



**Social Workers
Registration Board**

Kāhui Whakamana Tauwhiro

ANNUAL SWRB WORKFORCE SURVEY

2019 Summary Report

New Zealand Government

WHAKATAUKĪ

*Ko te manu kai i te miro, nōna te ngahere.
Ko te manu kai i te mātauranga, nōna te ao.*

*The bird that consumes the miro berry, owns the forest.
The bird that consumes knowledge, owns the world.*

PREFACE

It has been a significant year for the social work profession in Aotearoa New Zealand, with 2019 marking the passing of amendments to the Social Workers Registration Act. As a result, Aotearoa New Zealand is now in the process of moving to mandatory registration of social workers, with all practising social workers needing to be registered by 27 February 2021. Our role is not only protecting the public but also enhancing social worker professionalism. As a modern regulator we identify the need to be evidence-based and intelligence-led in informing our processes and achieving our purpose to ensure we positively influence the systems that social workers operate in. The workforce survey is a means of collecting data that provides insights about the current situation of the workforce and contributes knowledge towards workforce planning and decision making. Within a mandatory environment we will be better placed to build the picture of the social work workforce into the future.

The social work profession has received substantial media coverage in the past year to which the public response has been varied in its impact on the standing of the profession. Additionally, the pay equity settlement for statutory social workers that occurred late 2018 has had significant consequences for other parts of the system, especially in the NGO sector. At the SWRB we hope that the findings in this report can help provide evidence towards understanding these pressure points within the sector and guide us in our work as regulators.

We acknowledge the survey is not perfect, being only the second of its kind to be undertaken on the social work workforce, but improvements will be made to the survey annually. With time the SWRB hopes to be able to collect an evidence base that can be used to identify trends and gain a thorough understanding of the workforce and sector.

We would like to thank the social workers who took the time to participate in the survey. As the regulator we want to continue to build our relationships with social workers and manaaki the work that they do.

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report presents a summary of the data collected from the 2019 annual SWRB Workforce Survey. It contains information about the current social work workforce in Aotearoa New Zealand through collating the survey responses of 1,173 social workers registered with the SWRB.

Note: Although care has been taken in summarising this data and we believe it provides a valuable contribution towards understanding the social work workforce in Aotearoa New Zealand, we recommend that readers take care in interpreting its information.

Younger social workers more likely to work for NGO and/or iwi employers: Social workers 30 years and under were more likely to work for an NGO and/or iwi provider. Therefore, it is likely NGO and/or iwi providers are finding themselves in a position of supporting new graduates into work.

Pay disparity across the sector: Differences in hourly rates of social workers were identified between social work employers. The largest proportion of social workers working for NGO and/or iwi providers earned between \$21-\$30 an hour whereas the largest proportion of social workers working for a DHB earned between \$31-\$40 per hour. Social workers working for Oranga Tamariki earned a range of hourly rates and it had the largest proportion of social workers earning in the wage bracket \$41-\$50 per hour compared to the other employers.

Time in current social work role: Nearly half of all social workers indicated that they had been in their current role for two years or less. This group was diverse in age.

Workforce sustainability: Nearly a quarter of all social workers indicated that they intended to leave the social work workforce in Aotearoa New Zealand. Of those intending to leave, pay scale and workload were key factors influencing their decision. For social workers under 40 years old, lack of support and supervision were key factors influencing their decision to leave.

Methodology

At the time of the survey being undertaken, just over 7,800 social workers were registered with the SWRB with around 5,800 social workers working and holding a Practising Certificate (PC).

The survey was delivered electronically via Survey Monkey and consisted of 36 questions. All social workers who were registered with the SWRB and held a PC received the survey link via email along with a reminder email to renew their PC. This email was sent in April 2019 and the survey remained open for responses until late August 2019.

During this period, the survey received 1,358 responses, of which 1,173 respondents (86%) completed the survey. These responses were used in the final report. Survey responses remained anonymous and the response time was 9 minutes on average.

This report also uses data from the SWRB register to determine the representativeness of the survey data to the social workers registered with the SWRB.

The survey link was emailed to just over 5,800 social workers holding a current PC, along with a reminder email to renew their PC. Of this group, 23% participated in the survey, of which 86% completed it. This was lower than the 2018 response rate where around 30% participated in the survey with an 87% completion rate.

Feedback was received that the survey link was unclear which may have influenced the reduced response rate.

Due to the lower response rate, the majority of the data in this report is presented as proportions (i.e. as percentage of survey respondents).

01

DATA REPRESENTATIVENESS

Comparisons were made between the survey data and data from the SWRB register to determine the representativeness of the survey data. The comparisons showed similar demographic breakdowns, affirming the representativeness of the survey data.

Gender

As seen in figure 1.1 the proportion of male and female social workers who responded to the survey was similar to the proportions of male and female social workers registered with the SWRB. It is important to note that one survey respondent identified as gender diverse and eight selected prefer not to say. Due to the small number of respondents in this category they were not included in this gender comparison.

Age

Additionally, the proportion of social workers in each age bracket was similar between the survey data and the SWRB register data, see figure 1.2. Furthermore, this data highlights that the largest groups of social workers were those aged between 41-50 years and 51-60 years. The average age of social workers who participated in the survey was 48.48 years, with the median age being 50 years.

Ethnicity

A direct comparison of ethnicity between the survey data and the SWRB register data could not be made as ethnic categories and the selection process were different between the two data sets. A breakdown of survey respondents' ethnicity can be seen in figure 1.3, alongside an ethnic breakdown of the social workers registered with the SWRB. Please note that the SWRB register currently allocates one ethnicity to each social worker, whereas in the survey social workers were able to select up to three ethnicities. Ethnic groups have been grouped together for ease of presenting.

Social work qualification

According to the survey data, of those who had completed social work qualifications, 86% had completed their social work qualification in Aotearoa New Zealand, and 14% completed it overseas. This was similar to the SWRB register data with 83% having completed their degrees in Aotearoa New Zealand and 17% having completed their degree overseas.

Figure 1.1. Gender comparison of survey respondents with social workers currently registered with SWRB as at September 2019

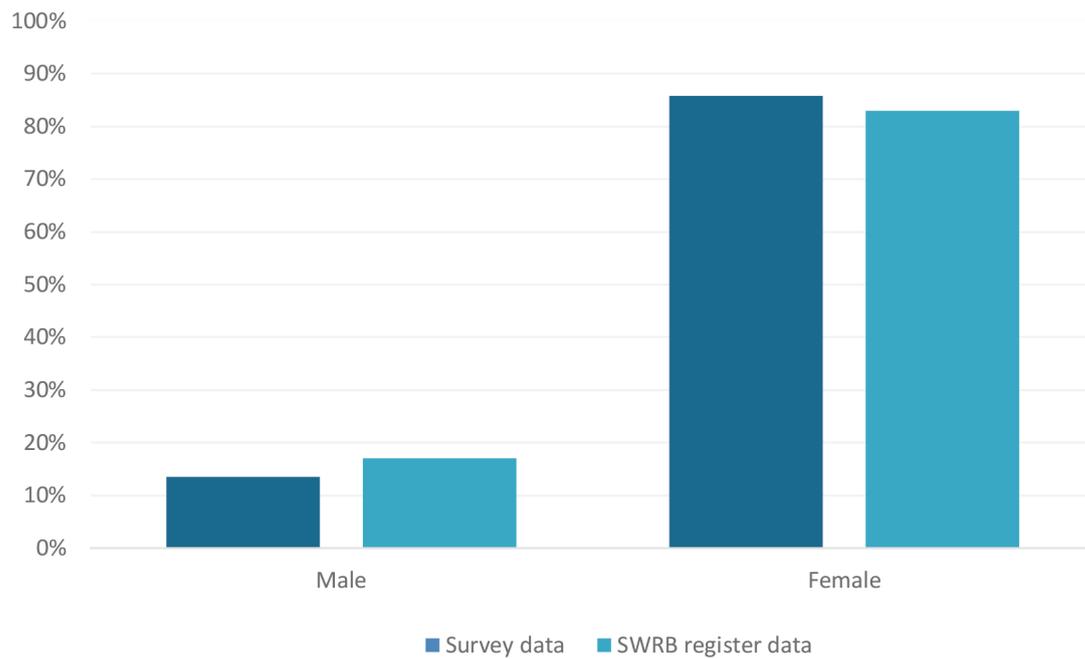
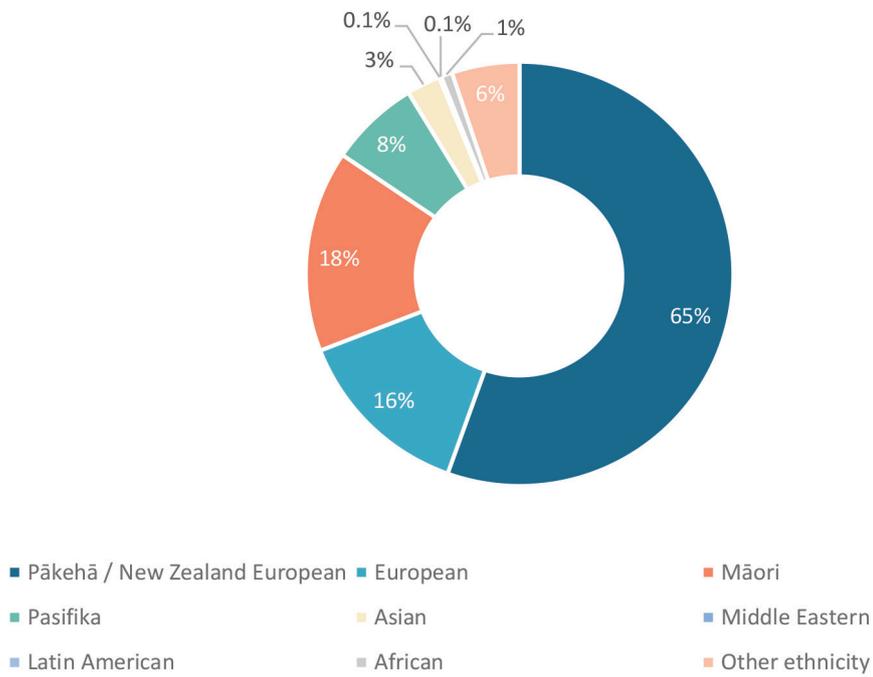


Figure 1.2. Age comparison of survey respondents with social workers currently registered with SWRB as at September 2019



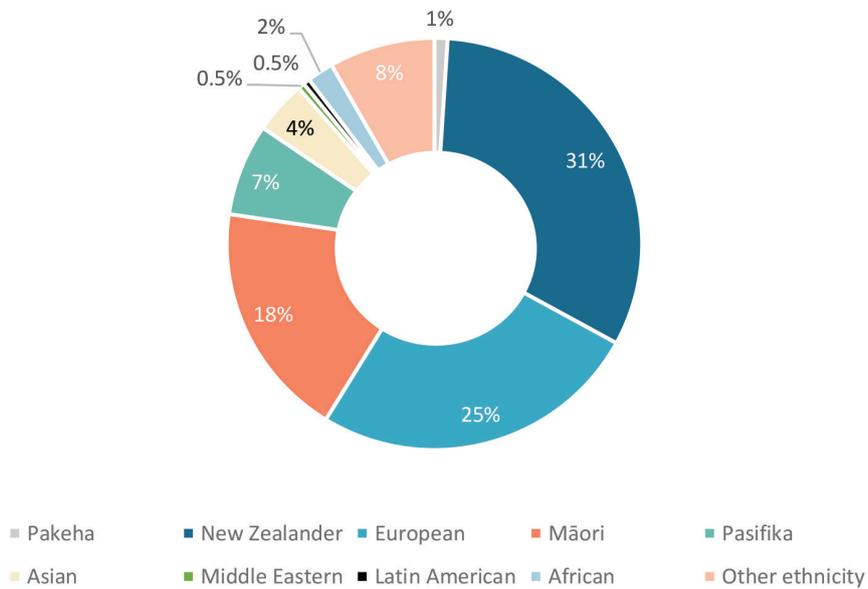
Figure 1.3. Ethnicity of survey respondents and SWRB register data

Ethnicity of survey respondents



NOTE: The survey data sum of categories does not total 100% as respondents were able to select up to three ethnic categories they identified with.

Ethnicity of SWRB Register data



Demographic Information

Below is additional demographic information provided by the social workers who completed the workforce survey.

Figure 1.4. Breakdown of survey respondents age by gender

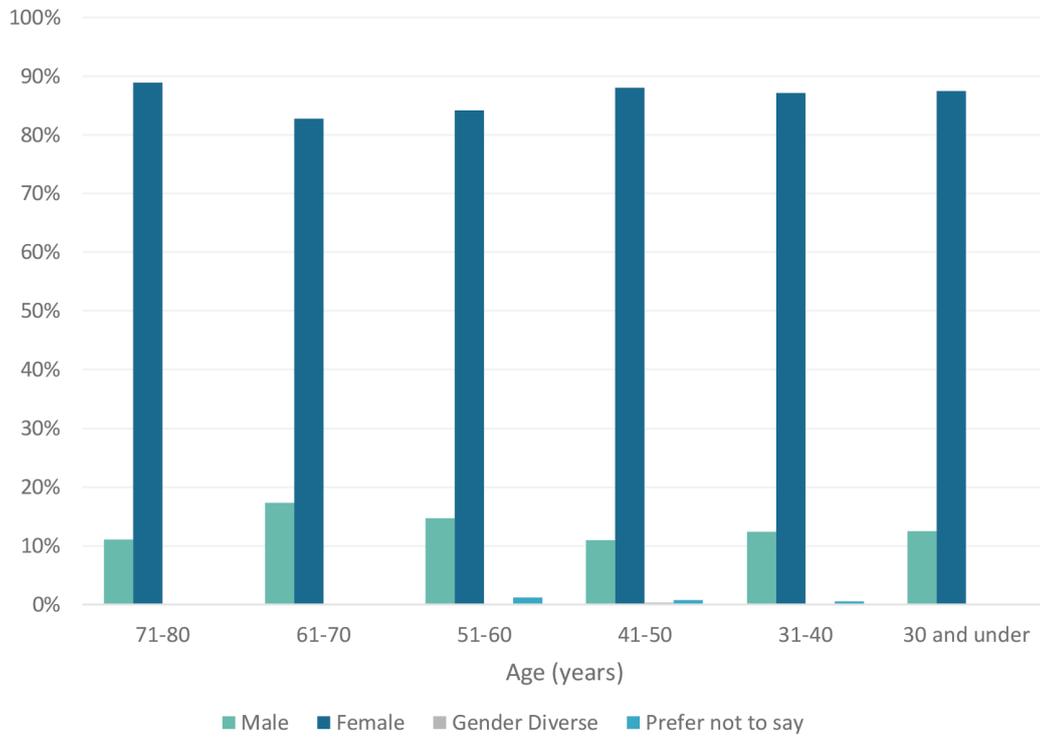
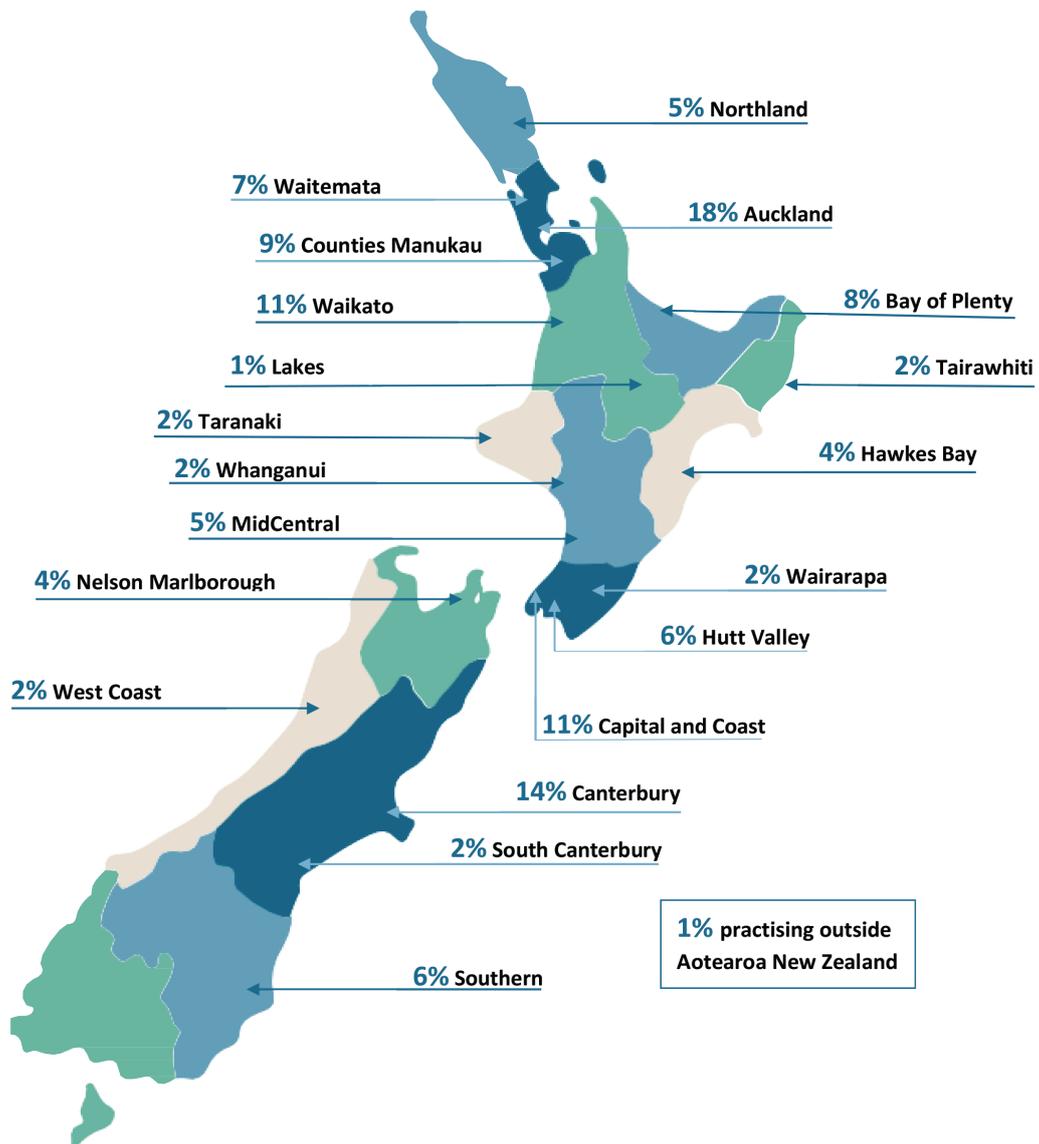


Figure 1. 5. Geographical areas survey respondents reported working in over the last year



02

TANGATA WHENUA WORKFORCE

The SWRB recognises the importance of tangata whenua and the crucial role they play in the social work workforce. Below is the demographic information summarised of 214 social workers who completed the survey and identified as tangata whenua.

Gender

Tangata whenua survey respondents demonstrated a gender split of 84% female and 14% male and one member identified as gender diverse.

Age

The age breakdown of survey respondents who identified as tangata whenua can be seen in figure 2.1. The majority of respondents, 81%, were above 40 years old. The average age of tangata whenua survey respondents was 50.57 years and the median age was 51.5 years.

Social work qualification

The majority of tangata whenua social workers, 61%, indicated holding a bachelor's degree or bachelor's degree with honours as indicated in figure 2.2.

The SWRB offers an experience pathway to registration, where social workers with substantial social work experience have the opportunity to become a registered social worker. This is an alternative to the most common pathway to registration where social workers hold a recognised qualification. 2% of tangata whenua social workers received registration via the experience pathway.

Main employer

Tangata whenua social workers reported working predominantly for NGO or iwi provider organisations as indicated in figure 2.3. This has implications for tangata whenua social workers and their income, as can be seen in section 4 of the report outlining income based on employment.

Place of work

Figure 2.4 highlights the geographical areas that tangata whenua respondents indicated working in over the last year (based on DHB boundaries). The northern areas of Northland, Bay of Plenty and Waikato were the geographical areas most frequently worked in by tangata whenua social workers.

Demographics of tangata whenua social workers

Figure 2.1. Age of tangata whenua survey respondents

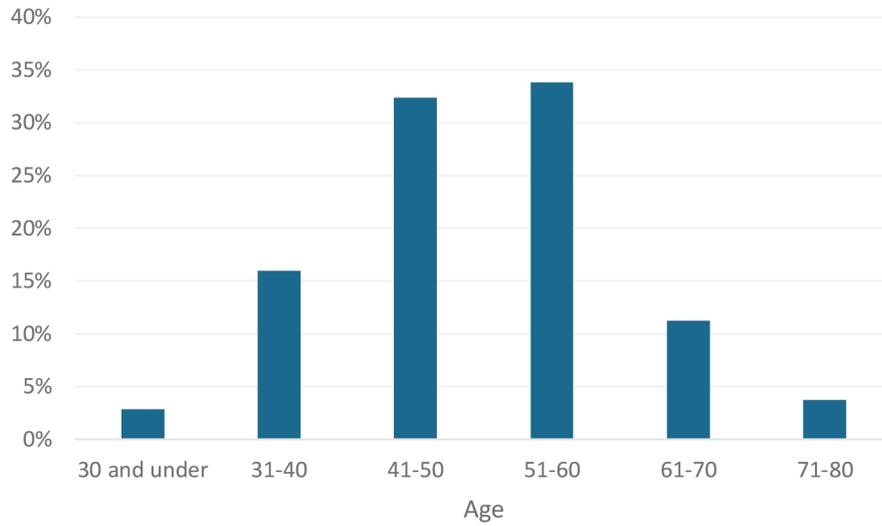
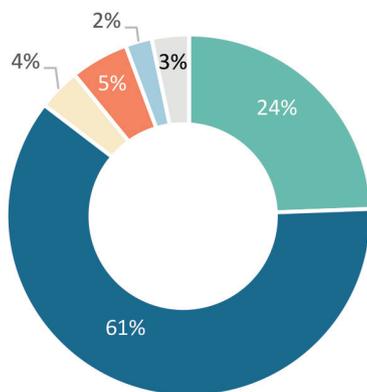
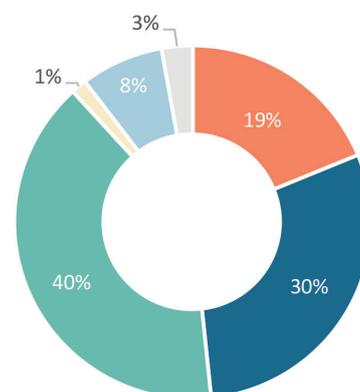


Figure 2.2. Level of recognised social work qualification of tangata whenua survey respondents



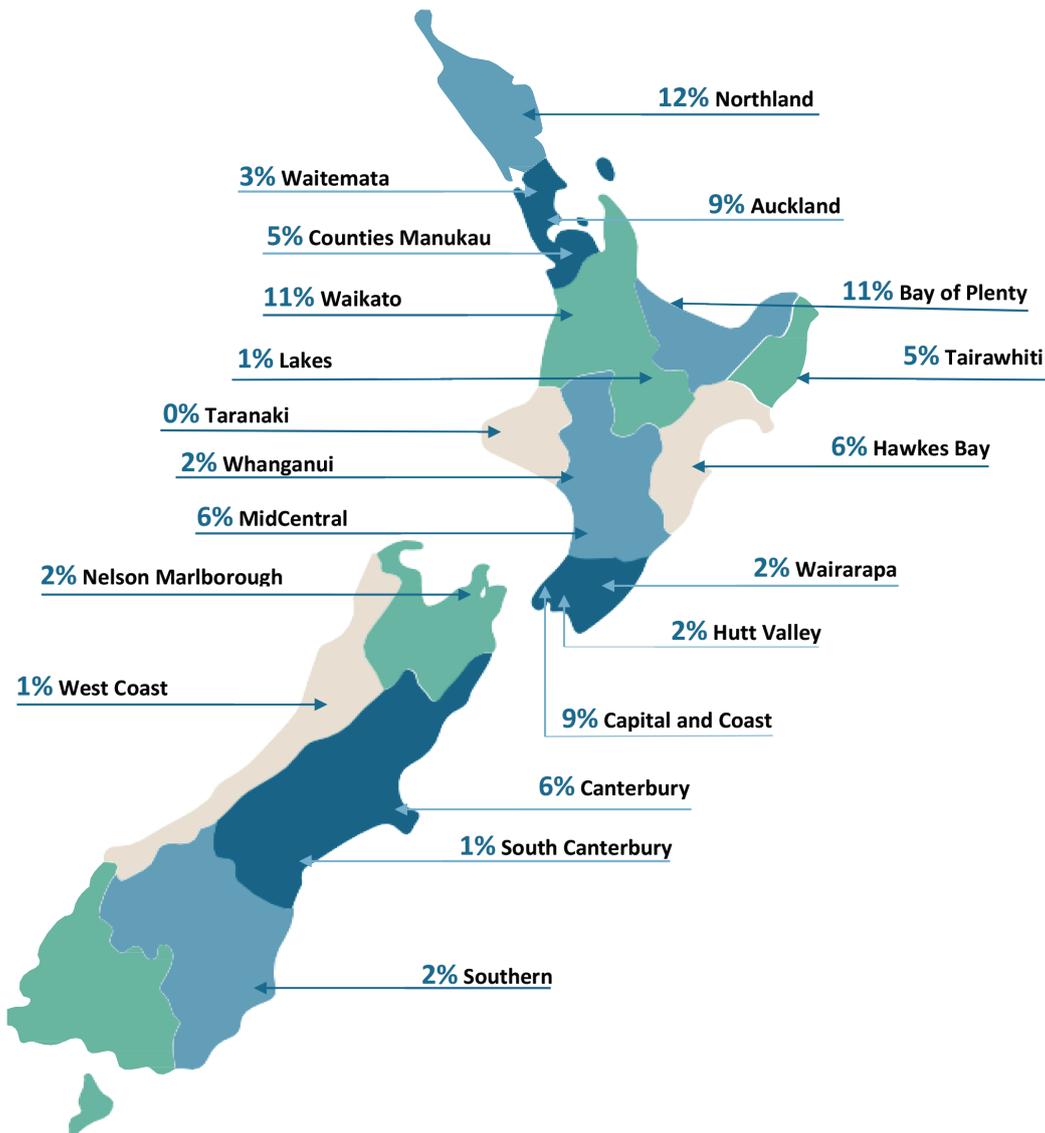
- Diploma or Graduate Diploma
- Bachelors Degree / Bachelors Degree with Honours
- Postgraduate Certificate or Postgraduate Diploma
- Masters Degree
- Experience assessed as equivalent (s.13)
- Other including currently studying

Figure 2.3. Main employer indicated by tangata whenua social workers



- Oranga Tamariki
- District Health Board
- NGO or iwi provider
- Self-Employed/Practice practice
- Other
- Not currently working as a swkr/Retired

Figure 2.4. Geographical areas tangata whenua respondents reported working in over the last year



03

EMPLOYMENT AND MAHI

Job title

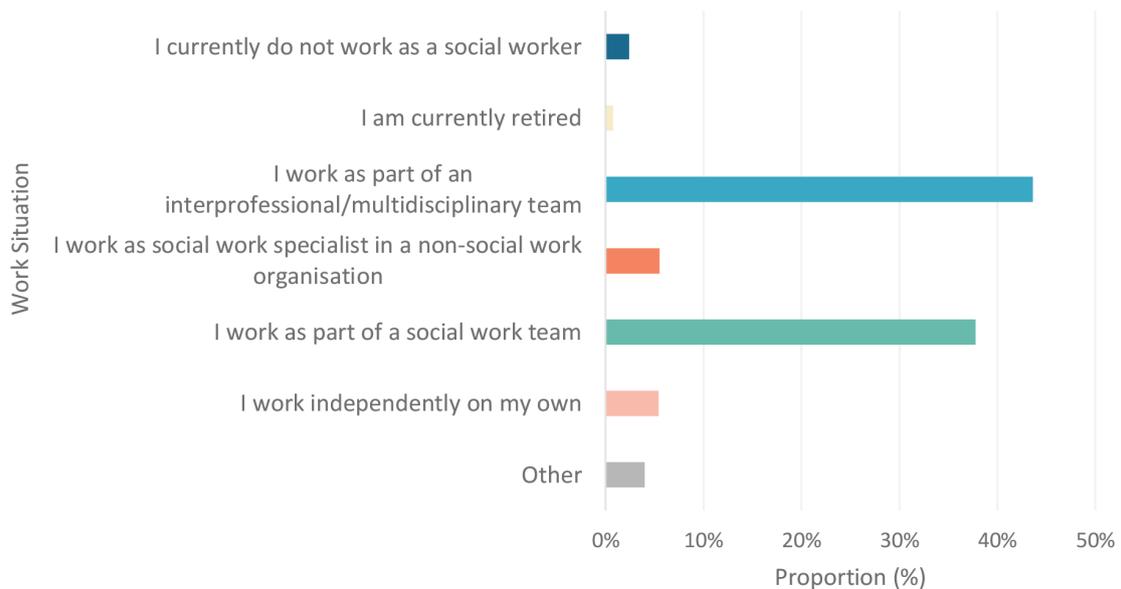
Social workers were asked if the term 'social worker' or 'social work' were included in their job title or job description. 75% of respondents indicated that their job title or job description contained one of these terms, whereas 94% of respondents indicated holding a current practising certificate. This suggests that a number of social workers consider their role to be practising social work although their employer does not necessarily identify that they are.

Social workers are required to hold a current practising certificate if they believe they are practising social work. See the SWRB website for further detail on what practising social work and holding a practising certificate involves: (<https://swrb.govt.nz/for-social-workers/practising-certificate/>).

Work situation

Social workers were asked to indicate 'which best describes your main type of work situation and place or work?'. Figure 3.1 shows social workers responses. The majority of social workers, 81%, indicated that they worked as part of an interprofessional/multidisciplinary team, or as part of a social work team.

Figure 3.1. Breakdown of social workers work situation



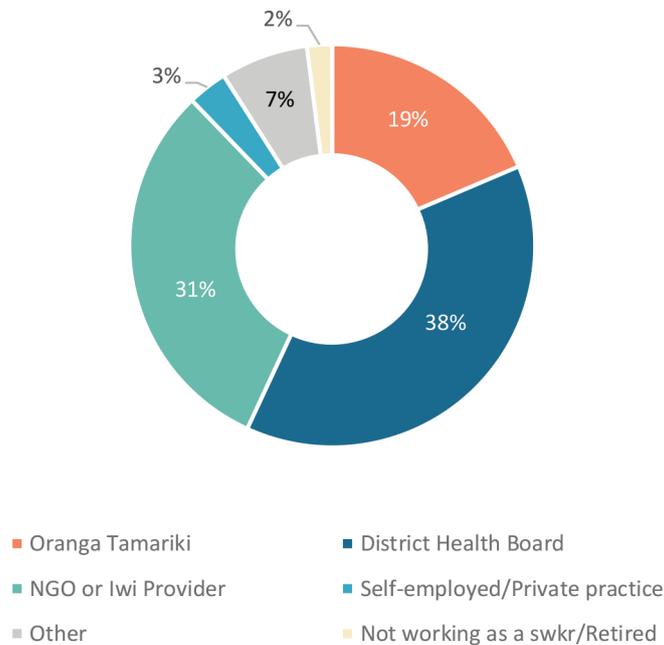
Social work employer

Social workers were asked to provide their main employer in Aotearoa New Zealand, either paid or voluntary. The largest proportion of social workers reported working for a District Health Board (DHBs) as seen in figure 3.2. This was followed by NGO and/or iwi providers making up the second largest employer of social workers.

A greater number of respondents in the 2019 survey data report working for a DHB, 38%, compared to 25% of respondents working for a DHB in 2018. Similar proportions of survey respondents work for Oranga Tamariki and NGOs and/or iwi providers in 2018 as in 2019.

It is not clear if this reflects a change in social work employment numbers within DHBs and Oranga Tamariki, or if this is solely a reflection of the respondents who responded to the survey. A comparison was made between the survey data and the SWRB register data. As of June 2019, of the social workers on the SWRB register data, 20% worked for a DHB, 28% worked for an NGO, 21% worked for Oranga Tamariki, 21% were not currently practising and the remaining 10% were in other forms of employment.

Figure 3.2. Main social work employer of survey respondents - paid or voluntary

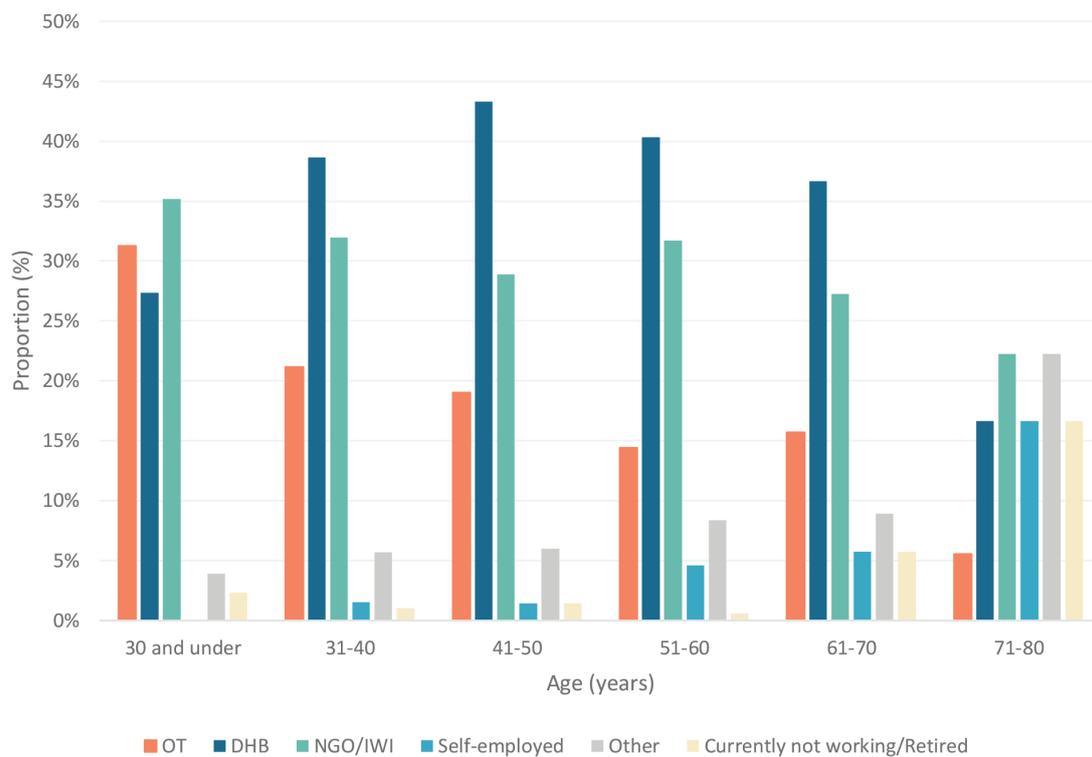


Social work employer and age

The data shows that the age of social workers varies between employers. A greater proportion of younger respondents, less than 30 years old, reported working for an NGO and/or iwi provider than for other employers, see figure 3.3. This has potential implications for the NGO and iwi provider sector who appear to be more likely to employ new graduates and younger social workers who will require support in their position starting out as a social worker.

It appears that social workers above 30 years old are less likely to work for an NGO and/or iwi provider and more likely to work for a DHB, with a greater proportion of respondents within the 41-70-year age range reporting they work for a DHB.

Figure 3.3. Breakdown of age of respondents by social work employers

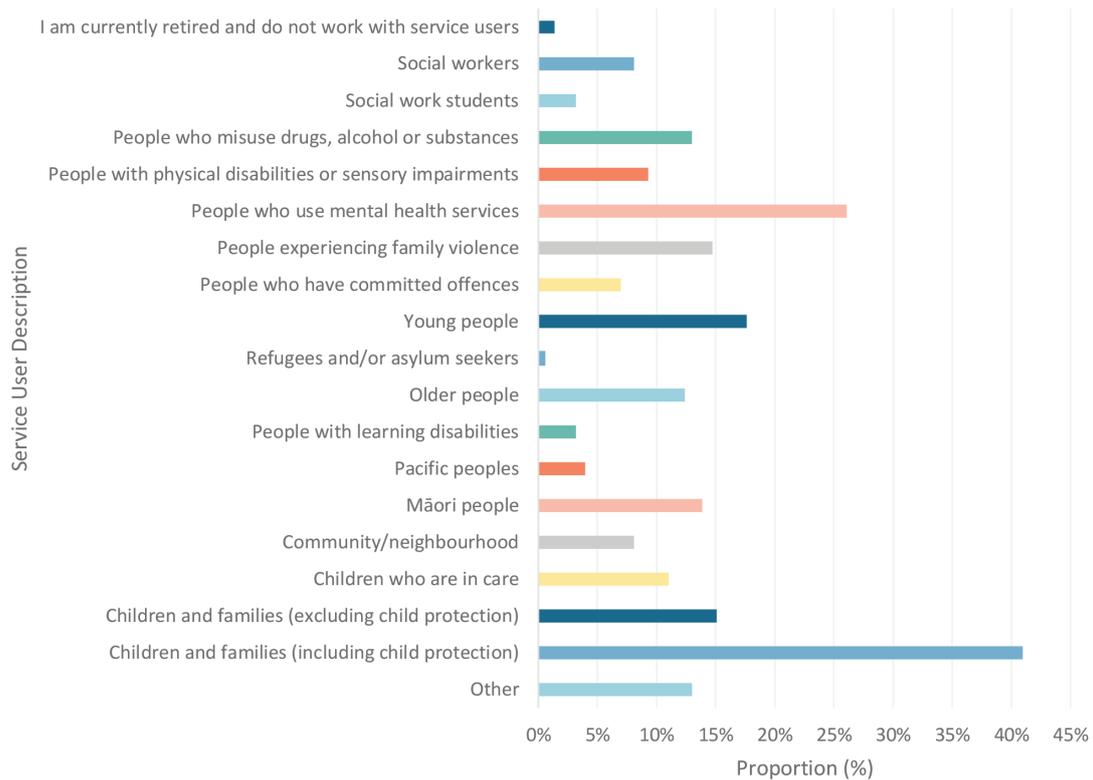


Service users

Figure 3.4. shows the responses to the question ‘which of the following descriptions best describes the service users with whom you work?’. Children and families (including child protection) still makes up the largest proportion of service users as was found in 2018.

It is useful to note that the second highest category was people who use mental health services, at just over a quarter of respondents indicating working with this group of services users (26%).

Figure 3.4. Respondents descriptions of service users they work with



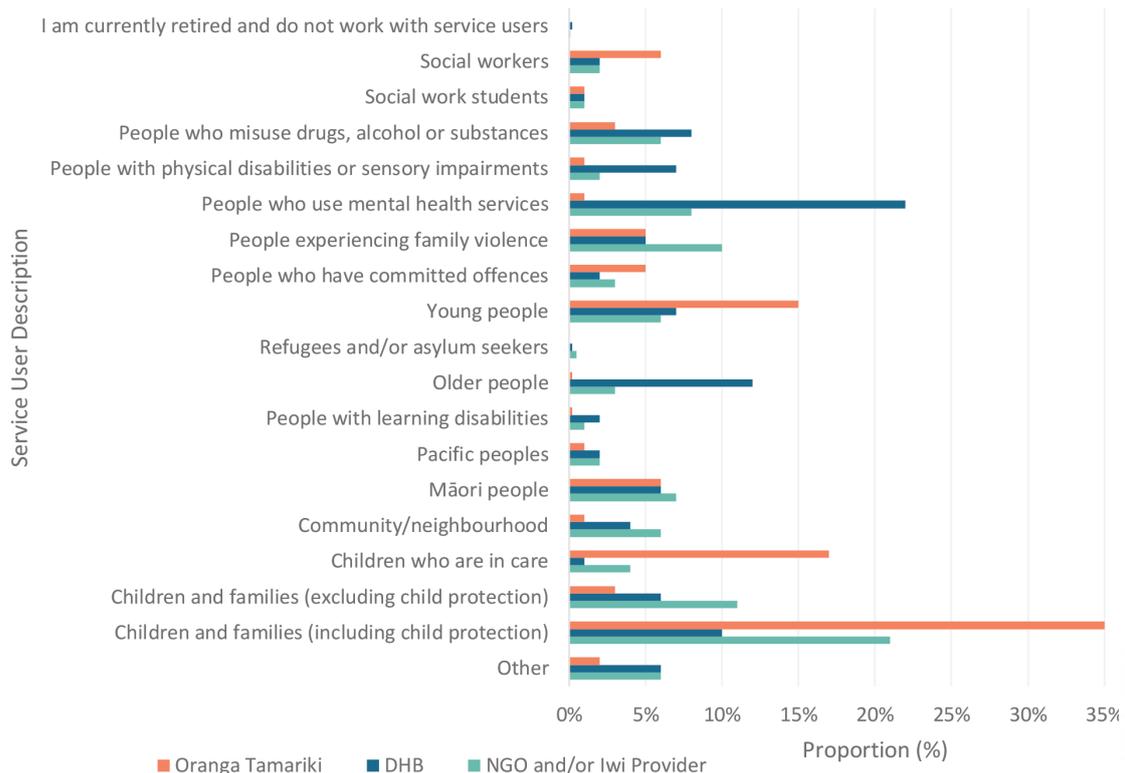
NOTE: The sum of categories does not total 100% as respondents were able to select up to three service users they worked with.

Social workers who selected the response option ‘other’ described a range of service users with which they worked. A number of social workers indicated working with people and whānau who would fit into many of the categories described above. This demonstrates the complexity of the situations that service users experience and that social workers work with.

Service users and employer

The service users social workers reported working with differed depending on their reported employment as shown in figure 3.5. Children and families (including child protection) were the largest proportion of service users reported by social workers working in an NGO and/or iwi providers or in Oranga Tamariki. Social workers who reported working for a DHB indicated the largest proportion of services users were those using mental health services. Please note the sum of service user categories totals to greater than 100% as respondents were able to select up to three service user types they worked with.

Figure 3.5. Descriptions of services users worked with by social work employer



Social work role

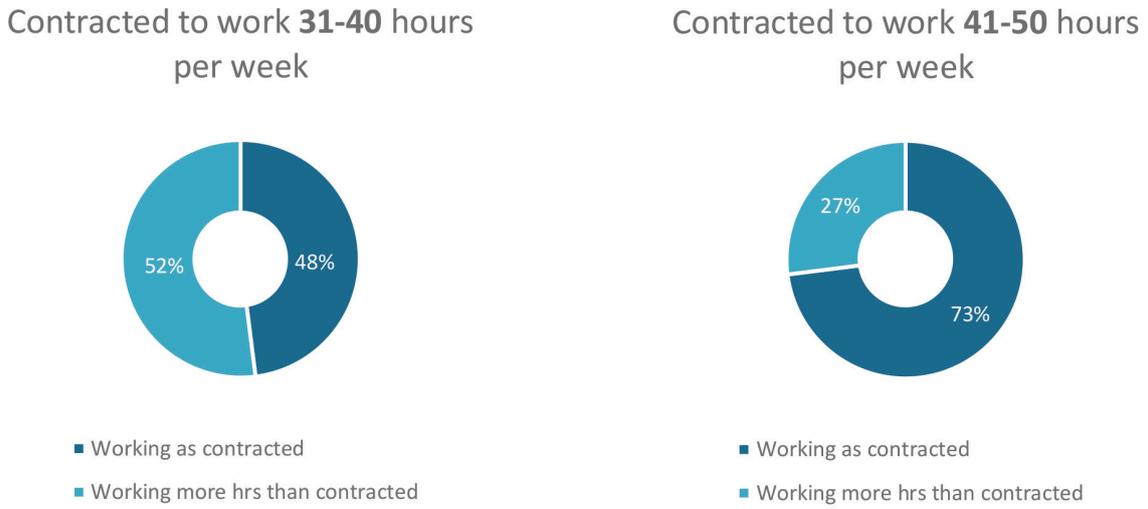
The survey asked social workers to report ‘which description best fits your current social work role?’. The categories provided in the survey caused some confusion for survey respondents. In the 2020 survey this question and the response options will be refined so accurate results can be collected.

Workload

Social workers were asked to report how many hours they were contracted to work a week and on average how many hours a week they worked. A large proportion of social workers (46%) reported working on average a greater number of hours per week than the number specified on their contract.

Of those contracted to work 31–40 hours per week, 52% reported working more hours on average than the number specified on their contract, see figure 3.6. Of those contracted to work 41–50 hours per week, 27% reported working more hours on average than the number specified in their contract.

Figure 3.6. Contracted hours to work per week compared to average number of hours worked per week



Length of time in current social work employment

A large proportion (48%) of respondents were new to their current social work role (less than two years), see figure 3.7. Of those who have been in their current social work role for less than two years, there is a split across ages, see figure 3.8. This indicates that social workers across a range of ages have been in their role for less than two years, not just younger social workers who are new to the workforce.

A significant number of respondents, 15%, have been in their current social work role for over 10 years as shown in figure 3.9. A breakdown by employer was completed for this group of respondents. Of those who have been in their current role for over 10 years, 54% indicated working for a DHB. Note that a large proportion of survey respondents indicated working for a DHB as their main employer. No respondents indicated working for an iwi provider for more than 10 years.

Figure 3.7. Length of time working in current social work role

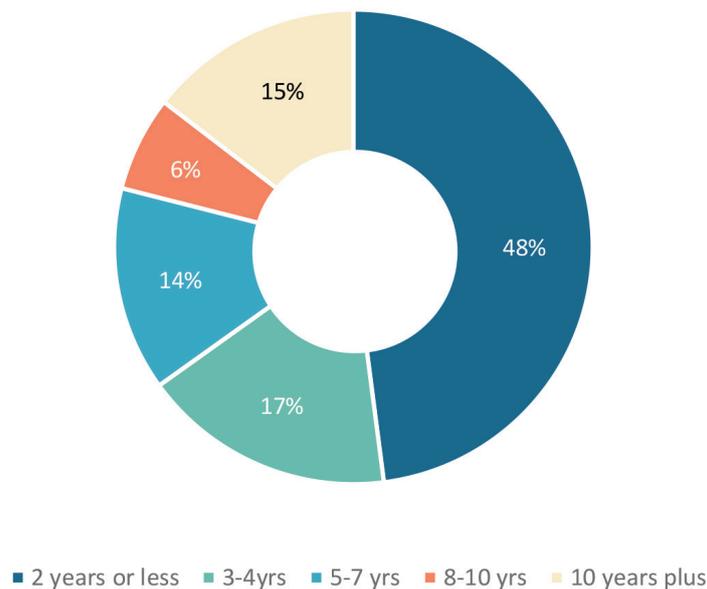


Figure 3.8. Age breakdown of respondents who have been in their current social work role for 2 years or less

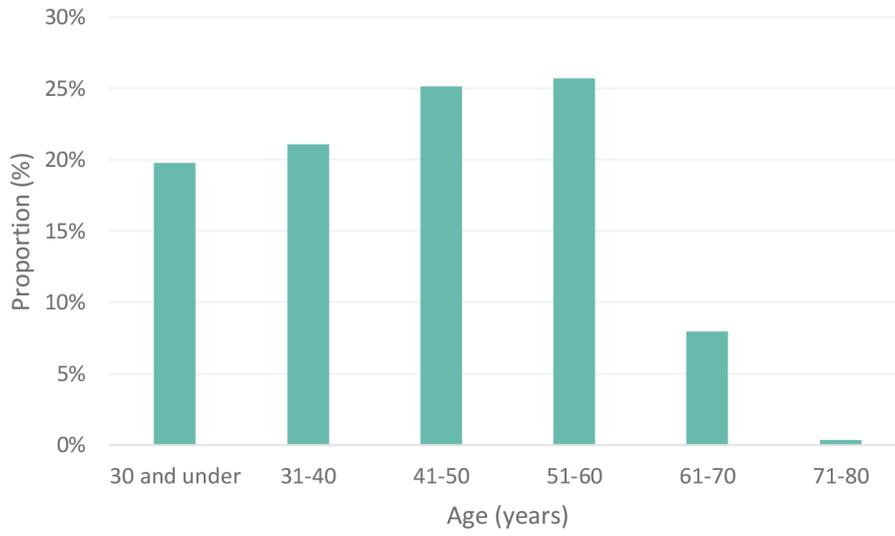
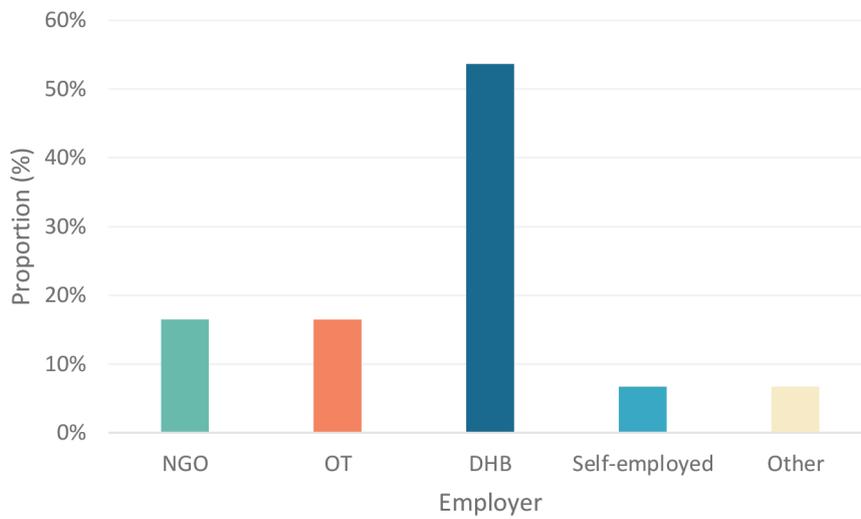


Figure 3.9. Respondents in current role for more than 10 years broken down by employer



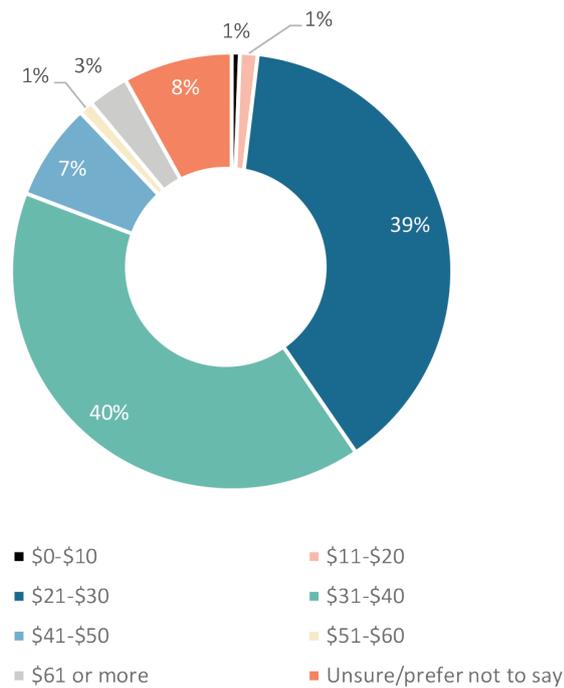
04

INCOME

Social workers were asked to indicate their hourly rate for practising as a social worker, see figure 4.1. Noteworthy is that 82% of social workers reported a rate of \$40 or less an hour. Furthermore 41% reported earning less than \$30 an hour. In salary terms, an individual working 40 hours a week on \$30 an hour earns \$62,400 per annum before tax.

It is important to note that a number of social workers reported working a variety of roles on a part-time basis. These different roles provide different hourly rates, with self-employment work earning more per hour. For example, one individual reported earning \$30 per hour in an NGO role and \$84 an hour in a self-employed role contracted with ACC.

Figure 4.1. Hourly rate for practising as a social worker indicated by respondents



Income and employment

A difference was identified between social workers' hourly rate and their main employer as shown in the figures below. For social workers working for a NGO and/or iwi provider 73% earn in the \$21-30 wage bracket, whereas of those working for a DHB 19% earn in this wage bracket and 67% earn between \$31-40. Oranga Tamariki workers reported a greater split across wage brackets and had the largest proportion of social workers earning between \$41-50. This is likely reflective of the Oranga Tamariki pay equity settlement that occurred late 2018. The Oranga Tamariki pay equity settlement was a point raised by a number of social workers in the survey feedback, see section 8.

Figure 4.2. Hourly rate indicated by social workers who work for an NGO and/or iwi provider

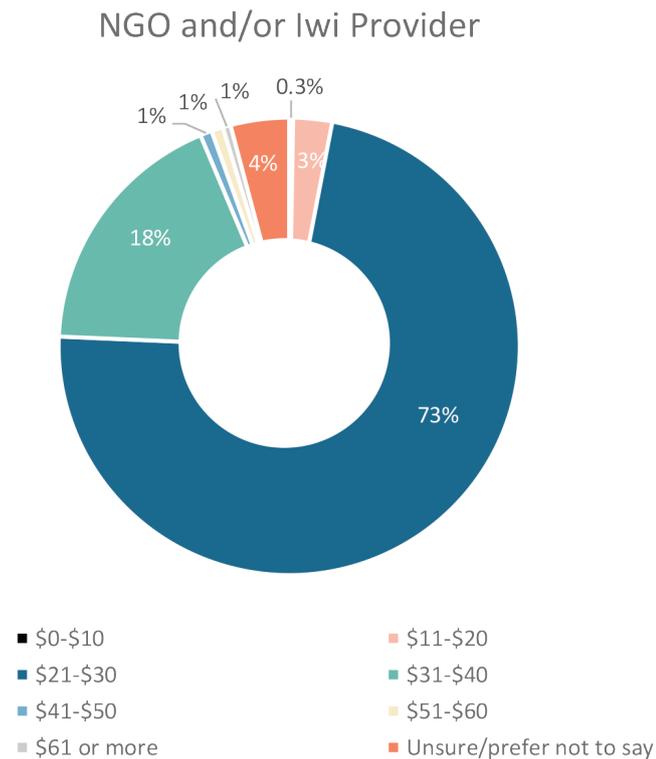


Figure 4.3. Hourly rate indicated by social workers who work for a District Health Board

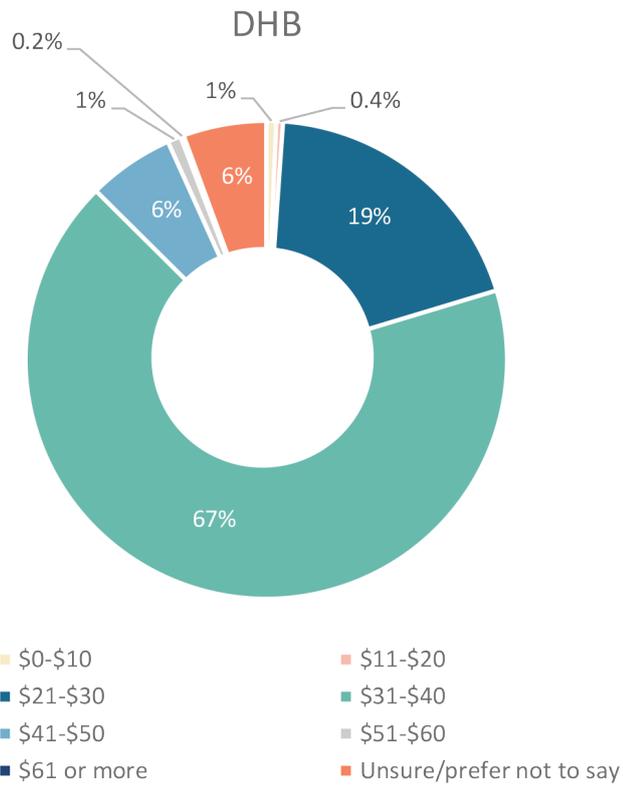
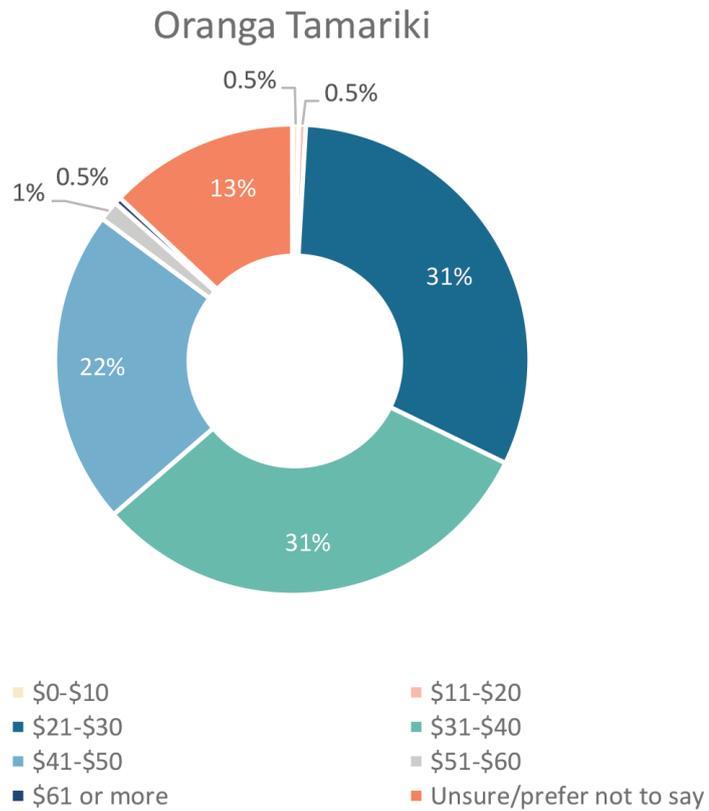


Figure 4.4. Hourly rate indicated by social workers who work for Oranga Tamariki



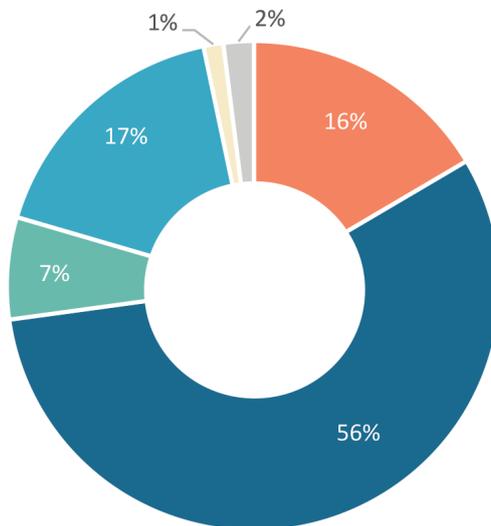
05

QUALIFICATIONS

Qualifications

Figure 5.1 shows the responses to the question 'What is the level of your recognised social work qualification that enabled you to apply for registration?'. The most common form of qualification indicated by social workers was a bachelor's degree/ bachelor's degree with honours.

Figure 5.1. Level of recognised social work qualification of respondents



- Diploma or Graduate Diploma
- Bachelors Degree / Bachelors Degree with Honours
- Postgraduate Certificate or Postgraduate Diploma
- Masters Degree
- Experience Pathway
- Other, including currently studying

A large proportion, nearly 30%, of respondents, indicated having completed a further form of formal tertiary education after their initial social work qualification. The SWRB acknowledges that social workers continue to go through various forms of personal development, not just tertiary education, to continue developing their competence.

Highest level of education completed

Social workers were asked to indicate their highest level of tertiary education as shown in figure 5.2.

Figure 5.2. Highest level of tertiary education indicated by social workers

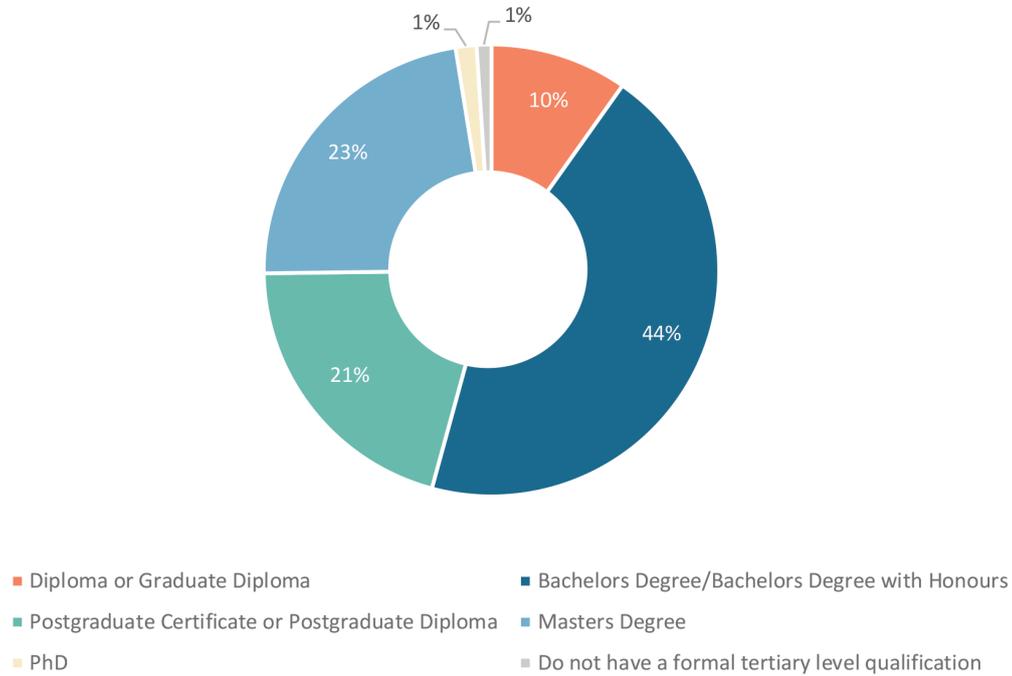
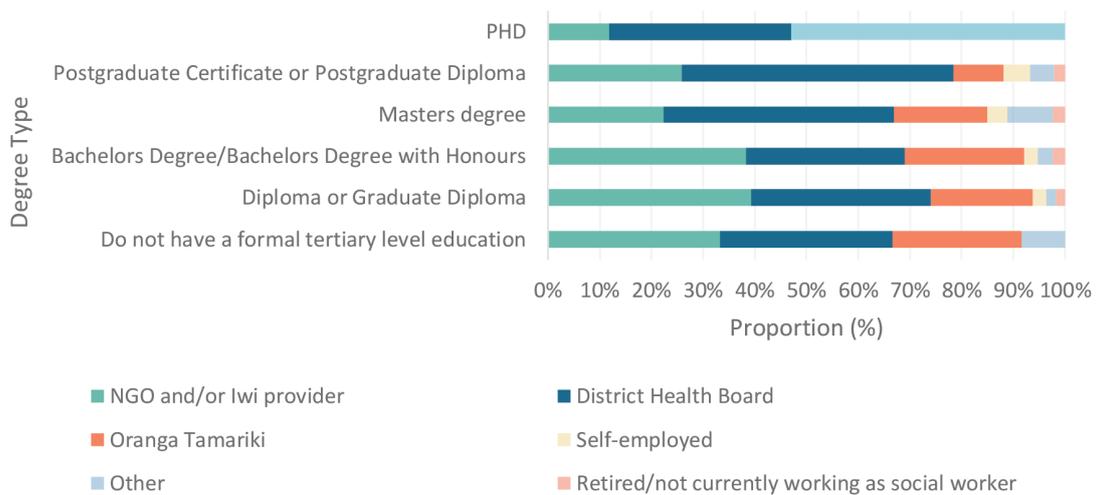


Figure 5.3 shows the proportion of degrees across employers. Social workers with a diploma, graduate diploma or bachelor's degree are most likely to work for an NGO or iwi provider. Those with master's degrees or postgraduate certificates or diplomas are most likely to work for a DHB.

Figure 5.3. Proportion of highest level of tertiary education indicated by social workers by employer

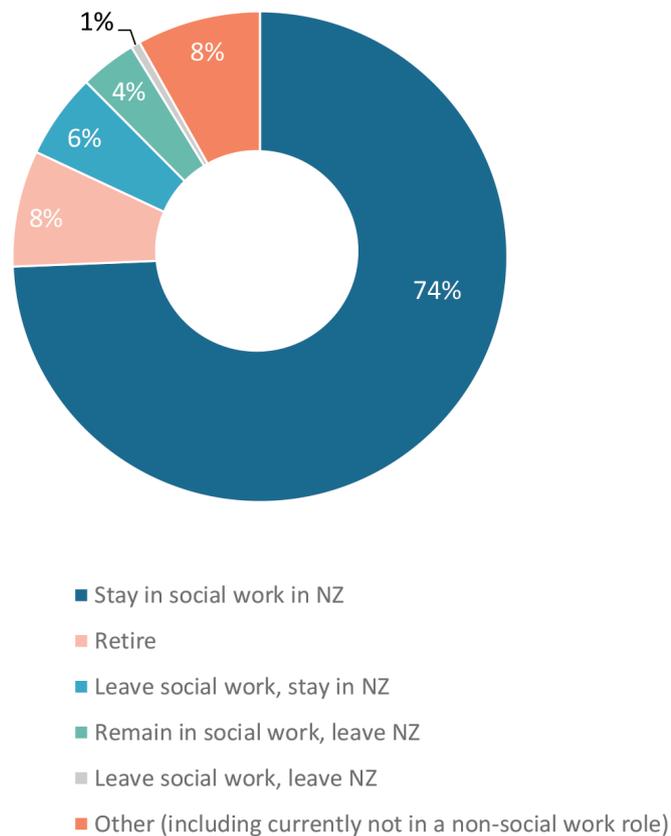


06

FIVE YEAR INTENTIONS

For workforce planning it is important to understand the intentions of social workers over the next five years and the factors underlying these intentions. Figure 6.1 indicates social workers' intentions in the workforce over the next five years. 74% of social workers indicated that they planned to stay in social work in Aotearoa New Zealand. This is an increase from the findings of the 2018 workforce survey where approximately 69% indicated they intended to remain in the social work workforce.

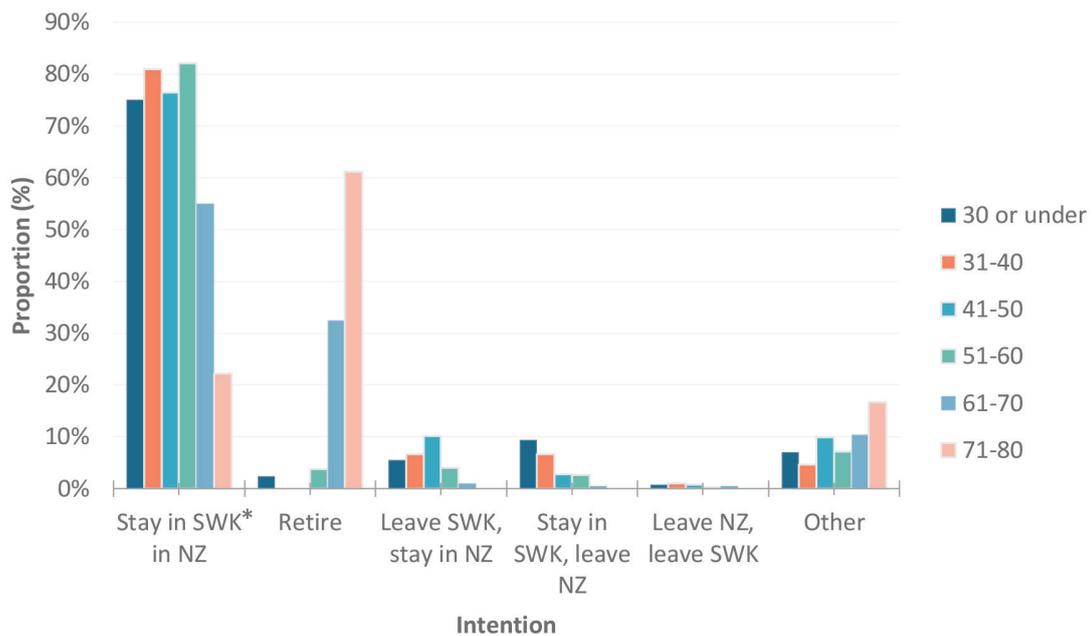
Figure 6.1. Intentions of social workers over the next five years



Note: Leave social work refers to the social work profession.

When broken down by age, intentions for the next five years for social workers across ages are relatively similar. It can be noted that younger social workers, 30 or under, are more likely to stay in social work but leave Aotearoa New Zealand, see figure 6.2. Older respondents 61-80 years are more likely to retire.

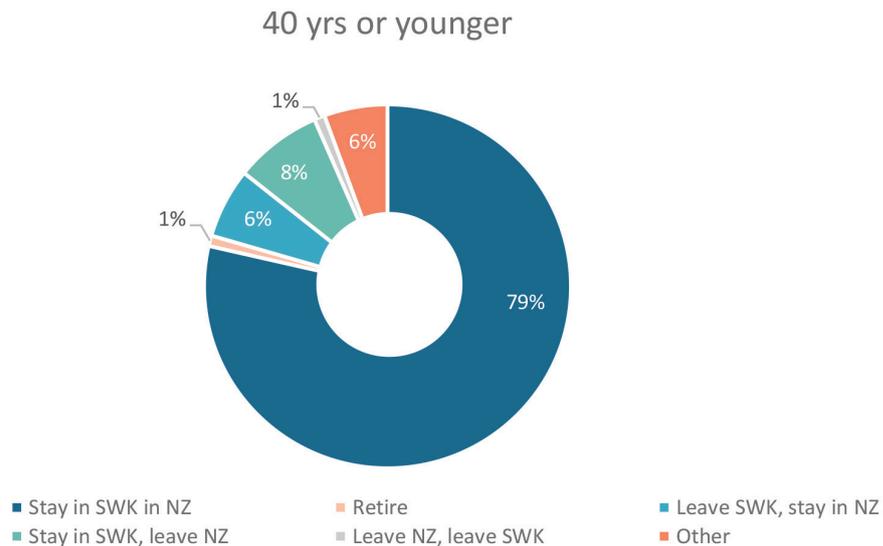
Figure 6.2. Intentions for the next five years as by age



* social work

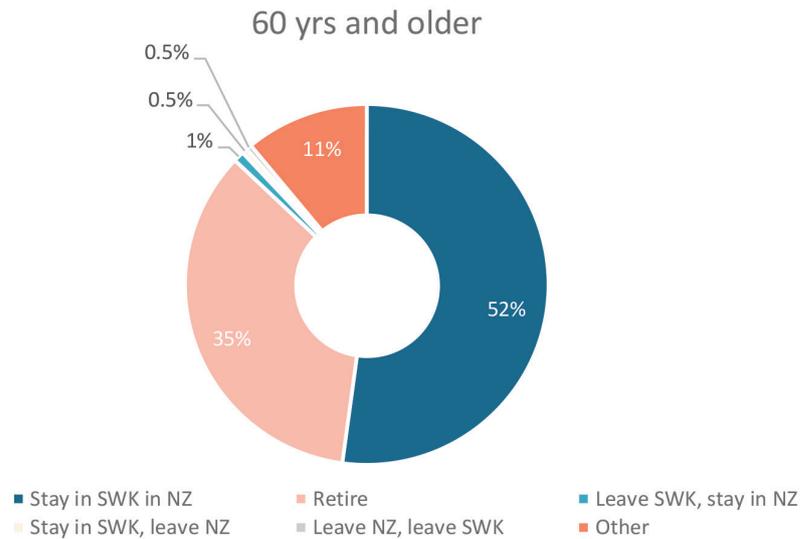
Social workers 40 years or younger made up 28% of survey respondents. Figure 6.3 indicates the five-year intentions of social workers 40 years or younger. It can be seen that 79% of social workers indicated remaining in the social work workforce in Aotearoa New Zealand.

Figure 6.3. Five-year intentions for social workers 40 years or younger



Social workers 60 years or above made up 18% of survey respondents and Figure 6.4 indicates the five-year intentions of this group. 52% reported that they planned on remaining in the social work workforce.

Figure 6.4. Intentions for social workers 60 years or older



Factors influencing social workers to leave

It is important to understand the reasons influencing social workers to leave the social work workforce as they can indicate some of the issues and pressure points occurring in the workforce.

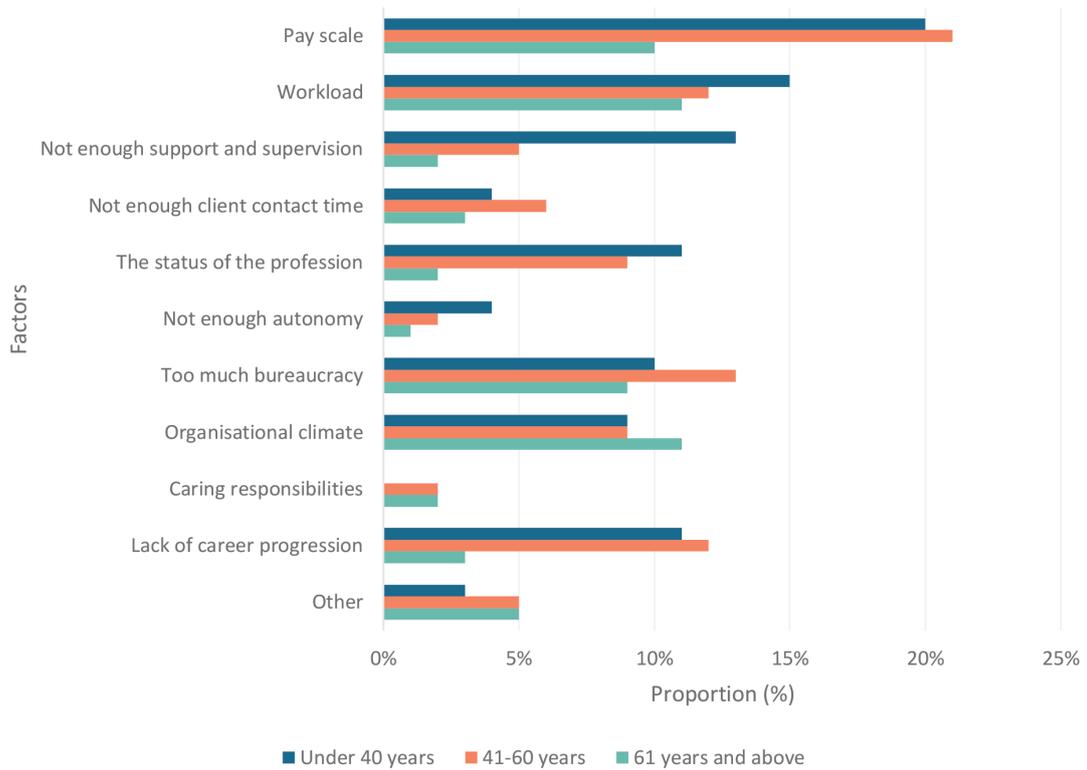
Social workers who were thinking of leaving the social work workforce indicated up to three factors were influencing their decision to leave. Figure 6.5 below shows the proportions of social workers' responses broken down by age. Please note totals of proportions do not sum 100% as respondents were able to select up to three factors.

Key differences can be seen between the influencing factors and age categories. For social workers under 60 years, pay scale is the number one reason identified for leaving the social work workforce. This contrasts with social workers over 61 years who indicated that choosing to retire is the number one reason for leaving the workforce. *Please note the proportion of social workers who indicated choosing to retire as an influencing factor is noted under the graph, to make the graph simpler to read.* Across all ages social workers indicated workload as a major reason for leaving the social work workforce.

Social workers under 40 years indicated that not enough support and supervision were key influencing factors contributing to leaving the social work workforce.

A greater proportion of social workers 41-60 years indicated too much bureaucracy as a key factor relative to the other age categories.

Figure 6.5. Influencing factors for social workers who reported they intended to leave the social work workforce in the next five years



NOTE: Choosing to retire as a factor: under 40 years = 0%, 41-60 years = 4% and 61 years and above = 43%

07

SOCIAL WORKERS VOICES

Social workers had the opportunity to provide general comments at the end of the survey. Below is a summary of some of the themes that emerged throughout these comments.

Love the work

Social workers' passion and love for their mahi was clear, as shown by several social workers' comments below.

"I've been very happy and privileged to have practised as a social worker."

"I really enjoy being a social worker. It's a great profession, it has allowed me to find my place in the workforce and support others to make changes in their lives."

"I do what I love! While I continue to provide support to families to make positive change, I will keep going."

Unfortunately, this love of social work did not always appear to be enough to keep a social worker in the workforce. One social worker commented,

"I love my job and working with clients, but I believe that my future will be outside of "social work" and in a role that does similar work but has more career progression, respect and status within the community."

Social work identity

The sense of identity as a social worker was strong amongst some respondents, as one social worker stated,

"I highly value being a social worker in NZ, even though that is not the title of my role currently. I still identify strongly as a social worker."

Several social workers articulated that they felt their social work identity and skills were not necessarily appreciated or noted by employers, as reflected in a comment below,

"I have had many roles which have needed my social work skills, but I am not employed as a social worker. I believe I have been employed in these roles because of my social work skills."

Undervalued and underpaid

The themes of feeling undervalued and underpaid were apparent in social workers responses. One social worker commented,

"I would love to leave health social work as I feel completely undervalued and invisible."

Another social worker commented,

"As a child mental health social worker, I feel undervalued and underpaid considering the level of risk I deal with on a day to day basis..... I have seen numerous clinicians in my team leave this role because of the high stress environment and low wages not justifying the mental stress of working in this line of work. I'm sure these low wages are not specific to mental health but the profession in general."

Further comments were made by social workers identifying the amount of risk social workers experienced in their roles and the lack of recognition they felt this received. One social worker summarised,

"Social workers face risk regularly in their day to day work.... social workers need more recognition and better pay for the work that they do."

The pay equity settlement with Oranga Tamariki that occurred late 2018 was a topic mentioned frequently, particularly by social workers within NGOs. Social workers stressed that they felt they were working in social work roles that were of equal importance as statutory social work roles and pay rates did not reflect this, as shown by several comments below,

"Pay rates in NGOs do not equal hospital or Oranga Tamariki social workers, but NGO social workers work just as hard, often with a lot less resources and supports available to them. Our work is just as important."

"Working in an NGO dealing with mental health and risk seems incomparable in a pay scale compared to Oranga Tamariki or DHB."

"NGOs are so important in the role of social work, but they pay so much less than Government. It's a great job but it's not fair. We help prevent so many situations from escalating to requiring government intervention and yet we aren't recognised for it. Pay equity needs to be looked at."

Challenges around staff retainment in the NGO sector were identified as a result of the pay disparity across the sector. One social worker stated,

“As a practising social worker and manager of a not for profit, I have concerns for staff retainment as we are unable to compete with the market when it comes to salary scale. I go out of my way to reward staff and show staff that they are valued in other ways but sometimes that is not enough.”

“I work as a non-government manager/supervisor in the social work sector where there is huge disparity in pay scale between statutory and non-statutory roles. We have a significant staff turnover and spend considerable time recruiting and inducting staff..... we are experiencing considerable burnout and unwellness from staff due to very high caseloads and managing significant risk with families which would previously be managed through statutory intervention.”

Challenges around staff retainment in the NGO sector were reflected in NGO social workers' comments as well, as reflected below,

“I feel that community social work is not a profession that can be sustained in the long term due to the emotional intensity of the work and impact it has on one's family life, in addition to the poor pay and high levels of individual accountability (lack of support and resources).”

The social workers made it clear that they felt valued by the services users, as one social worker mentioned,

“I know I am valued working with children and their whānau (they tell me so).’ But they went on to further mention, [It would] be nice to be given the tools to work with and recognition in terms of pay scale compared to OT”.

Several social workers mentioned that the pay disparity may lead them to seek work within Oranga Tamariki. One social worker commented,

“I have considered returning to Oranga Tamariki due to financial gain only.”

Several other social workers commented that despite the pay gap they chose to continue working for an NGO. One social worker commented,

“I work for an NGO and I am well aware of the restraints that NGOs have as in salary. It is not about the money, it is about the passion I have working with whānau”.

Several social workers commented on the income difference between social workers and other professionals, as shown by the following,

“I am employed as a social worker in my team but work generically across the team and get paid a lot less than my nursing colleagues for the same kind of work.”

Burnout

Burnout was a theme that emerged throughout the social workers comments. Social workers mentioned that they were experiencing burnout and were considering leaving the work force. One social worker, 26 years old, articulated,

“My last role burned me out so badly that I’ve had nearly a year off now. I don’t know if/when I’ll be ready to go back to social work practice”.

Another social worker stated,

“It is become increasingly ... hard to be a social worker with lack of resources, larger workload, organisational climate and there are definitely times where I consider a different career path.”

Several social workers articulated that burnout, along with other factors, was making them consider other career paths,

“I have personally burned out multiple times in such roles and considered leaving the field and retraining at university in another profession..... Anecdotally, among my collegial and alumni social work peers - more and more of us are now leveraging our degrees and experience into gaining positions with non-social work titles.”

Social work profession

Social workers' passion for the social work profession was visible. This was reflected through social workers' comments that advocated for the profession,

“I hope that the results from this survey are published and used to make positive changes to the social work profession.”

Notably, social workers continued to promote their clients wellbeing alongside their profession, as reflected in one social worker's comment,

“Hei aha, at the end of the day it’s not about us, it’s about the whānau we work with and supporting them to achieve Mauri Ora and becoming independent of community agencies.”

Many social workers articulated a drive to continue to develop their skillset and learn. One social worker acknowledged,

“Social work environments are diverse and require more specialist support and training to avoid social work genericism ensuring specific social work requirements and their clientele needs are met.”

Several social workers articulated their plan to complete further study. For example, one social worker said,

“I plan on postgraduate social work study alongside parental responsibilities.”

CHANGES FOR NEXT YEAR

In an attempt to increase survey participation, next year a change will be made to the timing and delivery of the survey link in an attempt to make it clearer and more accessible for registered social workers.

Changes will be made to the way data is collected on income, social work roles, and employment in response to social workers' survey feedback and to increase the accuracy of the data collected.

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Social Workers Registration Board

Offices:
Level 7
110 Featherston Street
Wellington 6011

Postal Address:
PO Box 3452
Wellington Central
Wellington 6140

www.swrb.govt.nz