



**Social Workers  
Registration Board**  
Kāhui Whakamana Tauwhiro

# Social Worker Employers Report 2024

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*He ara pūkenga, he ara tauwhiro,  
hei whakamana mātā waka*  
*The many pathways of knowledge, the many  
pathways of social work, upholding the dignity of all*

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## Introduction

This report presents findings from the Social Workers Registration Board (SWRB)'s 2024 inaugural Social Worker Employers Survey.

This new survey collected information from a subset of social worker employers. It provides a different perspective to evidence already gathered by the SWRB as part of its role as lead agency for workforce planning for all social workers. More information about this role can be found in Appendix 1. It extends our understanding of trends in the social worker workforce by gathering information about issues facing the social work sector from an employer perspective. This report sits alongside other SWRB Reports, including the Annual Social Worker Workforce Report and the Annual Social Work Education Report.<sup>1</sup>

The employer perspective enables the SWRB to build a better picture of work underway to grow and sustain our current social worker workforce. By combining data and information sources we aim to better understand the sustainability challenges facing the social worker workforce, across the key components of the Workforce Life Cycle including attraction, recruitment, induction and onboarding, learning and skills development, reward and recognition, career progression, and retention through re-entering the workforce.

The survey asked employers about their organisation's experience and perspectives on key issues affecting their social worker workforce, including recruitment, retention, and their interactions with education providers.

It is important to note that the findings are indicative. However, the employers who participated in the survey are estimated to employ 30% of the practising social worker workforce.

<sup>1</sup> <https://swrb.govt.nz/about-us/news-and-publications/publications/>

# Summary of key findings

## Survey responses were received from a range of employers

- Four responses were received from Oranga Tamariki, which represented approximately two-thirds of the social worker workforce covered by this survey. In contrast, although the largest number of responses were from employers in the non-government organisation (NGO) sector, this represented a much smaller proportion of the workforce.
- The most common fields of social work practice were in mental health, family violence, and child, youth and whānau support work.
- Nearly half (48%) of employers described the focus of their service delivery as working across all age groups, such as working with whānau/families.

## Employers report challenges in the supply and sustainability of social workers in the workforce

- When asked if their organisation or business unit faced social worker supply issues, 20% described the supply of social workers as highly challenging, and 22% as moderately challenging.
- In contrast, 29% of employers responded that they faced no supply issues at all, and 29% reported workforce supply as a slight challenge.
- The employers who were experiencing supply issues tended to be larger organisations covering a greater number of social workers. The employers who were not experiencing supply issues tended to be NGOs.

## Recruitment and retention of knowledgeable and skilled social workers is a challenge for employers

- The biggest challenge noted by 54% of employers was difficulty recruiting social workers into their organisation. In addition, 46% reported difficulty in attracting suitable social workers with the necessary range of social work knowledge and skills.
- Other challenges included:
  - recruiting people to work with specific populations including in rural communities, with Māori and Pacific Peoples, and older people.
  - budget constraints and fulfilling pay parity/pay equity requirements.
- Employers indicate they are seeking a range of both technical and 'soft' skills and attributes when recruiting social workers. 'Team fit' was the most important single attribute, skill and knowledge area identified by employers (52%).

## Some employers are taking a strategic approach to recruitment and career progression for social workers

- Only 20% of employers reported that their organisation or business unit had a recruitment strategy specifically for social workers.
- Half (50%) of employers reported having pathways in place for newly qualified social workers. Slightly fewer (44%) have an overall career progression framework in place for their social workers.

- Approximately one third (30%) of employers said that their organisation or business unit had recruited social workers from overseas.
- Barriers noted with recruiting overseas social workers included concerns about process complexity and employer perception relating to overseas candidates' understanding of the wider Aotearoa New Zealand context for social work practice.

## **Employers' role in supporting social worker education and training – almost all employers provide placements for ākonga (students)**

- Almost all employers (98%) said they had provided field education placements (work-based learning) for social work ākonga (students) and reported their organisation engages with tertiary education organisations (TEOs) that offer social work qualifications.
- Challenges noted in offering field education placements (work-based learning) included a lack of supervisor capacity, administrative burdens and lack of financial support for hosting placements (compared to nursing and other allied health ākonga).
- Employers also commented on ākonga readiness for field education, noting some lack appropriate interpersonal skills and "life experience".
- However, employers also identified benefits associated with field education placements:
  - for ākonga such as gaining real world social work experience
  - for the profession, in terms of supporting the future workforce
  - for employers themselves by providing a source for recruitment, and the fresh perspective and energy to the workplace that ākonga bring.

## **Employers have a high awareness of, and confidence in meeting their obligations as employers of registered social workers**

- Most employers indicated high awareness (92%) and confidence (79%), in the ability of their organisation to meet their legislative obligations in their employment of social workers. This includes ensuring that social worker roles are filled by suitably qualified and registered social work practitioners.
- Employers indicated high levels of awareness of professional requirements for social workers to have regular supervision (95%) and engage in continuing professional development (CPD) (92%). However, they reported less confidence in their ability to meet these requirements.
- Employers also indicated high levels of awareness (75%) and confidence (78%) in reporting to the SWRB if they have any concerns about their social workers regarding serious misconduct or other issues.

## **Organisational relationships with the SWRB**

- The SWRB information that employers indicated greatest awareness and use of were the Annual Social Worker Workforce Reports. The Code of Conduct in Practice resources were also reported as having been used in their work with social worker employees by 24% of employers.
- Findings suggest that some employers are unfamiliar with the dual functions of SWRB as the occupational regulator for social workers and the Lead Agency for Workforce Planning for all social workers. Many are particularly interested in learning more about social worker workforce planning and sustainability.

# Data collection method

The SWRB invited employers to complete an online survey in November 2024. Invitations were sent directly to those employers SWRB has a relationship with, through its Authorised Employer Agreement (those employers who pay fees on behalf of their social workers). In addition, the invitation was shared with key strategic contacts to extend the reach to other employers of social workers (several Non-Government Organisations (NGOs), Oranga Tamariki and Health New Zealand/Te Whatu Ora). The individual business units for some larger employers were contacted separately.

In the survey, we asked employers to provide information about the following six areas of interest:

1. Composition of employers and their organisation/business unit and their social worker workforce.
2. Sustainability of their social worker workforce, and current supply issues.
3. Employers' recruitment practices.
4. Their role in supporting social worker education and training.
5. Their awareness and confidence in meeting responsibilities as employers of registered social workers.
6. Organisational relationships with the SWRB.

Survey responses were received from a total of 71 individual organisations and business units, representing employers of 2,752 social workers (30% of the practising workforce of 9,135 social workers as of 30 June 2024). Responses were received from a range of different sized employer organisations. Most survey responses (64%) were received from employers who describe their organisation or business unit as a Non-Government Organisation (NGO). Respondents from business units of government agencies, such as Oranga Tamariki and Te Whatu Ora tended to represent large social worker workforces, (for example one respondent represented over 1,000).

The number of social workers employed in each organisation and business unit that responded can be found in Appendix 2, along with additional information about the survey methodology.

The findings in this Report provide a broad indication of how some employers view the challenges and opportunities facing the social worker workforce. They will support the development of further SWRB research to explore the employer perspective in the future.



# Section 1 – Composition of employers and their organisation/business unit

Employers were asked to describe the type of organisation they represent, their fields of practice, primary client group, and the composition of their social worker workforce.

## 1.1 Employer organisation/business unit type

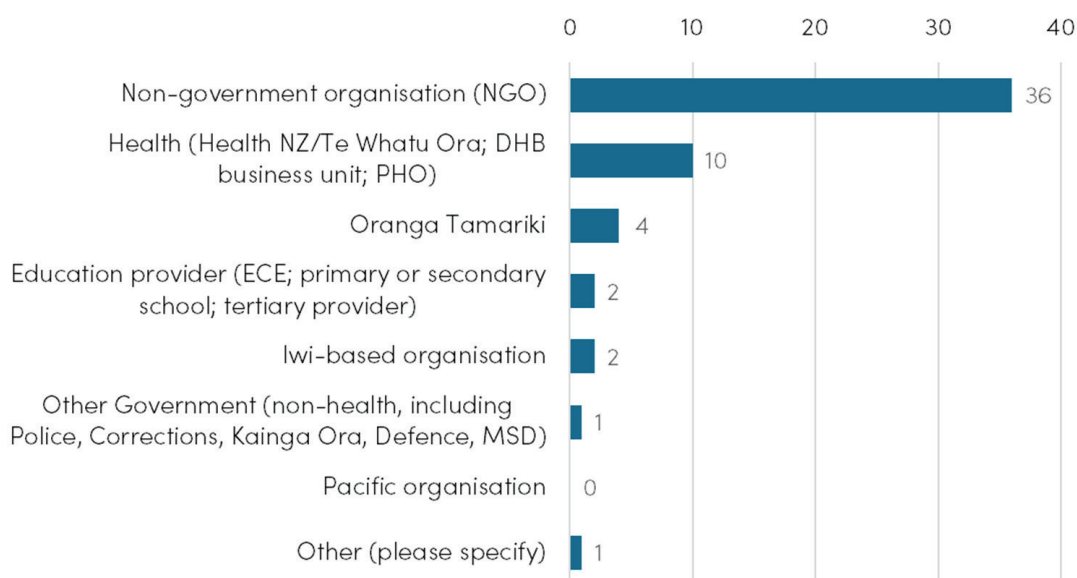
Responses were received from employers of social workers across the health and social service sector, representing 30% of the current practising social worker workforce.

Most survey responses (64%) were received from employers who describe their organisation or business unit as a Non-Government Organisation (NGO). However, these NGOs only employed a small proportion of the total social worker workforce covered in this survey (around 10%).

There was wide variation in the size of the social worker workforce represented by each survey response. For example, whilst Oranga Tamariki employers only provided four of the 71 responses, these represented the largest proportion of the social worker workforce (1,832, or 67% of the total of 2,752 social workers covered in this survey). (Appendix 2, Table 1).

The types of organisations/business units and the numbers of individual survey responses are identified in Figure 1.

**Figure 1. Employer organisation type**

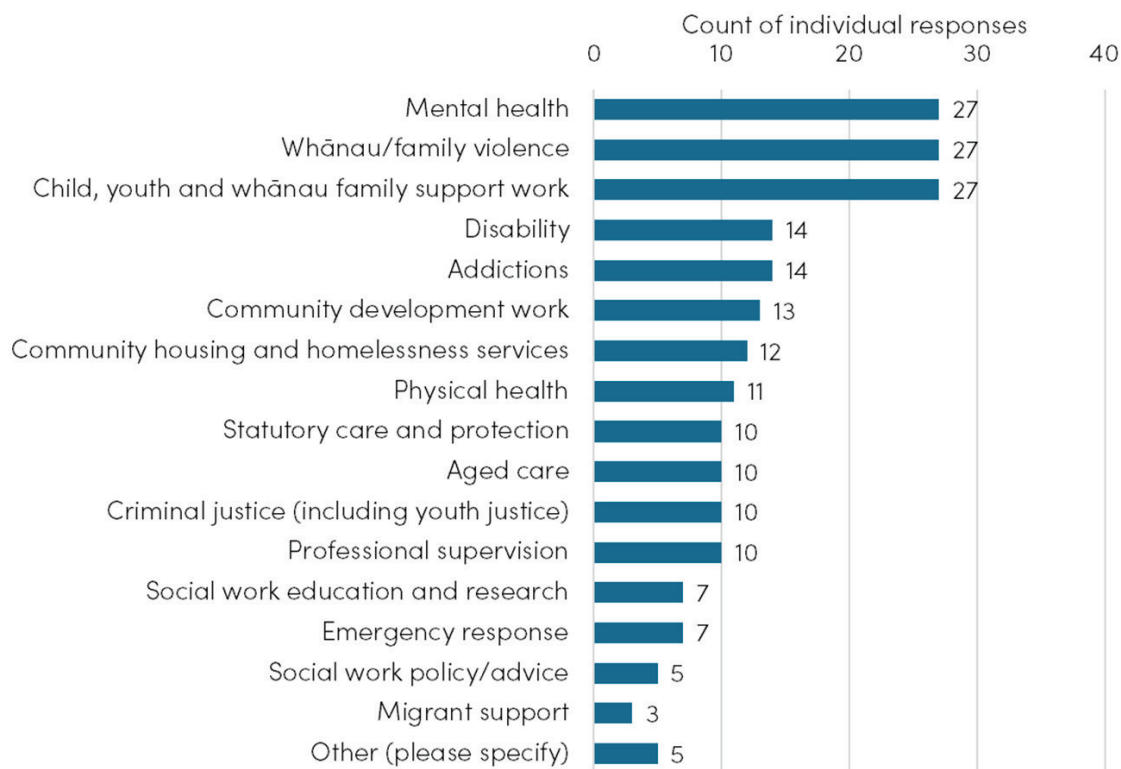


## 1.2 Employers' main field of social work practice

To better understand the type of work employers are mainly engaged in, they were asked to identify their main fields of practice (see Figure 2). The most common fields were in mental health, family violence, and 'child, youth and whānau support work'. This distribution aligns with the fields of practice identified by practising social workers who completed the 2024 SWRB Annual Social Worker Workforce Survey.

Multiple choices were allowed in these responses, so the total count of each category will exceed 100%. Those who responded 'other' described their field of practice as foodbanks, sexual harm and foster care.

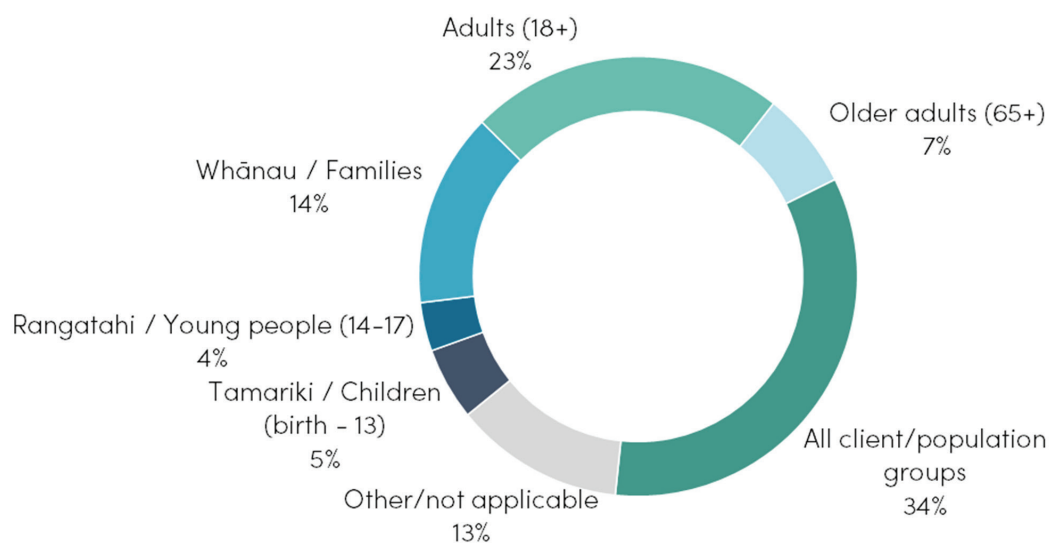
**Figure 2. Employers' main field of social work practice**



### 1.3 Employers' primary client group

When asked about their primary client group and focus of their services, approximately one third (34%) of employers reported providing services across all population groups. The next largest client group identified was services for adults (24%). 14% of employers described providing services for whānau/families, and a combined 7% identified providing services for children/tamariki and rangatahi. Less than 7% of employers described providing services for older persons. Another 13% indicated providing services to 'other' population groups, for example, some that covered all age groups except for older adults.

**Figure 3. Employers' primary client population**





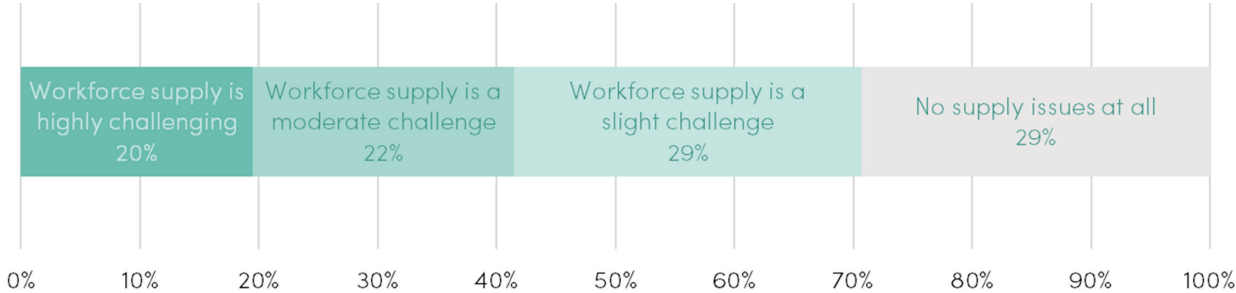
# Section 2 – Workforce sustainability: workforce supply issues

Employers were asked about the sustainability of the social worker workforce including supply issues.

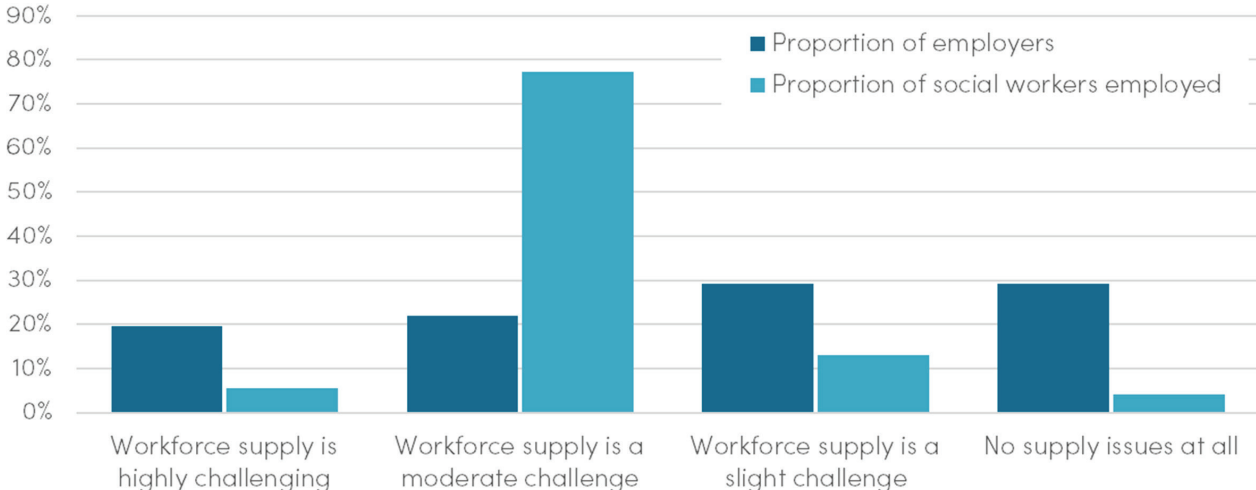
When asked if their organisation or business unit faced social worker supply issues, 20% said it was ‘highly challenging’ for their organisation or business unit (Figure 4). 22% of employers indicated that workforce supply issues were ‘a moderate challenge’. 29% said that supply is ‘a slight challenge’, and 29% of employers responded that they faced ‘No supply issues at all’.

Those employers who reported ‘No supply issues at all’ with social worker workforce supply tended to be NGOs, who employed smaller numbers of social workers. In contrast, the employers experiencing supply issues tended to employ a greater number of social workers. For example, Figure 5 below shows that the 22% of employers who indicated that supply issues were ‘a moderate challenge’ represented 77% of social workers covered by this survey. This indicates that supply challenges are greater for those employers who employed a greater proportion of the practising social worker workforce.

**Figure 4. Whether or not employers are currently facing social worker supply issues.**



**Figure 5. Whether or not employers are currently facing social worker supply issues, weighted by the number employed.**



For employers who found workforce supply highly challenging, the most common supply challenge reported was difficulty in attracting suitable candidates.

Additionally for 22% of employers, the issue of an ageing workforce and social workers planning to retire was noted as a significant challenge. The approach employers are taking towards succession planning and managing losses to retirement is discussed in Section 3.6.

## Section 3 – Recruitment practices

Employers were asked to describe their approaches to recruitment and to comment on any challenges faced by their organisations or business units in relation to recruitment, development and retention of their social worker workforces.

### 3.1 Recruitment strategy specific to social workers

Most employers (80%) indicated their organisations or business units did not have recruitment strategies in place specifically for social workers.

Of the 20% who indicated having a recruitment strategy in place, approaches to recruiting social workers included:

- offering work-based placements to fourth-year social work ākonga to complete their requirements for work-based learning
- working with tertiary education providers and at promotional events such as Career Expos to provide a graduate recruitment pathway.

### 3.2 Skills employers look for when recruiting social workers

Employers were asked about the attributes, skills and knowledge they are looking for when recruiting social workers.

Figure 6 shows how employers rated the following attributes, skills and knowledge from 'not at all important' to 'very important'. The most important single attribute, skill and knowledge area identified by employers was 'team fit' (52%).

**Figure 6. Importance of attributes needed to become a social worker**



Those employers, who indicated 'other' skills and attributes as being 'most important' (58% of employers) indicated a range of nuanced attributes including:

- better knowledge of the complexities within a particular field of practice relevant to the provider; for example, health, housing/homelessness, child protection
- 'soft skills' such as emotional intelligence, empathy, passion for the work
- aptitudes such as being flexible, able to learn and absorb new skills, thinking 'outside the box' and creativity/problem-solving skills.

*“The most important thing we look for is attitude. These other skills can be taught if the social worker has the right attitude and commitment to serve our people. With the workforce shortage it is difficult to find the right person with all of the attributes, skills and knowledge we are looking for, so we focus on being able to grow the right applicant.”*

### 3.3 Challenges in recruiting social workers

Employers were asked to record the biggest challenges they faced in social worker recruitment. More than one response was allowed. The challenge most commonly noted by employers was difficulty recruiting social workers overall (54%). 46% also noted difficulty in attracting suitable social workers with the necessary range of social work knowledge and skills.

Other common recruitment challenges employers described relate to budget and financial constraints.

Employers described the impact of operating services within financial constraints as an ongoing challenge for recruitment and retention of social workers. Specific impacts noted include:

- fewer opportunities for experienced candidates to get higher pay or advance their careers
- a freeze on front-line recruitment
- increased workloads for existing social work staff
- fewer opportunities to provide new social workers with full-time work
- limitations on employers’ ability to fulfil pay parity and pay equity agreements for social workers, was noted as a challenge in the NGO sector.

Employers also indicated that some services supporting diverse and widely spread communities had difficulty attracting social workers to vacancies. Isolated roles in rural settings, and roles within services for Māori and Pacific peoples, and older persons services were reported as being difficult to fill.

*“Ability to pay the staff what they are worth. While pay parity was successful for 23/24, we are still waiting for the new 24/25 contract which is putting stress on the organisation to continue meeting those salaries. Pay Parity was meant to take that pressure away from the NGO sector so we could compete with government.”*

### 3.4 Recruitment of overseas-qualified social workers

Employers were asked to describe their experience with recruiting overseas-qualified social workers.

Approximately a third (30%) of employers reported that their organisation or business unit had experience of recruiting overseas-qualified social workers. Some provided examples of successful overseas recruitment. However, overall commentary indicated concerns about the processes being complex and lengthy at times, involving visa and education requirements, as well as evidence of appropriate social work practice experience.

*"We supported a visa for a staff member to move into a social work role using her overseas qualifications once they were accepted in NZ. She has now become a resident and continues to work for us."*

Some employers with no experience of recruiting overseas-qualified social workers raised concerns about the suitability, skill set and knowledge of social workers who obtained their social work qualification outside New Zealand. These included:

- concern about understanding of Te Tiriti o Waitangi and working with tangata whenua
- a widespread perception of difficulties in overseas-qualified social workers understanding and adapting to the unique cultural context for social work practice in Aotearoa New Zealand.

*"It is a long process to recruit an overseas applicant. The applicant needs to be committed to achieving registration status. The recruiting team needs to have the capacity to be able to support the new to NZ social worker while they develop their practice to the NZ context. We have had some real successes in our overseas recruitment; however this is dependent on the support they get once they are in the post."*

## 3.5 Career progression frameworks

Employers were asked if they had new entrant pathways for newly qualified social workers and to describe the career progression frameworks they had in place for their social worker workforce.

### 3.5.1 New Entrant Pathways

Half (50%) of employers report that their organisation or business unit has a specific pathway to develop newly qualified social workers entering the workforce. These tended to be divided between:

- less formal (buddy based) peer supervision which may incorporate the Te Ao Māori concept of Teina-Tuakana. This approach appeared to be the most common approach.
- more formal, structured programmes for new graduates in larger organisations to support them towards full registration. This could include, for example, induction, supervision, professional development processes and support for membership of the ANZASW.
- Employers of Te Whatu Ora social workers reported the New Entrant to Specialist Practice training pathway (NESP) was widely used to support new entrants to roles within mental health services.

*"We have a teina/tuakana system within their practice and supervision offered regularly – weekly or fortnightly until they are more experienced."*

### 3.5.2 Career progression frameworks for existing employers

Less than half (44%) of employers have a career progression framework in place for social workers to develop their capabilities in their organisation or business unit.

The most common approach involved developing leadership skills to allow employers to replace their current more experienced social workers. The Allied Health Career

Progression Framework implemented within Te Whatu Ora was commonly noted amongst those working in the health sector as a way to develop staff on an ongoing basis.

Development through building links across the wider sector was also mentioned in one case as noted by an NGO below.

*“For us, career progression is supported in terms of their work outside our organisation. For example, we support professional development that potentially leads towards becoming External Supervisors, Sub Contracting and supporting the professional development of others in their work.”*

### 3.6 Succession planning

Employers were asked about succession planning when social workers indicate intention to leave the workforce. Over half of employers (51%) indicated their organisation or business unit had no formal succession planning in place.

Of those employers who did, the most common succession planning in place for their organisation or business unit was ensuring there were opportunities for students on unpaid work-based placements to become employees and fill the anticipated vacancies.

# Section 4 – Employers’ role in supporting social worker education and training

The SWRB sets standards for social work education. To meet these standards, tertiary education organisations that offer social work qualifications are required to place their ākonga with employers for at least two work-based learning placements. With this in mind, employers were asked to describe the ways that they engage with social work tertiary education programmes, and their experiences with ākonga field education (work-based learning).

## 4.1 Engagement with tertiary education and provision of work-based learning

Many employers (88%) said their organisation or business unit engages with education providers that offer social work qualifications. Types of engagement include:

- student placements (hosting, hui etc)
- engage through other CPD/training offered by TEOs
- membership of TEO advisory/reference groups
- guest lecturers (from employer to TEO)
- contact about potential recruits/candidates for employment
- other non-specific relationship or engagement.

Almost all employers (98%) said their organisation or business unit had provided work-based learning for social work ākonga (students). The majority had done so in the past year (78%).

## 4.2 Challenges and benefits in providing work-based learning

A number of challenges were noted in relation to supporting work-based learning. These included lack of supervisor capacity and the ability to match ākonga needs with available staff and organisations. These issues were noted as especially challenging in rural areas and in specific fields of practice such as mental health and family harm services.

Other notable challenges included lack of financial support for employers hosting placements compared to other work-based learning placements for nursing and other allied health ākonga. Also reported were issues of administrative burdens and having limited facilities to accommodate work-based learning. One employer summarised the process and the challenges as follows:

*“We try and encourage social workers to take students as an opportunity to develop their own practice and also as part of the workforce development strategy. For first-time social work student supervisors we pair them up with another social worker who is experienced in student placements/ mentoring and supervision. We have good relationships with the tertiary providers and have good processes in place to manage any problems or difficulties.*

*Capacity and willingness from social work staff is an ongoing issue, especially in teams where there is only one social worker, and they are already expected to support other Allied and Nursing students. Social workers are not that keen to take part-time students as this extends the length of placement and workload of the social worker. The main cause for concern from management is that there is no payment for social work students as is the case for some nursing and Allied Health students.”*



*"We consider the quality of the students, whether they take initiative, good interpersonal skills, etc. I know it is difficult for students to have all the skills, but as a busy organisation, we don't have the capacity to teach the students all the basic skills."*

In describing their experience of supporting individual ākonga with work-based learning, some employers, especially the NGOs, described the importance for ākonga to show initiative and good interpersonal skills. Several employers noted that ākonga required considerable support and oversight and to develop their communication skills before being introduced to their workplaces.

When asked about the benefits in offering field education placements, employers noted benefits for the organisation, for the social worker ākonga and benefits for the profession overall.

Benefits for the organisation included:

- the ability to try out new recruits for future roles
- students provide fresh/up-to-date perspectives and energy to the employer and existing staff, such as in the example given below:

*"They bring fresh perspective of social worker practice, share their up-to-date training/knowledge, give our experienced staff an opportunity to lead/teach which they enjoy, makes our organisation a learning environment."*

The benefits for the ākonga included:

- exposure to the reality of social work and 'real-world' issues in a way that cannot be learned in a 'classroom', including areas like harm to children and family violence
- generally raising their awareness and strengthening their connections and their understanding of the community they work within.

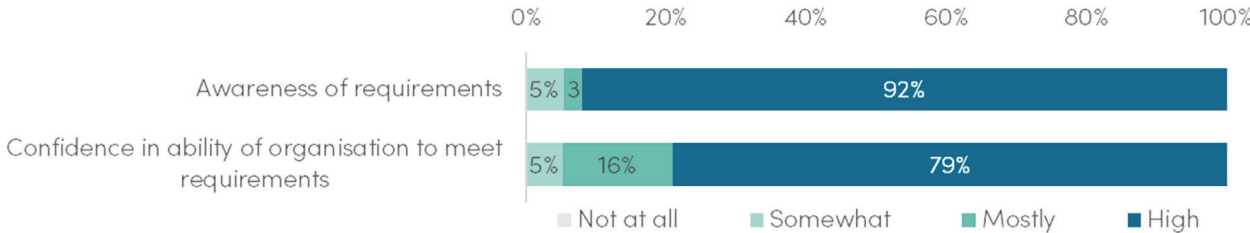
# Section 5 – Employer awareness and confidence in meeting responsibilities as employers of registered social workers

Employers have a responsibility to meet the statutory obligations involved in employing registered social workers,<sup>2</sup> and were asked a number of questions about how well their organisation or business unit understands and is able to meet the legislative requirements that relate to employing registered social workers in social work positions. The questions focused on awareness of the protected title of ‘social worker’, the need to enable social workers to undertake continuing professional development (CPD), and to meeting their requirements for undertaking professional supervision.

The survey results below show that in general there is high awareness among employers of their obligations to meet requirements, but less confidence in their ability to meet those requirements.

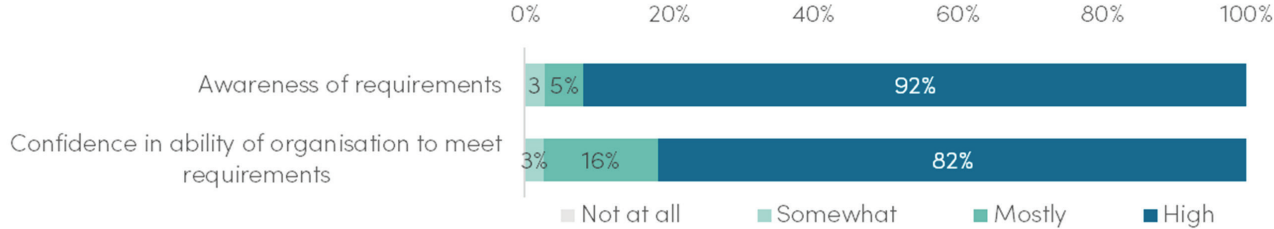
Figure 7 shows that 92% of employers were aware of and 79% were confident in the ability of their organisation or business unit to ensure roles are filled by a suitably qualified and registered social worker.

**Figure 7. Understanding that ‘social worker’ is a protected title and that roles can only be filled by a suitably qualified and registered social worker**



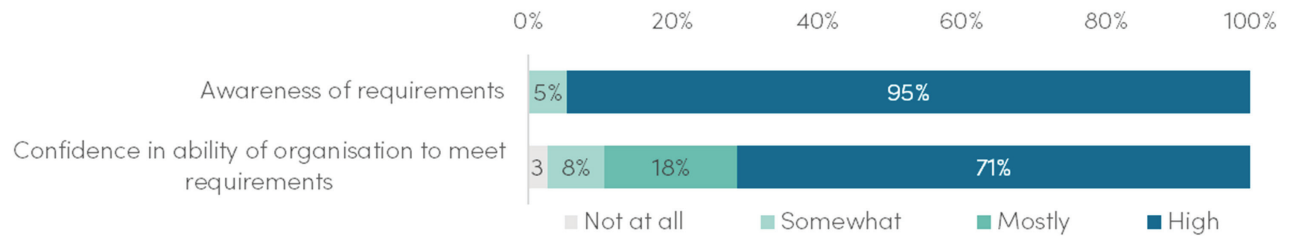
Figures 8 and 9 show that employers indicated high levels of awareness of professional requirements for social workers to have regular supervision (95%) and continuing professional development (CPD) (92%). However, they reported less confidence in their ability to meet both these requirements.

**Figure 8. Awareness of the need for 20+ hours of Continuing Professional Development per year**



<sup>2</sup> Responsibilities for employers of social workers are set out here: [swrb.govt.nz/employing-social-workers/](http://swrb.govt.nz/employing-social-workers/)

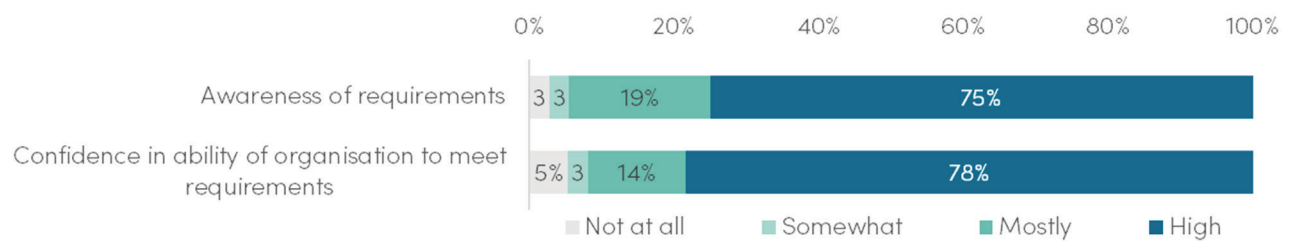
**Figure 9. Understanding the requirements to participate in professional supervision at least monthly**



In the interests of public safety, employers are required under the Social Workers Registration Act (2003) to report to the SWRB any concerns about their social workers regarding serious misconduct, health issues, or competence (mandatory reports). Employers were asked about their level of awareness of mandatory reporting and to provide feedback on experiences of doing so.

Figure 10 shows that 75% of employers were aware of and confident in their ability to report these issues to SWRB. However, this awareness is lower than the other requirements of employers described above.

**Figure 10. Awareness of requirements to report key concerns about social workers to the SWRB**



# Section 6 – Organisational relationships with the SWRB

This section discusses employers’ perceptions of the SWRB and their use of either the regulatory or the workforce planning insights and products that SWRB develops. To learn more about this, employers were asked to rate their awareness of the SWRB and its role and outputs on a ten-point scale from one (not aware) to 10 (very aware).

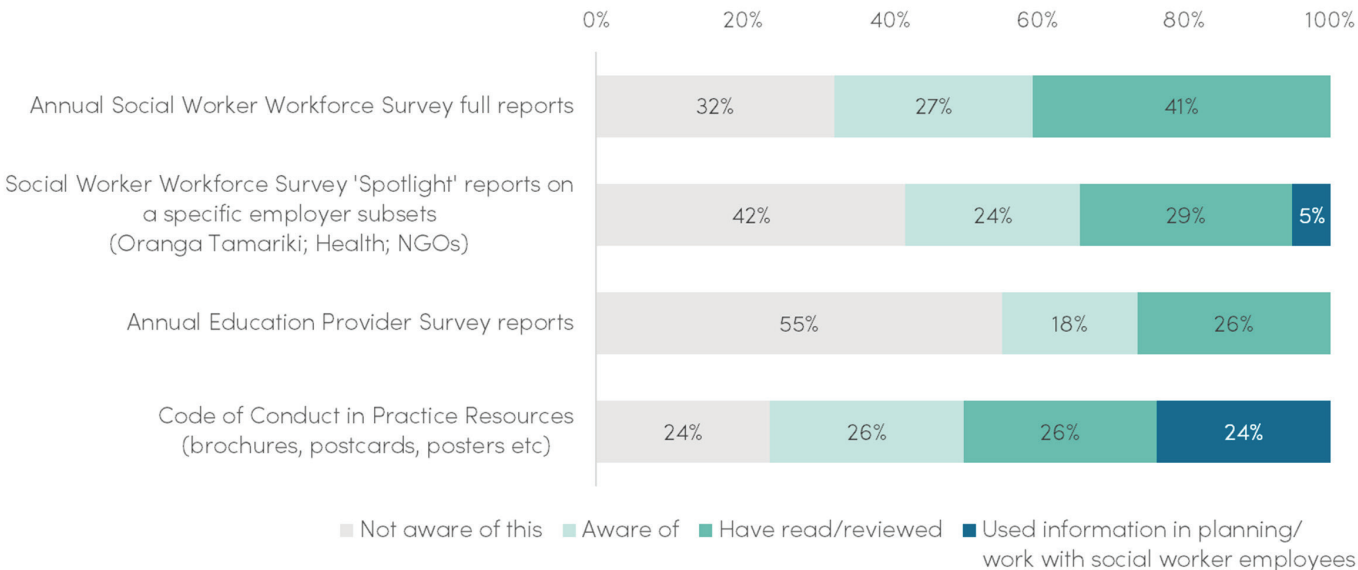
Figure 11 below shows that, on average, employers were more aware of the SWRB’s regulatory role as legislated under the Social Workers Registration Act 2003 than of its designated role as Lead Agency for social worker workforce planning for all social workers.

**Figure 11. Awareness of the SWRB and its functions**



Figure 12 shows the level of awareness of the SWRB’s reports and resources. The Annual Social Worker Workforce Reports are the most read/reviewed of the reports. The publications with the highest level of engagement are the SWRB’s Code of Conduct in Practice resources, with 24% of employers stating they have used these in their planning or work with social worker employees.

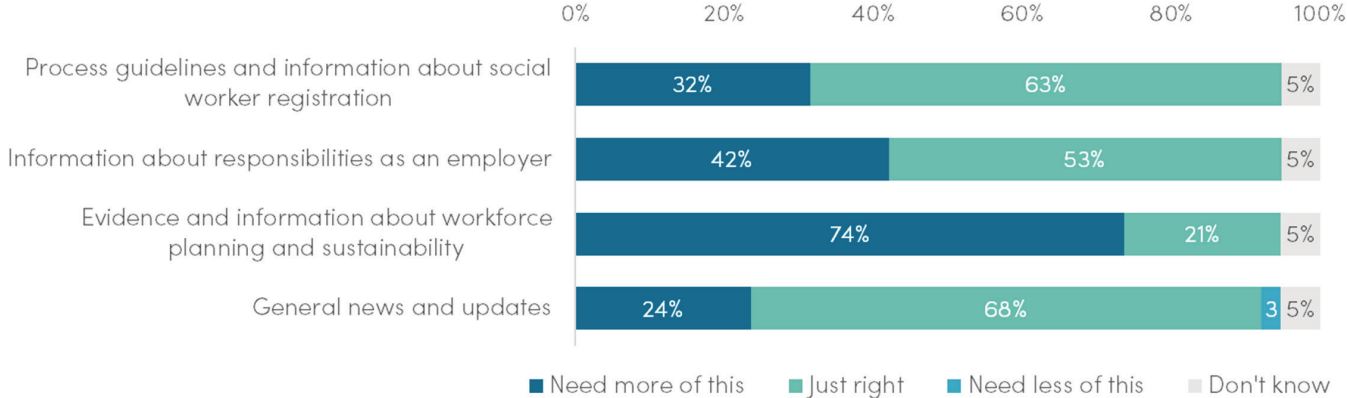
**Figure 12. Current awareness and use of SWRB resources**



When asked what they needed from the SWRB in future, most employers (74%) indicated needing more evidence and information about workforce planning and workforce sustainability. Most of those who want more evidence and information related to

workforce planning are aware of or have read or used our existing suite of publications in their organisations (Annual Social Worker Workforce Reports, Spotlight and Education Provider reports).

**Figure 13. Areas most needed from the SWRB as the social work regulator and lead agency for workforce planning**



# Closing comments

This inaugural Social Worker Employers Report adds to our existing suite of reports that are helping to build a more detailed picture about the social worker workforce. It has drawn on the perspective of employers who are recruiting and developing their social worker workforces. The SWRB appreciates and acknowledges the employers who shared their time and gave valuable feedback and insights into the complexities of the work they are doing. We look forward to expanding our reporting in this employer space in the future.

We welcome feedback, comments and suggestions on ways to further develop our understanding of the employer perspective in future similar surveys.



# Appendix 1: The SWRB's role as Lead Agency for Workforce Planning for all social workers

The SWRB's vision for its lead agency function is to support the health and social care system to have enough social workers with the right skills, knowledge, and competencies in the right place, at the right time and at the right cost, to support New Zealanders to lead happier, healthier and more productive lives.

We work together with employers, as well as sector organisations, government agencies, funders, education and training providers, taking a cross-sectoral, strategic and collaborative relationship-based approach.

We collect and analyse social worker and employer information and provide insights and evidence for others to use in their workforce planning and development activities.

The SWRB's role to date has focused on building knowledge on trends, developing robust evidence and developing relationships to better understand the workforce challenges we are facing.

The SWRB was designated its role as Lead Agency for workforce planning for all social workers in Aotearoa New Zealand by the Cabinet Social Wellbeing Committee in 2020.

## Appendix 2: Additional information about the 2024 survey methodology

This inaugural survey of social worker employers used a ‘convenience sample’ of the SWRB’s ‘Authorised Employers’ (those who have signed an Authorised Employer Agreement with the SWRB to allow for payment of registration and/or practising certificate fees on behalf of employed social workers). Convenience sampling is a pragmatic way to collect information from an accessible sample of participants, and while the results may not represent the entire social work employer landscape in New Zealand, this methodology was chosen as a way to efficiently gather information for this inaugural piece of work.

An online survey link was sent out by direct email to over 400 administrative and team leader contacts in the SWRB’s database from approximately 200 organisations and business units. Notification of the survey was also sent to key strategic contacts across the largest employer groups (several NGOs, Oranga Tamariki and Health New Zealand/ Te Whatu Ora). The survey email also included an invitation to share the survey with colleagues and other employers as appropriate. The survey was also publicised through Social Service Providers Te Pai Ora (SSPA) in their update to members.

The 2024 survey opened on 29 October and closed on Friday 15 November.

At the date of survey closure, 71 individual survey responses had been received, representing employers of 2,752 social workers (30% of the practising workforce of 9,135 social workers as of 30 June 2024).

- Two-thirds of respondents were from NGOs (64%, or 36 responses, representing 299 social workers)
- 18% from health (10 responses, representing 566 social workers)
- 7% from Oranga Tamariki (4 responses, representing the largest subset of 1,832 social workers)
- 4% from iwi-based organisations (2 responses, representing 71 social workers)
- 4% from education providers (2 responses, representing 15 social workers)

**Table 1. Survey respondents by employer type and number of social workers represented**

Employer type	Proportion of responses	Number of responses	Number of social workers represented by org/business unit
Non-government organisation (NGO)	64%	36	299
Health (Health NZ/Te Whatu Ora; DHB business unit; PHO)	18%	10	516
Oranga Tamariki	7%	4	1,832
Iwi-based organisation	4%	2	71
Education provider (ECE; primary or secondary school; tertiary provider)	4%	2	15
Other Government	2%	1	4
Other (please specify)	2%	1	No response
Employer type unspecified	-	15	15
<b>Total</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>71</b>	<b>2,752</b>