

# Kia Toipoto

Closing Gender, Māori, Pacific and Ethnic Pay Gaps

**Public Service Action Plan**  
2021-24

## Guidance

**Career progression, pathways,  
breaks and leave**

FEBRUARY 2023



**Te Kawa Mataaho**  
Public Service Commission



**Manatū Wāhine**  
Ministry for Women



**Te Puni Kōkiri**  
MINISTRY OF MĀORI DEVELOPMENT



Ministry for  
**Ethnic  
Communities**  
Te Tari Mātāwaka



Ministry for  
**Pacific  
Peoples**  
Te Manatū mō ngā hui o te Moana-nui-ā-Kiwa



## Purpose

This guidance supports Aotearoa New Zealand Public Service agencies and Crown entities to meet this Kia Toipoto milestone:

*Te Whakawhanaketanga i te Aramahi | Effective career and leadership development. By mid-2023, agencies/entities have career pathways and equitable progression opportunities that support women, Māori, Pacific and ethnic employees to achieve their career aspirations.*

A number of recommendations in this guidance are similar to other Kia Toipoto guidance. This is because there are some common approaches that help tackle bias in decision-making in human resource practices.

Agencies have been working to close gender pay gaps and increase diversity and inclusion. As a result, agencies may already be familiar with, and have implemented, some of the recommendations in this guidance.

To access other relevant guidance (including Flexible work by default, Recruitment, Improving workforce and leadership representation and Implementing Kia Toipoto in small organisations), visit the [Kia Toipoto](#) web page.

For support and queries, please contact the Equal Pay Taskforce at [EqualPay@publicservice.govt.nz](mailto:EqualPay@publicservice.govt.nz)



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## Introduction

### Kia Toipoto

[Kia Toipoto](#) is the Public Service Pay Gaps Action Plan 2021–2024, with milestones for agencies and entities to achieve over the next three years. It builds on the successful Public Service Gender Pay Gap Action Plan 2018-20, but goes further, with specific actions to address the workplace drivers of gender, Māori, Pacific and ethnic pay gaps. Kia Toipoto reflects the [Gender Pay Principles](#), the legislative requirements of the Public Service Act 2020, the Human Rights Act 1993, the Equal Pay Act 1972 and the [Government Workforce Policy Statement 2021](#).

### **Purpose and application**

This guidance supports agencies and Crown entities (entities) to eliminate bias from policies, practices, systems and workplace cultures which impact career progression, career breaks and leave.

It will support agencies and entities to achieve the Kia Toipoto milestone **Te Whakawhanaketanga i te Aramahi | Effective career and leadership development**, which states that “by mid-2023 agencies/entities have career pathways and equitable progression opportunities that support women, Māori, Pacific and ethnic employees to achieve their career aspirations”.

Doing this will contribute to achieving the Kia Toipoto goal that, by the end of 2024, the Public Service workforce and leadership overall will be substantially more representative of society.

Human resource practitioners, managers and people managers are advised to use this guidance with unions and employees when taking action to ensure all policies, processes and practices around career progression, pathways, career breaks and leave are free of bias.



Gender is not binary. If employees of another gender are identified in your organisation, include these employees (as well as members of other Rainbow communities) in all your work on Kia Toipoto.



## Public Service as an exemplar employer for Aotearoa

The New Zealand Government seeks to establish the Public Service as an exemplar to other employers in the public sector and beyond. This means:

- promoting ways of working that enable inclusion, and attract and retain Māori, Pacific, all other ethnic groups, and people with disabilities and Rainbow communities
- ensuring the workforce, and its leadership, are representative of and understand the communities they serve
- proactively working to eliminate all forms of discrimination and bias in workplaces, including in workplace systems, policies, practices and behaviour.

Implementing this guidance will help you to meet the expectations of the [Government Workforce Policy Statement](#) and create a public service where everyone can reach their full potential. See section 73 of the [Public Service Act 2020](#) for more information on good employer requirements.

**Kia Toipoto commitment:** Māori participate in action and monitoring and have career paths that empower them to achieve their career aspirations

- include data and actions to achieve equitable outcomes for Māori in action plans
- celebrate tikanga, kawa and mataūrangā Māori, and taonga such as te reo Māori.

All of this work will enhance workplace practices and the mana of Māori and others in the workplace.

The public sector is a large employer of Māori and should role model good employment practices for Māori.

A high number of Māori workers are undervalued. Public Service data shows that Māori are over-represented in roles that involve lower pay, lower skills, fewer advancement opportunities and lower job security.

Throughout our guidance you will see a theme of transparency and engagement with employees and unions. This means genuine, meaningful engagement with Māori employees and Māori union representatives in all aspects of implementing Kia Toipoto.

This guidance will support your agency/entity to:

- work purposefully and with good intentions to achieve equitable pay and work conditions for Māori

*“I have had feedback from a lot of managers [generally about other ethnic minority candidates]. They note that these people are quiet-speaking candidates who are humble, and managers view this as a lack of confidence. I hear the senior leadership team talk about a candidate: ‘I’m not sure if that candidate has executive presence!’*

*So, I think there is an inherent bias. Pacific peoples are smiling and like jokes etc., but the substance to them is often missed. I don’t know if we value these different traits enough!!”*

**-Wāhine Māori public servant**



The Government's [Māori Employment Action Plan](#) uses ‘**building pathways into inclusive, sustainable and productive mahi for Māori**’ as its guiding principle. The recommendations of the Māori Employment Action Plan align with the Kia Toipoto milestones and commitments to Māori.

The action plan recommends the following actions for Public Service employers:

- **By Māori for Māori model** – work in partnership with Māori by including them in decision-making processes. Your actions should support Māori rangatiratanga and carry out the Crown’s kāwanatanga role appropriately by engaging in meaningful partnership with Māori.
- **Confident cultural capability** – develop and implement initiatives that raise the Māori cultural capability of your organisation. Evaluate the work to build Māori cultural capability, including reporting on the impact it has on the experiences of Māori staff and users of public services. Findings from

evaluations should be incorporated into existing initiatives.

- **Making mahi accessible to all Māori** – focus on Māori with caring responsibilities, sole parents, young parents, tāngata whaikaha (disabled people) and older workers. Improve access to flexible work by piloting different ways to meet the diverse needs of your employees.
- **Upskilling, lifelong career planning and guidance** – work with Māori employees and Māori union representatives to design, implement and evaluate learning and development programmes to support different groups of Māori to access career planning tools early, including access to non-digital options.
- **Increase Māori representation in Public Service leadership** – develop targeted initiatives to support Māori to develop skills and experience specific to serving on leadership boards and guidance on the application process.

*“Being a Māori staff member is difficult due to the lack of cultural capability within the organisation and across the public sector. There are many times when I am required to lead activities or pieces of work to help progress the Māori-Crown relationship which is not part of my role. This is exhausting as it requires me to sacrifice a lot of my own time. I also feel that my te ao Māori perspective is not valued as much as my colleague’s western perspective. I cannot operate and just be Māori without having to make others feel comfortable first with practices such as karakia and waiata. I am required to work harder to validate my contribution and way of being to the team and the organisation.”*

**-Wāhine Māori public servant**





### **About bias and occupational segregation**

Fair and equitable pay is a question of fundamental human rights and everyone in Aotearoa New Zealand should have the same opportunities to achieve their career aspirations.

Gender and ethnic pay gaps are driven by factors like occupational segregation, under-representation in leadership, bias and discrimination. For instance, women, Māori, Pacific and Asian public servants are over-represented in occupation groups that are lower paid.

Women from all ethnic groups take on the largest proportion of caring responsibilities. They are therefore more likely to combine primary caregiving with part-time work, which tends to be more readily available in lower paid occupations and positions. This limits their access to better-paying occupations and/or positions. Moreover, stereotypical beliefs that associate leadership traits with European men limit access for many employees to the career development opportunities necessary to advance to senior leadership roles.

Women are diverse, and it is important that policies and practices take account of the intersection between gender, ethnicity, and membership of other diverse groups. Removing bias from processes, practices and systems around career development, career breaks and leave will address important aspects of the employment environment that contribute to poorer employment, pay and progression opportunities for women, Māori, Pacific and ethnic employees.

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*“Power networks are too difficult for Asians to break into, unless you’re very strong and ambitious. Breaking into power networks requires you to adopt the cultures and paradigms of the people who have the power. Otherwise they don’t recognise you and then, even when you do, you’re still different.”*

**-Asian public servant**

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### What does the data tell us?

To ensure responsiveness to all Aotearoa New Zealand communities, it is important that New Zealand’s Public Service reflects and understands the society it serves.

The [2022 Public Service Workforce Data](#) shows the Public Service is becoming more diverse, and good progress is being made on gender equality and fairer wages for lower-paid workers. More women are occupying senior leadership roles, and the gender pay gap is the lowest since measurement began in 2000. However, more needs to be done to improve representation and leadership for Pacific, Asian and MELAA (Middle Eastern, Latin American and African) people in the workforce.

Some key factors contribute to low ethnic representation in Public Service leadership:

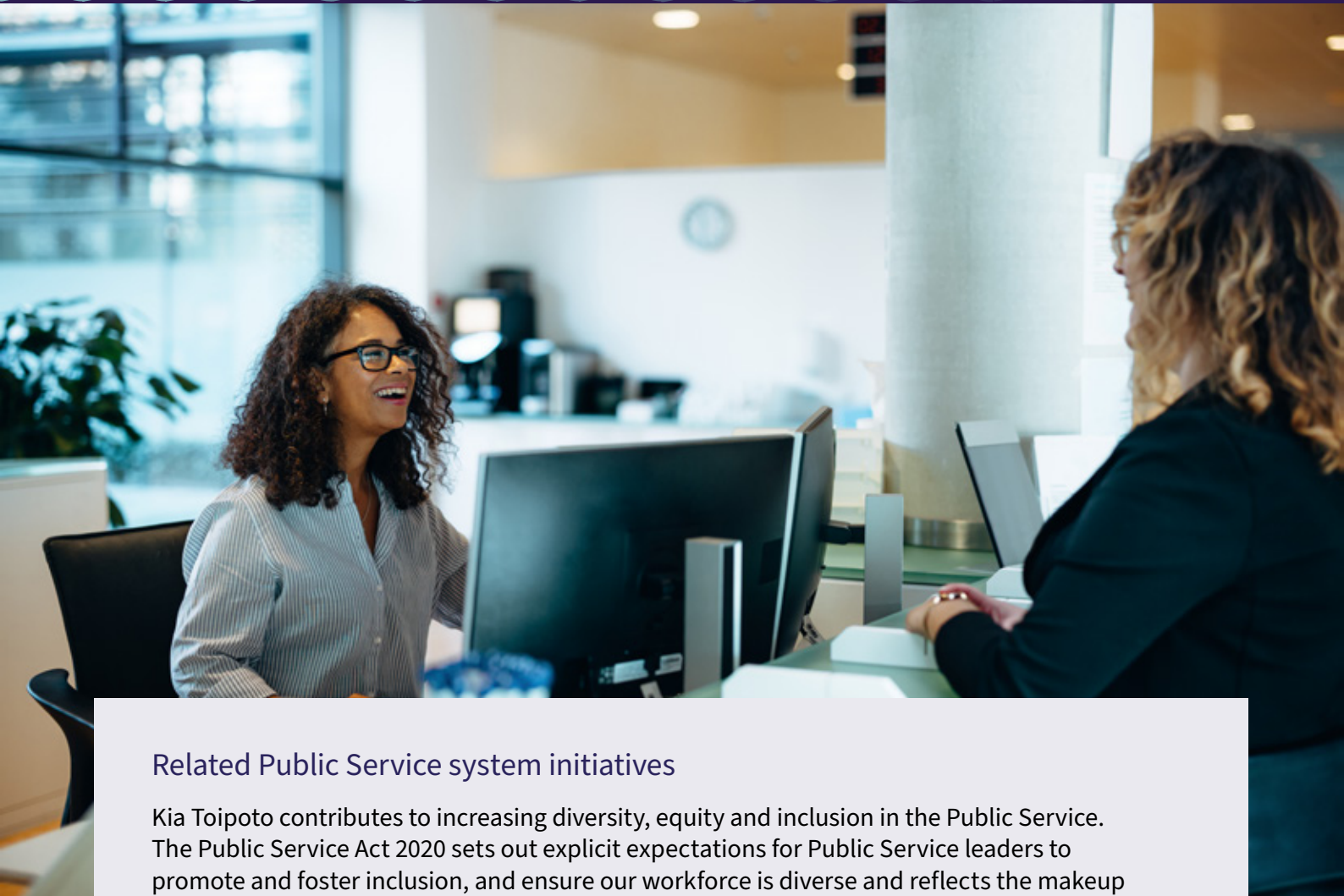
- Public servants under the age of 35 now make up 31 percent of the workforce. Younger public servants are more likely to be Pacific, Asian or MELAA, which means they are earlier in career.
- Occupational segregation is a long-standing driver of Pacific and Asian pay gaps, with Pacific and Asian public servants more concentrated in low-paid occupational groups (such as contact centre and clerical roles). These occupations do not typically offer pathways to leadership.
- Concentration of the Pacific and Asian populations in Auckland is also likely to be a factor in occupational segregation. The Auckland public service has a greater share of inspectors and regulatory officers, social, health and education workers and contact centre workers than the overall Public Service workforce, and a lower share of managers, policy analysts and information professionals.

Group	NZ population 2018	Public Service representation 2022	Leadership representation 2022
European	70.2%	64.9%	80.2%
Māori	16.5%	16.7%	14.5%
Asian	15.1%	13.4%	3%
Pacific	8.1%	10.6%	5.1%
MELAA	1.5%	2.1%	0.8%

Source: Te Kawa Mataaho Public Service Commission Workforce Data and 2018 Census







## Related Public Service system initiatives

Kia Toipoto contributes to increasing diversity, equity and inclusion in the Public Service. The Public Service Act 2020 sets out explicit expectations for Public Service leaders to promote and foster inclusion, and ensure our workforce is diverse and reflects the makeup of society. [Papa Pounamu](#) is a dedicated diversity and inclusion (D&I) work programme across the Public Service, established in 2017. Papa Pounamu has five priority areas that Public Service leaders have agreed to make mandatory in their agencies (cultural competence, addressing bias, inclusive leadership, building relationships and employee-led networks).

There are resources and expertise available, and agencies are supported to collaborate and share experiences and good practice. This includes a resource hub designed to help agencies achieve the Papa Pounamu-related training commitments. It includes free-to-use resources and online modules on a range of topics (including addressing bias and building inclusiveness for Rainbow communities). In 2023, Te Kawa Mataaho Public Service Commission aims to expand access to the resource hub to Crown entities.

There is visibility and accountability of the work agencies are doing to improve D&I. This includes the expectation that agencies have D&I plans and the requirement that they report in their annual reports on their progress against the Papa Pounamu priorities.

Kia Toipoto also sits alongside other work programmes to increase D&I in the Public Service: strengthening public sector capability in [Māori Crown relationships](#); and [building positive and safe workplaces](#).



## Overview of recommendations

Assess your current state

Embed transparency, accessibility & engagement

Base decisions on skills-based & non-biased criteria

Build cultural competence & understanding of bias

Make decisions collaboratively

Monitor impact

We recommend organisations work with unions, employees and leaders to implement the following recommendations.

### **Assess your current state**

- Map the decisions points where there is discretion over decisions, and therefore where bias may influence decisions.
- Gather data about outcomes at these decision points, and compare the outcomes for different groups.
- Supplement data with feedback from leadership teams, people managers, diverse employees and unions.

### **Build cultural competence and understanding of bias**

- Senior leaders, human resource practitioners and people managers need to be culturally competent, and understand how to counter bias in their formal decisions and day-to-day behavior.

### **Embed transparency, accessibility and engagement**

- This will help guard against bias and provide assurance to leaders, unions and employees that systems, policies, processes and practices are designed and implemented fairly and are delivering fair outcomes.

### **Make decisions collaboratively**

- When supported by clear non-biased criteria, group decision-making provides opportunities to test and challenge assumptions and help ensure decision-making processes are consistent across the organisation. Agencies/entities can develop their own processes depending on their size and the scale of decision-making.

### **Base decisions on transparent, skills-based and non-biased criteria**

- Base decisions about promotion, progression and performance on clearly-defined, transparent criteria (gender, ethnicity, sexual orientation, disability and age-neutral), which can be easily accessed and understood by both decision-makers and employees. Decisions, and reasons for decisions, should be made available to candidates.
- In developing the criteria, organisations should refer to the [Te Orowaru](#) pay equity work assessment tool, which helps recognise the value of cultural skills in work, including te reo Māori. It assesses an employee's work according to their skills, responsibilities, work conditions and knowledge, and demands or the degree of effort required.

### **Monitor impact**

- Ensure your actions have the desired impact by working with unions and employees to periodically refresh the data and feedback gathered at the start of your process.



## Recommended actions

Kia Toipoto recognises that departments (agencies) and entities are at different stages in their work:

- Agencies that have implemented the Gender Pay Gap Action Plan since 2018 will now embed the gains they have made and accelerate gains for Māori, Pacific and ethnic communities, and for disabled people and members of Rainbow communities.
- Entities that may be at an earlier stage, as they were not required to implement the Gender Pay Gap Action Plan 2018-2020.

The following sections provide a common, but flexible, framework that allows agencies and entities to tailor actions to reflect their context and the progress they have already made.

### Assess your current state

This section reflects the importance of collecting, analysing, and monitoring data, reviewing policies and practices and assessing workplace culture to identify factors contributing to gender and ethnic pay gaps. Agencies/entities should also take a proactive and collaborative approach to engaging with unions, employees, employee-led networks and people leaders from the earliest stages of this process.

#### Steps to take to assess your current state

##### Step 1

Map decision points

##### Step 2

Gather data and feedback

##### Step 3

Analyse your data and evidence to identify your biggest challenges

##### Step 4

Plan and prioritise actions with unions, leaders and employees



## Step 1 Map decision points

All decision points are susceptible to bias. Mapping these within your agency/entity will provide a comprehensive view of where bias may influence your policies and practices, and enable you to compare your current policies and practices at each decision point with the recommendations in this guidance. Remember to include decision points that affect attraction and recruitment, all forms of leave, promotion, progression, access to professional development and secondments/acting-up opportunities.

## Step 2 Gather data and feedback

Gathering data can enable you to target any bias “hot-spots” and/or groups experiencing particularly poor outcomes (e.g. low rates of progression or promotion for women, Māori, Pacific, Asian, ethnic, or disabled employees or members of Rainbow communities). It will also help identify any gaps in data recorded by your agency/entity and provide you with baseline data from which to monitor progress.

In a small organisation, data can be volatile, changing a lot as employees come and go. Long-term trends from data are more useful than snapshots, so we recommend analysing data annually. For more information on dealing with small numbers, refer to the Implementing Kia Toipoto in small organisations guidance on the [Kia Toipoto web page](#).

Examples of the types of metrics organisations may need/be able to gather include:

- professional development spending (internal and external costs) across occupational groups
- what development opportunities/secondments were made available
- internal promotion applications and outcomes
- discretionary leave approved and declined
- Public Service Leadership Group membership and participation in Te Pae Aramahi Development Boards (previously called Career Boards)
- progression within role.

## Employee feedback

Seeking feedback from employees will provide critical information to fill in data gaps and to understand your workplace culture. Workplace culture significantly impacts how policies are operationalised, and whether procedures and processes are seen as accessible or effective. It is important that managers and people leaders don't assume their own experience is representative.

You should seek views from employees, employee-led networks, unions, people leaders, managers and human resource practitioners. Entities without employee-led networks can support their establishment. Smaller agencies/entities can support employees to join cross-agency networks.

Some key questions for feedback include:

- How are career breaks and non-traditional career paths viewed in your organisation?
- To what extent do all employees (including part-time, flexible, casual) feel they have equitable access to opportunities for promotion, progression and support?
- What do employees in different groups consider to be the barriers to taking up professional development? (e.g. do opportunities require additional hours of work or work outside established patterns of availability?)
- To what extent do employees from lower paid occupational groups feel they have career pathways into higher paid occupation groups?
- To what extent do managers feel supported to work with diverse employees around career progression?
- Does professional development lead to progression or promotion outcomes for all groups?
- How is leave (such as sick leave or domestic leave) viewed by your organisation?
- To what extent are people leaders and managers recognising skills and knowledge developed outside the paid workplace?



- To what extent is flexible and responsive support available to those reorienting to the workplace on return to work?
- To what extent are positive workplace cultures modelled by leaders in your agency?

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*“Many times, I have mentored and trained others who got the promotion ahead of me, and yet they relied on me to ensure they could do the job. It’s been like one step forward 10 back my whole career. I have always had to do more to be seen anywhere near the same.”*

*-Pacific woman public servant*

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### Step 3 Analyse your data and feedback to identify your biggest challenges

If you have sufficient numbers of employees, review your data by: gender, ethnicity, and other diversity dimensions; part-time/full-time, casual, and fixed-term status; and by employees who have taken career breaks and those who have not. Look for patterns in your data and feedback from unions and employees to help you identify your main challenge(s). Smaller agencies/entities may want to focus on one main challenge to address while larger agencies/entities could identify several.

While at least 20 employees in each group are needed to make robust statistical comparisons between groups, comparisons of smaller groups can still provide useful indicative information and trends.

These questions can help you:

- What is the current skill set of the organisation, its strengths and gaps?
- How significant is occupational segregation and where is it occurring?
- Who is benefiting from secondments, acting up opportunities, and other development opportunities?

- What have employees and unions said about any barriers they experience?
- How can the barriers identified by different groups of employees be addressed to ensure equitable opportunities for all?
- Overall, to what extent are your trends moving in the right direction and need to be accelerated, or in the wrong direction and need to be turned around?

Remember that wāhine Māori, and women from Pacific and ethnic communities are more likely to be negatively affected than Pākehā women and men within the same ethnic group. Bias also compounds for employees who belong to more than one diversity group, such as disabled employees who are also members of Rainbow communities.

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*“Being transgender, I rarely feel comfortable disclosing this especially in a work environment. The discrimination and violence my fellow community experience in everyday life is a deterrent for me to be open and comfortable. For this reason, I do not fully disclose my full self at work.”*

*-transgender public servant*

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## Step 4 Plan and prioritise actions with unions, leaders and employees

Ground your planning within:

- the recommendations in this guidance
- the findings from your data and information gathering exercise
- any actions your agency/entity is already taking as part of your organisation's pay gap action plan and diversity and inclusion strategy
- how these actions support your workforce and organisation's strategy and culture.

In thinking about planning and sequencing your actions we recommend you consider:

- what you may be able to achieve in the short term
- what you may be able to undertake concurrently, such as building your data and information while beginning to implement recommendations in other parts of this guidance
- the ongoing nature of some of the recommendations, like those which build culture and capability
- how you can integrate the actions you take into ongoing work programmes around leadership development, culture, attitudes and engagement.



### **Build cultural competency and understanding of bias**

Reflecting on the significance of Māori-Crown relations, and building cultural competence and capability across a broad range of cultures, is integral to ensuring inclusion. The capability of people leaders and managers is a core contributor to workplace culture. Your agency/entity should have training and support resources available for all decision-makers (human resource practitioners, leaders, managers and union delegates) – to build a shared understanding about how bias and discrimination can occur in processes, in everyday decisions, and become entrenched in systems and policies.

Training and support in bias and cultural competence should:

- change behavior, not just raise awareness – regularly evaluate the effectiveness of your training initiatives, and seek employee feedback to see whether it has changed the experiences of employees
- be undertaken by people leaders who then model those behaviors in their day-to-day actions
- focus on bias based on gender and ethnicity, and bias against disabled employees, and employees who are members of Rainbow communities
- acknowledge that work in this area can be uncomfortable and challenging for individuals and organisations
- offer practical strategies to help participants mitigate bias in their decision-making, such as techniques to slow down thinking and create pause points for reflection
- provide follow-up opportunities for participants to practice these strategies and discuss their experiences.

We recommend integrating cultural competence training with training on bias. In this way common themes can be highlighted, such as ethnic privilege in the New Zealand context and the compounding impact of gender and ethnic bias on Māori, Pacific, and women from ethnic communities.<sup>1,2</sup>

Tools and resources for building cultural competency and addressing bias can be accessed here:

[Te Urupare i te Mariu- Addressing bias](#)

[Te Āheinga ā-Ahurea- Cultural competence](#)

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*“Commit as a whole organisation to improve cultural capability. Often it feels like tokenism, rather than a genuine desire to an organisation wide shift. Basic things like correct pronunciation of Māori words, names and phrases would go a long, long way to building better relationships with iwi and whānau Māori.”*

*-wāhine Māori public servant*

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<sup>1</sup> [Te Arawhiti | The Office for Crown-Māori Relations](#) has more information and resources on public sector Māori-Crown relations capability.

<sup>2</sup> There are a range of providers that offer workshops and customised training in bi-cultural confidence and cultural intelligence in the workplace. Many agencies already have memberships with such agencies as [Diversity Works New Zealand](#).



### **Embed transparency, accessibility and engagement**

Building transparency, accessibility and engagement into policies and practices associated with career pathways, progression, breaks and leave will help guard against bias and ensure systems and policies are designed and implemented to support fair and robust outcomes.

#### **Step 1 Engagement and transparency in review of policies**

As agencies/entities review and amend their policies, practices, and build workplace culture in line with this guidance, we recommend they:

- regularly gather feedback from unions and employees about current policies and practices
- regularly gather feedback from, and problem solve with, unions and employees about policies or practices about which there are concerns
- take a proactive and collaborative approach to involving unions and employees from the earliest stages of reviewing existing policies, practices, or processes, or developing new ones
- are transparent about all processes, and any progress, outcomes and results from monitoring.

#### **Step 2 Ongoing transparency and accessibility of information**

Agencies/entities should embed transparency and accessibility of information in their policies and practices that inform career progression, breaks and leave – by proactively ensuring that the following information is readily available to employees in plain language:<sup>3</sup>

- leave entitlements and how to access these
- policies and processes that underpin development, secondment and acting up/higher duties opportunities

- support and cover options available for employees when they are on leave
- all processes and/or criteria managers use for approving leave
- current and upcoming opportunities for professional development and how they can be accessed
- options and examples for career breaks and returning to work
- career pathways, especially from lower paid occupational groups into higher paid occupational groups
- criteria for progression/promotion, both within role and between roles
- how to appeal or review decisions
- how to escalate risks or behaviours that are not aligned with agreed workplace culture standards.

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*“Ensure there is no favouritism given to certain staff. We all need to be treated equally and all given the same opportunities to do special work or tasks so that we can grow and advance our careers.”*

*-ethnic woman public servant*

<sup>3</sup>“Readily available” will depend on the nature of the workforce in your agency and the systems you have available. This could be a combination of intranet, staff newsletters, team meeting discussions and any other settings appropriate for your agency.





### ***Make decisions collaboratively***

Decisions made by individuals are more prone to bias than those made by groups. Group decision-making provides opportunities to test assumptions and help ensure consistent decisions are made across the organisation. While collaborative moderation processes can take time, they are important for ensuring fair outcomes and for overcoming biases.

We recommend agencies/entities:

- retain a focus on reducing discretion in decision-making processes
- engage Te Rūnanga Mangai, PSA Network delegates or workplace delegates/unions, employees, and leaders on the design of – decision-making processes, development of criteria and review of process outcomes
- peer review decisions about leave
- moderate progression or promotion decisions by groups of managers and human resource practitioners.

### ***Base decisions on skills-based and non-biased criteria***

Bias is also more likely to affect decisions if the criteria is not clear and/or are open to interpretation. Base decisions about promotion, progression and performance on clearly defined, transparent, gender, ethnicity, sexual orientation, disability and age-neutral criteria – which can be easily accessed and understood by both decision-makers and employees. Decisions, and reasons for decisions, should be made available to candidates and employees.

In developing the criteria, organisations should align with the Equal Pay Act 1972 and the [Te Orowaru pay equity work assessment tool](#) (which helps recognise the value of cultural skills in work, including te reo Māori). Te Orowaru assesses an employee's work according to their skills, responsibilities, work conditions, knowledge and demands/degree of effort required.

[Te Orowaru](#) is a revolutionary pay equity assessment tool designed to understand and measure the skills, responsibilities, effort and experience workers bring to their workplaces every day in Aotearoa New Zealand. This tool is the first in the world to recognise skills and values. Te Orowaru is available free of charge to everyone in both English and te reo Māori. Te Orowaru reflects a commitment to Te Tiriti o Waitangi | The Treaty of Waitangi and our partnership with Māori by creating a stand-alone te ao Māori skills assessment and the recognition of te ao Māori values and competencies. Te Orowaru recognises skills in a more in-depth and nuanced way than traditional work evaluation tools. It goes beyond the use of language to consider things such as building inclusion into practices and policies, cultural leadership and adapting resources for different cultural contexts.



Be mindful of the following common risks that can contribute to gender bias, ethnic bias, and bias against other groups such as migrants, disabled people, and members of Rainbow communities:

- Skills like effective communication, managing workflow, connecting across cultures and stakeholders, and advising colleagues are frequently overlooked, especially when performed by those outside of a management role.
- Not recognising and valuing skills and knowledge acquired in voluntary/unpaid work, such as family caring, church, and community commitments.
- Not recognising and valuing cultural expertise. If cultural expertise is desirable, ensure it is specifically recognised in job descriptions and competencies.
- If using proxies for skills and knowledge, such as experience or qualifications:
  - Valuing the length of experience or only experience gained in paid work will disadvantage women and other groups, including disabled employees, who work part-time or have taken career breaks
  - Placing too much weight on specific qualifications or experience that are not necessary for particular roles can also disadvantage: women, Māori, Pacific and other groups less likely to hold these qualifications; employees holding overseas qualifications; and employees who are under-represented in these roles. Employees may have acquired the necessary skills and knowledge through equivalent paid or unpaid experience.

Once developed, agencies/entities should ensure that all criteria for decisions are understood by those using them, and that all parties are aware of the risks noted above.

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*“We need much more Pasifika staff throughout all our social services organisations. Just train us. Stop looking for degree-qualified people, stop psychometric testing – those are barriers for our communities right now. Use the people we have – just get them in there and train them. Help our people by using their people to help them.”*

*-Pacific woman public servant*

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**Monitor impact:**

Agencies/entities can ensure their initial changes have the desired impact by working with unions and employees to periodically refresh the data and feedback gathered at the start of the process.

Agencies/entities can then consider:

- whether the results of monitoring suggest that policies need further adjustment in line with this guidance and/or whether further work is needed to strengthen your organisation’s capability
- how data analysis and review findings can be made accessible to employees and unions, while maintaining employee privacy
- recording their progress and any changes they plan to make in their annual Kia Toipoto pay gap action plan.

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*“Continue to work on unconscious bias. Leaders have done training. However, for a small few, they still don't view their comments as being biased. Rather, they see them as being funny. And to that I need to have the courage to challenge it when I see/hear it happening in a way that is not confrontational and is respectful of that person ensuring dignity is maintained.”*

*-wāhine Māori public servant*



## Reducing bias in career pathways, progression and promotions

Linear career pathways in which full-time, continuous employment is the norm will create a barrier to advancement for all staff but especially women who have taken career breaks, work part-time or work flexibly.

We recommend organisations develop career pathways that will support a diverse workforce and offer equitable employment outcomes for women, Māori, Pacific, ethnic, disabled employees, and members of the Rainbow communities. A robust career pathways framework is fundamental to enable employees to make informed career decisions. New Zealand Intelligence Community’s [career pathway framework](#) is a good example of a systemic and planned approach to help individuals develop specific competences, achieve certain career objectives, undertake career progression or develop a long-term career plan. (There are more details about the framework in Case Study 2 in the appendix).

Career progression is an important feature of any working life. It is not just important for those wishing to hold senior or leadership positions, but as a way for all employees to move between occupations, especially from lower paid to higher paid occupational groups, as their skills and interests broaden. Māori, Pacific and employees from ethnic communities are currently under-recognised, undervalued and underutilised in the Public Service, facing barriers that undermine their career progression into high paid occupational groups and more senior roles, including the highest levels of leadership.

There is a significant body of research that tells us the processes to identify and measure success are extremely susceptible to bias. Being considered ready for progression or promotion is often linked with behaviours (such as extroversion and individualism) and actions (such as presenteeism and constant availability).<sup>4</sup> This favours men, because men are more likely to promote themselves and their abilities and are unlikely to share the same level of unpaid work or caring responsibilities as women. Even in organisations which have policies around balancing personal and professional lives, the advent of 24/7 expectations can influence who is seen as ready for promotion.

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*“Cultural change regarding how we talk about disabilities, specifically invisible ones e.g. ASD, ADHD, OCD, etc. As an employee, I don’t feel comfortable using my experience to educate others as I fear being discriminated against when it comes to career progression.”*

*-ethnic woman public servant*

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<sup>4</sup>Global Women (2022) [Hybrid working and the proximity bias: what does it mean for women?](#)



## **Recommended actions**

### **Ensure progression frameworks are gender, ethnicity, sexual orientation, disability, and age neutral**

Just as bias is more likely to affect decisions made by individuals than those made by groups, bias is also more likely to affect decisions if criteria are not clear and/or are open to interpretation. We therefore recommend that agencies/entities check their progression criteria for neutrality in terms of gender, ethnicity, sexual orientation, disability, and age. There are distinct points in progression systems where bias and discrimination can have an impact, and this may vary depending on the system/s operated by your organisation.

### **Where progression is linked to the completion of a test or assessment**

Tests and assessment processes can codify bias, preferencing traits, behaviours and competencies exhibited by men and by Pākehā. Where testing exists this needs to be accompanied by evidence demonstrating how the process has actively mitigated potential for bias.

### **Where progression is linked to years of experience in paid work**

If years of experience in paid work are used to indicate the level of skill and competence of an employee, employees who have taken breaks from paid work could be unjustly disadvantaged. We recommend that length of paid work experience is not used as the only or main indicator of capability as this can disregard other skills and knowledge an applicant may have developed in other parts of their lives, including cultural skills and knowledge.

### **Where progression is linked to qualifications**

Organisations should be mindful of not placing too much weight on specific qualifications unless these are necessary for a specialised role. Doing so could disadvantage women or other groups less likely to hold these qualifications, or who are under-represented in these roles. While qualifications may provide a useful indicator of the type and level of knowledge needed to perform the work, jobholders may not need to hold such qualifications: they may have acquired an equivalent level of knowledge through a combination of relevant formal or informal learning and/or experience. See [Te Orowaru Factor Plan guide](#) for more information on recognition and assessment of knowledge and skills.

### **Where progression relies on self-promotion**

Progression frameworks traditionally rely on employees to self-promote and identify their readiness to take on more responsibility. Men are more likely to identify themselves as ready and able to do more senior work and progress through their career, even when they are less skilled or experienced than a female peer or peer from another ethnic group. When women do engage in self-promotion there is a tendency for this to be viewed negatively. There are also significant cultural barriers in putting oneself forward, especially for people from collectivist cultures and cultures that value humility and deference to people in senior positions. We recommend that managers work proactively with employees to identify goals, strengths and opportunities for progression, and that development is promoted as a shared responsibility.

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<sup>5</sup> Danielle Li (2022) "[Potential](#)" and the Gender Promotion Gap



### *Where progression relies on performance ratings*

Performance decisions may be subject to gender, ethnic and other biases. If organisations link performance ratings with readiness for progression, we recommend that:

- performance decisions are based on transparent gender, ethnicity, sexual orientation, disability, and age-neutral criteria developed with unions and employees. Decisions and reasons for decisions are recorded and provided to employees
- part-time employees are assessed against the same transparent and neutral performance criteria as full-time employees and delivery expectations should reflect their part-time hours. Further advice on managing employees working flexibly, including part-time, can be found in our [Flexible-Work-by-Default Guidance](#)

- agencies/entities are aware that performance-based pay increases disadvantage employees who are hesitant about promoting themselves. For instance, women and people from many cultures may give less favorable self-assessments of their performance and potential, than similarly performing men because of gendered and cultural norms about promoting oneself.

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*“I was told if I wanted to progress, I needed to ‘be in the eye of the manager’. If you sit in the back and do your mahi you don’t get anything. You need to self-promote which is culturally difficult.”*

*-wāhine Māori public servant*

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## Reducing bias in professional development and growth

Professional development is integral to ensure that each employee can grow and progress throughout their career. In the changing world of work, professional development is a critical tool to support employees to adapt, grow, and enhance the agency/entity's performance. Failure to provide equitable and genuine investment in professional development can reduce employees' job satisfaction and increase staff turnover.<sup>6</sup> Organisations should be aware that gender and ethnic differences can exist in both access to and uptake of professional development opportunities, and in how development translates into career progression.<sup>7</sup>

### **Recommended actions**

As agencies/entities review and amend their policies, practices, and build workplace culture in line with this guidance, we recommend they:

#### **Ensure equity of access**

We recommend that professional development plans are proactively and jointly developed between employees and managers to ensure that every employee has suitable development opportunities. Managers and organisations should develop processes to monitor whether plans have resulted in development opportunities across all groups.

Ensure that as many professional development opportunities as possible are flexibly offered and are compatible with the individual goals of the employee. Where specific opportunities have limited flexibility, it is important that managers and employees discuss how access can be achieved, e.g. by supporting childcare arrangements, accruing days in lieu, or accessing alternative,

more flexible opportunities. Consider whether competitive processes are involved to access development. Men, in particular Pākehā men, are more likely to put themselves forward for opportunities in a competitive framework. Women and employees from many cultures, especially those holding part-time or flexible roles, are more likely to be overlooked or opt out in this type of model.

#### **Promote opportunities widely**

Assumptions about suitability, interest or capability should not inform who opportunities are offered to or how they are advertised. Agencies/entities should proactively encourage people to take opportunities that lead to career progression.

For training courses, conferences and other upskilling or networking events, consider utilising your staff intranet, newsletters, and team meetings to ensure that information and details on how to access these are widely available.

For secondments and acting up opportunities, we recommend that policies regarding how these operate are developed and/or reviewed with unions and employees and are readily available to all staff.

#### **Monitor uptake and evaluate the effectiveness of professional development opportunities**

We recommend monitoring uptake of professional development opportunities and addressing any inequitable outcomes by identifying barriers to uptake and removing them. Do not assume that people are not putting themselves forward because they are not interested. We also recommend seeking feedback from your employees to evaluate the effectiveness of the available professional development opportunities.

<sup>6</sup> LinkedIn (2018) [Workplace Learning Report](#)

<sup>7</sup> Ministry of Women's Affairs (2013) [Realising the opportunity: Addressing New Zealand's leadership pipeline by attracting and retaining talented women](#)



### ***Take a skills-based approach***

A skills-based approach looks beyond qualifications, skills acquired only in paid work and work history and puts the spotlight on the skills:

- required for roles
- their portability across positions and occupational groups and
- opportunities that exist to develop careers based on the growth of skills.

Taking a skills-based approach also enables agencies/entities to recognise that the skills that they have traditionally relied on are not necessarily the ones they will need in the future. As smart machines increasingly take over many of the more manual and routine aspects of jobs, enterprise skills (e.g. communication, teamwork and problem-solving) will become much more important.

A skills-based approach has the potential to create more equitable futures. Developing the transferable skills of the future will help ensure that Māori, Pacific, Asian and ethnic employees, particularly, wāhine Māori and Pacific, Asian and ethnic women, are well equipped to transfer to the jobs of the future as they develop.

[Te Orowaru](#) is a work assessment tool that enables te ao Māori skills and knowledge and other cultural skills and knowledge to be identified and measured appropriately.

The Summary of actions table on page 21 of our [Guidance on improving workforce and leadership representation](#) contains short, medium, and long-term actions in response to common challenges related to progression/promotion.

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*“Professional development has become so templated and restrictive with such hurdles to prove relevance or cost effectiveness that it never seems to meet the needs of our staff or translate to real opportunities and growth.”*

*-Pacific woman public servant*

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<sup>8</sup>Hinepounamu Apanui-Barr (2022) [Tomorrow's Skills](#)



## Reducing bias in career breaks

Research consistently shows that taking a career break negatively effects earnings and career progression, both for the period of the break and cumulatively upon return to work. This is particularly true for women taking and returning from parental leave.<sup>9 10</sup> Employees who return to work from a career break often experience slower progression following no progression at all for the period of leave, isolation from their prior cohort of peers, and a lack of professional opportunities and development. Returning to work part-time has an even greater impact. This contributes to women's lower lifetime earnings compared with men.

Skills, knowledge, and competencies developed during a career break most often go unrecognised, even where there are direct, useful applications to the work environment.<sup>11</sup>

The emphasis on the continuity of employment and traditional career paths contributes to systemic bias and often means women are disadvantaged in the labour market, especially wāhine Māori, Pacific women, and ethnic women. It also contributes to organisations missing out on talented employees.<sup>12</sup>



Credit: Colin McDiarmid

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*“Not having an adequate parents’ room would be the biggest reason I leave this organisation after my next parental leave. Without structural and system support, it feels like I am bringing myself as an employee being flexible to the organisation and leaving being a mother at the door in terms of having tangible support.”*

*-Pākehā woman public servant*

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<sup>9</sup> Sin et al (2018) [Parenthood and the Labour Market](#) Ministry for Women

<sup>10</sup> Harkness et al (2019) [Employment pathways and occupational change after childbirth](#)

<sup>11 12</sup> Ministry of Women's Affairs (2013) [Realising the opportunity: Addressing New Zealand's leadership pipeline by attracting and retaining talented women](#)





## Normalise flexible and part-time work

[Flexible-work-by-default](#) is a specific focus of Kia Toipoto because women in all ethnic groups still take on most of the family caring work. Flexible work can involve changing your hours, such as: start, finish and break times; changing the way you work; or changing the place where you work (like working from home). Flexible work helps women remain in the paid workforce while also caring for family. However, working flexibly and/or part-time can limit women's career progression and reduce their lifetime incomes, because:

- senior roles are traditionally less likely to be offered flexibly and/or part-time
- people working part-time are paid less compared to full-time workers (on average, part-time workers are paid 11.8 percent less than full-time workers on a full-time equivalent basis, as at 30 June 2022) – see [Workforce Data](#)
- stereotypes exist that women working flexibly and/or part-time are less interested in their careers, and/or less able to undertake challenging work or senior roles
- part-time work is more prevalent in low paid occupational groups: social, health and education workers and clerical and administrative workers
- lack of appropriate infrastructure to facilitate flexible/part-time work.

Normalising flexible and part-time working for all types of roles will help break the association between working flexibly and stalled careers. In addition, research suggests that men face barriers to accessing flexible work, which limits their ability to take on greater family caring responsibilities. Increasing men's access to workplace flexibility therefore has the potential to even the distribution of family caring work and help close gender and ethnic pay gaps (see [Flexible-Work-by-Default Guidance and Resources](#) for detailed processes). Organisations should develop strategies to successfully embed flexible working arrangements across their workforce and ensure there is equitable access to flexible work for all employees.



Credit: Neil Mackenzie Photography

### Recommended actions

#### Ensure there is a proactive process to plan for a career break

The needs of each employee embarking on a career break will be different. A plan should be agreed by both parties to provide certainty and confidence. Planning should consider things such as:

- Ways that the employee may remain connected with their workplace during their absence. This could include [“keeping in touch days”](#) for those on parental leave or other types of career breaks, being invited to staff social functions, training opportunities or “touching base” points.
- How any pay review (if applicable) will be conducted while the employee is on a career break.
- Initial plans for returning to work. This may include any refresher training, support and/or mentoring that may be appropriate or possible changes to hours/patterns of work that may be required.

#### Develop a shared understanding about the range of skills developed through a career break, whether through caring, voluntary and community work, mahi aroha, sports representation, or other experiences

Agencies/entities should work with people leaders, unions, and employees to shift away from

traditional thinking and language that does not see the added value resulting from working outside the paid work environment. Putting together examples of skills gained in unpaid settings can encourage people to make visible areas of knowledge they may have developed. For example, mahi aroha draws on and builds a range of skills including cultural advice, programme management, facilitating social connectedness, budgets/financial management, problem solving, governance and leadership, information management and distribution.<sup>13</sup>

In developing a framework for the recognition of skills from outside the workplace, it is critical to engage with Māori, Pacific and ethnic communities to ensure a culturally responsive design that can recognise this.

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*“I think it is not understood just how many staff have caring responsibilities at home due to family members having disabilities and medical conditions. This can and does impact on you in your work and on your own mental wellbeing. The ability to be very flexible with time, days of work and place of work can help so much.”*

*-Pacific woman public servant*

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<sup>13</sup> Raihana & Walker (2007) [Mahi aroha Māori perspectives on volunteering and cultural obligations](#)



## Reducing bias in leave

Taking leave is something that we all need to do during our working lives. Whether it is for rest and recreation, for bereavement or crisis, to recover from illness, for physical or psychological wellness or to care for a dependant. There are [legislative minimums for leave](#) and many agencies/entities have additional leave entitlements negotiated through collective agreements or provided in policy.

There is considerable evidence that taking leave entitlements, regardless of the reason or the type of leave, continues to be viewed negatively.<sup>14</sup> A culture of presenteeism can result in employees avoiding taking leave even when they are too unwell, bereaved, stressed, or fatigued to be productive.<sup>15</sup>

For women from all ethnic groups who take up majority of unpaid work and caring for dependants in our society, a culture of presenteeism can present a double bind. Taking leave entitlements can result in being identified as unready for promotion or progression, or as not being a strong “team player”. On the other hand, not taking leave can result in increased mental stress and pressure, decreased wellbeing and productivity. It is important to challenge negative perceptions of leave to ensure that women, particularly Māori, Pacific and ethnic women, are not disadvantaged in the workplace or in their careers.

The rapid transformation of work during the COVID-19 pandemic revealed opportunities to build more inclusive workplaces that support all workers to flourish. One example is paid cultural leave designed to support employees to take time away from work to attend their traditional rituals, customs, and dates of cultural significance.

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*“I think it is not understood just how many staff have caring responsibilities at home due to family members having disabilities and medical conditions. This can and does impact on you in your work and on your own mental wellbeing. The ability to be very flexible with time, days of work and place of work can help so much.”*

*-Pacific woman public servant*

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### **Recommended actions**

#### **Ensure leaders and people managers have active cover plans for absences**

Having plans and processes to cover work when employees are on leave will ensure that people feel able to take leave as appropriate. For instance, ensuring that more than one staff member is familiar with each piece of work. It is important that plans are also available for part-time or flexible workers, and it is not assumed they can catch up by working their hours at another time. Managers and people leaders need to support people to ensure they are not coming to work sick, stressed or accruing significant annual leave time. It is worth noting that the pandemic compounded existing inequalities for parents/carers and workers with disabilities, leaving many of them feeling stretched and stressed. Ensure leaders proactively plan for staff shortages occurring due to the pandemic.

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<sup>14</sup> Chambers (2015) [Superheroes don't take sick leave Presenteeism in the New Zealand senior medical workforce](#)

<sup>15</sup> Mental Health Foundation [Working Well- A workplace guide](#)



### ***Role model leave use***

Leaders and people managers should role model taking leave, including taking dependant leave. Peer and leader role modelling are the two most significant contributors to ensuring leave use is not stigmatised.<sup>16</sup> “Leaving loudly” is an action workplace leaders can take, as it supports and normalises different patterns of work and challenges presenteeism.<sup>17</sup> People leaders should build a team culture based on high trust.

### ***Consider your organisational communications regarding leave***

Consider promoting, via your intranet or other appropriate internal communications network, clear information about leave. For example, information about the cultural requirements of

tangihanga and roles on the marae could enhance understanding of the whānau and community responsibilities Māori employees may have at a time of bereavement. Employees can also be actively encouraged to take their leave, and men can also be encouraged to take leave to care for a dependant to share caring responsibilities.

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*“Don't make staff feel guilty when they need time off (sick etc). Look after staff that have been in their service for a long period of time instead of making them feel like 'dinosaurs' where they can't progress any further in their careers.”*

***-Pākehā public servant***

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<sup>16</sup> Business NZ and Southern Cross [Workplace Wellness Report \(2019\)](#)

<sup>17</sup> Global Women (2018) [How inclusive do New Zealand workplaces feel? And what can you do about it?](#)



## Appendix 1: Resources for next steps

### Guidance and resources for measuring and closing pay gaps:

To access other relevant guidance (including Flexible work by default, Recruitment, Improving workforce and leadership representation, and Implementing Kia Toipoto in small organisations), visit the [Kia Toipoto](#) web page.

### Positive and safe workplaces

Te Kawa Mataaho has published [Model standards](#) for the Public Service to ensure positive and safe workplaces.

### Identifying and measuring te ao Māori skills and knowledge

[Te Orowaru](#) is a work assessment tool that enables te ao Māori skills and knowledge and other cultural skills and knowledge to be identified and measured appropriately, without reference to qualifications.

### Māori Crown relations capability

The [Māori Crown Relations Capability Framework](#) has been developed by Te Arawhiti to build Māori Crown relations capability across the Public Service.

### Disabled employees

The [Lead programme](#), developed by the Ministry of Social Development, helps create an inclusive and welcoming environment for disabled people. It includes advice on: assessing your ability to attract and retain disabled people; interviewing; reasonable accommodation; practical tips for people managers; and resources for leaders and human resource professionals.

### Employee-led networks

This [web page](#) helps public sector employees find networks and events, and has resources to support employee-led networks.

### Diversity and inclusion

[Papa Pounamu](#) leads the Public Service programme to make progress on diversity and inclusion, with guidance on cultural competence and inclusive leadership, addressing bias, building relationships and employee-led-networks.

### Standards of workforce information for agencies in the Public Service

These standards are expected of workforce information collected and reported by all agencies in the Public Service (see: [Information standards and guidance](#)).

### Public Service workforce data

Te Kawa Mataaho publishes annual [Public Service workforce data](#) including representation and pay gaps for the sector and by agency, going back to 2000.

### Public Service census

[Te Taunaki](#), the first Public service census, was conducted in 2021 to better understand the diversity of public servants, their experiences, views and motivations. Results are available by topic, by agency and for the Public Service overall.

### Gender Pay principles

This guidance is underpinned by the [Gender Pay Principles](#).



## Developing leaders – system level and wider initiatives

The Public Service [Leadership and Talent](#) programme is a system-level approach to creating a strong and diverse group of Public Service leaders.

The programme includes:

- [Te Pae Aramahi | Development Boards](#) target leaders from groups which are under-represented in leadership for system support. They also focus on experience and capabilities related to specific system priorities, such as diversity, equity and inclusion. The Boards currently work across agencies but have the ambition to expand their offering more widely.
- The [Leadership Development Centre](#) is the primary vehicle for delivering public sector leadership development. It is a business unit within Te Kawa Mataaho with membership available to all public sector organisations by way of a levy set according to agency size.
- Delivered by the Ministry for Pacific Peoples and the Leadership Development Centre, the Public Service [Pacific Mentoring Programme](#) matches senior Pacific leaders in the Public Service with Pacific public servants who are ready to further their careers.
- [Tupu Tai Policy Internship Programme](#) – the Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment’s Tupu Tai programme is a paid 11-week summer internship offered to Pasifika tertiary students and recent graduates interested in a career in the public sector. It is an inter-agency government initiative that offers the opportunity to: explore career pathways; build confidence as a Pasifika professional; and see what it’s like working for government. The programme includes a growing number of government agencies. In 2020/2021, 23 agencies participated, offering 39 internships.

- [Ministry for Ethnic Communities Graduate Programme](#) – The programme provides a meaningful first employment opportunity in the Public Service for tertiary graduates from ethnic communities. It directly addresses inequities in the representation of ethnically-diverse employees and the barriers they face to access employment in the public sector. It aims to achieve that by offering a targeted pathway into the Public Service. Graduates are supported by the Ministry for Ethnic Communities' Graduate Programme Team with an 18-month training programme and by their host agency team with on-the-job training.
- The Government’s employment strategy and various [Employment Action Plans](#) – The Employment Strategy presents the Government’s vision for the labour market and the changes it is implementing to improve employment outcomes for all New Zealanders. This is supported by a series of seven employment action plans, which seek to improve labour market outcomes – for women, youth, disabled people, Māori, Pacific peoples, older workers (50 and over), former refugees, recent migrants, and ethnic communities.





## Appendix 2: Case Studies

### **Case study 1: Ministry of Defence – Occupational segregation, general pay gap reduction success, growing their own and reducing the impact of career breaks**

Agencies with high rates of occupational segregation have more work to do to reduce gender pay gaps than those without. The Ministry of Defence (the Ministry) has a concentration of men in highly-paid roles, drawn from the male-dominated STEM (science, technology, engineering and maths) and defence sectors. In 2015 their gender pay gap was 43 percent. By June 2022, it has dropped to 25 percent. This significant progress is due to the Ministry's commitment to accelerate progress and efforts to close the gap.

The Ministry has taken a series of actions since 2017, the following actions have contributed to the Ministry's success to-date:

#### **1. Internal targets**

In 2017, the Ministry set its own targets to drive action. These five-year targets aimed to grow the number of women across the agency, including having more women in higher paid roles. Since 2017, the representation of women across the Ministry in senior roles (Tiers 2-3) has increased, reaching 44 percent in June 2022. The number of women in project management has increased dramatically and accounted for 44 percent of the 90 staff in that division of the Ministry in June 2022. The Ministry has now largely achieved these targets and while it will continue to work on these, it has turned its focus on improving ethnic diversity in middle management. This supports its 'growing their own' approach.

#### **2. Widening recruitment reach**

The Ministry has overhauled its approach to recruitment to ensure more women apply and are appointed. This has included:

- deeming the system at fault if no women apply for an advertised role requiring a process review before progressing
- broadening recruitment networks to actively recruit women and recruiting women with career progression in mind

- changing position descriptions and re-writing job advertisements to include references to flexible work options, and welcoming applications from "men and women". Knowing that women often apply only for roles if they believe they meet all the requirements, the Ministry states: "If you think you can do some of the things we're wanting – just apply". Also using language that is not so specific and technical makes a difference.

These changes increased the number of applications from women. The important learning is to keep vigilant, try new things and if they don't work keep trying. The Ministry is planning to update their recruitment process in 2023 to make it even more inclusive.

#### **3. Growing their own**

The Ministry has focused on "growing their own" – using career development to correct workforce gender imbalances. This has resulted in more internal progression and women moving into higher-paid roles, especially specialised project management. In the year 2021/2022, 24 percent of the women in the project management division achieved promotion. This is attributed to the strategy of employing project coordinators who have the potential to move into project management roles, implementation of a competency framework and making promotion opportunities more transparent and accessible, as well as encouraging women to apply. These strategies help counteract the small numbers of women with the necessary experience in the marketplace.

#### **4. Policies to support parents and reduce the impact of career breaks**

The Ministry has policies in place to support parents. These are likely to encourage more women to apply, retain women longer, reduce the impact of career breaks and support men to be more involved with caring responsibilities.

As well as all roles being flexible by default, the Ministry actively supports people on parental leave and facilitating their return. This includes:



making good use of 'return to work hours'; including employees on parental leave in annual remuneration reviews; paying annual leave at the current daily rate on return; supporting career development by encouraging applications for roles while on parental leave; and enabling secondments.

The Ministry also takes a proactive approach to childcare, providing \$3,000 per year reimbursement for children under two, with other amounts for children up to the age of 14. Additionally, if employees are required to travel and can't make alternative childcare arrangements, reasonable expenses can be claimed. The Ministry takes an innovative approach to this, for example by paying for grandparents' airfares so they can care for the children.

### **Case Study 2: New Zealand Intelligence Community (NZIC) – Career Pathways Framework, Diversity and Inclusion initiatives**

Since 2016, the New Zealand Intelligence Community (NZIC) (comprised of the Government Communications Security Bureau/GCSB and New Zealand Security Intelligence Service/NZSIS), has been proactively working to improve representation of women and ethnic groups in all areas of their workforce.

Women are traditionally under-represented in STEM disciplines (both in New Zealand and globally) that dominate roles within GCSB and in the operational roles within the NZSIS. Considering these constraints, the community has taken specific actions to address this underrepresentation.







Between 2016 and 2022, overall representation of women in the NZSIS increased from 40.6 percent to 44.5 percent, and women's representation in senior leadership has increased from 24 percent to 52.4 percent.

In the same period, the GCSB have sustained 50 percent representation of women in senior leadership roles.

### ***Career progression***

Both the GCSB and NZSIS have many roles where the skills, knowledge, and experience (capability) are not readily available in the market. They also recognise that individuals must be supported to grow professionally in order to have a satisfying, long-term career.

To grow some of the technical capability they require, the NZIC has developed a Career Pathways Framework. The framework enables employees in selected technical roles to make informed decisions about whether they want to be a deep technical specialist, have a multi-faceted career, or become a leader within the NZIC.

In particular, the framework helps employees when:

- undertaking individual development planning
- developing a long-term career plan
- undertaking career progression
- considering applying for a position in the NZIC.

The framework is made up of several different components. There are five different job families, where competencies are 'assigned' to job families and different progression frameworks are formed using these competencies. A progression framework is 'owned' by a job family when most of the competencies are from that area.

The NZIC is committed to continuous improvement across the Career Development Framework. Career Development Boards comprise of subject matter experts and key leaders who govern the maintenance of progression frameworks and competencies, and assess individual progression applications.

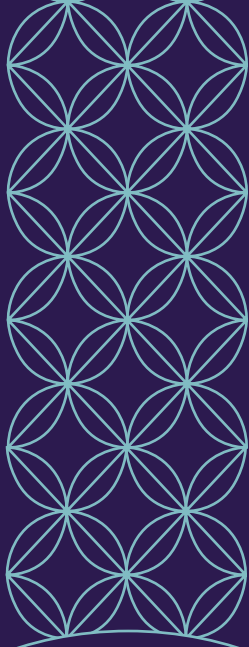
### ***Women's self-development programme***

In August 2019, the NZIC implemented a new women's development programme, Poutamatia – Reach for the highest. The Poutamatia programme was developed to support women with their personal and professional career development and self-confidence. Due to the positive feedback and successes of women putting themselves forward for new opportunities, the programme is now over-subscribed.

### ***D&I learning for staff and leaders***

The NZIC has a comprehensive [Diversity and Inclusion \(D&I\) Strategy](#). The strategy outlines three key objectives – 'Grow our diversity', 'Cultivate an inclusive culture', and 'Build our D&I capability'. The NZIC recognize they need to continue growing their D&I capability in order to achieve their D&I goals.

A D&I learning programme was established in 2020. D&I topics are built into employee learning pathways and delivered via the learning management system. This creates a visible pathway for employees to track their progress and identify additional opportunities to build their capability.



Kia Toipoto

