

Skills Matter Student Feedback Report 2020

Evaluation of all courses funded through the Skills Matter programme

February 2021

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Introduction

Skills Matter is a workforce development programme that, on behalf of the Ministry of Health, funds programme providers to deliver post entry clinical vocational training to mental health and addiction clinicians. These training programmes contain both clinical and academic components. The Skills Matter programme team within Te Pou manages and administers contracts with programme providers to deliver the training programmes and support to students. The Skills Matter programme has quality assurance processes to ensure each programme provider delivers its core components and that these are functioning as expected.

Students in the Skills Matter programme funded through Te Pou are invited to complete an end of year survey about their course experiences. This report contains the overall survey results and analysis for all courses funded through the Skills Matter programme in 2020:

- New Entry to Specialty Practice Mental Health and Addiction Nursing (NESP Nursing)
- Post-graduate Diploma in Cognitive Behaviour Therapy (CBT)
- Co-existing Substance Use and Mental Health (CEP)
- Clinical Leadership in Nursing Practice (CLNP)
- Core Skills for Infant, Child and Adolescent Mental Health and Addiction (ICAMH)
- New Entry to Specialist Practice Allied Mental Health and Addiction (NESP Allied).

The results are from students who completed their programme in June and December 2020. The University of Auckland (UOA), University of Otago (UOO), Massey University of New Zealand, Auckland University of Technology (AUT), Whitireia, Canterbury DHB (CDHB) and Waitematā DHB (WDHB) deliver these courses.

The evaluation survey covered areas of:

- satisfaction with the programme
- support received for studying
- challenges during study
- opportunities to apply learning to study
- career development
- results from training knowledge and confidence
- results from training practice change

This report begins with discussion of the evaluation methodology and goes on to provide the evaluation survey results and ends with the summary points and conclusions. The appendices of the report provide a copy of the evaluation survey and more comprehensive coverage of the students' demographic information.

Methodology

212 out of 380 students completed an evaluation survey. This gave an overall response rate of 56% and a moderate level of confidence that respondents' views reflect those of all Skills Matter-funded students (see Table 1).

Table 1Survey response rates per programme and provider

Course	Programme Provider	Number in course	Total responses	Response rate
NESP	CDHB	23	19	83%
NESP	UOA	88	60	68%
NESP	WDHB	26	4	15%
NESP	Whitireia	42	4	10%
NESP (Allied)	AUT	52	44	85%
CEP	UOA	19	9	47%
CEP	UOO	14	1	7%
CLNP	Massey	10	4	40%
CLNP	UOA	12	9	75%
CLNP	UOO	8	1	13%
ICAMH	UOA	44	18	41%
CBT	UOO	42	39	93%

Survey results

Respondent demographics

Just over one in 10 respondents identified as Māori with the same proportion identifying as Asian. Just under one in 10 identified as Pasifika. Almost six in every 10 respondents identified as NZ European. Respondents also identified with 12 other ethnicities (see Table 2).

Over two thirds of respondents were under 30 years of age and just over two thirds were aged 30 to 39 years. Almost two in 10 respondents were aged 40 to 49 years. At least one in 10 were aged 50 to 59 years. Very few respondents were aged 60 and over (see Table 3).

More than four in five respondents were registered nurses. Almost one in five were social workers. One in 10 were alcohol and other drug practitioners. Very few respondents were occupational therapists (see Table 4).

Respondents worked in all 20 District Health Boards (DHBs) in New Zealand. The DHBs with most people represented were Canterbury, Auckland and Counties Manukau. Almost one in five respondents worked in Canterbury DHB while at least one in 10 worked in Auckland and Counties Manukau DHBs. Almost one in 10 respondents worked in Waitematā, Capital and Coast, Southern and Waikato DHBs. One in 20 worked in Northland DHB. Fewer than one in 15 worked in the remaining DHBs (see Table 5).

At least four in five respondents worked directly in a DHB. Almost three in 10 worked in non-government organisations (NGO). Just under one in 10 worked in primary health organisations (PHO; see Table 6).

Tables with the full details of respondent demographics can be found in Appendix B.

Findings

Satisfaction with the course

At least four in every five students who responded to the survey rated their level of satisfaction with the training as a 4 or 5 on a scale of 1 to 5 where 1 = Strongly disagree and 5 = Strongly agree. Nine in 10 respondents agreed the course content was relevant to their work (see Figure 1).

Figure 1
Students' satisfaction with training



Many respondents expressed their satisfaction with the course and noted its relevance to their work.

Satisfaction

"This was so well run, I really appreciated the practical content and the fact that the grades were based on clinical ability rather than academic knowledge. Thank you so much for the opportunity ©" (CBT student)



"Highly beneficial and placed at such a high standard" (CBT student)

"I'd like to express thanks for the funding that allowed me to study" (ICAMH student)

Relevance

"Overall I found this course very interesting and relevant to my practice. I found it was a great opportunity and that it has helped me to develop my practice." (NESP student)

Support for study

During their study, 17 out of 20 respondents felt supported by their organisation and colleagues as well as their whānau and friends, and eight out of 11 felt supported by their academic course co-ordinator. Over four in 10 respondents agreed it was easy to find information about Skills Matter travel and accommodation grants (see Figure 2).

Figure 2

Levels of support received by students

Respondents felt supported by: Organisation and colleagues including supervisor and/or preceptor (85 per cent) Academic course co-ordinator (88 per cent) Whānau and friends (85 per cent)

Additional comments reflect the above ratings and describe the factors that helped students complete their studies. The most common factors were the supportive providers and funding.

Supportive provider

"I found the staff to be professional, friendly and engaging, which helped me a lot to engage in the programme, and instrumental in my desire want to further progress my study and development" (CBT student)

"There was lots of support from the University of Auckland and the lecturers went out of their way to make things easier during the first lock down which was amazing." (CLNP student)

"I am very [grateful] to Te Pou organisation and staff for giving me the opportunity to study and for all their support to meet my education needs." (NESP Allied student)

Funding

"... I am immensely grateful for Te Pou and University of Otago to fund and run the programme, otherwise it would be much less accessible for me" (CBT student)

"If it had not been for the funded study, I would likely not have been able to even entertain the idea of post grad cert health sci [...] I am so very appreciative and grateful" (CBT student)



However, some students found it difficult to access funding for their studies.

"I have not found accessing financial assistance for accommodation costs from Te Pou easy to [access]" (NESP student)

Challenges during study

Four in ten respondents agreed their workload was too high to allow time for study. Fewer than four in 10 needed someone to fill in for them at work while they studied. Just over half of respondents felt the balance between work, life and study was an issue (see Figure 3).

Figure 3

Challenges to study

40 per cent agreed their workload was too high to allow time for study 38 per cent needed someone to fill in for them at work while studying 54 per cent felt the balance between work, life and study was an issue

The ratings above indicate that most students did not encounter significant challenges during their study. However, some comments highlighted the issues they did face. Issues include online learning due to COVID-19 lockdown, work-life-study balance and lack of support.

Online learning

- "Studying during COVID was very challenging, particularly remote/online study." (CBT student)
- "Due to this pandemic the year has been a challenging one, however, I am grateful for all the support through the year." (NESP allied student)
- "This is the first time I have studied online, which I found difficult ... I found Canvas difficult to navigate" (ICAMH student)

Work-life-study balance

"It would be very helpful if there could be some reduction in usual workload while doing this course." (CBT student)

"Working full time in a new position [...] while studying put a lot of pressure on me and my home life and mental health suffered as a result. I believe this could have been mitigated with more time allocated to study days which we could have used for the university assignments." (NESP student)

Lack of support

"Some fellow students from other teams were provided more or less supervision & mentor support/study time/case load protection, compared to others and consequently created/lessened challenges and increased/decreased learning and reflection time" (NESP Allied student)

"... the lack of support from the DHB coordinator/preceptor was not helpful at all." (NESP student)

"The course tutors were difficult to access with out of office replies received more commonly than replies." (NESP student)

Applying learning to practice

Almost four in five students agreed the course included adequate opportunities for practical experience. At least nine in 10 agreed they were able to use their training in practice. Seven in 10 indicated they shared their new learnings with colleagues (see Figure 4).

Figure 4

Applying learning to practice

Applying learning to practice Applying learning to practice 78 per cent agreed the course included adequate opportunities for practical experience 70 per cent indicated they shared their new learnings with colleagues

Accordingly, respondents commented on how the course content could be used in practice.

"Great course, I think every new graduate working in mental health should complete the NESP. It has helped me connect to my practice and supported my understanding of social work in the mental health field of practice." (NESP Allied student)

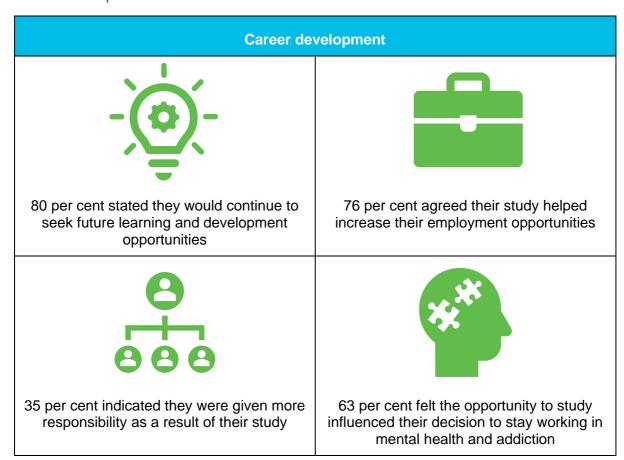
"The information is very relevant to the workplace and evidence-based. I feel that we were given a well-rounded education and there were a lot of resources available online for self direction and supplementary learning." (NESP Allied student)

Career development

Four in five students indicated they would continue to seek future learning and development opportunities. Over three quarters agreed their study helped increase their employment opportunities. At least three in 10 indicated they had been given more responsibility as a result of their study. Over six in 10 felt the opportunity to study influenced their decision to stay working in mental health and addiction (see Figure 5).

Figure 5

Career development



Reflecting the above ratings, respondents expressed their intentions to continue pursuing professional development within mental health and addiction.

"... I am passionate about and hope to further advance my knowledge and skills over time" (NESP student)

"I found the staff to be professional, friendly and engaging, which helped me a lot to engage in the programme, and instrumental in my desire [...] to further progress my study and development in the area of CBT."

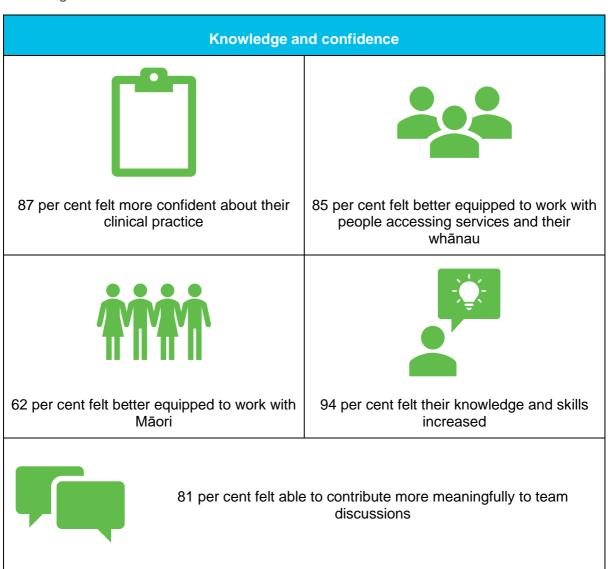
"Hoping to get into Diploma next year to increase skills further"

Results from training – knowledge and confidence

Almost nine in 10 felt more confident about their clinical practice as a result of their Skills Matter-funded training. Over four in five agreed they were better equipped to work with people accessing services and their whānau. Almost two thirds felt better equipped to work with Māori. At least nine in 10 agreed the training increased their knowledge and skills. At least four in five felt able to contribute more meaningfully to team discussions (see Figure 6).

Figure 6

Knowledge and confidence



Positive comments reinforced these ratings.

"Doing NESP programme has increased my knowledge and improved my skills in supporting tangata whaiora with their recovery journey. It has also increased my awareness to be reflective in my practice." (NESP student)

"It's a good learning after doing my nursing degree, I gained more knowledge and more confident and comfortable providing nursing cares to the service users. Thank you" (NESP student)

"It has helped me become more competent, confident and re-ignited [my] passion to continue self improvement." (ICAMH student)

"The course has definitely improved my self confidence as a clinician in mental health working in New Zealand!" (NESP Allied student)

Results from training – practice change

Over nine in 10 respondents felt more able to practice safely. Eight out of 11 agreed they reflect more critically on their practice. Nine in 10 felt their practice is informed by up-to-date evidence. Two thirds agreed their job satisfaction had increased (see Figure 7).

Figure 7

Practice change

Practice change					
93 per cent felt able to practice safely	88 per cent reflect more critically on their practice				
90 per cent agreed their practice is informed by up-to-date evidence	66 per cent felt their job satisfaction increased				

Reinforcing the above ratings, respondents noted how their studies **positively influenced their practice.**

"... the information I have learnt is extremely helpful and has already had a significantly positive change to the lives of the clients I have worked with so far. For example, clients have said to me – "My anxiety is finally manageable" and "This is the first time in my life I have enjoyed setting up my art installation..." (CBT student)



"... the course has improved outcomes for the people I work with, and competence in therapy" (CBT student)

"This course has [...] allowed me to grow as an occupational therapist and allow for advocacy that is backed with research that acknowledges and reinforces recovery focused work alongside tangata whaiora." (NESP Allied student)

"Up to date education allows us to think more critically in our workplaces and stop us from becoming stagnant and follow the workplace culture into unhelpful habits." (NESP student)



Written feedback

Respondents also offered suggestions on how they thought the courses could improve. Students mainly expressed the need for greater integration of kaupapa Māori and other culturally-focussed frameworks, content on working with youth, clearer assessment guidelines and better feedback.

Māori and cultural models

"I would like to see this course have increased consideration on working within Kaupapa Māori framework and increased considerations on how this therapy can be adapted to meet needs of Māori. What they did deliver around Māori was great – just need more." (CBT student)

"I would have liked a stronger cultural element included. I predominantly work with Māori and Pacific Islanders and felt, while included, the module just brushed the surface." (CBT student)

"I found the learning very westernized" (ICAMH student)

"More bi-cultural/Pacific inclusion throughout all the course would be great to see" (CBT student)

Youth

"Youth-related/specific content was minimal and in some cases non-existent [...] Coming into the course from a youth-specific role, content was often not tailored or adapted to suit these demographics and any learnings would have to be modified at personal discretion/ability in order to implement it in my work." (CEP student)



"... there was limited consideration on adapting CBT for our Tamariki and Rangatahi. I would be seeking this for future study." (CBT student)

Feedback and guidelines

"Good course content and teaching, but needed more feedback about practice in classes" (CBT student)

"Needed to have clearer guidelines for the assignments and PDRP [Professional Development and Recognition Programmes] requirements." (NESP student)



Recommend to others

Overall, respondents were happy with their Skills Matter-funded studies and would recommend it to others.

"It would be amazing if all social workers or occupational therapists keen to enter the mental health and addictions field do this course." (NESP Allied student)

"Overall, useful course and I would recommend it to others wanting to develop or enhance therapeutic skills." (CBT student)

"It was a great experience and an opportunity of learning beside other mental health professionals. I strongly recommend the program to continue." (NESP student)

Summary and conclusions

Students funded via Te Pou as part of the Skills Matter programme are routinely invited to complete an end of year survey as part of continuous quality improvement. This report shows the overall survey results for all courses funded through the Skills Matter programme in 2020. There were six courses run by seven programme providers throughout New Zealand.

Of the 380 students funded, 212 responded to the survey, generating a response rate of 56 per cent and a moderate level of confidence that the views expressed in the evaluation represent all those who attended courses.

Over four in five respondents were registered nurses. Around two thirds were over 30 years of age.

The proportion of respondents who identified as Māori (14 per cent), Pacific (nine per cent) and Asian (14 per cent) were similar to those reported in the 2018 census¹. The proportion of respondents who identified as NZ European (55 per cent) was less than those reported in the 2018 census.

Respondents came from all 20 New Zealand DHBs and over four in five worked directly in a DHB. Over half worked in either Canterbury, Auckland, Counties Manukau or Waitematā DHBs. In 2020, students reported numerous ways their professional practice improved as a direct result of their studies. These included enhanced knowledge, skills, confidence and safer practice informed by critical thinking and up-to-date evidence. They also shared their learning with others and feel better equipped to work with Māori, their whānau and other service users.

There was a high level of satisfaction with all courses and two thirds of respondents indicated their job satisfaction increased as a result of undertaking their courses. Participating in the courses also provided students with opportunities for career advancement previously not available to them. It inspired them to continue working in the mental health and addiction workforce in the future.

As with previous end-of-year feedback surveys, many students reported struggling with work-life-study balance and time to complete studies. However, this reduced slightly in 2020 compared to 2019 despite the extra challenges brought on by the COVID-19 pandemic and lockdown. Many students did receive support to deal with challenges, mainly from their course providers.

Respondents greatly appreciated the Skills Matter funding provided through Te Pou and most gave very positive feedback and high ratings for the value of their courses overall.

Several useful suggestions for improvements to the programme were made. These are detailed in the body of this report.

As in previous years, these results from the 2020 Skills Matter student feedback surveys continue to demonstrate the importance of these courses to the mental health and addiction workforce and the need to continue with Skills Matter funding.

¹ https://www.stats.govt.nz/infographics/major-ethnic-groups-in-new-zealand

Appendix A

Student survey



Skills Matter 2020 New Entrants to Specialist Practice - Nursing student survey

Post-entry clinical training evaluation

Skills Matter is a workforce development programme within Te Pou o te Whakaaro Nui (Te Pou). Skills Matter funds programme providers to deliver post-entry clinical training to the mental health and addiction nursing and allied health workforces on behalf of the Ministry of Health.

About this survey

You're invited to complete this survey We're interested in finding out more about your experience of the programme and the factors that supported or hindered your training in 2020. We're also interested in any benefits you experienced as a result of the training. This information will be used to improve the delivery of the training programmes funded by Skills Matter and will help us evaluate the overall Skills Matter programme. We really welcome and value your feedback.

You are under no obligation to complete the survey and you do not have to answer a particular question if you do not wish to do so. All the information you provide will be kept confidential and will only be used for improvement and evaluation. Only summary results will be reported and you will not be personally identifiable in any reports.

Instructions

Please tick the box that is most relevant to you or write your answer in the space provided. The survey should take about ten minutes to complete.

* 1. Which organisation provided your course?	
University of Auckland	
Whitireia	
○ Waitematā DHB	
Canterbury DHB	

We'd like to ask you about your training experience. There are no right or wrong answers—please tick the response that is best for you.

2. Satisfaction with training?

	1 =				5 =	
	Strongly				Strongly	Not
	disagree	2	3	4	agree	applicable
Overall I was satisfied with the course	\circ	\circ	\circ		\circ	
The course content was relevant to my work	\circ	\circ	\circ	\circ	\circ	\circ

We'd like to know about the factors that supported your study.

3. Support for your study

	1 = Strongly disagree	2	3	4	5 = Strongly agree	Not applicable
My organisation and my colleagues, including my supervisor and/or preceptor, supported my study	\circ	\circ	0	\circ	\circ	0
My academic course co-ordinator supported my study	\bigcirc	\bigcirc	\bigcirc	\bigcirc	\bigcirc	\bigcirc
My family/whānau and friends supported my study	\circ	\circ	0	\circ	0	0
It was easy to find information about the Skills Matter travel and accommodation grants	\circ	\circ	\circ	\circ	\circ	\circ

We'd like to know about any challenges you faced during your study.

4. Challenges during study

	1 = Strongly disagree	2	3	4	5 = Strongly agree	Not applicable
My clinical workload was too high to allow time for study	\circ	\circ	\circ	\circ	0	\circ
Someone filled in for me at work while I attended study	\bigcirc	\bigcirc	\bigcirc	\circ	\bigcirc	\bigcirc
The balance between my work, life and study was an issue for me	\circ	\circ	\circ	\circ	\circ	\circ

We'd like to know if you have had the opportunity to apply your learning.

5. Opportunities to apply learning to practice

	1 = Strongly disagree	2	3	4	5 = Strongly agree	Not applicable
My course included adequate opportunities for practical experience	0	\circ	0	\circ	0	0
I was able to use my training in practice	\circ	\circ	\circ	\circ	\circ	0
I've shared my new learning with colleagues	0	\circ	0	0		0

We'd like to know about the links between the training and your career development.

6. Career development

	1 = Strongly disagree	2	3	4	5 = Strongly agree	Not applicable
I'll continue to seek future learning and development opportunities	\circ	0	0	0	0	0
My study has helped to increase my employment opportunities	\circ	\circ	\circ	\circ	\circ	\bigcirc
I have been given more responsibility as a result of my study	\circ	\circ	\circ	\circ	\circ	0
The opportunity to study influenced my decision to stay working in mental health and addiction	\circ	\bigcirc	\circ	\circ	\circ	\circ

We are very interested in any benefits from the clinical training programmes.

7. Results from your training

	1 = Strongly disagree	2	3	4	5 = Strongly agree	Not applicable
I'm more confident about my clinical practice	\bigcirc		\circ		\bigcirc	
I'm better equipped to work with people accessing services and their family/whānau	\bigcirc	\bigcirc	\bigcirc	\circ	\bigcirc	\bigcirc
I'm better equipped to work with Māori	\circ		\circ		\circ	
My knowledge and skills have increased	\bigcirc	\bigcirc	\bigcirc	\bigcirc	\bigcirc	\bigcirc
$I^\prime m$ able to contribute more meaningfully to team discussions	0	0	0	0	\circ	0
I feel able to practice safely	\bigcirc	\bigcirc	\bigcirc	\bigcirc	\bigcirc	\bigcirc
I reflect more critically on my practice	\circ		\circ		\bigcirc	
My practice is informed by up-to-date evidence	\circ	\circ	\circ	\circ	\circ	\circ
My job satisfaction has increased	0	\circ	0	\circ	0	

8. What is your current role?	
Registered Nurse	Social worker
Occupational therapist	Alcohol and other drug practitioner
If other, please specify	
9. What DHB district do you work in? (Please tick a	as many boxes as you need)
Auckland	Northland
Bay of Plenty	Southern
Canterbury	South Canterbury
Capital & Coast	Hauora Tairāwhiti
Counties Manukau	Taranaki
Hawkes Bay	Waikato
Hutt Valley	Wairarapa
Lakes	Waitematā
Midcentral	Whanganui
Nelson Marlborough	West Coast
Unsure or other (please specify)	
10. Please tick if you work in	
a DHB	
an NGO	
a PHO	
11. Which ethnic group(s) do you belong to? (tick	all that apply)
Māori Asian	
Pacific New Zealand E	uropean
Other (please specify)	
12. What is your age range?	
Under 30 years	○ 50 to 59 years
30 to 39 years	60 years and over
40 to 49 years	
Te Pou are committed to ongoing programme improvement and engage in further research and evaluation. We want to hear from	
us to invite you to these research activities in future.	,
13. These details are kept separately from your an	
the box. You can always opt-out at future contact.	
Opt-out	

Appendix B

Respondent demographics

Table 2

Ethnicity of respondents

Which ethnic group(s) do you belong to?	Count	%
Māori	30	14%
Pacific	20	9%
Asian	29	14%
New Zealand European	118	56%
*Other (please specify)	15	7%
Total	212	100%

Note. Respondents were able to select multiple ethnicities.

*Other ethnicities include South African Indian, African, Australian, Dutch, Welsh, Latin American, Celt, German, South African European, Malaysian Indian, British, Fiji-Indian, Filipino, Moroccan, Afghan, Indian, Japanese and other European – each representing less than two per cent of the total.

Table 3Age of respondents

What is your age range?	Count	%
Under 30 years	69	35%
30 to 39 years	67	34%
40 to 49 years	35	18%
50 to 59 years	23	12%
60 years and over	6	3%
Total	200	100%

Table 4
Respondent roles

What is your current role?	Count	%
Registered Nurse	114	75%
Social worker	22	14%
Alcohol and other drug practitioner	13	8%
Occupational therapist	4	3%
Total	153	100%

Note. Respondents were able to select or enter multiple roles.

Other roles include counsellor, mental health professional, psychologist, team leader for Mental Health and Addictions Service, CAMHS clinician, adolescent mental health clinician,

nurse practitioner, nurse consultant, clinical supervisor, case worker and clinical nurse specialist (CNS) – each representing less than one per cent of the total.

Table 5

DHB areas in which respondents worked

What DHB district do you work in?	Count	%
Auckland	26	13%
Bay of Plenty	6	3%
Canterbury	37	18%
Capital & Coast	16	8%
Counties Manukau	24	12%
Hawkes Bay	2	1%
Hutt Valley	2	1%
Lakes	4	2%
Midcentral	4	2%
Nelson Marlborough	3	1%
Northland	11	5%
Southern	16	8%
South Canterbury	1	0.5%
Hauora Tairāwhiti	2	1%
Taranaki	7	3%
Waikato	16	8%
Wairarapa	3	1%
Waitematā	18	9%
Whanganui	4	2%
West Coast	1	0.5%
Total	203	100%

Note. Respondents were able to select multiple DHBs.

Table 6Types of organisations in which respondents worked

Please tick if you work in	Count	%
a DHB	164	83%
an NGO	27	14%
a PHO	7	4%
Total	198	100%

Note. Respondents were able to select multiple types of organisations.

y in @tepounz