

NEW ZEALAND DIVERSITY SURVEY

April 2018



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Introduction

In his introduction to the 2017 Diversity Awards, Michael Barnett noted that while large businesses were likely to consider and respond to diversity issues, medium and small-sized businesses were much less likely to. Given the publicity that has been given to a range of issues associated with diversity, from the #MeToo campaigns through to attention paid to the behaviour of firms and individuals in New Zealand, we were interested to see if there had been a noticeable uplift in firms reporting interest in, and responses to, diversity. The response is mixed, as this report demonstrates. There are some issues which have received the same - or almost the same - responses in this survey but there have been other matters which have changed. One matter that is confirmed in this survey is that public sector organisations continue to place more emphasis than private sector firms on diversity issues. A second would be that there are some interesting variations in the issues that large, medium and small organisations see as important. And finally, there are disparities in how organisations deal with diversity issues, both in terms of what they see as important and sometimes, while they acknowledge an issue as significant, there are relatively few actions to address the matter.

The New Zealand Diversity Survey provides a twice-yearly scan of how New Zealand firms and organisations see and respond to diversity. What is significant for them in terms of issues? And how are they responding? The survey contributes to public understanding and debate, and seeks to highlight both good practice and what needs further attention. What follows is the most recent survey results.

Methodological note

This April 2018 iteration of the Diversity Survey closely resembles the previous version in order to ensure continuity and comparability of results. We introduced two changes. Firstly, respondents were asked to state whether their organisation had formal policies and or initiatives in place for any of the given diversity items rather than simply for those they had selected as important to their organisation. This was done to better reflect the presence or absence of measures in organisations than the previously used wording allowed for. Secondly, we continued to simplify the survey for respondents by replacing remaining write-in requests with multiple response options to choose from.

Respondent characteristics

A total of 410 respondents took part in the April 2018 Diversity Survey. This constitutes a significant decline from 705 respondents in the previous survey.

Participating organisations operate in a variety of industries, as shown in detail in Table 1. Just over one-fifth of all respondents (22.0%) operate in 'Other Services', followed by 'Professional, Scientific and Technical Services' (14.9%) and organisations in 'Financial and Insurance Services' (8.8%).

Of the 410 responding organisations, 245 (60%) operate in the private sector and 165 (40%) in the public sector. This distribution is comparable to the previous survey (63% and 37% respectively).

Organisations located in the Auckland region (N=192 or 46.8%) clearly dominate the sample. The next largest shares of respondents are located in the Northland region (N=57 or 13.9%) and in the Wellington region (N=47 or 11.5%) followed by smaller numbers from many but not all of New Zealand's other regions.

Small organisations with up to 19 employees make up 42 percent of all respondents (N=174), while medium-sized organisations (20-199 employees) constitute nearly one-third (N=131 or 32%) and large organisations (200+ employees) approximately a quarter of the sample (N=105 or 26%).

Industry	Responses	Percent
Other Services	90	22.0%
Professional, Scientific and Technical Services	61	14.9%
Financial and Insurance Services	36	8.8%
Education and Training	33	8.0%
Information Media and Telecommunications	32	7.8%
Health Care and Social Assistance	29	7.1%
Retail Trade	24	5.9%
Wholesale Trade	24	5.9%
Public Administration and Safety	23	5.6%
Infrastructure	15	3.7%
Accommodation and Food Services	11	2.7%
Administrative and Support Services	10	2.4%
Arts and Recreation Services	9	2.2%
Transport, Postal and Warehousing	8	2.0%
Rental, Hiring and Real Estate Services	5	1.2%
Total	410	100%

Table 1: Industries organisations operate in

Diversity issues that are most important to organisations

A key element of this survey is to identify the diversity issues that are most important to organisations and to examine trends across time. In this survey, organisations identified wellbeing/wellness, flexibility, and aging as the three most important diversity issues (62.4%, 49.0%, and 42.9% respectively).

Across the four most recent surveys (Table 2), wellbeing/wellness and flexibility have been consistently identified as the two most important diversity issues with aging in third place in all but the April 2017 survey when bias was seen as slightly more important than aging. However, bias continues to be an important diversity issue following closely behind aging in fourth place. At the opposite end of the spectrum, disability, sexuality and religion have been consistently of least concern for organisations. Any notable shifts in ranking between surveys are only evident in issues such as ethnicity, employment transition for younger staff, gender, and bullying and harassment but there is no clearly discernible trend.

In this survey, the importance accorded to wellbeing/wellness decreased by five percent compared to the last survey. Bias, gender, as well as bullying and harassment saw increases of up to six percent relative to October 2017.

Diversity issues	April 2018	October 2017	April 2017	October 2016
Wellbeing/wellness	62.4% (1)	67.7% (1)	66.9% (1)	62.3% (1)
Flexibility	49.0% (2)	49.9% (2)	54.6% (2)	53.1% (2)
Aging	42.9% (3)	40.6% (3)	47.0% (4)	43.8% (3)
Bias	42.0% (4)	35.6% (4)	48.3% (3)	30.1% (4)
Gender	36.1% (5)	30.1% (7)	45.0% (5)	28.9% (5)
Ethnicity	33.9% (6)	32.6% (5)	41.4% (6)	27.0% (7)
Bullying and harassment	31.5% (7)	25.8% (8)	35.8% (7)	25.6% (8)
Employment transition for younger staff	26.8% (8)	30.1% (6)	27.5% (8)	27.6% (6)
Disability	21.2% (9)	20.7% (9)	24.2% (9)	16.2% (9)
Sexuality	12.4% (10)	12.5% (10)	17.9% (10)	11.0% (10)
Religion	8.5% (11)	8.9% (11)	12.3% (11)	7.7% (11)

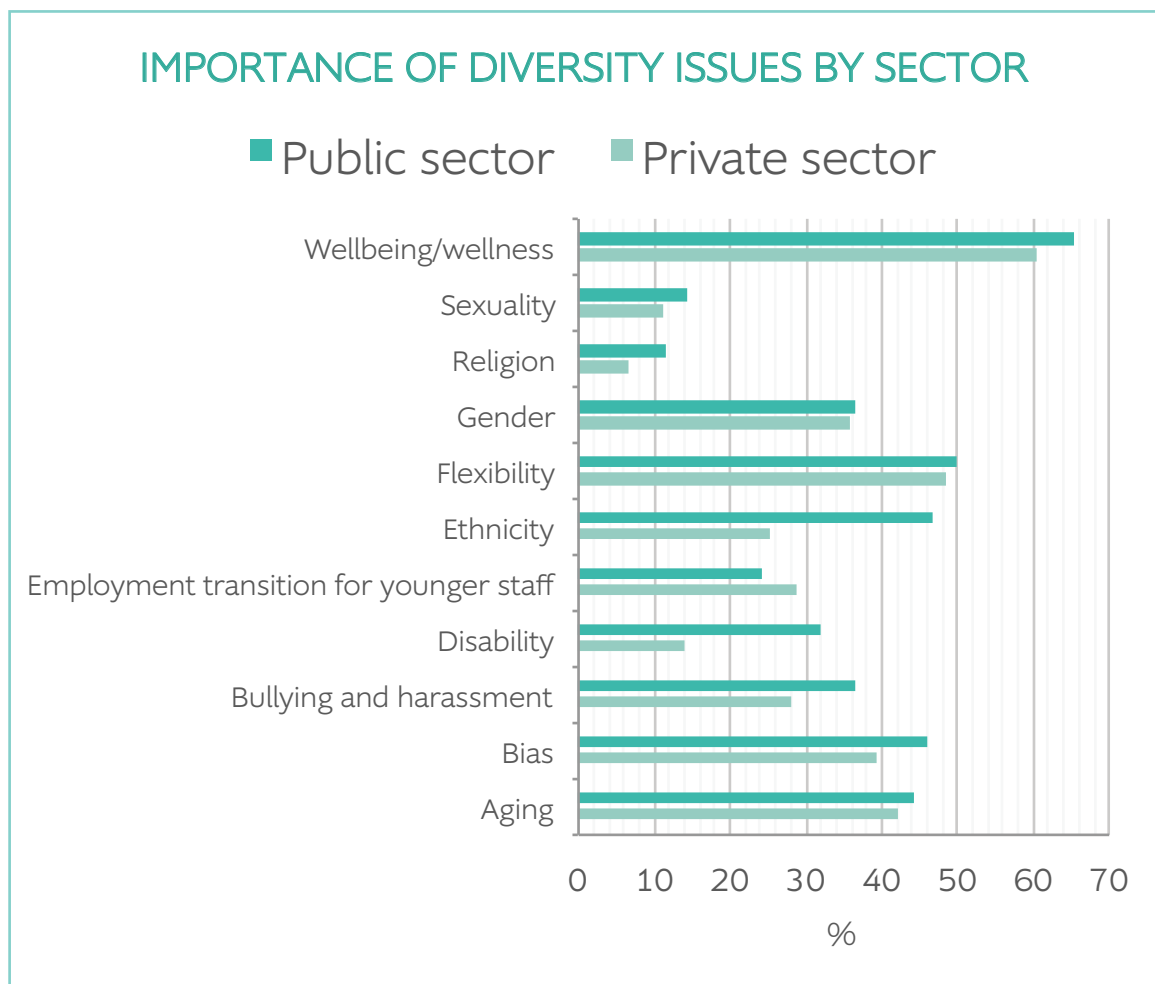
Table 2: Importance of diversity issues for organisations 2016 - 2018, percentage and ranking

Importance of diversity issues by sector

Having examined the importance of diversity issues by sector across the three most recent diversity surveys, we'd like to highlight two trends. One clear trend is that respondents from public-sector organisations consistently accord somewhat or significantly more importance than those from private-sector organisations to all diversity issues, with the exception of employment transition for younger staff. As shown in Figure 1, we see the largest differences in ethnicity and disability.

The second observation is that while the top three diversity issues named by private-sector organisations have consistently been identified as wellbeing/wellness, flexibility and aging, there are more frequent shifts in public sector organisations. Diversity issues that do not rank as highly for private organisations feature in the top three issues of public organisations. For instance, one year ago (April 2017), bias was the second most important diversity issue for public-sector organisations; this time, ethnicity features as the third most important diversity issue.

Figure 1: Importance of diversity issues by sector



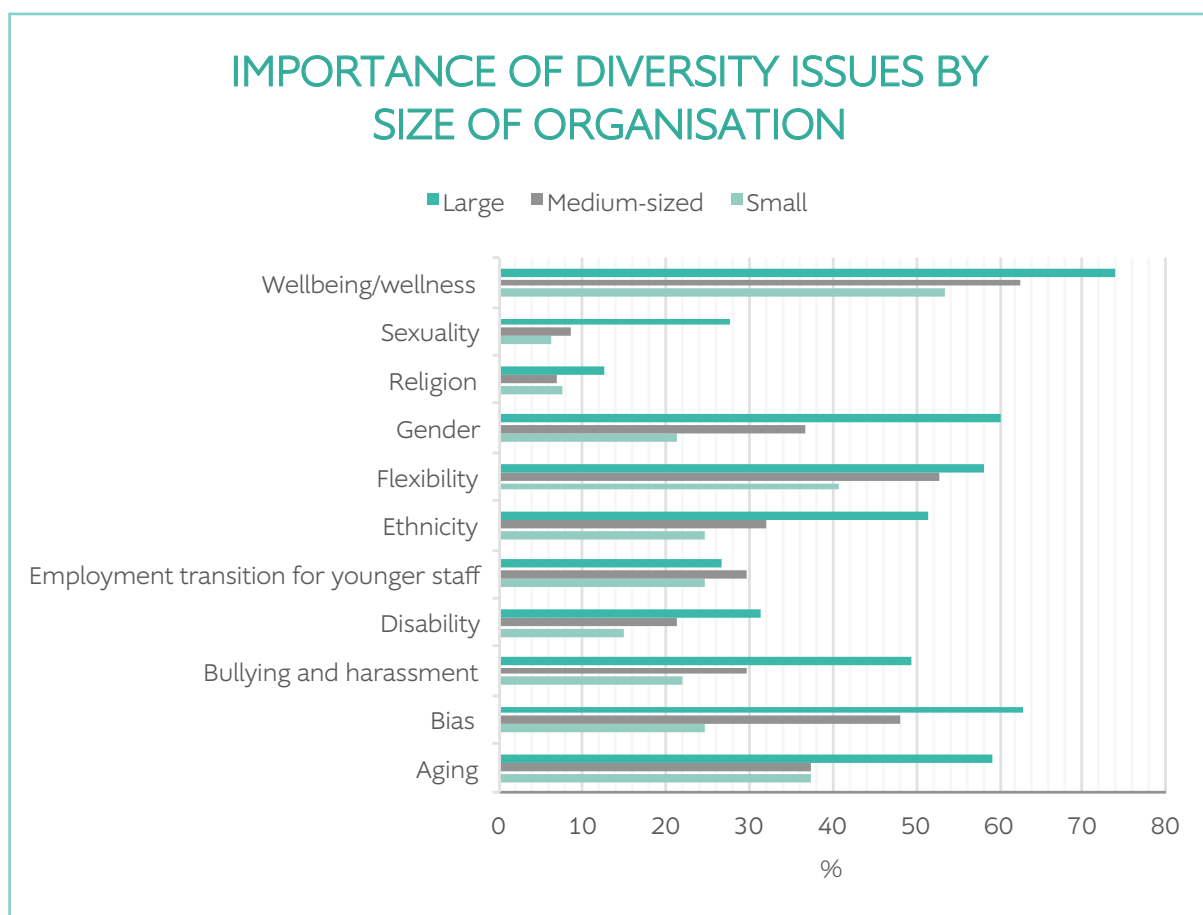
Importance of diversity issues by size of organisation

Generally, the importance of diversity issues increases with the size of the organisation (see Figure 2). Differences between small, medium-sized and large institutions are especially pronounced for gender, sexuality, bias and ethnicity. One exception is the issue of employment transition for younger staff which is seen as more important by medium-sized businesses.

As previously pointed out, for large organisations, a greater number of diversity issues are of high importance. As shown in Figure 2, wellbeing/wellness, bias, gender, aging, flexibility and ethnicity are all seen as important by more than half of all respondents from large organisations. By contrast, only two issues (wellbeing/wellness and flexibility) reach that level of importance in medium-sized organisations and only one single issue (wellbeing/wellness) in small organisations.

Wellbeing/wellness is by far the most important diversity issue for all organisations irrespective of size. As in the previous survey, flexibility and aging come second and third for small organisations. In this survey, bias is the third most important diversity issue for medium-sized organisations after wellbeing/wellness and flexibility. For large organisations, however, bias and gender are of most importance after wellbeing/wellness.

Figure 2: Importance of diversity issues by size of organisation



Addressing diversity issues

Respondents were asked to indicate whether their organisation had a formal policy, a programme or initiative, or neither of these, in place for each diversity issue. As shown in Table 3, the three diversity issues for which participating organisations were most likely to have either a formal policy or a programme/initiative in place are bullying and harassment (70.6%), wellbeing/wellness (63.8%), and flexibility (57.1%). The figures are in line with the October 2017 findings.

Aging continues to stand out as the one diversity issue for which organisations are least likely to have formal structures in place. We have repeatedly noted that this finding is surprising and sits uneasily with its continuous placing as one of the most important diversity issues. Yet, the percentage of respondents indicating that their organisation had either a formal policy or a programme/initiative in place slightly decreased further from approximately a third of all organisations (32.8%) in April 2017 to a quarter (25.9%) in October 2017 to 23.7% now.

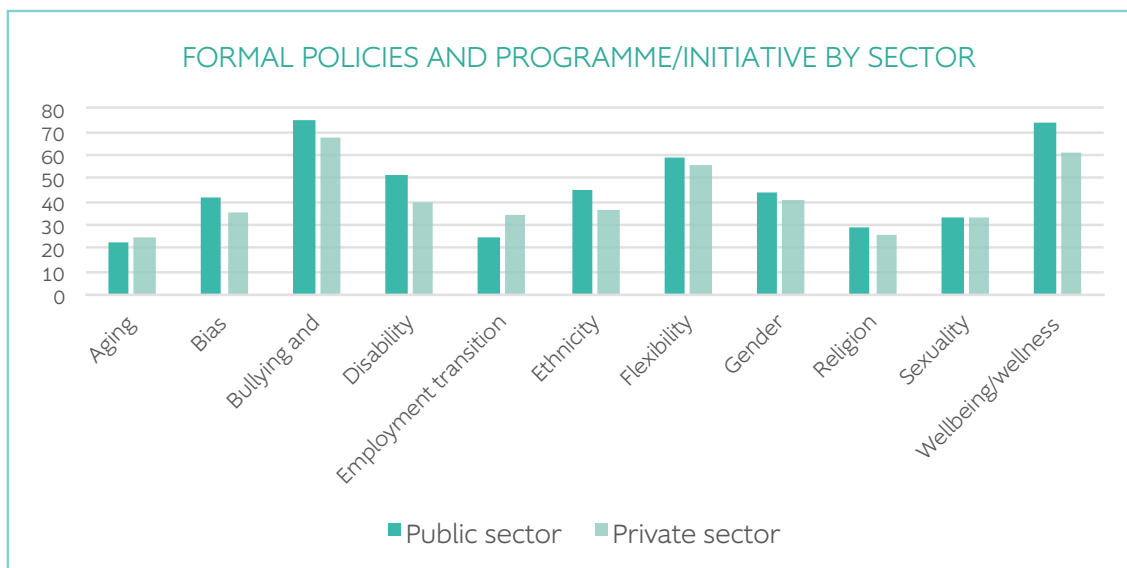
Diversity issue	Responses	Formal policy or programme/initiative	Neither formal policy nor programme/initiative	Don't know
Bullying and harassment	398	70.6%	23.1%	6.3%
Wellbeing/Wellness	400	63.8%	29.0%	7.2%
Flexibility	394	57.1%	33.5%	9.4%
Disability	393	44.1%	42.2%	13.7%
Gender	395	42.0%	45.8%	12.2%
Ethnicity	395	39.8%	46.3%	13.9%
Bias	366	38.0%	48.6%	13.4%
Sexuality	392	33.2%	51.0%	15.8%
Employment transition for younger staff	391	30.2%	52.4%	17.4%
Religion	388	27.0%	54.4%	18.6%
Aging	372	23.7%	58.6%	17.7%

Table 3: Diversity policies and programmes/initiatives

As illustrated in Figure 3 below, both public and private-sector organisations are most likely to have either formal policies and/or programmes and initiatives in place for bullying and harassment, wellbeing/wellness, and flexibility.

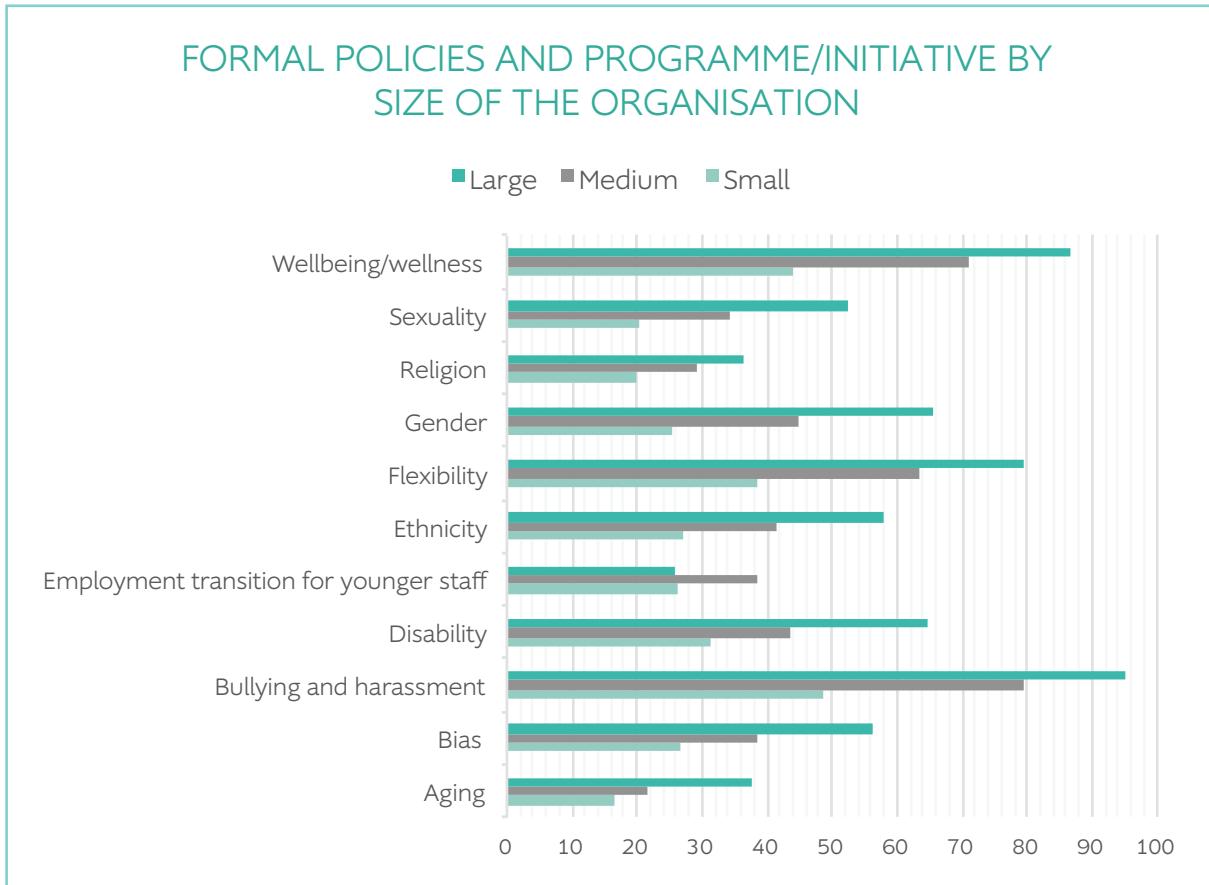
Public-sector organisations continue to be somewhat more likely than private-sector organisations to have formal policies and/or programmes and initiatives in place for most diversity issues. However, the discrepancies are much less pronounced than in the April 2017 survey.

Figure 3: Diversity policies and programmes/initiatives by sector



Earlier, we noted that the size of the organisation affects whether, and to what extent, diversity issues are regarded as important. These differences between small, medium-sized and large organisations are also reflected here (Figure 4). Large organisations remain more likely to have policies and/or programmes and initiatives in place than medium-sized and small businesses for all diversity issues with the exception of employment transition for younger staff.

Figure 4: Diversity policies and programmes/initiatives by size of organisation



Addressing diversity in the organisation

Respondents were also asked how their organisation addresses diversity. For that purpose, they were given several response options. Results are shown in Table 4. Respondents indicated that their organisation most commonly addressed diversity through top management commitment to and involvement in diversity issues (53.0%), consideration of diversity in relevant HR policies (51.2%), as well as through communication and promotion of diversity to internal stakeholders (28.8%).

Following a decrease in the percentage of organisations employing such methods in October 2017, the figures in this survey have somewhat recovered. Perhaps the most interesting observation is that only the top two methods are used by approximately half of all organisations. The third and fourth most common methods - communicating to internal stakeholders and having a diversity strategy - are consistently only employed by about 20 to 30 percent of all organisations.

Methods of addressing diversity	April 2018	Oct 2017	April 2017	Oct 2016
Top management commitment to and involvement in diversity issues	53.0% (1)	47.3% (2)	54.0% (2)	37.3% (1)
Consideration of diversity in relevant HR policies	51.2% (2)	47.7% (1)	59.6% (1)	36.0% (2)
Communication and promotion of diversity to internal stakeholders	28.8% (3)	27.7% (3)	31.8% (3)	20.8% (3)
Diversity strategy or plan	28.8% (3)	24.9% (4)	31.8% (3)	19.8% (4)
Diversity support networks	21.5% (4)	19.8% (7)	25.8% (4)	13.6% (7)
Monitoring and reporting diversity performance	20.5% (5)	17.9% (12)	23.5% (7)	12.7% (8)
Diversity council, committee, team or taskforce	19.0% (6)	13.0% (13)	22.8% (8)	9.9% (11)
System or mechanisms for reporting diversity-related concerns	18.3% (7)	19.6% (8)	18.9% (9)	12.1% (9)
Diversity education and training for people managers	17.1% (8)	21.2% (6)	24.8% (5)	13.9% (6)
Diversity education and training for existing employees	16.3% (9)	22.4% (5)	24.5% (6)	14.6% (5)
Communication about diversity-related issues to external stakeholders	15.1% (10)	18.5% (10)	16.9% (10)	9.8% (12)
Other	15.1% (10)	19.1% (9)	13.6% (12)	5.2% (14)
Diversity education and training for new employees	12.2% (11)	18.2% (11)	16.2% (11)	11.6% (10)
Diversity-related employment benefits	5.8% (12)	7.0% (14)	9.6% (13)	6.5% (13)
Diversity-related managerial incentives	5.8% (13)	4.2% (15)	4.6% (14)	3.6% (15)

Table 4: Trends and ranking of methods of addressing diversity in organisations 2016-2018

Measuring and evaluating the effectiveness of diversity initiatives

One fifth of all organisations (20%) indicated that they formally measure or evaluate the effectiveness of their diversity initiatives. This is in line with previous figures. Of these most use internal reporting (64%), tracking statistics or metrics (50%) and/or regular reviews and stocktakes (31%) to do so.

Public-sector organisations are more likely to monitor their initiatives than private-sector organisations (25.6% and 16.3% respectively).

As reported previously, there is a strong correlation between the size of the organisation and the likelihood of monitoring the effectiveness of diversity initiatives. Thirty-nine percent of the respondents from large organisations monitored the effectiveness of their initiatives, compared to 16 percent of medium-sized organisations and 11.5 percent of small organisations.

Diversity issues under the spotlight

This section reports the results from those survey questions that were designed to learn more about some of the diversity issues broadly outlined in the previous sections. Respondents were asked about:

- the ways in which wellbeing/wellness presents a challenge to their organisation;
- whether any incidents of bullying and harassment were recorded over the previous 12 months;
- what forms of flexibility the organisation employs;
- what percentage of staff are on non-permanent contracts;
- how organisations engage with workers over the age of 55;
- gender representation at their organisations' governance and leadership levels;
- the ways in which ethnicity constitutes a diversity issue and how it is addressed;
- how the literacy, language and numeracy needs of a diverse workforce are addressed;
- and, lastly, the ways in which bias constitutes a diversity issue and how it is addressed.

Wellbeing/wellness

As wellbeing/wellness has been consistently identified as the single most important diversity issue by respondents, we are keen to understand more about the ways in which it presents a challenge for organisations. This is the second time we provided respondents with answer choices allowing us to track trends over time.

Work/life balance (71.9%), stress (66.8%) and the mental health of employees (56.8%) remain the most common wellbeing challenges for organisations. In October 2017, we recorded significant increases relative to the previous survey and surmised that this was, at least partly, the result of a shift from a write-in response to multiple response options. Interestingly, while the results are in line with the last survey, we see further slight increases for most items (see Table 5).

Wellbeing/wellness challenges	April 2018	October 2017
Work/life balance	71.9%	66.0%
Stress	66.8%	62.4%
Mental health of employees	56.8%	50.7%
Physical health of employees	51.3%	49.6%
Health and safety	43.7%	40.9%
Flexibility	37.9%	30.7%
Aging	23.1%	24.3%
Illness and absenteeism	18.6%	21.1%
Cultural inclusion/diversity	25.4%	18.5%
Implementing wellbeing measures	22.1%	19.2%
Disability	7.0%	6.0%
Other (please specify)	3.8%	4.0%
None	3.3%	3.3%
Not applicable	2.0%	1.9%
Don't know	0.7%	1.6%

Table 5: Wellbeing/wellness challenges

Bullying and harassment

In line with previous surveys, just over one quarter of all respondents (26.6%) reported that their organisation had recorded incidents of bullying or harassment over the past 12 months.

Bullying and harassment continue to occur more frequently in public-sector organisations (38%) than in private-sector organisations (19%). The difference has slightly increased comparative to the last survey when the figures were 36% and 22% respectively.

Size of the organisation remains an important variable. More than half of all large organisations (56%) had recorded incidents of bullying and harassment, compared to 27% of medium-sized and 8% of small organisations.

The continued high incidence of bullying and harassment in large institutions is a cause of concern. Bullying is the diversity issue that is most commonly addressed by all organisations and by large ones in particular. Over 70 percent of all organisations have implemented either formal policies or programmes and initiatives. In large organisations, this rises to 95 percent. This raises the question as to whether policies and programmes/initiatives are effective enough to address bullying and harassment.

Flexibility

To explore the second most important diversity issue in more detail, respondents were asked to indicate what forms of flexibility their organisation provides (see Table 6).

Unchanged from both October and April 2017, the three most common forms of flexibility in organisations were flexible work time (77%), part-time contracts or reduced hours (70%), and the option to work remotely (64.9%). Family-friendly measures, as well as time in lieu and flexible or extended leave arrangements were also mentioned by about half of all respondents. As the numbers show, many organisations employ multiple forms of flexibility.

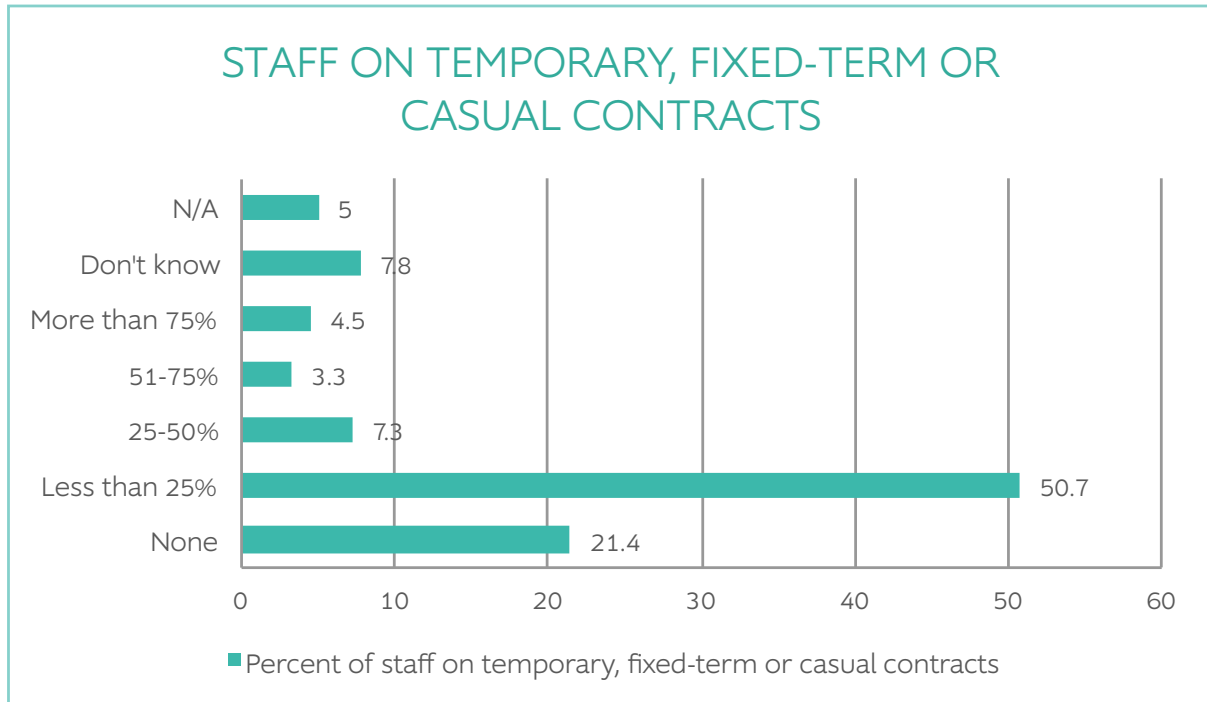
Forms of flexibility	April 2018	October 2017
Flexible work time	77.0%	76.4%
Part-time work / reduced hours	70.0%	64.2%
Possibility to work remotely	64.9%	62.4%
Family-friendly arrangements	57.8%	59.1%
Time in lieu	50.0%	43.8%
Flexible / extended leave arrangements	45.5%	42.8%
Flexible / extended break arrangements	29.3%	29.3%
Phased return to work	28.3%	23.4%
Flexible roles	20.2%	20.1%
Flexible work load	18.4%	19.6%
Job share	17.4%	15.8%
Flexible roster	16.4%	19.6%
Not applicable	4.5%	3.8%
Other (please specify)	2.3%	4.5%
Don't know	0.7%	1.3%

Table 6: Forms of flexibility in organisations

Temporary, fixed term, and casual contracts

One area of exploration in this survey is the percentage of staff on temporary, fixed term, and casual contracts across organisations. Just over one fifth of all respondents (N=398) indicated that they have no staff on non-permanent contracts, while in half of all organisations (50.7%) less than 25 percent of staff hold non-permanent positions (up from 44% in October 2017). In less than ten percent of organisations, more than half the workforce is on either temporary, fixed term or casual contracts (Figure 5).

Figure 5: Staff on temporary, fixed term, and casual contracts



Aging

To further investigate aging as the third most important diversity issue, respondents were asked whether their organisation encouraged the recruitment of workers over the age of 55 years old and how they engaged with older workers.

This survey replicates the figures from both April and October 2017 with approximately 60 percent of respondents stating that their organisation encouraged the recruitment of workers over the age of 55, and 40 percent stating that it did not.

Previous surveys suggested no notable differences by sector or size and no clear trends. In this iteration, public-sector organisations were more likely to encourage the recruitment of workers over the age of 55 (64% compared to 56% of private-sector organisations). In addition, in October 2017, medium-sized organisations were just as likely to recruit older workers as small organisations, while large organisations were less likely to do so. This has shifted. Now, small organisations (67%) were most likely to encourage the recruitment of older workers followed by large organisations (56%) and medium-sized organisations (50%).

In addition, we asked respondents how their organisation engaged with workers over 55 years of age. Participants were provided with response options in order to answer this question. The results are shown in Table 7. As in October 2017, the largest percentage stated that their organisation values the experience that older staff bring to the workplace. However, the percentage dropped steeply by nearly 20 percent. At the same time, the percentage of organisations that have no specific strategy for engaging with older workers increased by nearly 10 percent to about 40 percent. By comparison, between April 2017 and October 2017, we had recorded a decline from 50 to 30 percent in organisations that had no specific strategy for engaging with older workers.

In effect, all forms of active engagement with older workers – from flexible hours to mentoring roles and networking opportunities – saw quite significant decreases while a larger share of respondents stated that this was not applicable to their organisation or they did not know how their organisation engaged with older workers.

Forms of engagement with workers over the age of 55	April 2018	October 2017
Value experience	42.3%	60.8%
No specific strategy / treat everyone equally	40.6%	31.8%
Flexible or reduced hours	27.9%	33.7%
Older employees in mentoring roles	19.5%	33.1%
Not applicable	15.5%	10.5%
Don't know	12.5%	6.7%
Networking opportunities	4.9%	11.1%
Other (please specify)	4.3%	7.2%
We offer fitness programmes for older workers	3.3%	4.7%
We offer retirement seminars	3.3%	3.6%

Table 7: Forms of engagement with workers over the age of 55

Gender representation

Respondents were asked four questions about gender representation in their organisation at the level of governance and at the level of leadership and decision-making.

In line with previous surveys, women are represented at the governance level in 80 percent of all organisations and at the leadership/decision-making level in 87 percent of all organisations.

Public-sector organisations were, as in October 2017, more likely to have female representation at both the governance and at the leadership/decision-making level than private-sector organisations. At the governance level, women were represented in 87 percent of public organisations and 76 percent of private organisations. At the leadership level, the gap was much smaller with women represented in 89 percent of public organisations and 86 percent of private organisations.

As in October 2017, large organisations were significantly more likely to have female representation at both the governance and leadership/decision-making levels than small and medium-sized organisations. At the governance level, women were represented in 94 percent of large organisations, compared to 76 percent of both medium-sized and small organisations. At the leadership level, women were represented in 98 percent of large organisations, compared to 87 percent of medium-sized and 81 percent of small organisations.

What does the gender distribution at these levels look like? As shown in Table 8, in the majority of organisations, women constitute up to 50 percent of staff at the governance and leadership/decision-making levels. We also see that in nearly one-quarter of all organisations women make up less than 25 percent at governance and leadership/decision-making level.

	April 2018		October 2017	
	Governance level	Leadership level	Governance level	Leadership level
Less than 25%	24.3%	23.4%	21.2%	20.2%
25-50%	43.8%	36.6%	40.8%	40.4%
51-75%	15.4%	20.1%	15.9%	17.3%
More than 75%	12.1%	17.1%	11.5%	15.7%
Don't know	4.4%	2.7%	5.8%	2.6%
N/A	---	---	4.8%	3.8%

Table 8: Female representation at the governance and leadership/decision-making levels

Table 9 shows the gender distribution by size of the organisation. In approximately 30 percent of large organisations and 34 percent of medium-sized organisations, women make up less than 25 percent at the governance level (compared to 24.3% overall).

Gender distribution	Governance level			Leadership/decision-making level		
	Small	Medium	Large	Small	Medium	Large
Less than 25%	12.4%	34.0%	31.0%	16.7%	29.5%	26.0%
25-50%	41.6%	45.0%	45.5%	34.0%	34.8%	42.3%
51-75%	21.2%	11.0%	11.9%	16.7%	23.5%	21.1%
More than 75%	21.9%	7.0%	4.0%	31.2%	9.6%	5.8%
Don't know	2.9%	3.0%	7.9%	1.4%	2.6%	4.8%

Table 9: Gender distribution by size of the organisation

Ethnicity

Since introducing multiple response options in the previous survey, the results regarding the ways in which ethnicity presents a diversity issue for organisations have stayed much the same. Findings are presented in Table 10. As before, respondents most often indicated that their organisation recruited staff based on skill alone.

Because the option ‘ethnicity is not an area of concern for our organisation’ was very common in the previous survey, we added a split between ‘ethnicity is not an area of concern and does not need to be addressed’ and ‘ethnicity is not an area of concern because it is addressed’ to get a better sense of what respondents mean. Interestingly, nearly one third of respondents opted for the former and only about 14 percent for the latter.

Under-representation of Māori and Pasifika as well as finding diverse candidates with the right skills for the job were mentioned by over one fifth of all respondents.

Response options	Responses N=375	Percent
Skills and qualifications are most important in recruitment and/or retention of staff	127	33.9%
Ethnicity is not an area of concern for our organisation and does not need to be addressed	119	31.7%
Māori are underrepresented in our organisation	97	25.9%
Pasifika are underrepresented in our organisation	86	22.9%
Finding diverse candidates with the right skills for the job is difficult	79	21.1%
Our workforce lacks ethnic diversity	65	17.3%
Our workforce needs to represent our clientele / community better	60	16.0%
Ethnicity is a focus in recruitment and/or retention of staff	55	14.7%
Ethnicity is not an area of concern for our organisation because it is addressed	52	13.9%
Culturally appropriate service delivery	39	10.4%
Don't know	27	7.2%
There is a lack of acceptance and understanding of cultural diversity amongst staff	26	6.9
Other (please specify)	24	6.4
There are language barriers within the workforce or between workforce and clients	22	5.9

Table 10: Ethnicity as a diversity issue for organisations

Respondents were also asked to outline how their organisation addresses ethnicity as a diversity issue (Table 11). Approximately 30 percent of respondents indicated that their organisation did not specifically address ethnicity and that they hired based on skills and qualifications alone. The most prominent way of addressing ethnicity within organisations is fostering an institutional culture of inclusion, equity and respect.

As in the previous survey, respondents fell into two camps with regards to the place of ethnicity in recruitment. 'Hiring based on skills and qualifications alone' was advocated by nearly 30 percent of respondents, while approximately 20 percent indicated that their organisation actively aimed to increase ethnic diversity through hiring practices.

Response options	Responses N=371	Percent
Ethnicity is not specifically addressed	116	31.3%
Hiring based on skills and qualifications alone	108	29.1%
Fostering an institutional culture of inclusion, equity and respect	107	28.8%
Increasing ethnic diversity through hiring practices	75	20.2%
Cultural competence training	66	17.8%
Networking opportunities for employees	56	15.1%
Bias training	39	10.5%
Don't know	34	9.2%
Other	22	5.9%

Table 11: Methods of addressing ethnicity as a diversity issue

Literacy, Language and Numeracy (LLN)

In this survey, we asked for the second time how organisations meet the literacy, numeracy and English for Speakers of other Languages needs of their diverse workforce.

In October 2017, we argued that the findings suggested that this issue was not given much attention. As outlined in Table 12 below, the results are almost identical to the previous survey. The vast majority of respondents again stated that this is not an area of concern for the organisation (68.5%), and a further 10 percent said it is an area of concern that is not currently addressed. Much smaller numbers indicated that they engaged in some way with LLN issues. In the main, this is done through informal coaching and mentoring for employees with LLN issues (11.7%) or referring employees who identify with LLN issues to external providers (8.5%).

Response options	April 2018	October 2017
This is not an area of concern for our business	68.5%	64.7%
Informal coaching and mentoring for employees with LLN issues	11.7%	14.0%
This is an area of concern for our business but we do not at this stage address LLN issues	10.0%	9.9%
Referring employees who identify with LLN issues to external providers	8.5%	9.8%
Taking LLN needs into account when other training is offered	7.1%	7.8%
Formal workplace LLN training initiatives	6.6%	7.5%
Offering other training and programmes that support LLN skills development, e.g. financial literacy programmes	6.1%	6.5%
Building business awareness of the impact of LLN issues	5.8%	6.9%

Table 12: Forms of addressing the Literacy, Language and Numeracy (LLN) needs of a diverse workforce

Bias

Bias continues to be an important diversity issue for organisations. In order to explore the ways in which bias may be a diversity issue for organisations and how it is addressed, we added two new write-in questions to the October 2017 survey. In this survey, we provided respondents with multiple response options to select from.

In October 2017, the largest share of respondents (30%) indicated that bias was not an area of concern for their organisation. To better understand this reply, we gave respondents the opportunity to tell us whether bias was not an area of concern because it was sufficiently addressed in the organisation or because they felt it did not need to be addressed (see ethnicity above for the same design). As with ethnicity, the bigger share of respondents indicated that bias was not an area of concern and did not need to be addressed (27.7%). Eighteen percent of respondents replied that bias was not an area of concern because it was addressed by the organisation.

Possibly as a result of the provided response option, we note a strong increase in the percentage of respondents indicating that ‘there is a lack of awareness of bias in our organisation’ (23.6%). Previously, 9 percent of respondents expressed this concern. About one-fifth of respondents felt that there was unconscious bias in their organisation and that bias affected decisions with regard to recruiting, promotion and/or pay.

We also asked how organisations addressed bias. As shown in Table 14, the largest share of respondents (27.1%) said that bias was addressed informally on a needs basis. Nearly one quarter of respondents stated that bias was not currently addressed but almost equal numbers indicated that bias was addressed in HR policies.

Bias as a diversity issue	Responses N=373	Percent
Bias is not an area of concern for our organisation and does not need to be addressed	101	27.1%
There is a lack of awareness of bias in our organisation	88	23.6%
There is unconscious bias in our organisation	83	22.3%
Bias affects decisions (e.g. recruitment, promotion, pay) in our organisation	72	19.3%
Bias is not area of concern for our organisation because it is addressed	67	18.0%
There is a lack of diversity in the leadership of our organisation	63	16.9%
Don't know	55	14.8%
There is a lack of diversity in the workforce of our organisation	49	13.1%
Other	17	4.6%

Table 13: Bias as a diversity issue for organisations

Forms of addressing bias	Responses N=373	Percent
Bias is addressed informally on a needs basis	96	25.7%
Bias is not specifically addressed	93	24.9%
Bias is addressed in recruitment practices	91	24.4%
Not applicable	61	16.4%
Bias is addressed in formal policy	60	16.1%
Our organisation offers unconscious bias training	54	14.5%
Don't know	45	12.1%
Bias is monitored through regular reporting	28	7.5%
Other	15	4.0%

Table 14: Forms of addressing bias

Concluding comments

The survey results provide an indication of how public and private-sector firms see and respond to diversity issues. Some of these issues have remained important according to these surveys for some time. Wellbeing and flexibility remain important and of those surveyed, many have formal policies, programmes and initiatives in place to address these issues. The third most important issue is identified as aging and the fourth, bias.

While aging is identified as an issue, and 60 percent encouraged those over 55 years of age to be recruited, many organisations (nearly 60% in this survey) were unlikely to have formal policies or programmes or initiatives in place to address aging. (And those that did declined from 26% in October 2017 to 23.7% now). This does suggest that many recognise aging is an important – and a growing – issue for societies and economies like New Zealand, but organisations appear not to know quite what to do in the workplace. Do they not see formal policies and programmes and initiatives as required – or do they not understand what is needed? The issues of aging, both in the workplace and more widely in society, will become more important over the next decade.

In terms of the most important issues, there is one other aspect that deserves attention. Wellbeing/wellness, followed by flexibility and then aging are identified as the three most important issues in that rank order. But while this is true overall and for SMEs, when it comes to big business, flexibility is replaced by “ethnicity” and bias by ethnicity in public sector organisations. Is this because big business and public sector organisations are more likely to be in metropolitan centres which are much more ethnically diverse?

In the last two surveys, we have asked some new questions about literacy, language and numeracy but two thirds of those answering this survey, as in the previous survey, did not see these matters as an issue of concern. This tends to contradict some other surveys which note that employers are concerned that job seekers or even employees lack soft skills, including communication skills or basic literacy and numeracy. For the moment, these issues were only a concern for a minority of employers. This might reflect the sector or the skills required in a particular firm.

As previously, it is encouraging to note the high proportion of firms that have women at the governance level and in leadership/decision-making positions. Yet, it is worrying that in nearly one third of all large organisations, women constituted less than 25 percent of staff in such positions. It is also encouraging to see that many firms are actively addressing bullying and harassment, wellbeing/wellness and flexibility. It is notable that the public sector is more likely to have policies in place. One issue of concern, though, is a fairly high rate of bullying and harassment, especially in large organisations. Twenty-six percent of all organisations recorded incidents of bullying and harassment, despite having formal policies or initiatives and programmes in place (70.6% of all respondents). This raises questions as to how effective such measures currently are. Bullying and harassment, along with bias and gender, were all seen as more important in this survey compared with October 2017. It would be interesting to know whether the publicity given to such matters both here and overseas has heightened awareness, or whether this increase is coincidental.

Diversity, in all its manifestations, is an important part of the contemporary business environment and this survey illustrates the issues and responses for New Zealand organisations. It tells a story of awareness and good practice alongside some gaps and the need to be more proactive in responding to diversity, especially to an issue like aging.