



**MINISTRY OF SOCIAL
DEVELOPMENT**

TE MANATŪ WHAKAHIATO ORA

14 JUL 2020

Dear

On 17 June 2020, you emailed the Ministry of Social Development (the Ministry) requesting, under the Official Information Act 1982, the following information:

1. *What proportion of the workforce had flexible working arrangements/ were working from home prior to Covid-19? Under Level 4? Under Level 3? Under Level 2? Now under level 1?*
2. *Copies of emails from Cabinet or the office of the Minister to chief executives and from chief executives to staff regarding working from home arrangements under level 1.*
3. *Copies of emails, reports and surveys regarding staff and managers' experience of working from home and any measures of productivity carried out.*

In the interest of clarity, your questions are answered in turn.

1. *What proportion of the workforce had flexible working arrangements/ were working from home prior to Covid-19? Under Level 4? Under Level 3? Under Level 2? Now under level 1?*

Flexible working arrangements can be irregular or can occur on an ongoing basis and may include variations to a staff member's hours of work, days of work and place of work. Decisions on flexible working arrangements are mutually agreed upon between the manager and employee. The decision considers the appropriateness of the arrangement for the organisation, the employee, and the health, safety and security of all Ministry staff and information. These discussions and decisions are not centrally recorded.

Therefore, in order to provide all employee and manager decisions regarding flexible working arrangements prior to the outbreak of COVID-19 and during Alert Levels 1, 2, 3 and 4, the Ministry would need to divert personnel from their core duties and allocate extra time to complete the task of collating all correspondence, contracts and agreements between all Ministry staff members. The diversion of these resources would impair the Ministry's ability to continue standard operations and would be an inefficient use of the Ministry's resources. As such, your request is refused under section 18(f) of the Official Information Act, requires substantial collation. The greater public interest is in the effective and efficient administration of the public service.

I have considered whether the Ministry would be able to respond to your requests given extra time, or the ability to charge for the information requested. I have

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concluded that, in either case, the Ministry's ability to undertake its work would still be prejudiced.

However, following the outbreak of COVID-19, the Ministry implemented a self-reporting system to encourage staff to report where they are working. The Ministry did this in order to have a record of where staff are located, in case of an emergency.

Graph One attached shows the total proportion of all Ministry staff that recorded working from home from 16 March 2020 to 18 June 2020. The graph notes when each Alert Level began and ended.

2. *Copies of emails from Cabinet or the office of the Minister to chief executives and from chief executives to staff regarding working from home arrangements under level 1.*

As noted above, working from home arrangements are agreed upon by the employee and their manager. The Ministry did not receive emails from Cabinet or the Office of Hon Carmel Sepuloni, Minister for Social Development, regarding working from home arrangements under Alert Level 1.

Additionally, as all working from home arrangements are agreed upon by the employee and their manager, the Ministry's Chief Executive, Debbie Power, did not supply emails to Ministry staff regarding their working from home arrangements under Alert Level 1.

Therefore, your request for this information is refused under section 18(e) of the Official Information Act as this information does not exist or, despite reasonable efforts to locate it, cannot be found

3. *Copies of emails, reports and surveys regarding staff and managers' experience of working from home and any measures of productivity carried out*

If a staff member was working from home during the COVID-19 lockdown period, managers maintained regular contact with them to discuss what was required of them and the current priorities for the Ministry. Regular contact allowed an opportunity to discuss individual needs and support required so that the individual could be productive working from home. However, similar to above, these productivity measures were not centrally recorded.

In order to collate any emails or methods that managers used to measure staff productivity, the Ministry would need to divert personnel from their core duties and allocate extra time to complete the task of collating all correspondence regarding productivity between all managers and employees. The diversion of these resources would impair the Ministry's ability to continue standard operations and would be an inefficient use of the Ministry's resources. As such, your request is refused under section 18(f) of the Official Information Act, requires substantial collation. The greater public interest is in the effective and efficient administration of the public service.

Furthermore, as there was no way to centrally record this information, the Ministry did not create any reports regarding productivity. Therefore, this part of request is

refused under section 18(e) of the Official Information Act as this information does not exist.

However, to ensure that Ministry staff felt supported by their managers while working from home, the Ministry circulated two surveys for staff. These surveys were used to check how Ministry staff were doing during the COVID-19 restrictions and included questions on current working arrangements, and whether people felt well supported by the Ministry's communications and by their team, colleagues and manager.

Please find the following survey results attached:

- *MSD Survey: Kei te pehea koe? (how are you doing?)*, dated 23 April 2020
- *MSD Survey: Kei te pehea koe? (how are you doing?)*, dated 21 May 2020

The principles and purposes of the Official Information Act 1982 under which you made your request are:

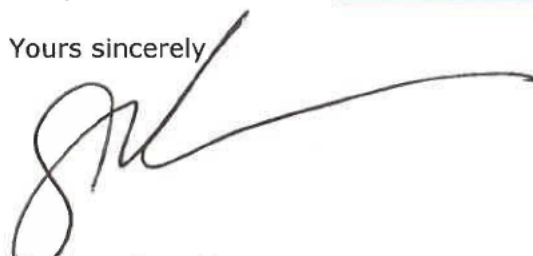
- to create greater openness and transparency about the plans, work and activities of the Government,
- to increase the ability of the public to participate in the making and administration of our laws and policies and
- to lead to greater accountability in the conduct of public affairs.

This Ministry fully supports those principles and purposes. The Ministry therefore intends to make the information contained in this letter and any attached documents available to the wider public. The Ministry will do this by publishing this letter and attachments on the Ministry of Social Development's website. Your personal details will be deleted, and the Ministry will not publish any information that would identify you as the person who requested the information.

If you wish to discuss this response with us, please feel free to contact OIA_Requests@msd.govt.nz.

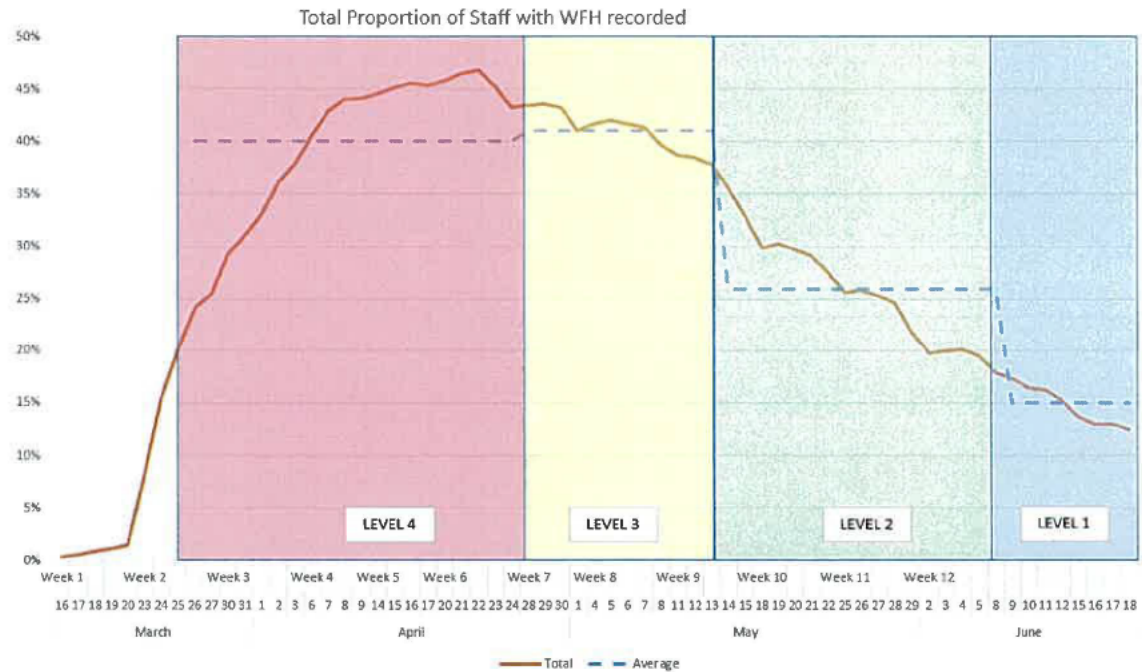
If you are not satisfied with this response regarding the Ministry's work from home arrangements during the outbreak of COVID-19, you have the right to seek an investigation and review by the Ombudsman. Information about how to make a complaint is available at www.ombudsman.parliament.nz or 0800 802 602.

Yours sincerely



Stephen Crombie
Deputy Chief Executive
People and Capability

Graph One: The total proportion of all Ministry staff that recorded working from home (WFH) from 16 March 2020 to 18 June 2020

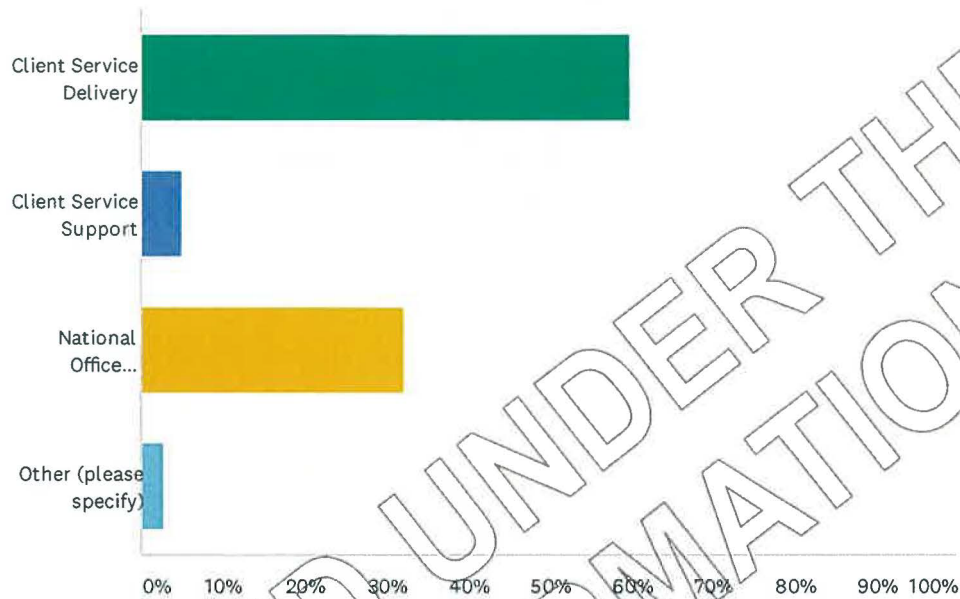


Notes for Graph One:

- This information is indicative only and is based on staff or their manager self-reporting their work status as 'working from home' on the Ministry's human resource system
- Data in June 2020 is expected to be underreported due to delays in staff entering 'working from home' codes
- The data excludes weekends and public holidays and has not been adjusted for staff who may be rostered off on a given day
- COVID-19 Alert Level 4 came into force at 11:59pm Wednesday 25 March 2020
- COVID-19 Alert Level 3 came into force at 11:59pm Monday 27 April 2020
- COVID-19 Alert Level 2 came into force at 11:59pm Wednesday 13 May 2020
- COVID-19 Alert Level 1 came into force at 11:59pm Monday 8 June 2020
- The average percentages of staff 'working from home' across each COVID-19 alert level have been calculated as:
 - Level 4: 40% [24% to 47%]
 - Level 3: 41% [38% to 44%]
 - Level 2: 26% [18% to 36%]
 - Level 1: 15% [12% to 17%]

Q1 Select which group you belong to;

Answered: 518 Skipped: 2,266



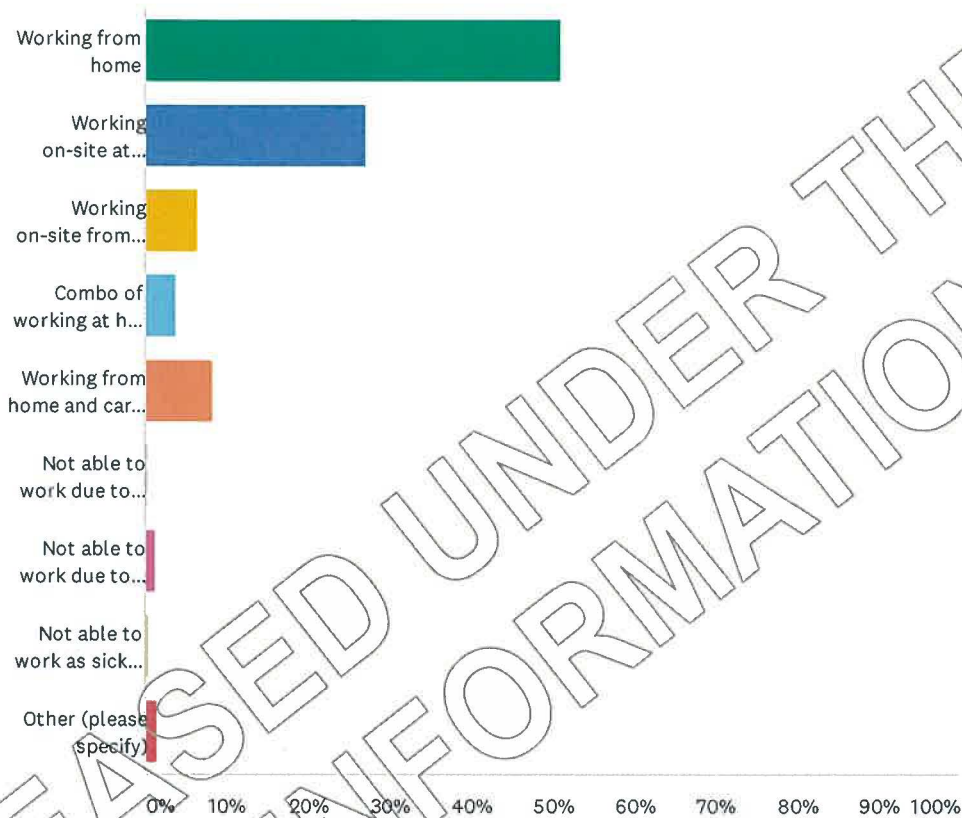
ANSWER CHOICES

RESPONSES

Client Service Delivery	60.04%	311
Client Service Support	5.02%	26
National Office (including those who work outside of Wellington)	32.24%	167
Other (please specify)	2.70%	14
TOTAL		518

Q2 Select the best description of your current working arrangements;

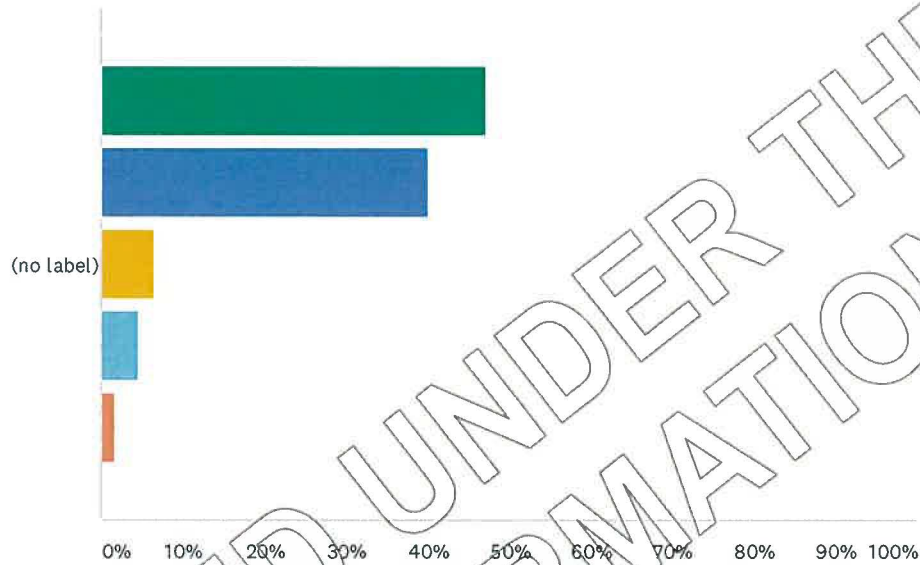
Answered: 513 Skipped: 2,271



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Working from home	51.27%	263
Working on-site at usual work location	27.10%	139
Working on-site from a different work location to my usual	6.43%	33
Combo of working at home and on-site work location	3.70%	19
Working from home and caring for children or whānau	8.38%	43
Not able to work due to caring for children or whānau	0.19%	1
Not able to work due to lack of technology/equipment	1.17%	6
Not able to work as sick or unwell	0.39%	2
Other (please specify)	1.36%	7
TOTAL		513

Q3 I am well connected with my team and colleagues during the COVID-19 restrictions

Answered: 2,768 Skipped: 16

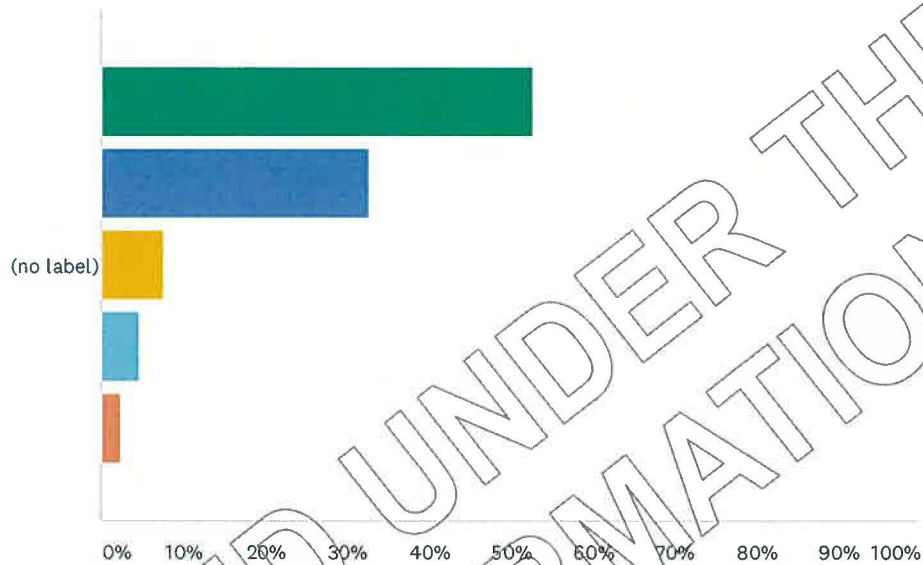


Strongly Agree Agree Neither Agree nor Disagree Disagree Strongly Disagree

	STRONGLY AGREE	AGREE	NEITHER AGREE NOR DISAGREE	DISAGREE	STRONGLY DISAGREE	TOTAL	WEIGHTED AVERAGE
(no label)	47.25% 1,308	40.14% 1,111	6.43% 178	4.52% 125	1.66% 46	2,768	4.27

Q4 I am well connected with my manager during the COVID-19 restrictions

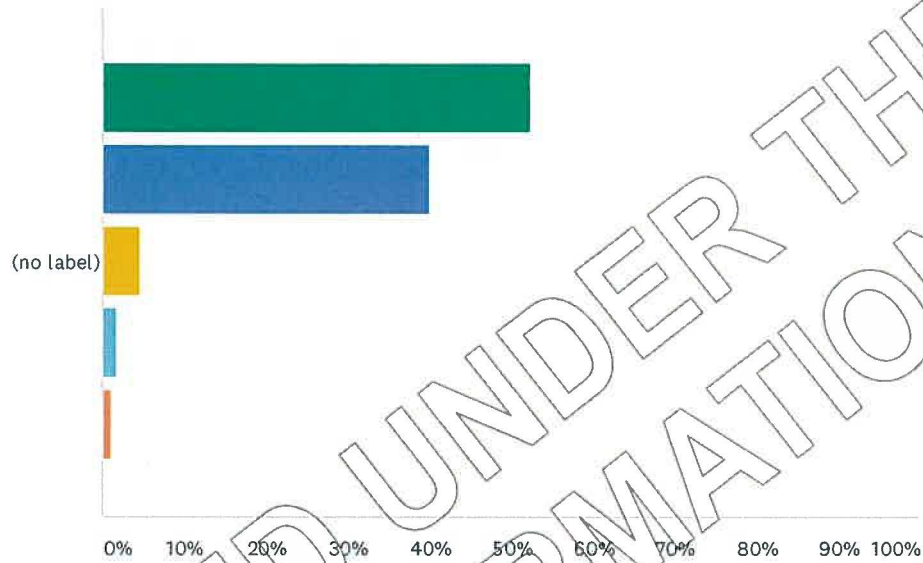
Answered: 2,768 Skipped: 16



	STRONGLY AGREE	AGREE	NEITHER AGREE NOR DISAGREE	DISAGREE	STRONGLY DISAGREE	TOTAL	WEIGHTED AVERAGE
(no label)	52.93% 1,465	32.84% 909	7.48% 207	4.55% 126	2.20% 61	2,768	4.30

Q5 I feel well informed through the daily email updates with information on our response to COVID-19

Answered: 2,768 Skipped: 16

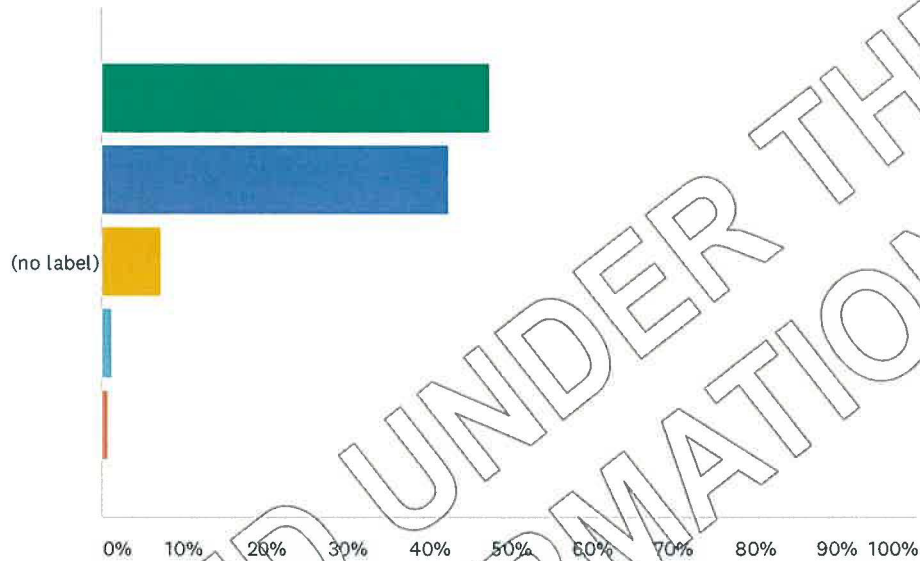


Strongly Agree Agree Neither Agree nor Disagree Disagree Strongly Disagree

	STRONGLY AGREE	AGREE	NEITHER AGREE NOR DISAGREE	DISAGREE	STRONGLY DISAGREE	TOTAL	WEIGHTED AVERAGE
(no label)	52.83%	40.21%	4.55%	1.63%	1.08%	2,768	4.41
	1,454	1,113	126	45	30		

Q6 I feel well informed by the messages from Debbie with information on our response to COVID-19

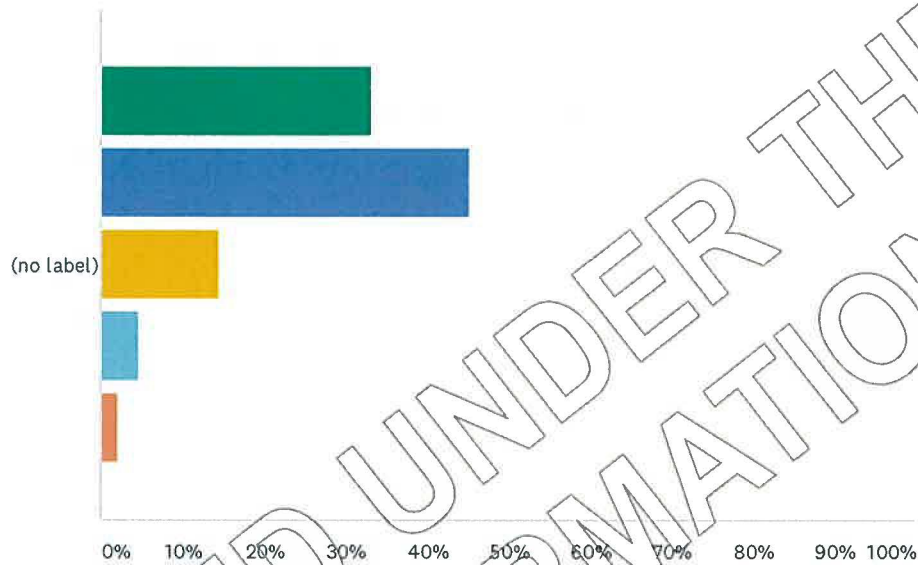
Answered: 2,768 Skipped: 16



	STRONGLY AGREE	AGREE	NEITHER AGREE NOR DISAGREE	DISAGREE	STRONGLY DISAGREE	TOTAL	WEIGHTED AVERAGE
(no label)	47.76%	42.67%	7.37%	1.26%	0.94%	2,768	4.35
	1,322	1,181	204	35	26		

Q7 I find it easy to get the information I need on doogle about our response to COVID-19

Answered: 2,768 Skipped: 16

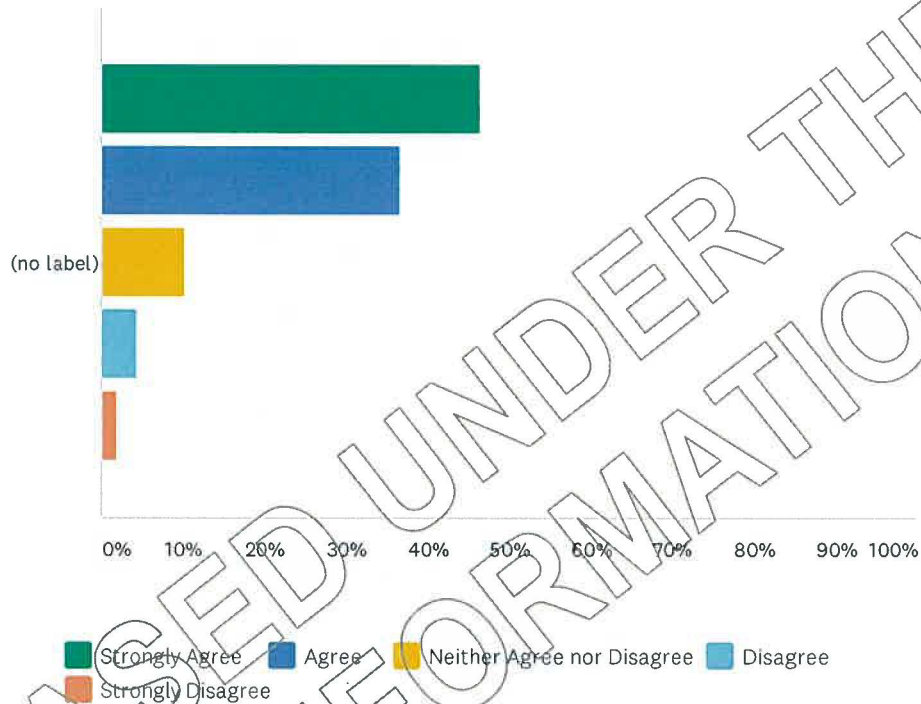


Strongly Agree Agree Neither Agree nor Disagree Disagree Strongly Disagree

	STRONGLY AGREE	AGREE	NETHER AGREE NOR DISAGREE	DISAGREE	STRONGLY DISAGREE	TOTAL	WEIGHTED AVERAGE
(no label)	33.31% 922	45.48% 1,259	14.49% 401	4.66% 129	2.06% 57	2,768	4.03

Q8 I feel well informed with information received from my manager on our response to COVID-19

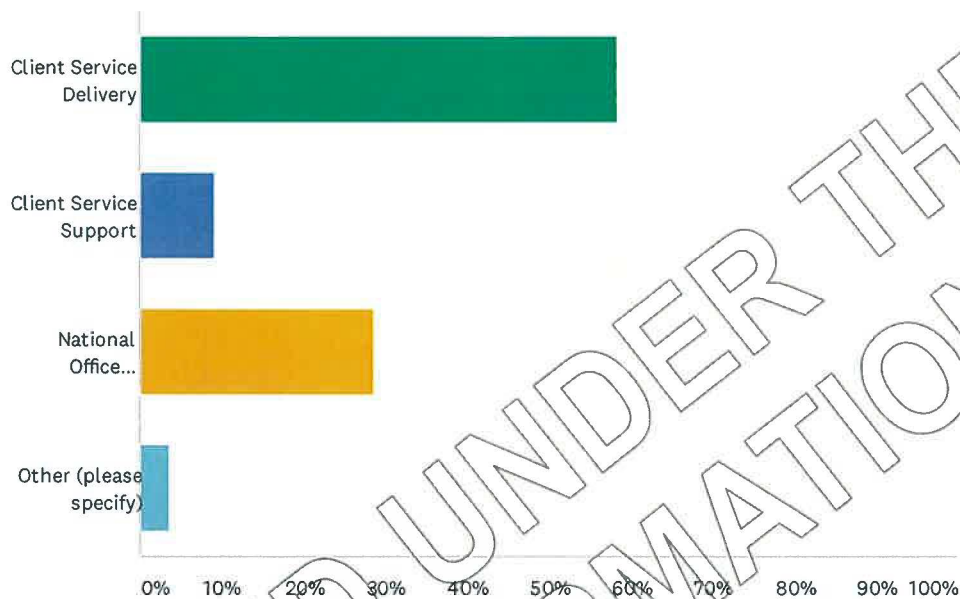
Answered: 2,768 Skipped: 16



	STRONGLY AGREE	AGREE	NETHER AGREE NOR DISAGREE	DISAGREE	STRONGLY DISAGREE	TOTAL	WEIGHTED AVERAGE
(no label)	46.64%	36.85%	10.30%	4.34%	1.88%	2,768	4.22
	1,291	1,020	285	120	52		

Q1 Select which group you belong to;

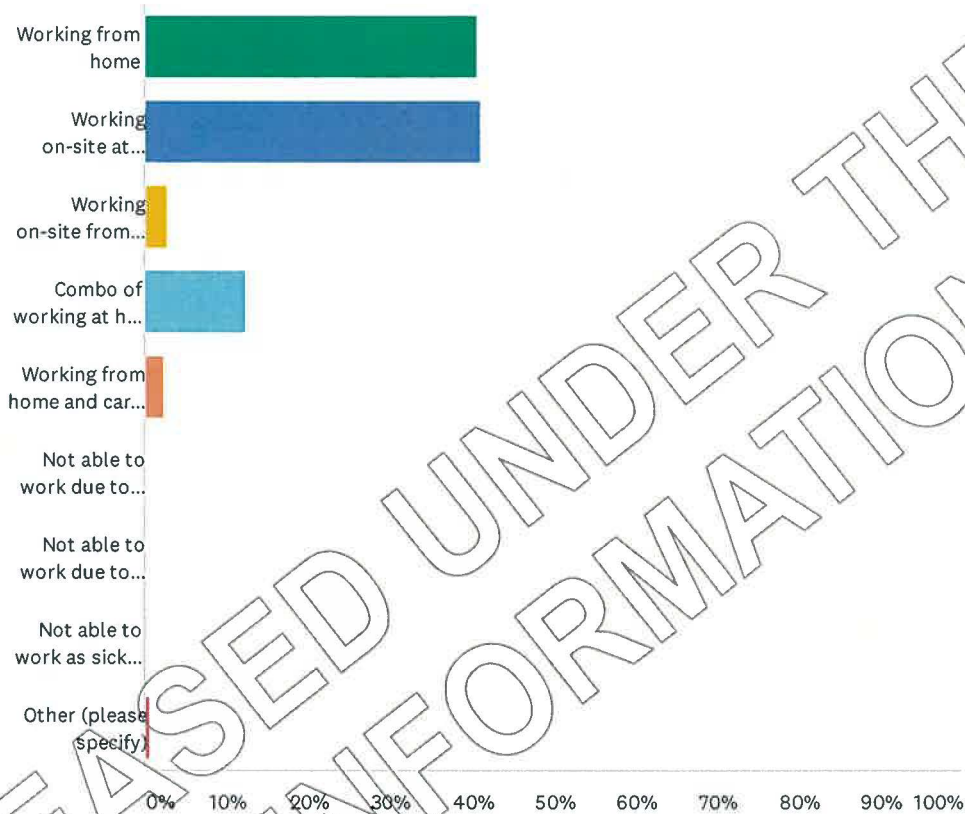
Answered: 1,747 Skipped: 0



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Client Service Delivery	58.50%	1,022
Client Service Support	9.27%	162
National Office (including those who work outside of Wellington)	28.68%	501
Other (please specify)	3.55%	62
TOTAL		1,747

Q2 Select the best description of your current working arrangements;

Answered: 1,747 Skipped: 0



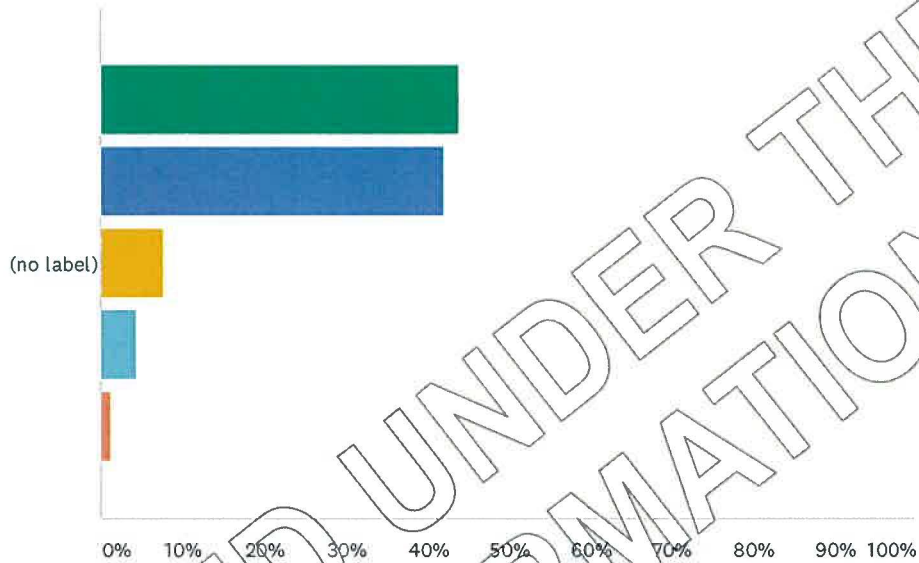
ANSWER CHOICES

RESPONSES

Working from home	40.87%	714
Working on-site at usual work location	41.21%	720
Working on-site from a different work location to my usual	2.63%	46
Combo of working at home and on-site work location	12.36%	216
Working from home and caring for children or whānau	2.29%	40
Not able to work due to caring for children or whānau	0.06%	1
Not able to work due to lack of technology/equipment	0.00%	0
Not able to work as sick or unwell	0.00%	0
Other (please specify)	0.57%	10
TOTAL		1,747

Q3 I am well connected with my team and colleagues as we move into Alert Level Two

Answered: 1,710 Skipped: 37

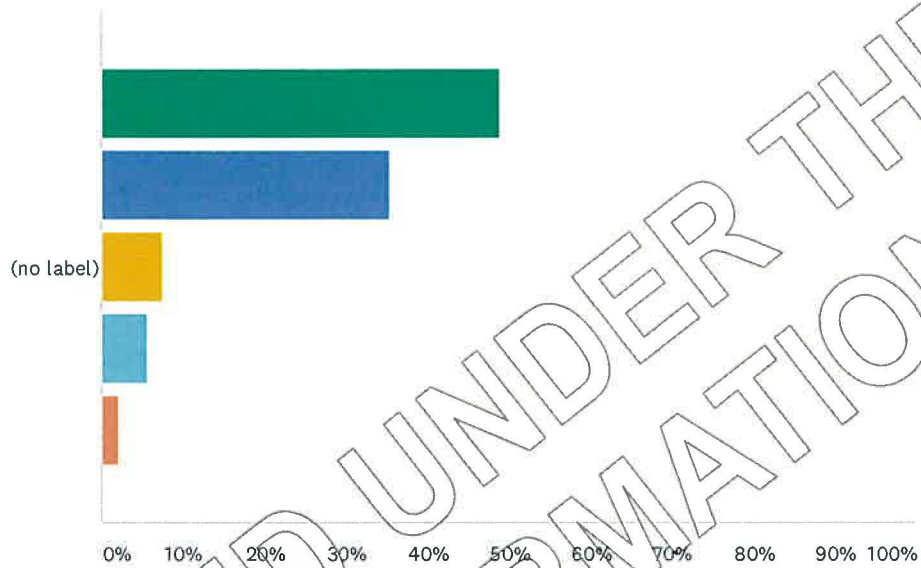


Strongly Agree Agree Neither Agree nor Disagree Disagree Strongly Disagree

	STRONGLY AGREE	AGREE	NEITHER AGREE NOR DISAGREE	DISAGREE	STRONGLY DISAGREE	TOTAL	WEIGHTED AVERAGE
(no label)	44.15% 755	42.34% 724	7.84% 134	4.44% 76	1.23% 21	1,710	4.24

Q4 I am well connected with my manager as we move into Alert Level Two

Answered: 1,710 Skipped: 37

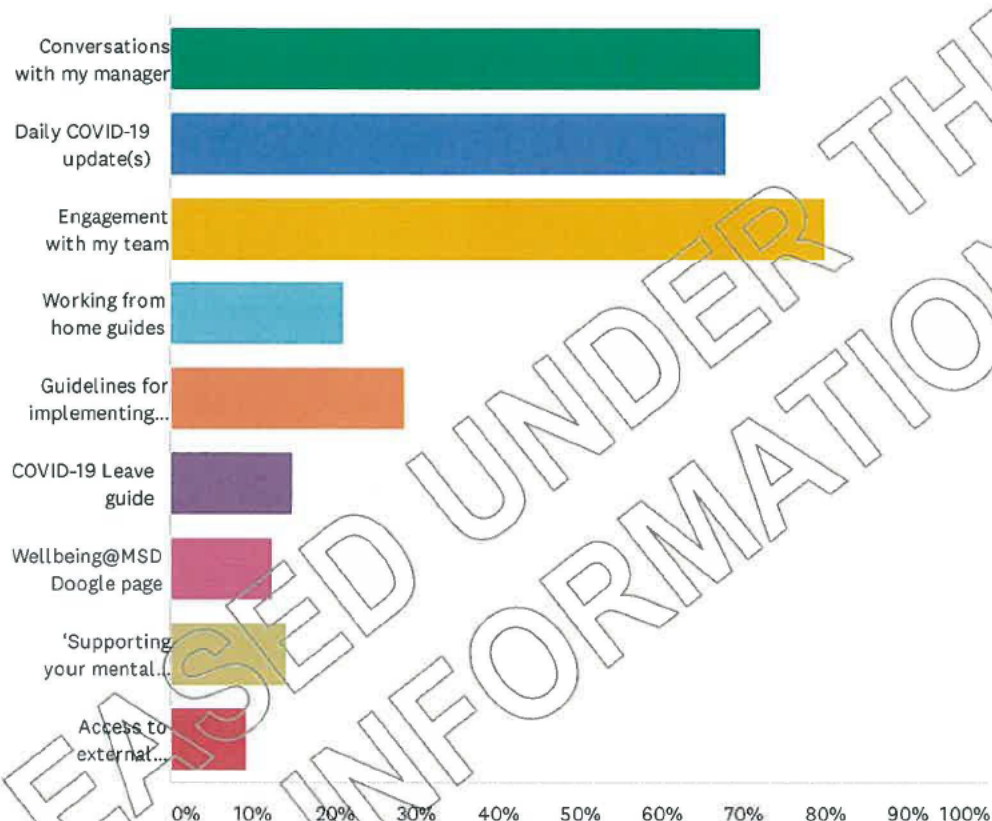


Strongly Agree Agree Neither Agree nor Disagree Disagree Strongly Disagree

	STRONGLY AGREE	AGREE	NEITHER AGREE NOR DISAGREE	DISAGREE	STRONGLY DISAGREE	TOTAL	WEIGHTED AVERAGE
(no label)	49.06%	35.56%	7.54%	5.73%	2.11%	1,710	4.24
	839	608	129	98	36		

**Q5 The things that I have found most useful to support me at this time are
(choose as many as you want):**

Answered: 1,710 Skipped: 37



ANSWER CHOICES

RESPONSES

Conversations with my manager	72.40%	1,238
Daily COVID-19 update(s)	68.25%	1,167
Engagement with my team	80.41%	1,375
Working from home guides	21.40%	366
Guidelines for implementing COVID-19 protocols	28.95%	495
COVID-19 Leave guide	15.09%	258
Wellbeing@MSD Doogle page	12.46%	213
'Supporting your mental well-being' on COVID-19 Doogle page	14.27%	244
Access to external support e.g. EAP, Benestar	9.36%	160

Total Respondents: 1,710