

EMPLOYEE HEALTH AND WELLBEING SURVEY

Cook Islands Police - Overview
Report

PRESENTED TO

Cook Islands Police

PRESENTED BY

Office of the Public Service
Commissioner

Te Puna Vai Mārama

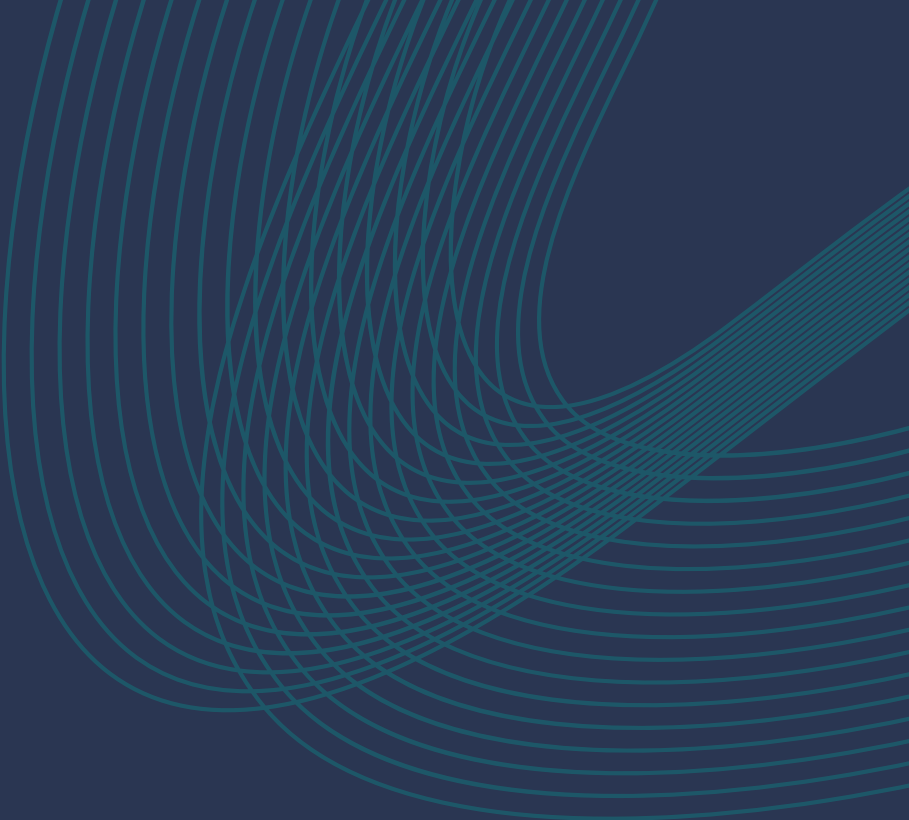


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SUMMARY

The Health & Wellbeing Employee Engagement Survey is designed to support Public Sector agencies to build positive workplace cultures that reflect the Public Sector values of Honesty, Impartiality, Service, Transparency, Accountability, Respect, Effectiveness and Efficiency.

The first survey was launched on 7 June 2022 and this year it was launched on 14 May 2025. The survey results provide Agencies with a snapshot on employee satisfaction and workplace culture. In total, including the Pa Enua, 835 employees participated.

Only agencies that have a response rate of 25% or higher receive individual reports. In survey reporting particularly for workplace health and wellbeing a minimum of 5-10 respondents are typically considered necessary to preserve confidentiality and avoid deductive disclosure (i.e., being able to guess who said what). In line with internationally recognized confidentiality standards (e.g. U.S. Office of Personnel Management, Australian Bureau of Statistics, NZ Ministry of Education), individual agency reports are also only provided for agencies that have both a response rate greater than or equal to 25% and have at least 10 respondents per agency to avoid any risk of identifying individuals.

KEY DEMOGRAPHICS

Total staff: 104

Respondents: 42 (40%) response rate

Motivation under pressure: Financial realities and Workplace morale

To protect the confidentiality of respondents, quotes have been paraphrased to remove any potentially identifying details. Additionally, only sentiments expressed by 10 or more staff have been included to ensure no individual can be singled out.

"Over the past year, challenging working conditions (particularly financial pressures due to the rising cost of living) have tested employee commitment.

When compensation remains stagnant and expectations increase, motivation naturally declines. There's growing frustration with outdated attitudes that discourages open discussions about pay while demanding more effort. As a result, roles that were once seen as full of potential are now becoming less attractive to current and prospective employees."

WORKPLACE VALUES AND CULTURE

Values and Culture	Always	Frequently	Occasionally	Rarely
Reflection of Public Sector Values ¹	33%	17%	40%	10%
Work-life balance ²	20%	43%	37%	13%
Idea Acceptance ³	17%	27%	47%	10%

¹Reflection of Public Sector Values: How well do your agency's actions reflect the core Public Sector values of honesty, accountability, impartiality, respect, service, transparency, effectiveness and efficiency?

²Work-life balance: To what extent are you able to carry out your role while maintaining a healthy work/life balance.

³Idea Acceptance: How often do you feel that your ideas are accepted in the workplace?

WHAT SUPPORTS WORK-LIFE BALANCE?

Top strategies used by staff:

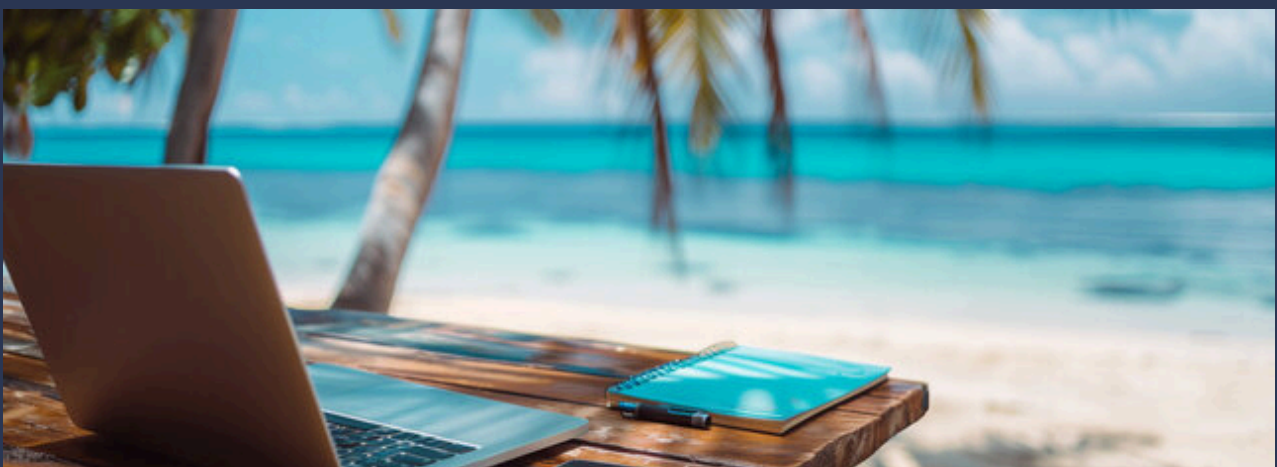
- Setting boundaries between work and personal life, rest, time management, physical activity, family.

Agency initiatives mentioned:

- Flexible work arrangements, encouragement to separate work and personal life, fitness tests, breaks, physical training opportunities

Gaps identified:

- Staffing shortages, increasing workload, lack of formal support, perception that some staff must comply without choice, difficulty taking advantage of flexible work options due to workload, sacrificing time with family.



BARRIERS TO WORK-LIFE BALANCE

Top Challenges

- 01 Heavy shift demands
- 02 Staff shortages
- 03 Unpredictable hours
- 04 Exposure to trauma
- 05 Limited ability to take breaks

SUGGESTED IMPROVEMENTS

The most commonly desired supports
for improving work-life balance are:

01

**Fairness,
Recognition
and Career
Support**

*Better incentives
and recognition*

*Clear and fair
promotion system*

*Support further
training/study*

02

**Compensation
& Financial
Support**

Improved pay

Overtime pay

*Government
perks (e.g.
housing
discounts)*

03

**Flexible
working
hours**

Glide time

*Better rostering
to ensure days
off*

04

**Mental health
and well-
being
initiatives**

*Consistent
access to mental
health resource*

*Wellbeing
initiatives or
packages for
trauma exposed
staff*

"Sometimes it's the small things that make a big difference. Keeping our one hour PT helps us stay physically and mentally fit for the job. We need caps on excessive hours working more than 60 hours a week isn't sustainable. Many of us also want to grow in our roles, some of us would even like to study further, in areas like law, if we were supported to do so."

WORKPLACE SENTIMENT

	How often would you recommend your workplace to others	How often have you thought about leaving your workplace
Always	43%	30%
Occasionally	20%	23%
Rarely	37%	47%

Disputes

23%

Of the employees that took part in the survey have experienced an Employment dispute in the past 12 months.

"It would be great if our voices could be heard by our management team. Because we work hard to do our part doing our job everyday. The staff always try and not just talk the talk. We actually walk the walk everyday."

60% Of disputes were resolved within 1 month

FINAL COMMENTS

Financial strain: Rising living costs with stagnant wages

“ *The main issue has been financial as the cost of living keeps rising our financial stayed the same testing our commitment to the job* ”

Desire for growth: Staff are still thinking about long-term development

“ *I want to do further studies and continue to grow what I know* ”

Staffing: Gaps in workforce causing stress

“ *I used to like my job when we had a lot of staff filling all the roles, money wasn't the issue at the time* ”

Resistance to Change and Need for Modernisation

“ *Some of the older staff need to realise that the future and change has to be embraced to help our new staff to achieve their goals and ambitions* ”

Structural and strategic limitations

“ *CIPS employees are predominantly delivering effects in the community. There are a very limited number of staff dedicated to improving the way the service operates or what it needs to do so.* ”

DISCLAIMER FOR INCLUSION IN REPORT

This report is based on responses from 42 staff from the Cook Islands Police, representing approximately 40% of the Ministry's total workforce. While this meets the thresholds for confidentiality and reporting, it is important to note that the results may not fully reflect the views and experiences of all staff across the Ministry. Caution is advised when generalizing these findings to the entire agency, and results should be interpreted as indicative rather than definitive.

