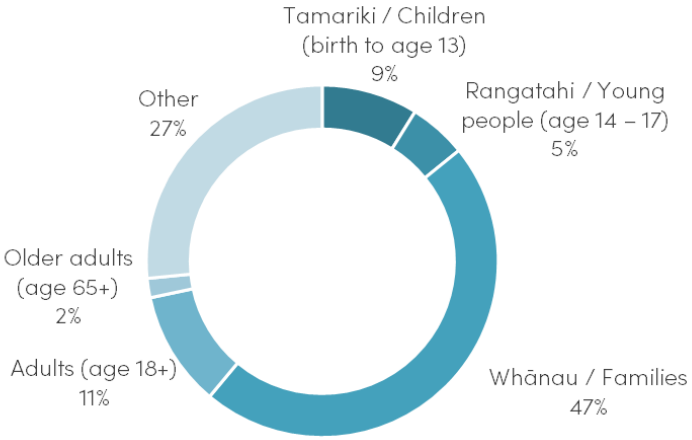
TABLE 7: KAIWHAKAHAERE CLIENT GROUP

Client group	Number of kaiwhakahaere	Kaiwhakahaere %
Tamariki/Children (birth to age 13)	10	9%
Rangatahi/Young people (age 14 – 17)	6	5%
Whānau/Families	53	47%
Adults (age 18 and above)	12	11%
Older adults (age 65 and over)	2	2%
Other (please specify)	30	27%
Total	**113**	**100%**

Main focus of organisation's mahi

44. Over two thirds of the kaiwhakahaere respondents said the main focus of their organisation's mahi is child, youth and whānau family support work (69%).

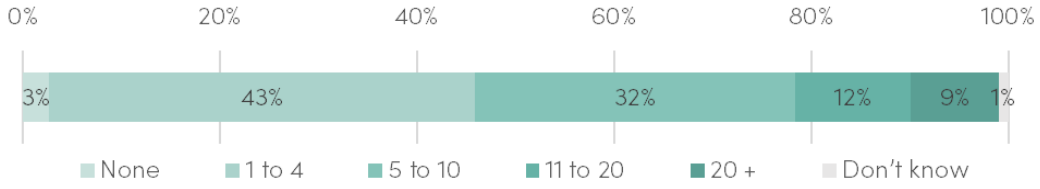
FIGURE 9: KAIWHAKAHAERE PRIMARY CLIENT GROUP (KAIWHAKAHAERE SAMPLE OF 113 RESPONDENTS)



Kaiwhakahaere were able to select more than one focus area, so the total is more than 100%

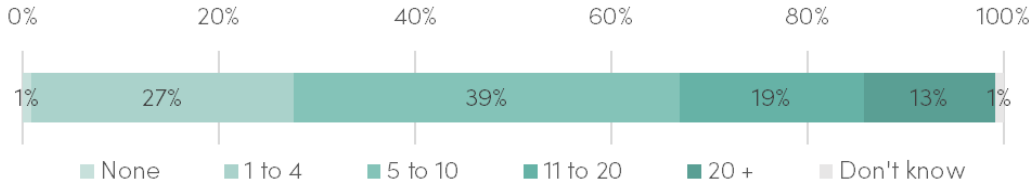
45. Most kaiwhakahaere work in organisations that employ between one and ten social workers (60%).

FIGURE 10: NUMBERS OF REGISTERED SOCIAL WORKERS WITHIN EACH ORGANISATION WE SPOKE WITH



46. Over a third of the kaiwhakahaere respondents said their organisation employs five to ten people in social worker-like roles, including vacancies (39%).

FIGURE 11: NUMBERS OF SOCIAL WORKER-LIKE ROLES WITHIN EACH ORGANISATION WE SPOKE WITH



Employing staff in social worker-like roles

47. Over half of the kaiwhakahaere respondents said their staff in social worker-like roles have a social work qualification (54%); over a third of the kaiwhakahaere respondents said they require their staff in social worker-like roles to belong to a professional association or body (36%).

48. Over two thirds of kaiwhakahaere respondents said the main reason for employing staff into social worker-like roles is that they have close connections with the communities they work with (70%).

TABLE 8: RESAONS FOR EMPLOYING STAFF IN SOCIAL WORKER-LIKE ROLES

Reason	Number of kaiwhakahaere	Kaiwhakahaere %*
Close connections with the communities we work with	79	70%
Shortage of trained social workers	63	56%
Can do the job just as well as a registered social worker	60	53%
It's what we've always done	30	27%
Cost effective	20	18%
Don't have to pay for registration and/or practising certificate fees	5	4%
Other (please specify)	53	47%
Total	**113**	

* Kaiwhakahaere were able to select more than one reason, so the total is more than 100%

49. Kaiwhakahaere were asked what other reasons they had for employing staff into social worker-like roles. Reasons include a perception that personality or experience is more important than a qualification, and that staff have other relevant qualifications that are important or required for the role (examples given include nursing and education qualifications).

50. 41% of kaiwhakahaere respondents said the main barrier to employing a registered social worker into these roles is the workforce shortage – a lack of registered social workers.

FIGURE 12: MAIN BARRIERS TO EMPLOYING A REGISTERED SOCIAL WORKER

Support, training and professional development for staff in social worker-like roles

51. Almost all kaiwhakahaere respondents said they offer training and skills development, professional work supervision, and a supportive and safe working environment for staff in social worker-like roles.

TABLE 9: TYPES AND QUANTITY OF PROFESSIONAL SUPPORT OFFERED

Professional support	Number of kaiwhakahaere	Kaiwhakahaere %*
Training and skills development	109	96%
Professional work supervision	106	94%
Supportive and safe working environment	105	93%
Cultural supervision	94	83%
Flexible working arrangements	88	78%
Access to free/subsidised counselling	79	70%
Wellbeing days	52	46%
Access to free/subsidised Rongōa Māori	20	18%
Other (please specify)	25	22%
Total	**113**	

* Kaiwhakahaere were able to select more than one form of support, so the total is more than 100%

52. A high number of kaiwhakahaere respondents said the training and professional development on offer meets the needs of their staff and their clients (91%).

Safe Practice

Safety of staff in social worker-like roles

53. Fewer than a third of kaiwhakahaere respondents said they have safety concerns for their social worker-like staff or the communities they work with (30%). The most dominant theme in kaiwhakahaere responses when asked how they ensure social worker-like staff are practising safely is the use of supervision, both internal and external.

Complaints and safety of clients with staff in social worker-like roles

54. Almost all kaiwhakahaere respondents said they have a complaints process for clients (97%); over two thirds have a process to escalate the complaint outside of their organisation (73%).

55. There were a number of other employees who did not meet the criteria for category 3 as they do not work with or have a registered social worker overseeing their work. Delivering 'social worker-like' services without a registered social worker on the team raises concerns about the quality of service being provided. Supervision is one of the key mechanisms in achieving safe practice for registered social workers.

Targeted stakeholder engagement

56. Between November 2023 and January 2024, the SWRB organised and conducted 11 hui, all online, bar one face-to-face kōrero. 163 kaimahi and kaiwhakahaere from 92 organisations were invited and a total of 46 individuals from 32 organisations attended. These people were identified either by working for one of Aotearoa New Zealand's large sector-specific organisations that we specifically targeted, or from the survey we undertook in June 2023. The team at SWRB was made up of the Policy Lead, Senior Advisor and Kākaho Niho Social Work Advisor.

57. What we heard in these hui is not necessarily representative of the whole profession. Those organisations that were keen to be involved in this work and proactively made contact with the SWRB are a likely to represent good practice.

58. We specifically targeted two organisations, and a third approached us directly:
    - The Fono – based in Auckland and primarily supports Pasifika families.
    - Women's Refuge – consisting of National Office, 42 affiliated, and 13 unaffiliated regional organisations, supporting women and children who are currently or have previously experienced family harm.
    - Family Works – we were also invited by the Chief Executive of Presbyterian Support New Zealand to talk to the seven regional managers of Family Works, which was a face-to-face meeting.

59. The invitation to participate in the survey included an invitation to assist us further to gain a better understanding of the workforce of unregistered professionals. Over 90 survey recipients responded, of which approximately 70% were kaimahi. We further split these people according to the service(s) their organisation(s) provided and invited them to one of six hui. See table 11.

TABLE 11: WHO WAS INVITED TO JOIN A HUI AND HOW MANY ATTENDED

Organisation/ service type	Type of services	Kaimahi/ kaiwhakahaere	No. of organisations invited	No. of organisations attending	No. of invitees	No. of attendees
The Fono	Pasifika services	Kaimahi	1	1	12	6
The Fono	Pasifika services	Kaiwhakahaere	1	1	5	2
Women's Refuge	Family violence services	Kaimahi	23	3	48	5
Women's Refuge	Family violence services	Kaiwhakahaere	23	5	47	8
Family Works Managers	Families & children services	Kaiwhakahaere	7	6	7	6
Families & children services	Services for families	Kaimahi	8	1	16	1
Families & children services	Services for families	Kaiwhakahaere	8	2	12	2
Iwi services	Mixed services	Kaimahi	10	3	10	5
Mixed services	Multidisciplinary, youth, faith-based, & sexual violence survivor support services	Kaimahi	14	5	23	4
Mixed services	Social & community, housing, migrant support, workforce development, drugs & alcohol, & problem gambling support services	Kaimahi	9	1	9	1
Mixed services	Multidisciplinary services	Kaiwhakahaere	7	5	10	5
TOTAL			**111**	**33**	**199**	**45**

60. We developed a presentation covering who the SWRB is, the reason for the kōrero, the context for the work, what the SWRB was asked to do, and the work to date. We then invited the participants to share their thoughts and insights with us. In particular, we discussed the following with them:
    - their organisation and their people
    - the contracts held by organisations

- the different job titles within their organisation
- the services and tasks carried out by the organisation
- qualifications of the people in the organisations, in particular kaimahi
- experience and skills of the kaimahi
- the differences between kaimahi and registered social workers
- barriers that prevent kaimahi from becoming registered social workers
- internal training and support systems
- supervision
- safe practice.

61. We gained valuable insights from these engagements that generally aligned with the survey results.

Who the organisations and their people are

62. We talked with a variety of organisations, from very small providers to national providers of social services, with numbers of staff ranging from six through to around 200. A lot of providers focus on recruiting kaimahi to cover contractual work, who are overseen and managed by registered social workers. Not all kaimahi fall into category 3; some are counsellors, youth workers, financial advisors, mentors or administrators.

63. Many organisations are still working through the pay equity process, so at this stage do not know how many of their employees will fall into category 3. During the conversations, some managers expressed concern that some of their kaimahi are not being classified as category 3. However, we did not drill down into pay equity decisions as that is not within the scope of this work.

The contracts held by these organisations

64. We asked kaimahi and kaiwhakahaere what contracts their organisations hold with government agencies.

TABLE 12: SAMPLE OF GOVERNMENT AGENCIES THAT HAVE CONTRACTS WITH SOCIAL SERVICE PROVIDERS

Government agency	Number of contracts held across the organisations we spoke with
Ministry of Social Development	13
Ministry of Justice	6
Ministry of Education	3
Ministry for Urban Development	3
Department of Corrections	2
Ministry of Health	2
Inland Revenue	2
Health New Zealand/Te Whatu Ora	2
Ministry of Youth Development	1
Police	1
Te Puni Kōkiri	1

65. In general, and as expected, the larger organisations held more contracts than the smaller ones. Many contracts do not specify the roles required to deliver the service, and very few receive funding for specified regulated/registered roles. The organisation holding that contract, therefore, generally does not receive the funding required to employ social workers to deliver contract. In contrast, one provider is looking to hire more social workers to deliver on a contract for MSD.

Different organisations use different job titles

66. Kaimahi we spoke to, work under a variety of different job titles (even if roles are similar). These include caseworker, counsellor, advocate, team leader, navigator (in particular Whānau Ora Navigator), champion, mentor, (family) therapist, play therapist, support worker, whānau worker,

(family) mediator, (programme) facilitator, (health) coach, wellbeing worker. These titles closely aligned with those specified in the survey.

67. A 'word cloud' was built from the terms used by kaimahi in both the survey and the targeted engagement to describe their role or job title, and from responses given by kaiwhakahaere to describe the job titles of staff in social worker-like roles. The size of the word reflects the number of times the word was used as a descriptor of the role or job title. This word cloud can be seen on the front page of this report.

A variety of services and tasks are delivered by organisations employing kaimahi

68. We asked kaimahi and kaiwhakahaere to describe the services and tasks they carry out within their organisations. While services in most link directly to contracts, some find funding elsewhere to provide other services. As stated above, contracts do not always stipulate that the work is to be conducted by registered social workers, and so providers do not have the budget for registered social workers to carry out this mahi. Organisations, therefore, look to other kaimahi to undertake a lot of this contractual work.

69. Most providers focus on specific areas of service, which can be grouped into the following categories:
    - addictions
    - child, youth and whānau/family support
    - community housing
    - criminal justice
    - elder support
    - homelessness services
    - mental health
    - migrant support
    - physical health and disability
    - professional supervision.
    - statutory care and protection
    - whānau/family violence
    - youth justice.

70. The people we spoke with described specific services carried out by their organisations – as listed below. Some of these services are delivered by kaimahi and kaiwhakahaere who are not covered by the pay equity agreement:
    - 24-hour crisis line
    - assessments for community and government agencies
    - birthright coordination
    - community and/or faith-based programmes and support services
    - community exercise
    - facilitating meetings with families
    - financial mentoring, including:
        - assessment of finances and debt
        - developing a budget
        - identifying areas where supports need to be put in
    - home visits and initial assessments
    - intervention work, including:
        - sleep hygiene
        - levels of play

  - trauma
  - supporting and advocating for families who need to interact with other agencies such as Work and Income and Ministry of Justice
- Iwi-based (dedicated to providing a wide variety of services to Māori)
- men support, including non-violence counselling, court work, sexuality, spirituality
- nutrition advice and support
- outreach services
- palliative care
- Pasifika-based (dedicated to providing a wide variety of services to Pasifika)
- residential support services
- specialist children's programmes
- social workers in schools
- support clients/consumers on healthy lifestyle and living
- social skills
- safe housing
- whānau ora
- whānau support
- workforce development.

71. One organisation shared some of the high-level duties expected of their social worker-like kaimahi or kaiwhakahaere:
    - Kaimahi in this organisation's mental health team support clients to live healthy lifestyles through community exercise, nutrition sessions, etc., helps them to gain better social skills, including connecting with their community, advocates for clients with Work and Income & the Ministry of Justice, supports clients when talking about treatment, education and employment and helps build bridges between clients and their families.
    - Kaiwhakahaere are expected to liaise with outside agencies, advocate for clients to get support and give power back to them, support clients to have knowledge and understanding of debt and finances which helps with many issues such as housing and education and try to make sure all living needs of the client are met.

Qualifications that people, particularly kaimahi, bring to their organisations

72. Kaimahi told us they bring a wide range of qualifications into their roles. These include bachelor's degrees in psychology, education, nursing, counselling, social health and wellbeing, health science, health promotion, business, and criminology. Certificates are held by kaimahi in subjects such as financial mentoring, mental health, whānau ora, indigenous health, and occupational therapy. A few also have master's degrees, including in social practice, and education.

73. Some kaimahi and kaiwhakahaere are studying part-time towards their Bachelor of Social Work, or a relevant post-graduate qualification, with the aim of becoming registered social workers. One organisation that we spoke with financially supported a staff member to complete their Master of Professional Practice and Leadership. That same organisation has sometimes used bonding to retain kaimahi and social workers after supporting them through their qualifications.

74. During one hui, however, a kaiwhakahaere stressed they would love to hire more people who could work towards registration but are reluctant as there is no current pathway that allows them to continue working while studying.

75. A few organisations we spoke with encouraged kaimahi to complete their Certificate in Health and Wellbeing – Level 4 (Advanced Care and Support), which is fees-free for those eligible, i.e., first-time tertiary learners. Some kaimahi continue on to complete their Level 5 Health and Wellbeing

Certificate (Practice and Applied Practice), but for many this is not affordable. Another common study pathway is the Health Coach Certificate.

Category 3 workers bring a variety of experience and skills to the job

76. The backgrounds and experience of the people we engaged with are diverse, with many telling us how important their 'lived experience' has been to their work. The backgrounds that they come from include nursing, education, police and corrections, youth work, occupational therapy, counselling and coaching, mental health support, and mediation. Some have a background that may be seen as further removed from social work, including business and IT.

77. One kaiwhakahaere talked about the need to 'gentle' kaimahi that have come from backgrounds such as Corrections or Police, to teach them more about empathy. They believed that work experience alongside study is the best grounding for these people, particularly those wishing to transition to become social workers.

78. Some kaimahi and kaiwhakahaere come as overseas-registered social workers who do not automatically become registered in New Zealand and so fit into this social worker-like space.

Differences and similarities between the work of category 3 workers and social workers

79. We asked the participants to share their perspectives on the similarities and differences between the approach, work, and outcomes of social worker-like kaimahi and kaiwhakahaere and registered social workers. The responses varied, from '[kaimahi are] not and can't be social workers' to '[kaimahi are] doing exactly the same work.'

80. Many contracts do not differentiate between the social worker-like role and the registered social worker role, resulting in the work of kaimahi and kaiwhakahaere often being similar, if not the same, as that of the social worker. Some organisations, however, use social worker-like kaimahi to make that first contact with clients and conduct an initial assessment prior to handing over to a social worker. For example, they allocate higher risk whānau to registered social workers. It was noted that social worker-like kaimahi are not always able to see the bigger picture as they have not been trained to apply theoretical frameworks or critical thinking.

81. In other organisations, a comment was made that 'there is no difference between registered social workers and kaimahi – they all walk alongside whānau, work with OT and MSD, coaching and advocating for clients.' One organisation stressed that their kaimahi are treated as if they are registered, are required to follow the same policies, code of ethics and behaviour, and receive the same supervision and support as their fellow registered social workers.

82. Generally, those organisations that felt the work was the same, employed more social worker-like kaimahi than social workers and held contracts that did not stipulate who was to carry out the mahi. One organisation explained that they are still working through what the difference is between category 3 and registered social workers. Another observed that some organisations use kaimahi to 'carry out social work but at a cheaper rate'.

Multiple barriers prevent kaimahi from transitioning to registered social workers

83. Those we engaged with told us the main barrier preventing them from becoming registered social workers is the cost of training. Multiple costs can be associated with gaining a recognised qualification, including the actual cost of study and ability to pay back a student loan, and not bringing in a wage while studying. There are also non-financial costs, such as spending less time with family, the time taken to travel to a training institution, and the cost of housing while they are studying. Further financial concerns centred on the cost of registration itself.

84. The majority of people we spoke to repeated the point that placements are currently unpaid. This means that should someone be working part-time while studying, they will not be paid for the duration of their placement, even if this placement is at their usual workplace. Some kaiwhakahaere and kaimahi talked about an 'earn as you learn' model of training, and questioned why this model does not currently exist.

85. Language can be a considerable barrier for migrants who worked as social workers in the previous country they lived in but who do not have English as their first language. To qualify for the overseas qualification pathway, migrants require IELTS[5] Level 7.

86. Some participants do not seek further qualifications to become registered as they feel too close to retirement to complete studies or are not inclined to study at the age they are. Others conveyed the impression they were too busy with work to have time to gain qualifications; they felt that if they stopped working or cut their hours to study, the organisation, and more particularly, clients, would be impacted.

87. Several people we spoke with felt they should not have to register as social workers. Their argument was that before registration became mandatory, all 'social workers' were doing the same job, and that job has not changed for them. Also, concern was expressed that clients would not want to talk to them or let them into their homes if they were registered social workers. One kaimahi said, 'As soon as you mention you're a social worker, whānau don't want a bar of you. They just think you're going to take the kids away'. It was unclear whether the people saying this understood the differences between kaimahi and social workers, or the reasons mandatory registration was introduced.

88. We heard from some kaimahi and kaiwhakahaere that they work for their people rather than for the Crown and that they feel no obligation to register with the Crown.

89. The lack of bridging courses, micro credentialling and cross crediting qualifications already gained were all voiced within the different hui. An opportunity for career progression in terms of qualifications and scope would be welcomed.

Internal training and support systems are offered in most organisations

90. Most of those we engaged with confirmed some level of training is available within their organisation, to help staff upskill and improve their knowledge. For some kaiwhakahaere, the expectation is that their kaimahi be proactive in upskilling themselves. However, most orgainsations deliver some training that is obligatory for all staff.

91. Those programmes cover such issues as:
    - abuse
    - advocacy
    - boundaries
    - child protection
    - drugs and alcohol
    - family violence/family harm
    - first aid
    - foundational courses based on models of care
    - health and safety
    - local knowledge
    - IT training

[5] International English Language Testing System.

- te tiriti, decolonisation and re-indigenisation
- trauma-enforced practice
- staff safety.

92. The exact type of training depends on the sector in which the organisation or kaimahi is working. According to one organisation we spoke with, a typical training programme for kaimahi working in the family violence space might cover topics including:
    - active listening
    - crisis calls
    - conflict
    - diversity
    - family violence awareness and advocacy
    - high-risk safety planning
    - methamphetamine and other drugs
    - non-fatal strangulation
    - occupancy orders
    - paramountcy of child
    - parenting orders
    - protection orders
    - self care
    - sexual violence
    - staff safety
    - trespass & police safety orders.

93. Professional development is on offer to many kaimahi. This this can cover attendance at conferences and hui, online or in-person training, and upskilling. Many providers also talked about ad-hoc workshops, presentations, seminars and similar, to meet the needs of the individuals or teams. Workshops can be as short as a half day or run for a whole week.

94. Several organisations establish tailor-made training plans for their kaimahi: one provider delivers an intern programme, and another commented on training expectations for their kaimahi. Conversely, some organisations deliver no internal training, with one organisation identifying that some of their kaimahi have been working for five years yet have gained no qualifications in that time. This organisation has now established a partnership with a training provider to support and upskill their staff.

Both the quality and quantity of supervision for social worker-like kaimahi is inconsistant

95. The SWRB Code of Conduct states that 'supervision is a fundamental part of being a competent social worker. It enables you to reflect on your current practice and offers opportunities for learning and development. It helps you apply social work ethics, including Te Ao Māori values.'[6] As detailed in the *Extension of pay equity settlement* documentation, a requirement for category 3 kaimahi is that they 'receive supervision/oversight by a registered social worker or registered professional.'

96. The provision of supervision was discussed in depth during the targeted engagement hui and everyone we spoke to claimed to have access to internal supervision. However, the frequency and quality of supervision is inconsistent. Supervision for kaimahi has several elements:
    - to protect clients
    - to ensure kaimahi are supported in every aspect of their work
    - to ensure quality services are delivered at a professional level.

[6] SWRB Code of Conduct, Principle 4, p.14

97. Generally, internal supervision happens weekly and is often compulsory across the organisations we spoke with. However, this supervision seemed to vary considerably from organisation to organisation. Who provides the supervision varies and includes team leaders, practice leaders and managers. In many instances, the supervisor is not a registered social worker.

98. Across the organisations we spoke with, external supervision is usually optional, but some participants told us it is compulsory within their organisation. Occurrence can be anywhere between weekly to six-weekly, with fortnightly sessions being the most prevalent. It may also depend on the service area that the kaimahi is working in. For example, at one organisation, internal supervision is undertaken fortnightly except for those working under the Family Start contract, where it is weekly.

99. Some organisations have stringent policies on who provides the external supervision. One organisation states that kaimahi must have a minimum of ten external supervision sessions per year, and, depending on their workstream, can pick from a number of different directories including NZAC, NZCCA, ANZASW, DAPAANZ,[7] etc. Several specifically list NZAC and ANZASW, but many are less rigid, allowing the kaimahi to choose whoever they want to be their supervisor.

100. Alongside professional supervision, many organisations offer counselling through their Employee Assistance Programme (EAP). Other less formal support includes wellbeing days, cultural supervision, exercise and wellness plans, mirimiri, team building away days, and the day off on your birthday. There are also buddying and mentoring systems for new kaimahi. One provider talked about a post-COVID sense of responsibility for supporting kaimahi and kaiwhakahaere wellbeing, 'as workforce fatigue is better recognised now'.

101. Mostly, we heard from the kōrero that supervision for kaimahi is similar to that for registered social workers. One kaiwhakahaere told us that once a kaimahi is 'up and running, they require no extra supervision than registered social worker.'

'Safe practice' was a topic discussed at every hui.

102. Generally safe practice was interpreted as being about the kaimahi, rather than the client; an organisation assesses risk and puts programmes, supervision and other similar supports in place for their kaimahi. Safe practice can include mechanisms such as two kaimahi visiting a home together, checking in advance whether dogs are present, equipping staff with panic alarms, and/or ensuring health and safety systems are in place to record, report and raise safety concerns. Phone tracking can be useful, but is not necessarily a reliable guarantee of safety, particularly as coverage in rural areas can be patchy.

103. Reminding participants in hui that the primary purpose of mandating registration is to keep the public safe, one organisation did comment that 'it doesn't make [practitioners] safer by being registered.' It was reassuring to discover that many organisations hold their kaimahi to exacting standards, including having robust complaints processes across the whole team.

Other comments and observations were made about this category 3 workforce

104. Several kaiwhakahaere commented that while there are guidelines on what skills, responsibility, demands and working conditions are expected of category 3 kaimahi, this does not represent a full competency framework.

105. Organisations recognise and understand the limitations of kaimahi but expressed concern that due to lack of sufficient funding, kaimahi can be, and are, used in place of social workers even when it is felt the role should actually be undertaken by a registered social worker. It was understood that

[7] NZAC – New Zealand Association of Counsellors, NZCCA – New Zealand Christian Counsellors Association, ANZASW – Aotearoa New Zealand Association of Social Workers, DAPAANZ – Addiction Practitioners Association Aotearoa New Zealand

kaimahi do not always have the knowledge and/or experience to deal with what is now being of expected of them. One kaiwhakahaere commented that 'needs have jumped up to the next level.'

106. Several comments were made that there are distinct differences in the roles between the North Island and the South Island. However, any perceived differences did not show themselves during this engagement process.

107. Some organisations raised inconsistencies around the pay equity roll-out and issues relating to who had been included in category 3. Those implementation issues fall outside the scope of this work and are not covered in this paper.

Conclusion

108. The findings from this multiple engagement process are drawn from the knowledge and experience of key sector leaders and experts across government, NGOs and the professional associations. They are also drawn from a detailed survey sent to all organisations that employ social worker-like kaimahi and kaiwhakahaere. We do not know how many organisations chose not to distribute the survey to their workers. We acknowledge that those organsisations who did participate are more likely to have frameworks for their kaimahi or kaiwhakahaere to work to and may provide more support for them.

109. We further engaged with the sector through a series of targeted hui, mostly online, across November and December 2023 and January 2024. While the data collected through the survey and hui are not statistically significant, we extended invitations to engage widely across the sector.

110. What we learnt was subjective and qualitative, but it was consistent. We learnt that many social worker-like kaimahi and kaiwhakahaere are largely doing the same work, across the same communities and with the same individuals, as registered social workers. Many told us they are doing 'exactly the same work' as registered social workers, and that many of the contracts they work under do not stipulate who should carry out this work. Others are focussed on lower-risk work, covering off initial assessments and then handing over to a social worker.

111. The workforce is diverse. It covers multiple services, for example, family violence, drugs and addiction, mental health, and housing, and operates under a mixture of roles. There is also a mixture of job titles, such as whānau/family support worker, advocate, coordinator, and mentor.

112. Kaimahi and kaiwhakahaere come to their roles with a variety of qualifications. Many have bachelor's degrees, commonly in psychology, education, nursing, counselling, social health and wellbeing, health science, health promotion, business, and criminology. There are some with social work degrees who choose not to register as social workers.

113. Experience and skills that social worker-like kaimahi and kaiwhakahaere bring to their roles vary greatly. Backgrounds include teaching, nursing, youth work, police or corrections work, occupational therapy, counselling and coaching, mental health support, and mediation. 'Lived experience' was often talked about and many kaimahi and kaiwhakahaere believe this to be something that enhances their work.

114. We learnt that the primary obstacle for social worker-like kaimahi and kaiwhakahaere to become registered social workers are the financial and non-financial costs of study. The lack of payment during placements was also frequently raised. Other barriers include language (for migrants), and the age of the kaimahi: those older kaimahi planning to stop working in the next few years feel it is not worth them working towards registration.

115. Most social worker-like kaimahi and kaiwhakahaere receive internal supervision of some kind, but how often and of what quality was hard to discern. External supervision is less common, with

employers often leaving this to their kaimahi and kaiwhakahaer to arrange. The majority work to recognised social work frameworks and many organisations have a complaints process. However, some kaimahi told us they did not receive supervision, and that their organisation had neither recognised frameworks nor complaints processes in place.

116. It is reassuring that many kaimahi and kaiwhakahaere are supported by frameworks, supervision and other tools. However, it is concerning that some organisations provide none of this. There is limited visibility or oversight of kaimahi in 'social worker-like' roles, or other social services sector roles. As with registered social workers, most will be working competently and appropriately. However, the SWRB is aware of cases where social workers, have been dismissed (for inappropriate relationships with clients for example) and have moved into similar social worker-like roles with other organisations where they are not required to have a Practising Certificate. There is currently no mechanism to stop this happening.

117. The majority of organisations provide some level of internal training for their employees, and in some cases, this is mandatory. Training is frequently delivered on a needs basis, but staff in some organisations, are expected to be proactive in upskilling themselves. Training is usually seen as part of the support system (alongside supervision, and more formal education).

118. Engagement with the social work sector has shown that overall, a mix of models is being used, with some organisations clearly differentiating between the work registered social workers carry out versus the work of social worker-like kaimahi. However, in other organisations, registered social workers and social worker-like kaimahi are doing the same work.