



Public Service Sector Skills Summary



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Hinonga Kōkiri/Head Start Project

The Hinonga Kōkiri/Head Start Project is an initiative from ServiceIQ that brings together service sector stakeholders from industry, employers, schools, tertiary education providers, and iwi throughout Aotearoa New Zealand to reflect on the impacts of COVID-19.

The purpose of the project is to hear stakeholder perspectives on:

- ▶ how COVID-19 has reshaped vocational pathways and business, and
- ▶ what people and skills, training, and learning pathways are needed to get a head start to COVID-19 recovery.

The stakeholder consultation began in August 2021 and concluded in October 2021 via industry focus groups. Their perspectives shaped the creation of this sector skills summary, and what support is needed for recovery.

The consultation results have been combined with industry insights, data and forecasting to produce

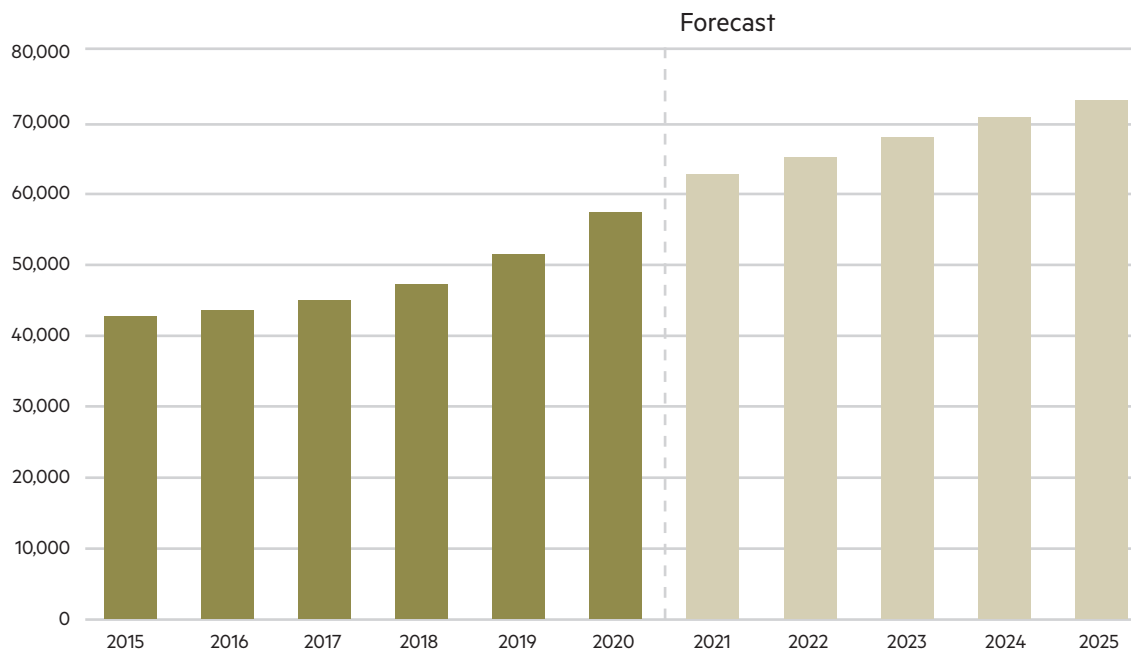
sixteen sector skills summaries, one for each sector represented by Ringa Hora Services Workforce Development Council. This skills summary is for the Public Service sector. There are 15 other summaries for the accommodation, aviation; cafés, bars and restaurants; catering; cleaning services; clubs; contact centres; financial services; local government; quick service restaurants; real estate; retail and retail supply chain; security services; travel; and tourism sectors.

From this research ServiceIQ will produce a workforce strategy for Ringa Hora Services Workforce Development Council. The strategy will include industry, employer, schools, provider, and iwi voices. In this way the project gives service sector stakeholders an opportunity to shape vocational education in Aotearoa New Zealand.

The report is structured into five main areas to show what impacts COVID-19 has had on the sector; the sector response to COVID-19; key drivers of future success; skills needed to support sector recovery; and skills initiatives and strategies.

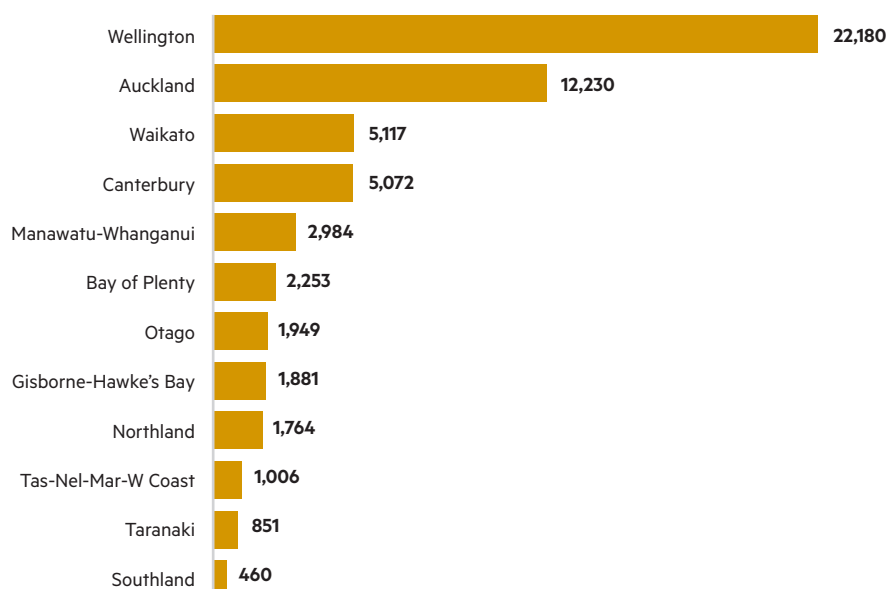
Public Service Sector Snapshot

State sector jobs



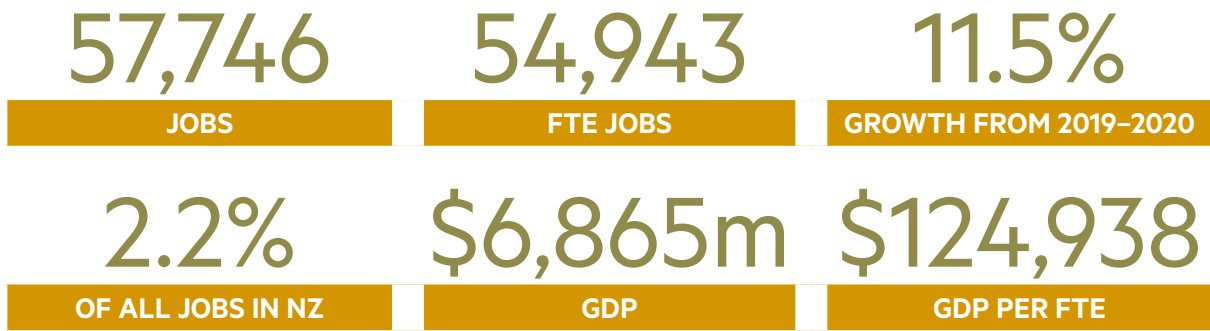
- Prior to COVID-19 there were 57,746 jobs in the public sector and the sector was forecast to grow by 21.9% between 2020 and 2025. Infometrics now forecasts job increases of 4,542 or 7.9 % of the sector workforce in the year to March 2021, growth of 6.9% (4,286 jobs) in the year to March 2022 and 2.8% growth (1,838 jobs) the following year.

2020 Regional employment

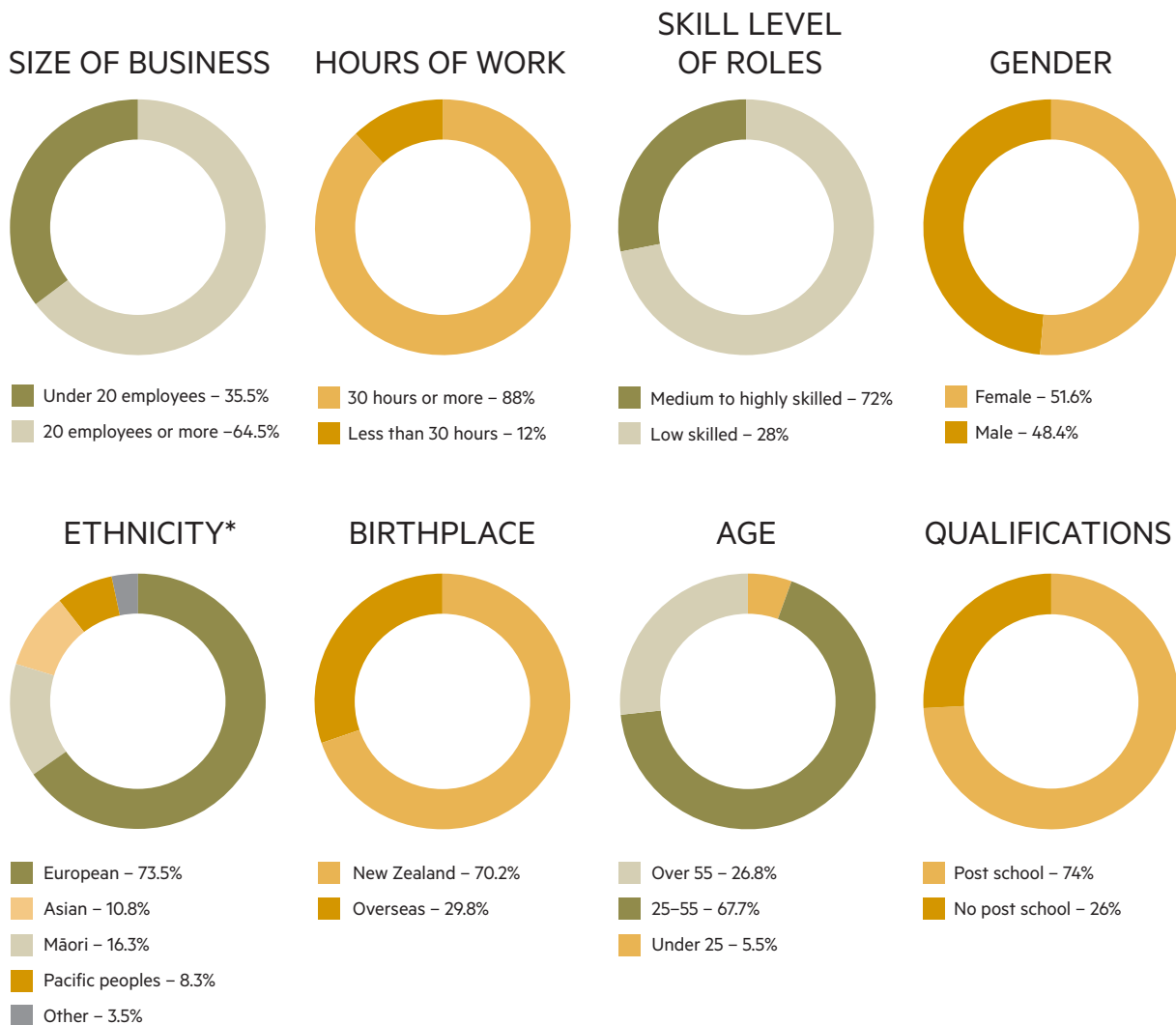


- In 2020 there were 770 business units employing one or more people, with an average of 73 people per business (compared to 4.4 people per business in the overall economy).
- The main occupations are prison officers, policy analysts, welfare workers, general clerks, and sales representatives nec.
- The public sector self-employment rate in 2020 was 2.9%; lower than the overall economy which was 16.8%.

2020 Public Service sector data



► GDP per FTE (full time equivalent) was \$124,938 lower than the GDP per FTE for the overall economy which was \$139,983.



*Ethnicity percentages may add up to more than 100% as people may identify with more than one ethnicity.

- In the 2018 Census, 29.8% of the sector workforce was born overseas compared to 32.4% of all New Zealand workforce. 10.5% of the workforce was born in Europe and 7.3% in Asia.
- 15.6% of the sector is under 30 years old compared to 25.9% of the overall workforce.
- 49.9% of the public sector workforce hold a Bachelor Degree or higher.



Public Service Sector Skills Summary

Introduction

This Public Service Sector Skills Summary is based on an environmental scan and several key informant interviews. The public sector is a ‘broad church’ and it is challenging to delineate the areas where its workforce development requirements will intersect with the activities of the Services Workforce Development Council. This Summary therefore provides a general overview, as well as three case studies to illustrate the impact of COVID-19 on specific agencies, their responses, and the implications for future workforce development.

Context

In this section, we define the public service and describe its workforce, introduce its leadership organisation, Te Kawa Mataaho Public Service Commission, and its guiding Act, the Public Sector Act 2020, and finally summarise insights from a strategic overview, the *Public Workforce 2035 – Futures Scan*.

Defining the Public Sector

At the broadest level, the public sector encompasses all of Aotearoa New Zealand’s central government agencies. Te Kawa Mataaho Public Service Commission maintains an up-to-date list of all these organisations.¹ These can be broadly defined as:

- ▶ Public service departments
- ▶ State-owned enterprises
- ▶ Other government entities
- ▶ Health sector
- ▶ Education sector.

¹ New Zealand’s central government organisations | Te Kawa Mataaho Public Service Commission
<https://www.publicservice.govt.nz/our-work/state-sector-organisations/>

The public service workforce

The public service workforce provides critical services to New Zealanders. Some of these services are provided directly to citizens, such as those provided by the health, education and social sectors. Other public services, such as regulatory enforcement and policy advice, are less direct but also have potentially large impacts on the wellbeing of New Zealanders.

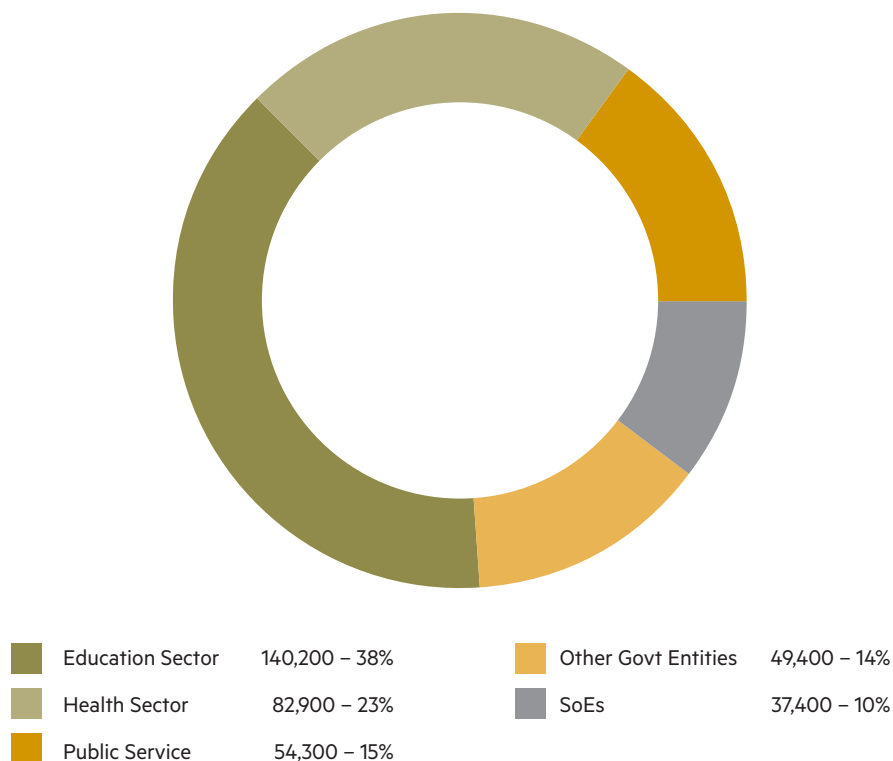
Individual agencies have the responsibility for determining the skill sets required in their workforce and how they might internally develop them. The overarching aim is to have a well-skilled public service and to ensure that the public service workforce represents and reflects the Aotearoa New Zealand it serves. In particular, this means reaching Māori and Pasifika streams of talent as well as other diverse groups. Key informants also emphasise the importance of the service ethic:

'The other thing that's important (alongside skills), is the critical importance of people who want to serve and come with a sense of ethics and integrity because we are very aware that social license and trust are a successful aspect of democracy...'

– KEY INFORMANT INTERVIEW

Due to the nature of its outputs, it is difficult to capture the importance of public services in standard economic measures, such as GDP. In terms of workforce size, central government had around 364,000 jobs as at February 2019, nearly one in six (16 percent) of all New Zealand jobs. This share has been relatively stable over the past twenty years.²

Public Workforce 2019



Source: Stats NZ Business Demography and SSC Workforce Data

² <https://www.publicservice.govt.nz/assets/SSC-Site-Assets/SAPG/Future-of-Work-Environmental-Scan-Demographic-and-Labour-Force-Change.pdf>

The core public service workforce

In 2020, the 36 entities that comprise the core Public Service had a workforce of just over 57,000. In terms of diversity, 15.9 percent of this workforce was Māori and 9.7 percent Pacific peoples. The average hides some interesting disparities, however. For example, the Ministry for Primary Industries (3,357 staff) had 5.3 percent Māori and 3.2 percent Pacific Peoples, and the Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment (4,676 staff) 6.5 percent Māori.³

Te Kawa Mataaho Public Service Commission

The role of Te Kawa Mataaho Public Service Commission is to provide leadership and oversight of the public service and ensure the purpose of the Public Service Act is carried out. The Public Service Commissioner is the Head of Service and provides leadership of the Public Service, including the performance and integrity of the system. The Commissioner ensures public service agencies work as one system to deliver better services and better outcomes for the public.

Public Service Act 2020

The Act aims to ensure a modern, more joined-up and more citizen-focused public service. It aims to build a public sector that is unified, reflective of and responsive to people, and grounded in a commitment of service to the community, better positioned to deal with social, economic and technological changes that have created expectations around actions and service delivery.

Progress to achieve this is already underway and includes work on: digital transformation, better data collection, Māori Crown relationship building, diversity and inclusion, leadership development, new organisational forms, open government and reconnecting the public service with its core values. The Act provides additional momentum for these changes.

Strategic overview⁴

The Public Workforce 2035 – Futures Scan, prepared by Te Kawa Mataaho Public Service Commission, explores the likely impact of a range of factors on the New Zealand public service workforce in 2035, the challenges and opportunities presented by these factors, and the implications these have for the public service today. The paper identifies **four key drivers for a capable public service**:

► **International megatrends**

- Technological development
- Demographic shifts
- Environmental pressures
- Shifting socioeconomic and political power.

► **Aotearoa New Zealand-specific drivers**

- The role of Māori as parties to the Treaty of Waitangi and the Crown Māori relationship
- New Zealand's geography, including its relative physical isolation
- New Zealand's constitutional arrangements, including a single house of Parliament and the limited role of local government
- New Zealand's role in the South Pacific.

³ <https://www.publicservice.govt.nz/our-work/workforce-data/2020-fact-sheet-summary/>

⁴ <https://www.publicservice.govt.nz/assets/SSC-Site-Assets/SAPG/Public-Workforce-2035-Futures-Scan.pdf>

► **Distinctive public service drivers**

- The public service workforce requires both continuity and change, with enduring roles such as: experts, regulators, engagers and networkers, and new or enhanced roles such as:
 - Commissioner – an acceleration in the shift from being service deliverers to being ‘brokers and facilitators’
 - Curator – a steward who upholds the values, culture and institutional memory
 - Fore sighter – who applies vision and imagination to strategic thinking
 - Storyteller – who can envision the future of role public services but also can communicate this effectively to a broad array of audiences.

► **Wild cards (like COVID-19).**

The implications of demographic and labour force changes on the future public sector workforce are considered in a supplementary paper.⁵ The paper concludes that in the short- to medium-term:

Public services may face capability pressures as the baby boom generation retires, and the impact of the relatively low numbers of employees in the 35–44-year age range becomes more apparent.

These pressures are unlikely to be relieved by the tertiary education pipeline or by raising already-high labour force participation rates any higher. Instead there will likely be a continued need to rely on immigration to meet workforce needs. There is also scope to improve the retention of older public employees, through increased flexibility and retraining, and workplaces that better accommodate the needs of employees with disabilities.



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⁵ <https://www.publicservice.govt.nz/assets/SSC-Site-Assets/SAPG/Future-of-Work-Environmental-Scan-Demographic-and-Labour-Force-Change.pdf>



Environmental scan/sector consultation insights

1. The impacts of COVID-19 on the Public Service Sector

This section discusses the immediate impacts of COVID-19 on the public service sector.

Key informants report a highly differentiated impact across the agencies within the public service. Work in some agencies ceased because the borders and facilities were closed: *'an overnight switch was turned off for some agencies'*. Other agencies had to shift focus, for example, remote working for those in the education sector. Other workforces became heavily in demand, for example, contact centre workers and contact tracer workers, where there was hugely increased demand and new services to be offered. The government's recovery packages also required massive behind the scenes efforts, and a rapid move to online service delivery. For example,

'The Ministry of Social Development 'did a remarkable job of turning around two weeks' work in 48 hours...'

– KEY INFORMANT INTERVIEW

The size and scale of the immediate response required people to be agile in their approach, thinking, and ability to adapt quickly. For example, the Te Kawa Mataaho Public Service Commission stood up new capability and added new responsibilities that adapted as conditions changed, with staff *'rolling with it'* as things changed.

COVID-19 showed how agencies can join forces and move with agility to solve complex challenges facing New Zealanders in a crisis. The response of the New Zealand public service to the coronavirus pandemic has been widely recognised as exemplary, receiving accolades both locally and internationally. In many ways, the pandemic revealed the public service at its finest – working across boundaries to meet the needs of New Zealanders in a complex and rapidly changing environment.⁶

⁶ <https://www.publicservice.govt.nz/assets/SSC-Site-Assets/SAPG/Public-Service-Reform/Factsheet-1.pdf>

2. The response to date as a result of COVID-19

In this section we consider the ways in which the public service sector has responded to the impacts of COVID-19.

Workforce deployment

A key component of the public service's response to COVID-19 was the need to easily deploy employees to other agencies where demand was higher. With input from agencies and the Public Service Association (PSA), Te Kawa Mataaho Public Service Commission developed guidance to help the movement of public servants to areas of higher need, both in the short and long term.⁷

Working from home

Te Kawa Mataaho Public Service Commission was committed to supporting sound flexible working protocols prior to the pandemic, noting that the: 'demand for flexible working has been building for decades, and regardless of its scale, the impact of the COVID-19 response is part of a longer-term trend'.⁸

Pay restraint

On 28 April 2020 the Public Service Commissioner issued guidance on the application of pay restraint through to June 2021 following a Cabinet decision that visible pay restraint in the public sector was an appropriate response to the impact of COVID-19. This guidance was to assist agencies to have a wage environment that:

- ▶ Recognises the challenges of the COVID-19 response and recovery by targeting pay increases to low paid roles and holding the pay for higher earners and senior leaders.
- ▶ Builds on gains made to date in reducing the gender pay gap to make further progress and accelerating reductions in pay gaps faced by Māori, Pacific and Asian employees.⁹

Activities required to support the COVID-19 response

Key infomants describe the wide range of activities, each with their relevant skill sets, required to support the public service sector's COVID-19 response:

- ▶ **Legal work:** What legislation is required and how and when can it be applied?
- ▶ **Dealing with COVID-19 on the ground:** Border and maritime work, MIQ work etc.
- ▶ **Support functions:** Social, financial, support for vulnerable communities, education support etc.
- ▶ **Exemptions analyses and approval:** There are several exemptions areas, each requiring critical analysis and judgement to be exercised, for example, MIQ early departures, passage into and out of alert levels boundaries etc.



Key infomants describe the wide range of activities, each with their relevant skill sets, required to support the public service sector's COVID-19 response.

⁷ <https://www.publicservice.govt.nz/resources/covid-19-workforce-mobility-guidance-for-state-services-agencies/>

⁸ <https://www.publicservice.govt.nz/our-work/the-gender-pay-gap-and-pay-equity/flexible-work-by-default/?e6318=6324-the-impact-of-the-covid-19-response>

⁹ <https://www.publicservice.govt.nz/our-work/er/public-service-pay-guidance-2021/>

- ▶ **Data analysis:** Critical across all activities.
- ▶ **Communications:** The ability to ‘tell a story’ in a complex rapidly evolving situation with varied levels of understanding and acceptance within the community. Communications specialists have been in extremely high demand.

As we are currently experiencing (20 August 2021) these functions ‘dial up’ under resurgence – *it’s remarkable what goes on behind the scenes!*. The setting of an internal boundary provides a good example of the intersection of these activities and skills:

‘When an internal boundary is applied there are significant volumes of work to manage the smooth transition of people in and out of alert levels, with new IT and Comms systems, down to the likes of the police who ‘man’ border stations and geo-experts who determine where you put a border boundary. In all of that there is a range of skill sets that we have found we have in abundance, and others that we have found to be constrained.’

– KEY INFORMANT INTERVIEW

3. Key drivers of future success for the Public Sector

There are two interconnected key drivers for future success for the public service sector.

Cross-system mobilisation

COVID-19 has accelerated the already anticipated need for agencies to work collaboratively. For example, the Chief Executives whose agencies manage the border now work collectively, rather than in agency silos. It is hoped that the impetus that COVID-19 has provided will open the way to thinking differently about the workforce, supporting its reconfiguration to support the sharing of resources, skills, and knowledge.

‘The important things that the government wants to work on, like climate change and inequity of income distribution, don’t cluster neatly into the purview of one agency ... that had been anticipated so the Act’s focus is to set up ways to work cross-agency. The skill sets needed to do that ... you need a mindset that you’re open to all of the answers in a way that produces the best outcome.’

– KEY INFORMANT INTERVIEW

Developing staff to support cross-system mobilisation

While most public servants will enter via a specific path or technical specialisation, the ability to work across the system requires career pathways and development opportunities to support:

- ▶ Those that want to build a career in a field and become an expert in it – they’ll have more traditional development
- ▶ Those who will want to be mobile in their career, for stage of life reasons (movement across sector), on-job learning is key here
- ▶ Highly agile workers who need to continue to know how to learn.



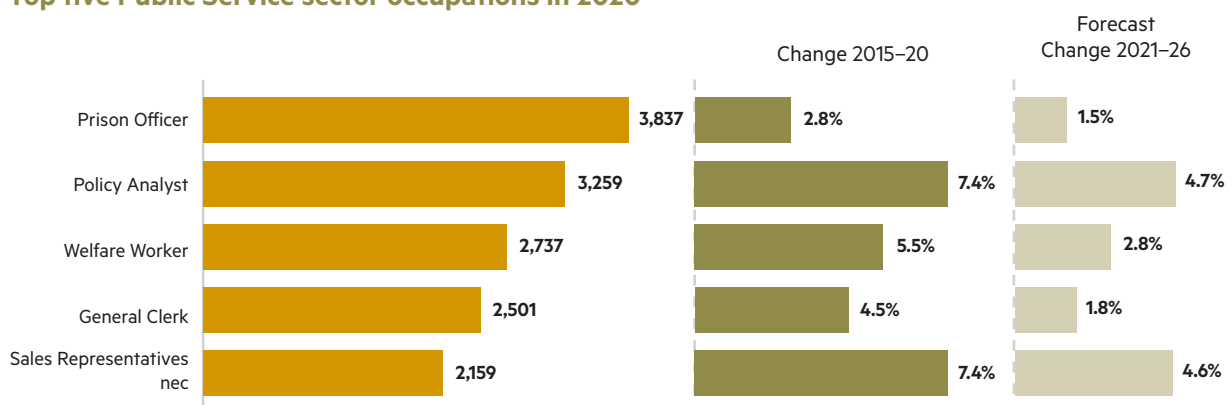
4. Skills needed to support Public Sector recovery

In this section, we discuss the skills that have come to the forefront since the onset of COVID-19. These are generally skill sets that were already identified and valued but the pandemic has shone a spotlight on their importance and intensified the need for greater development.

The *Futures Scan* document identifies several workforce development trends, for example:

- ▶ Fewer workers required for low to medium complexity roles as a result of automation
- ▶ Increased demand for workers to support the transition to a low emissions economy (e.g. more working from home, local service provision and working in hubs closer to home)
- ▶ Increased demands for capabilities to enable working in different ways, e.g.
 - ▶ Agility for cross-agency delivery
 - ▶ Critical thinking skills
 - ▶ Resilience
 - ▶ Data-savviness
- ▶ Increased demand for workers to work in bi- and multi-cultural contexts.

Top five Public Service sector occupations in 2020





There is also a different set of management and leadership skills needed in the new environment.

The **soft skill** capabilities outlined above were supported by the key informants:

- ▶ Agility and flexibility
 - ▶ The need to be agile and adaptable in the moment
 - ▶ The ability to change gear and be flexible about where and how you work
 - ▶ To learn and assimilate new information rapidly
- ▶ Problem-solving and critical thinking
 - ▶ Analytical skills
 - ▶ The ability to use judgement and arrive at a conclusion for an outcome to deliver a particular service
- ▶ Empathy and the ability to be inclusive–

'We won't be able to solve the big issues if we can't understand alternative points of view.'

– KEY INFORMANT INTERVIEW

There is also a different set of **management and leadership skills** needed in the new environment:

- ▶ Need to be able to 'flex' the management style depending on the team
- ▶ Coach/facilitator leadership style
- ▶ Empathy, inclusivity, self-awareness as important as technical knowledge

'What you're trying to do is coordinate and influence a group of experts to get to a decision. It comes back to empathy skills. Having enough self-awareness to get out of the way and remove your ego to get success from your team.'

– KEY INFORMANT INTERVIEW



5. Skills initiatives and solutions to support the sector over the next two years

Of note here is the speed needed to equip a rapidly changing workforce with the required skills. Key informants point to the rapid uptake of demand on roles which is faster than traditional training methods allow. This impacts in three areas:

- ▶ Newly emerging roles without formalised training – people become an ‘expert’ because they’re in the right place at the right time, e.g. exemptions expert, cybersecurity.
- ▶ Areas that have been around for a while but demand has been much greater than anticipated, e.g. communications experts.
- ▶ Lack of pipeline and development for ‘head office’ roles, like finance and IT experts when they’re distributed across multiple agencies.

Case studies

In this section we present three case studies from government agencies which illustrate various aspects of the general public sector overview. The Ministry of Social Development (MSD) was at the forefront of the COVID-19 response, with a massive expansion of the workforce required to provide vital support services. The case study shares the perspective of MSD’s Qualification team as they moved to support the upskilling and reskilling needed to ensure the public received a quality service in a stressful period. The New Zealand Defence Force (NZDF) case study focuses on the impact of the need to provide personnel for MIQ (Managed Isolation and Quarantine) facilities. The final case study looks at the Ministry of Justice’s Court Security Officers, who provide an essential service through all Alert Levels, and the bespoke training model that they have developed.

Context

The Ministry of Social Development's Qualifications team (of 10 people) supports between 360 to 400 learners annually to achieve New Zealand Qualifications Framework qualifications.

These include:

- ▶ NZ Certificate in Public Sector Services (Level 4)
- ▶ NZ Certificate in Adult & Tertiary Teaching (Level 4)
- ▶ NZ Certificate in Business Introduction to Team Leadership (Level 3)
- ▶ NZ Certificate in Business First Line Management (Level 4)
- ▶ NZ Certificate in Contact Centre (Level 3) and
- ▶ NZ Certificate in Case Management (Level 5).

Learners also undertake Government Regulatory Practice Initiative (G-REG)¹⁰ and Careerforce's Health and Well-being qualifications¹¹. Support for both G-REG and most Careerforce qualifications will transition to the Toitū te Waiora Community, Health, Education and Social Services Workforce Development Council.

Learners are identified via an expression of interest process that opens at the end of each year. MSD has a philosophy of developing its people, so a pathway plan, within which the qualification sits, is developed in conjunction with the staff member's manager. Because of wider operational requirements, most qualifications are achieved within a year, supported with one study day release per month alongside an expectation of the staff member completing the balance of study in their own time.

¹⁰ <https://g-reg.govt.nz/about/>

¹¹ <https://www.careerforce.org.nz/>

Impact of COVID-19

MSD was one of the public service agencies most impacted by COVID-19. The organisation took on new staff to respond to the increase in workload, recruiting from a wide range of people, many of whom had been made redundant because of the pandemic. This recruitment required a fresh approach to induction, including a redesign of the existing material and delivery to significantly compress the usual offering.

MSD has an in-house learning and development team, which does all of the assessment, marking and moderation for the qualifications they use. All learning was halted within MSD over the first lockdown, and the team was redeployed across the organisation, with training not recommencing until 1 August 2020. This had a huge impact on qualification duration and completion rates, with some 2020 learners still to complete as 2021 started.

In terms of training, the main response to the impacts of COVID-19 has been the move to online delivery and learning on the job. Prior to the pandemic, a significant amount of training was delivered via face-to-face workshops. This mode now accounts for only about 10 percent of training.

What new skills have you had to develop, or need to develop, for your organisation to adapt?

COVID-19 has also made MSD even more aware of the well-being of staff, including the importance of culture and an inclusive workplace. This may be as simple as a manager encouraging reflection or talking about resilience. The emphasis on well-being also extends to the customer service that is offered to MSD clients, with staff encouraged to empathise with the client and to predict their needs. MSD has also focused on the

need to pivot and respond an every changing environment. For example, the need to quickly mobilise and upskill the workforce to meet business demands such as the Employer Wage Subsidy.

What are some of the key drivers of future success for MSD?

There are a range of drivers for success for MSD supporting learning and development. The most critical is that training, and the qualifications offered, aligns with the broader business strategy of the Ministry. For example, youth and disability were both priority areas for MSD prior to COVID-19, but the pandemic has placed an greater emphasis on these areas. As another example, the changes in front-line service delivery discussed above, with the greater emphasis on the well-being of the client, have also meant a shift in the nature of the most appropriate qualification.

'The Careerforce Level 4 Health and Well-being qualification really meets the need of the client base – there's modules around critical thinking, lots of reflective stuff, big modules on Te Ao Māori, all of the stuff we really want our front-line workers to know...'

– KEY INFORMANT INTERVIEW

A new capability and development framework, Te ara piki (the pathway ahead), launched on 1 July 2021 anchors the learning of our people. This allows staff to take greater ownership of their development and career aspirations, focusing on critical business priorities, the organisational Values and linking to a development model that supports both learning in the mahi as well as formal development such as qualifications.

MSD is focused on ensuring that **the learner is the centre** of the learning and development framework and the achievement of national qualifications is a critical element, supporting, reinforcing and recognising the extensive internal development that takes place.

What skills, initiative or solutions will support your sector and organisation to succeed over the next two years?

There is uncertainty about the forthcoming changes to both the standard-setting and delivery of qualifications. The Learning and Development team have been closely involved in the qualification development process in the past and would like this to continue. This would help ensure that qualifications are fit-for-purpose, not just for MSD but for the wider sector. In terms of delivery, the operational funding model will be a 'huge' consideration for them, as any cost structure must recognise the in-house contribution that the MSD makes in the development of their people.

As well as facing challenges ahead due to COVID-19, MSD have quickly developed initiatives in their Learning and Capability areas which adapt to changing environments. These include switching from face to face learning to delivery in more self-directed and online; improving pathways of development and capability frameworks; lifting learning out of the classroom into the workplace (learning in the mahi/reflective practice); capability growth in Te Ao Māori and Mental Health and aligning qualification programmes and assessment to these.

Context

The New Zealand Defence Force (NZDF) comprises the Royal New Zealand Navy, New Zealand Army, and the Royal New Zealand Air Force, employing over 15,000 Regular Force, Reservists and Civilian personnel. The Army is the largest service with a regular force of just under 5000 personnel.

NZDF supports the All of Government COVID-19 response via Operation PROTECT. There are currently **962** NZDF personnel deployed in support of the All-of-Government (AoG) response to COVID-19. Areas of deployment (as at 6 August 2021):

- ▶ Managed Isolation and Quarantine Facility (MIQF) Staff: **342**
- ▶ MIQF Security: **600**
- ▶ MIQ (HQ) Operations: **19**
- ▶ Ministry of Health (MoH) COVID-19 Vaccination Planning: **1**

In total the NZDF has **1,246** personnel committed to the response, which includes personnel preparing to deploy and personnel in respite following deployment.¹² Deployment is managed via a rolling 6-week rotation, but this is fluid depending on the situation, with sometimes the need to surge-in at late notice. At the end of each rotation there is a stand-down period followed by respite leave.

¹² <https://www.nzdf.mil.nz/nzdf/covid-19-response/>

Impact of COVID-19

Training

As indicated by the numbers above, the requirement to provide personnel into MIQ (Managed Isolation and Quarantine) facilities has had a major impact on training. The need to provide personnel means that much training has been cancelled or postponed, with course dates often 'sliding'.

'Because we support MIQ the focus is less on [training]. Some courses continue to run, like promotion courses because we need to maintain those [courses]. Some that are not so important and do not affect career progression, pay, or capability requirements, might get a lower level of urgency placed on them.'

– FOCUS GROUP PARTICIPANT

There is, however, a strong drive to maintain as much training as possible:

'We also need to maintain our workforce because we need those people in MIQ with the same skills they normally need – team leadership, FLM, are always valuable to the military but we need them now and if we lose them, we will be in a death spiral.'

– FOCUS GROUP PARTICIPANT

As an example, the Level 4 First Line Management (FLM) course is aligned to workplace practices, so it is able to be completed while personnel are deployed in MIQ, but the day-to-day working situation makes it more difficult. The Level 5 business programme has just been revised, but the blended nature of its delivery means that it is currently on hold.

Recruitment and retention

The pandemic has had a 'double-edged sword' impact on recruitment and retention for NZDF. On one hand, there has been a surge in people wanting to join or rejoin, with appeal of a 'pay-check' and financial security. On the other hand, MIQ duties are off-putting for many:

'There is a lot of pressure, it is a lot harder on families. Partners are having to pick up the slack in lockdown. Someone must stay home and look after the kids. There is not much satisfaction in a MIQ role. There is also the capability effect – people want to be training, they are missing going overseas for training. One of the things that draws people in – travel, is not there.'

– FOCUS GROUP PARTICIPANT

Current lockdown

The latest Delta outbreak has seen NZDF again swing into a lockdown situation. The process is to protect the force, by keeping the camps closed and defining bubbles around operational capacity. For example, a course that was about to complete was accommodated in its own bubble and training finished via MS Teams. When there are different alert levels across the country, NZDF may be deployed to contain those areas. Internal borders also prevent MIQ rotations from leaving areas as duties are completed.

Responses to the impact of COVID-19

There has been a significant shift towards the online environment, both in terms of management practices and training delivery: 'MS Teams and Zoom have really taken over a huge part of our lives'. This has had several implications:

- ▶ the need to lift the amount and way information is provided about programmes
- ▶ the need to promote career opportunities differently

- ▶ the need to rethink the material placed on an existing online learning platform, and to target that material more appropriately
- ▶ a realisation about the time it takes to develop online learning material.

Key drivers of success

Two key drivers for success were identified:

- ▶ 'Fit-for-purpose' qualifications – the importance of 'clever' unit standard development in order that qualifications be fit-for-purpose and able to be delivered in the workplace setting.
- ▶ Partnership – the importance of partnership and open relationships with entities like Te Pūkenga, so they get a full understanding of NZDF's learning and development models.

New skills

Specialist skills

A security programme has been developed for people working inside MIQ. Much of the programme can be completed while personnel are 'on-site' in MIQ. The programme is completed once they leave MIQ using a workshop model.

Soft skills – resilience and open-mindedness

There is an increased awareness of the importance of pastoral care of peers and staff. There is also a sense that there is more openness to acknowledging a range of opinions: 'Moving with the changes and times: rather than being a cold-war mentality we are now following the way populations and values change'. This also requires the development of new skill sets for senior staff.

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Skills initiatives

NZDF will work across several WDCs. There is a strong plea for WDCs to understand the mechanics of NZDF training models:

'How we operate, our programmes, our in-depth training, how our training is recognised, how they demonstrate skills and knowledge, how we can recognise that in a form that can be moderated ... that most of our programmes are run through ITOs, or how the alignments work, our workplace assessor network...'

- FOCUS GROUP PARTICIPANT

It is also considered vital that WDCs and Te Pūkenga understand the industries they represent AND the contexts within those industries.

'My underpinning wish for WDCs is 'know your industry' - do not assume that one industry will operate the same as another industry or that all sectors within an industry will operate the same way.'

- FOCUS GROUP PARTICIPANT

The Ministry of Justice's Court Security Officers make up the uniformed frontline team based across all court sites. Team members are recruited, trained and supported by the Ministry's technical security experts to help them be an effective and reassuring physical security presence at courts and places of work.

Courts remained (and remain) an essential service throughout COVID-19 Alert Level 4 and while jury trials were adjourned, priority proceedings continued to be heard. This required social distancing, Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) to be worn, and remote technology to reduce in-person visits.

There are around 310 Court Security Officers (CSOs), with 60 to 80 a year having received training over the last few years. New staff attend a three-week training course, where they may choose to sign up to a training agreement with The Skills Organisation and work towards the New Zealand [Certificate in Security \(Foundation\) \(Level 3\)](#). By the end of the three-week course, they will have done around three-quarters of the required papers and will only have to complete the remaining assessments and on-the-job-work to be awarded the qualification.

The Ministry is currently working through an alignment exercise with The Skills Organisation as the standard Level 3 qualification is not fit-for-purpose for the public sector. CSOs operate under statute and have legislative powers which need to be taken account of within the training. The Ministry is looking forward to the aligned qualification coming online and expects good uptake of around 100 staff once it is available.

It will be open to all staff who are currently in the job, and then offered to new staff as they come on board, with recruitment levels of around 60 people a year. New staff are encouraged to enrol in the training as it means that even if the job doesn't work out for them, they are able to exit with a portable qualification.

The Ministry of Justice, Health Safety and Security Training Team, has become the 'go-to' organisation for government security training, and now have their own training facility, the Justice Training and Development Centre, built out at Trentham, complete with a mock court room, public waiting area and operational screening station. The training team works with (for example):

- ▶ MBIE, who have sought input into security provision at MIQ facilities.
- ▶ Parliamentary Security, who are currently reviewing their service delivery. The aligned Level 3 qualification could be useful them as they are likely to gain some regulatory powers.
- ▶ The New Zealand Customs Service, who currently do not have their own trainers.
- ▶ Oranga Tamarki, where some CSO team members are part of the Use of Force review panel.
- ▶ There has also been interest in the Ministry's model of training from some private security companies.

There is a case to be made for a government security organisation that would cover all government agencies:

'There's a lot that goes on around the government side of security that is not well-known.'

– KEY INFORMANT INTERVIEW



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