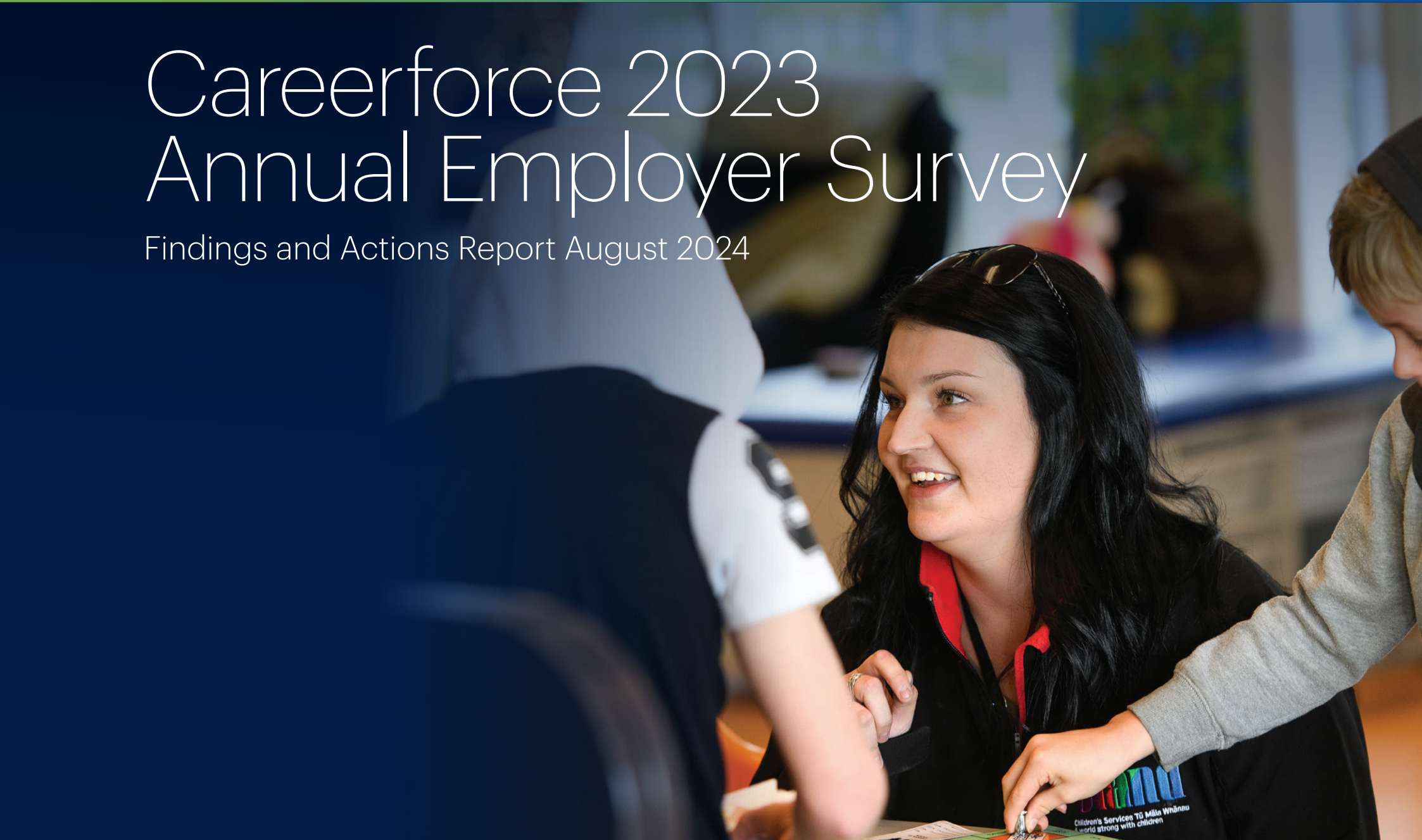


Careerforce 2023 Annual Employer Survey

Findings and Actions Report August 2024



Kia ora

My personal thanks to those of you who completed our 2023 annual employer survey, first launched back in 2017, with this survey representing its seventh iteration. There are a number of highlights from this survey, not least of which are the record response rate, and the record level of overall employer satisfaction.

While the actual survey was carried out at the end of 2023, we have spent significant time analysing the results and your verbatim comments, and considering what further improvements we can make to address areas of concern. This report shares the key results, but more importantly, it details the actions we are taking to address areas that you have identified for improvement.

Over the many years that this survey has been running, you have shared significant feedback, and this has informed a number of improvements across our organisation. I attribute our steady improvement in overall satisfaction to these improvements, and hence to the feedback you have so generously shared with us across the seven years the survey has been running.

While the results and your comments indicate that most of you are very satisfied with Careerforce, there are some pockets of dissatisfaction. Identifying and acting upon the issues identified is critical to further lifting satisfaction, so we appreciate your generosity and honesty in sharing your feedback.

In 2017, our inaugural satisfaction result was 7.1 (out of 10), and we set a target of achieving 7.5. Having achieved 7.6 in this latest survey, we are now resetting the bar to 8.0. This won't happen if we stand still, so we look forward to sharing details of our continuous improvements, some of which are outlined later in this report.

In tandem with the release of this topline report, we are also releasing *The Careerforce Difference*. This is essentially a summary of the key elements that we believe make up our value proposition to employers and learners, and has been heavily informed by the positive feedback that you have shared with us over the years. While there will always be room for improvement, we can't lose sight of what we do well, and to this end, we thank you for sharing your bouquets as well as your brickbats.

Ngā mihi

Rod Bentham

Executive Director
Careerforce



Survey background

Careerforce supports workplace-based training across the health, mental health, aged residential care, disability, social services, home and community support, youth work, cleaning and urban pest management industries. We work with over 2,000 employers nationwide to develop and then support the delivery of New Zealand Qualifications Authority (NZQA) approved training programmes.

We are industry driven, seeking to understand and meet the workforce development needs, in order to improve the health and wellbeing of New Zealanders.

This research was first commissioned in 2017 to provide a benchmark for measuring Careerforce's performance from an employer perspective on an annual basis. The aim of the research is to gather feedback that can help identify Careerforce's strengths and areas where improvements can be made at operational/delivery and strategic levels. Careerforce is committed to improving services and programmes, and the research findings provide valuable feedback that we can respond to.

The 2023 survey represented its seventh iteration and allows us to see any trends emerging over time.

Survey methodology

Research company Carte Blanche conducted this research on behalf of Careerforce over Nov/Dec 2023. The research is longitudinal in nature.

Year	Number of employers who completed all survey questions	Maximum margin of error at the 95% confidence level
2023	536	+/- 3.8%
2022	284	+/- 5.0%
2021	489	+/- 3.9%
2020	434	+/- 4.2%
2019	433	+/- 4.2%
2018	423	+/- 4.3%
2017	242	+/- 5.8%

We received a record response rate with 536 survey completions

89% up on the previous year's response rate. Thank you!

Key findings

- Overall employer satisfaction has steadily increased across the seven years the survey has been running, and with a **record level of satisfaction for 2023 of 7.6**.
- **Significant improvements in overall satisfaction** between **2017** and **2023** across aged residential care, social services, home and community health, and hospital/GP based services.
- A **record level of survey completions**, and **up 89%** on 2022.
- **Satisfaction with functions/roles stable** with previous years, and with Careerforce Workplace Advisors again receiving the highest level of satisfaction.
- Satisfaction with our technology services/ platforms also largely stable with previous years. **Satisfaction with Aka Toi**, our online learning platform **has steadily improved** over the years, a direct reflection of the significant investments we have made in improving this platform.
- **Satisfaction with our communications and engagement stable** with previous years.
- **90%** of respondents said that **Careerforce**

programmes meet or exceed their organisation's workforce development needs (just 6% say they do not meet).

- When considering workforce development options, **'programme relevance'** has **the most influence** on **employers' choice** of training programmes.
- **89%** of respondents said that **assessments in Careerforce programmes match workplace requirements** (just 5% say they do not match).
- When asked about **barriers to** their staff **completing training, lack of time** is **consistently the most significant barrier**. This is very consistent with how our learners respond when asked the same question. While insufficient English skills and lack of access to an assessor remain low as barriers, they have been steadily increasing over the last 5 years.
- **85% of employers expect** their **training needs to either increase (40%) or stay the same (45%)** over the next year.
- When considering their in-house staff assessor capability, **84% expect** their **staff assessors availability to either increase or remain the same**, and **86%** for **observer capacity**.



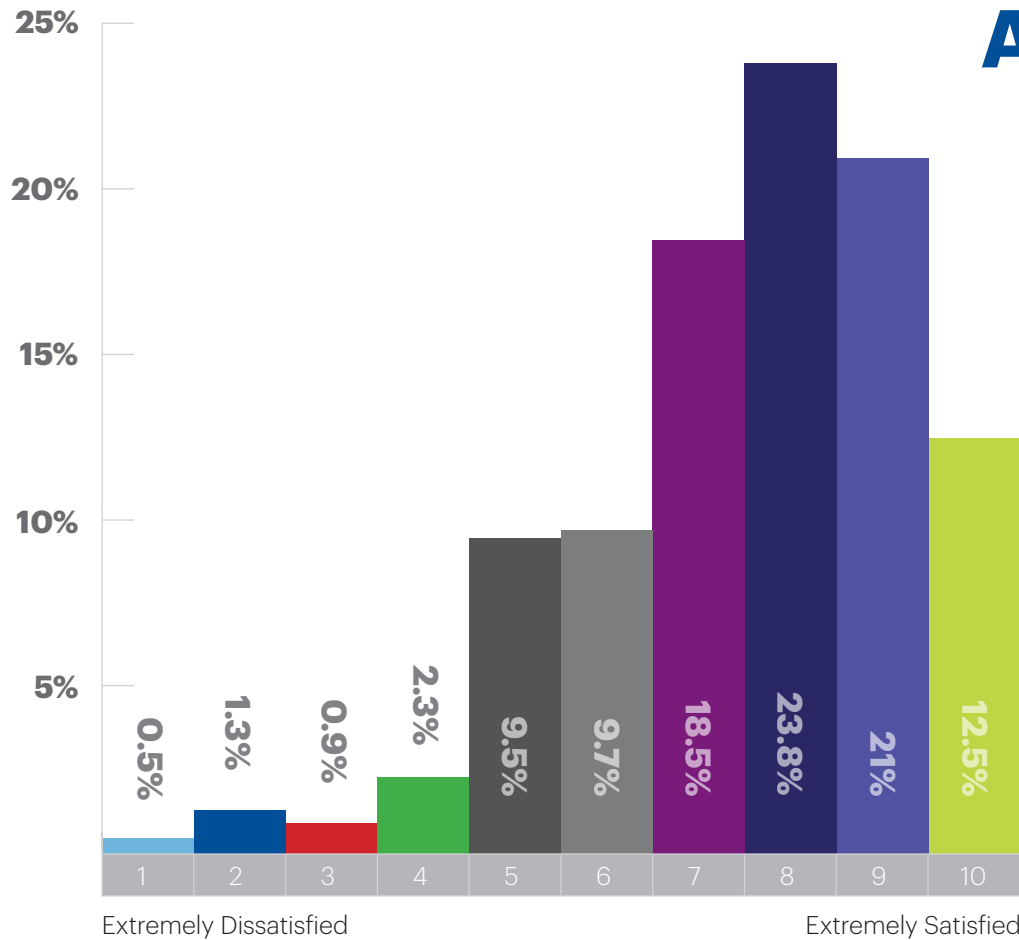
Base: All employers who answered, 2023 (n=558)

Overall satisfaction 2023

Most employers continue to be satisfied with their relationship with Careerforce.

Question: Taking all things into consideration, how would you rate your level of satisfaction with your overall relationship with Careerforce?

Average rating is **7.6** out of **10**.
A record result.

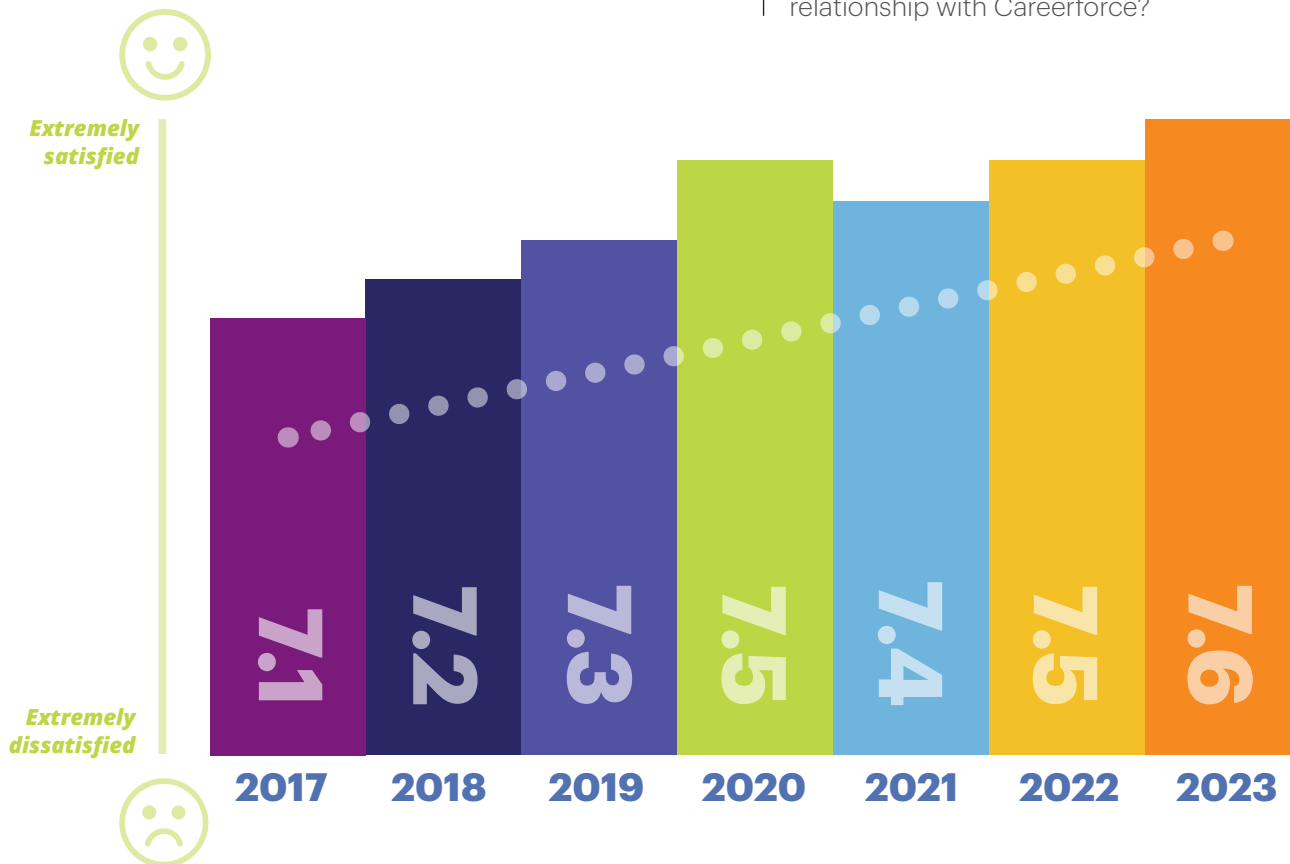


“The Careerforce team are an integral part of *our* team. They are wonderful, customer-focused and passionate about what they do. I love working with them.”

Overall satisfaction has steadily increased (2017 – 2023)

Overall employer satisfaction has steadily increased across the seven years the longitudinal survey has been running, from 7.1 in 2017, to a record result of 7.6 in 2023. Employers' average (mean) satisfaction is shown in the following graph as a rating out of 10.

Question: Taking all things into consideration, how would you rate your level of satisfaction with your overall relationship with Careerforce?



Base: All employers who answered, 2023 (n=558), 2022 (n= 284) 2021 (n=499) 2020 (n=441), 2019 (n=435), 2018 (n=427), 2017 (n=246)

“Excellent communication and responsiveness. We find Careerforce very helpful and supportive to our staff and organisation.”

“The seamless integration of your programs into our organisation has significantly contributed to the success and growth of our workforce. We value the partnership we have built with Careerforce and look forward to continuing this collaborative journey.”

“Our organisation's commitment to excellence is complemented by the depth and relevance of Careerforce's offerings, resulting in a harmonious synergy that has worked exceptionally well for us.”

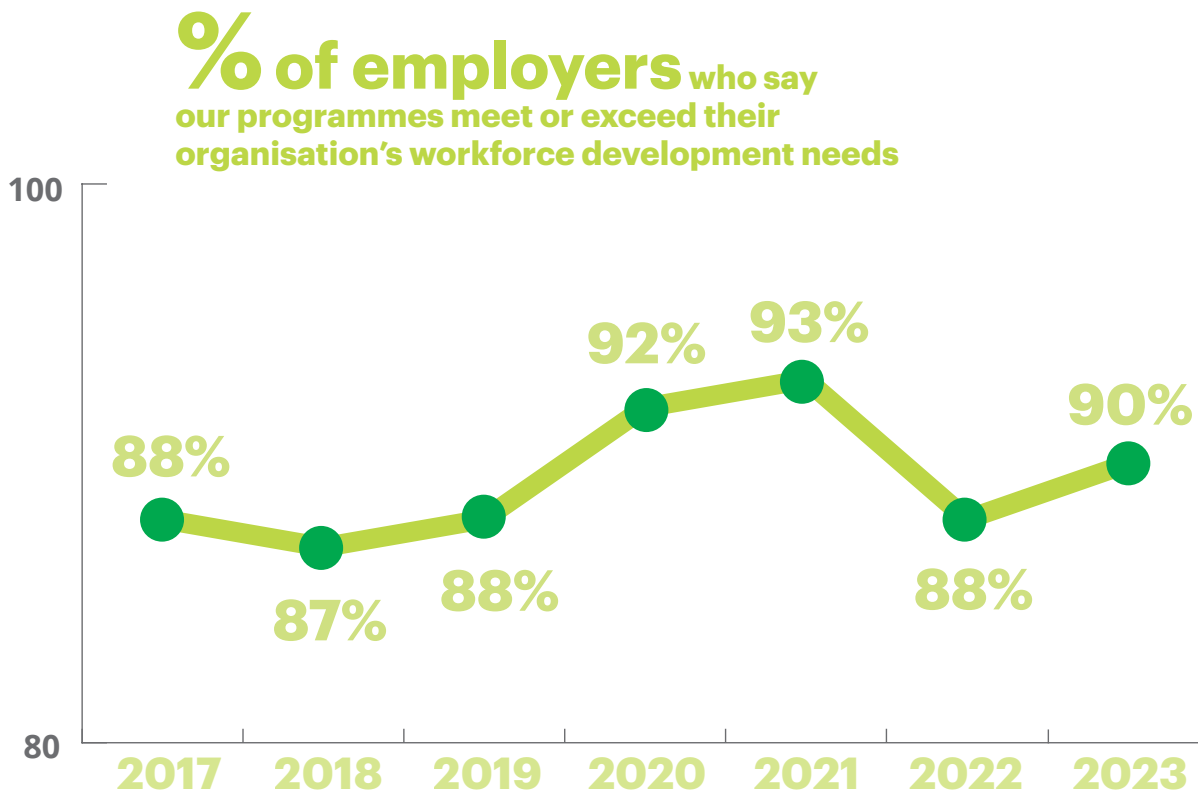
“Careerforce has been a great choice for our organisation and staff.”

Programme relevance

Base: All employers who answered, 2023 (n=583), 2022 (n=293), 2021 (n=514), 2020 (n=458), 2019 (n=448), 2018 (n=439), 2017 (n=254)

90% of employers say our programmes meet or exceed their workforce development needs. Just 5.7% say they do not meet these. A pleasing result given that employers also shared that ‘relevance of training programmes’ is the most important consideration when considering training options.

Question: Overall, how well do Careerforce programmes meet my organisation’s workforce development needs?



“Careerforce programmes are in-depth and comprehensive, giving caregivers a greater understanding of rationale and reasoning behind the health interventions that are offered and provided to residents.”

“Programmes fit our current training needs for staff. Back up and support is there when you need it, and the content of the assignments is relevant and reflects current practice.”

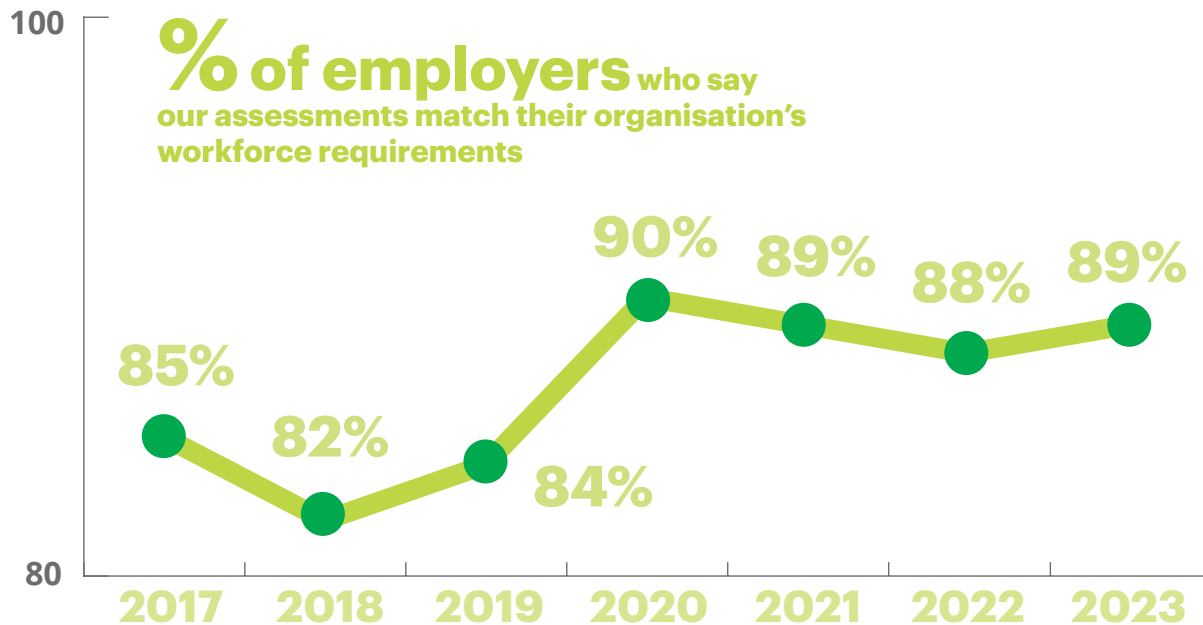
“Careerforce training has been integral in the training of our team, and the increased confidence and professionalism shown in their work.”

Programme assessments

Base: All employers who answered, 2023 (n=578), 2022 (n=293), 2021 (n=513), 2020 (n=456), 2019 (n=448), 2018 (n=438), 2017 (n=253)

Nearly 90% of our employers say our assessments match their workplace requirements. Just 5% say they do not.

Question: Overall, how well do the assessments in the programmes match workplace requirements?



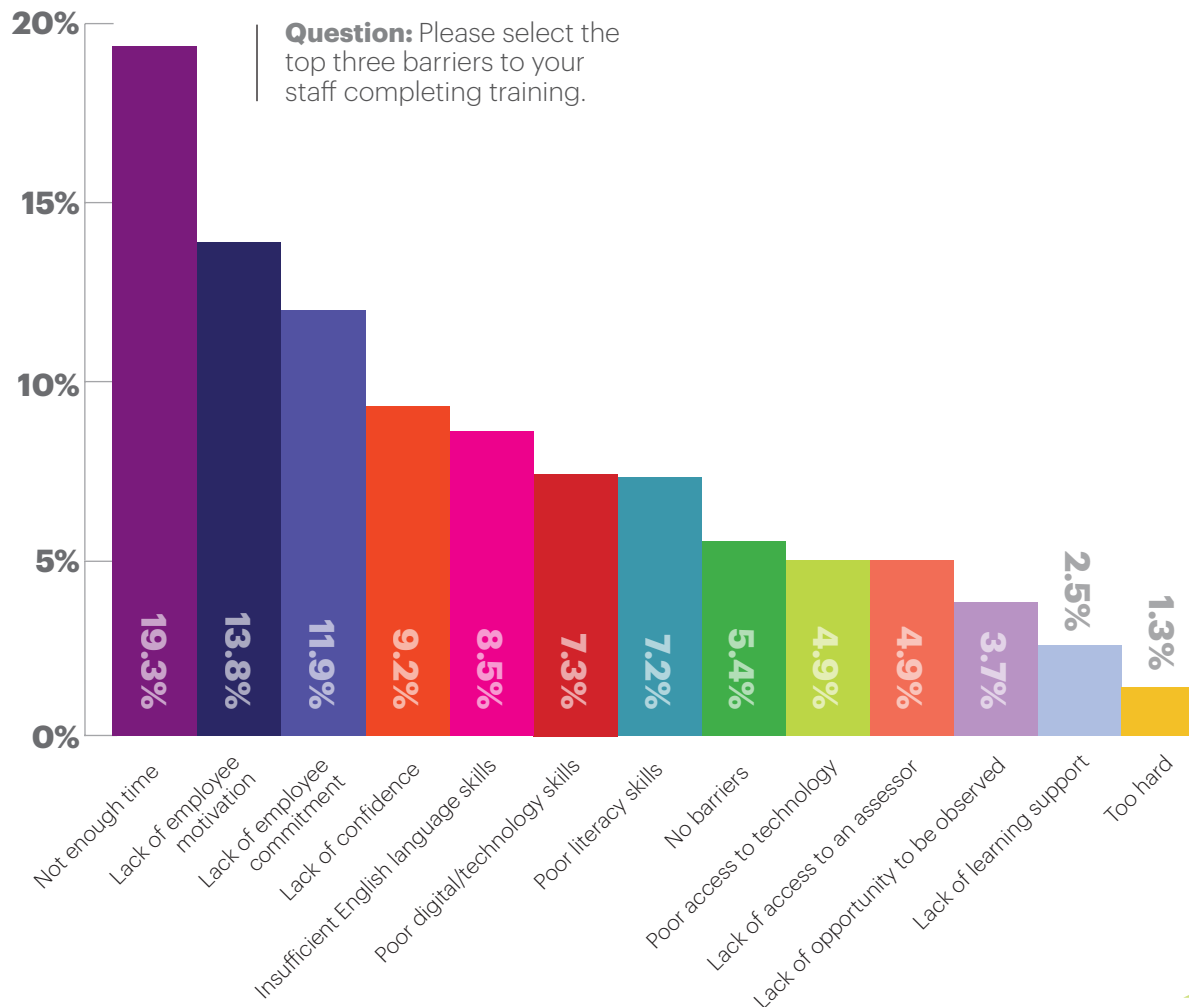
"I have found working with Careerforce to be a rewarding experience as an assessor, as I am able to help the trainees gain their qualifications."

"Careerforce is a wonderful organisation who enables staff to gain education in their field, giving them so much more confidence, which builds a better team. The programmes are very well thought out."

Barriers to completing training

Base: The n=1417 barriers that were selected by the n=573 employers who answered in 2023

The top barriers to staff completing their training have remained stable over the seven years of the survey, with 'lack of time' consistently the most significant barrier. Insufficient English skills has been steadily increasing over the last 5 years.



“It is difficult as staff are also working full-time in a role that can be quite demanding, so it's important that firstly staff are to fulfill their obligations to the organisation as an employee and at the same time to be able to find time to do their training. Finding balance between work and training can be challenging.”

Base: The n=1417 barriers that were selected by the n=573 employers who answered in 2023

Reducing barriers to completing training

Question: What could you, as an employer, do to reduce the barriers to your staff completing their training?

“One thing we really appreciated this year was the flex to help students using verbal assessments with a well trained assessor supporting them to ask questions, make notes, and mark the assessing schedule. The two learners we have on this system are doing so much better after we identified we could do that.”

“Make setting weekly time aside for study mandatory. Be stricter on the deadlines we set. Have achievement of the qual linked with a pay increase.”

“Employer is looking at creating structures to assist employees via learning hubs and offering them at different times of the day to meet individuals' needs.”

“Give them paid time to complete the training requirements.”

“Give some dedicated time during or immediately after shift to use spare workplace PC. We do but have limited capacity.”

“Making time while on shift to be assisted by a Careerforce assessor to go through any questions that are not understood.”

“Get them together as a group to study. Have timelines. Praise their hard work and successes. Find more appropriate staff to observe, instead of having only one person doing it.”

“Provide time and resources such as a venue to study.”

“Provide more opportunities to get together to work on assessments.”

“Be more prepared to have structured discussion specifically around their training.”

“Trainees are offered a lot of support within our organization, including paid training time monthly.”

“Supporting to give them confidence in the path they are on alongside some good work skills and ethics.”

“Continue to offer structured learning support (regular study days) and build our Observer and Assessors knowledge, ability and confidence.”

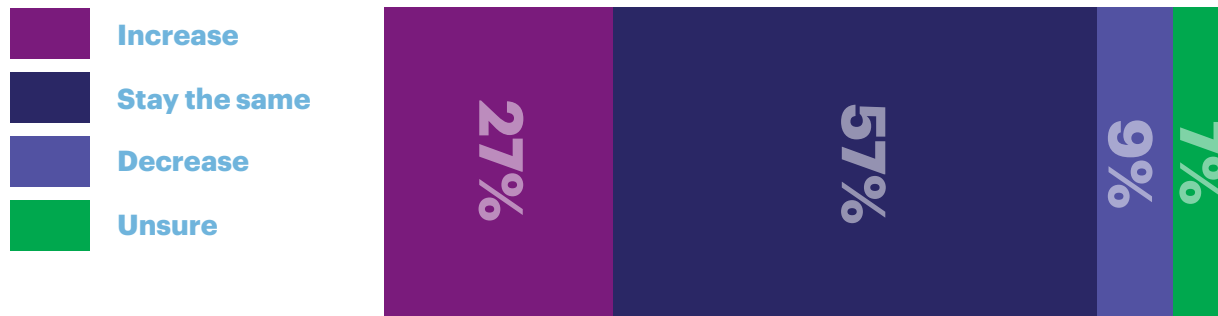
“Provide set study time to complete the work. Allow staff to take laptops/surface pros home as needed.”

“Supporting them to have confidence in the path they are on alongside some good work skills and ethics.”

Workplace assessor resourcing

84% of employers expect their in-house assessment capacity to either remain the same, or increase (just 9% expect it to decrease).

Question: Over the next 12 months, do you anticipate the availability of your in-house staff assessor(s) to do the role will:



"I don't expect a decrease. In fact quite the opposite. I have staff going through training at the moment and the expectation is that they will become fully fledged assessors by year's end "

"As a learning and development advisor I advocate for quality observations as this is how the qualification stays valid, reliable and applicable for our disabled partners. I will be focusing on quality and this is a pivotal part of the process. We will have increased capacity because I will support it. "

Workplace observer resourcing

85% of employers expect their in-house observation capacity to either remain the same, or increase (just 6% expect it to decrease).

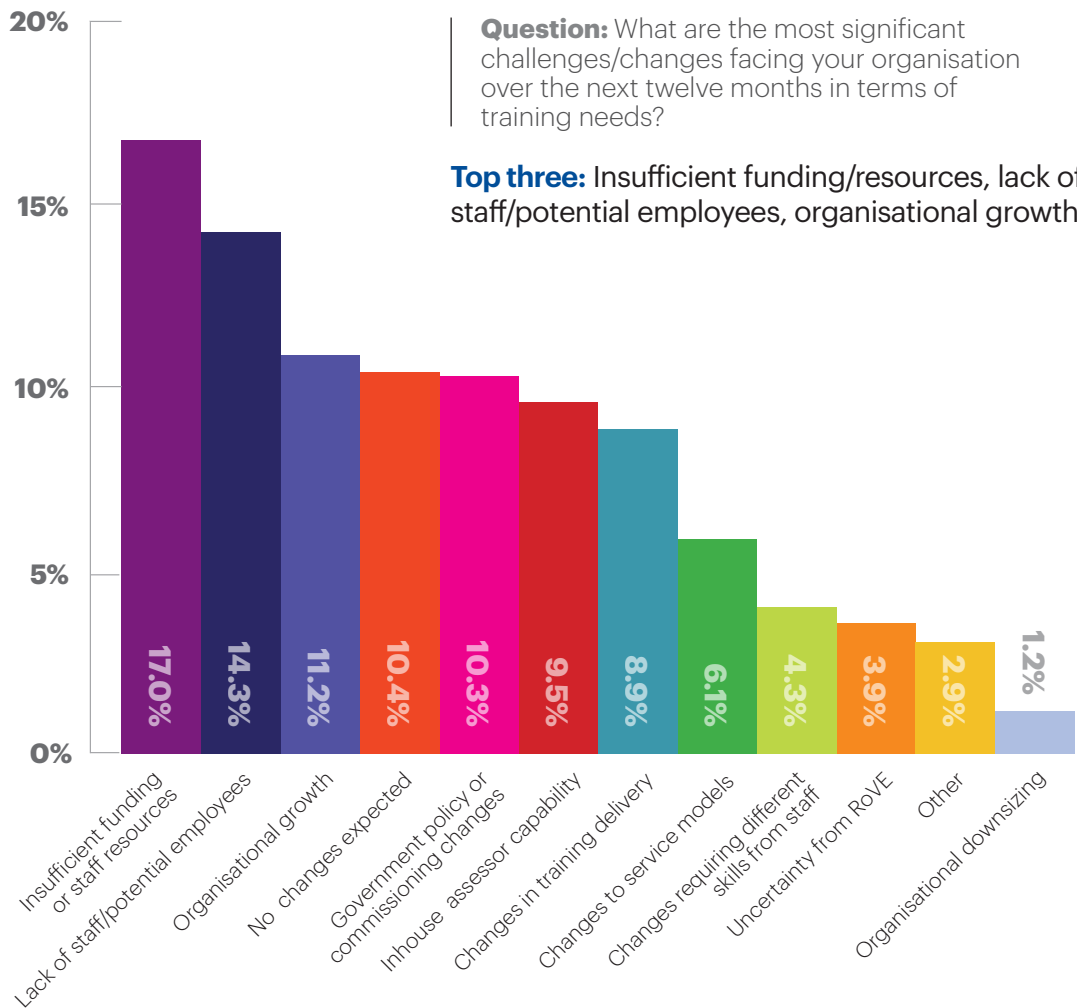
Question: 'Observation' is a significant part of the assessment process, to capture 'naturally occurring evidence' in the workplace. Over the next 12 months, do you anticipate your staff's availability to observe learners' performance and note examples of what they did, as part of the assessment process will:



Challenges/changes facing organisational training

Base: The n=1209 challenges that were selected by the employers who answered in 2023

The most significant challenge employers will face over the next 12 months is insufficient funding/resources (17%). Lack of staff has significantly reduced as a challenge, from 22% in 2022 to 14% in 2023.



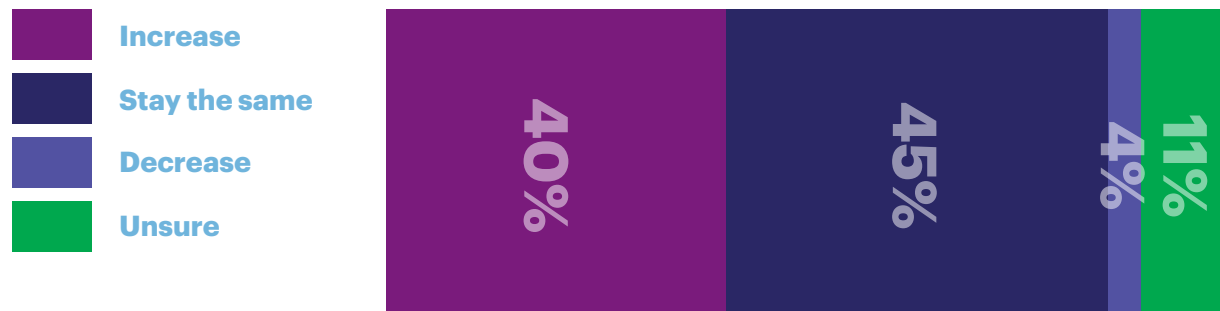
“We need to continually grow our staff and some of that has slipped back over last 2-3 years due to Covid .”

Next 12 months training requirements

85% of employers predict that their training requirements will either increase or stay the same over the next 12 months. Just 4% expected their training needs to decrease.

Question: Over the next 12 months, to what extent do you anticipate that your organisational training requirements will change?

Employers' expectations of their **organisational training requirements** over the next 12 months



“In our industry, legislation changes frequently, which means continuous staff training.”

“The requirements of the clients staying at home in the community are becoming more complex which in turn means the support workers need enhanced training to manage these clients.”

“We seem to be having a lot of more experienced staff leaving so we will move towards a more inexperienced workforce- so they will need more training.”

The Good Stuff



Supportive, responsive staff



“Great interactions with staff from Careerforce. Always prompt with any queries and explains answers in a way that is easy to understand. Very supportive with guidance and support if anyone is struggling.”

“Our Careerforce Advisor is very attentive to our training needs here at the hospital. Providing support and prompt responses to enquiries made by myself and our trainers. Going that extra mile to ensure and enhance client satisfaction.”

“Careerforce’s assessors/ advisors are great and very helpful. They are always available to meet and support our staff in person, by phone or by mail.”

Good communications



“I have found the communications and support in terms of workforce planning to be very helpful, clear, concise and timely.”

“Excellent communication and engagement with Careerforce.”

“Reporting and communication have always been timely, accurate and helpful.”

Good technology services



“Access to the online Aka Toi and Iportal are awesome. You have what you need and the support online to achieve.”

“Website is easy to guide through and find what you are looking for.”

“Reports are sent regularly and are easy to read and follow.”

Positive learning outcomes



“Staff confidence and quality of care has improved.”

“Staff gain not just task knowledge but also self-confidence by being able to achieve a qualification.”

“I have seen our staff try new things and then adapt to circumstances because they have learnt new ways to approach situations.”

Good learning resources and/or programme content



“The study material is relevant and engaging. The staff have benefited from studying through Careerforce.”

“We recommend your programme to everyone that asks about it - we are so grateful for your support!”

“Careerforce programmes along with the teaching of the trainer/assessor ensures that learners engage with the material to get the most out of their learning.”

Relevant programmes



“Careerforce programmes are in-depth and comprehensive, giving caregivers a greater understanding of rationale and reasoning behind the health interventions that are offered and provided to residents.”

“Careerforce’s programs have seamlessly integrated into our organisation, and their implementation has proven to be a highly effective collaboration.”

“Programmes are work- place applicable, supported well and so the result is better staff.”

The Not So Good Stuff



Communication, engagement, and/or support



“Hard to get hold of.”

“I have a relationship with one Careerforce staff member which I value but no one else.”

“I would like regular engagement, at least 2-3 times per year with the Careerforce staff who are working with our kaimahi.”

Technology services related



“I don't use [Aka Toi] but the students have had problems with it and many don't cope with the online training, I wish you had the option of paper based as well.”

“Simplifying Aka Toi, for the assessor and the students.”

Assessment related



“Improve the wording of the questions on the assessments.”

“The questions often aren't worded to elicit the answers you seem to be looking for in your example answers.”

“Some of the assessments are so repetitive.”

Programmes not meeting needs



“Revise the curriculum and add learning resources that are clear and simple to follow with practical scenario.”

“The assessments are not always applicable for kaiawhina working alone in the community.”

“Some unit standards are not relevant for the hospital trainee. Many questions appear repetitive. Some are out of date.”

Enrolment issues



“Enrolment takes too many steps, it creates a barrier.”

“Bring it back that the facility manager can attest the proof of identity rather than it is to be done by a JP.”

“I continue to struggle with accessing JP's to certify passports etc. The training agreement is the most difficult part of this process.”

Learner support



“More online support for the trainee through online classes.”

“More flexibility as some are working long hours and have little time.”

“More contact/encouragement with the employees doing the training.”

Issues and Actions

We are committed to improving overall employer satisfaction, and have spent significant time analysing the feedback to identify the key issues emerging, and identifying actions either underway or that we will commit to, in order to address these issues.

What follows is a summary of the key issues and actions. We intend upon expanding on these in upcoming issues of our monthly employer e-newsletter, Skills for Good – if you don't currently receive this, you can sign up at:

<https://www.careerforce.org.nz/skills-for-good-subscription>



Issue Themes Emerging	Careerforce Actions to Address
Need for more regular contact/engagement	<p>While we have a significant field team across Aotearoa, we also support more than 2,000 employer sites. We have call cycles locked in for most, but if you would like to see more of us, please just ask.</p>
Staff changes and not knowing who to contact.	<p>We have staff changes from time to time, and we need to do a better job of advising stakeholders when their key Careerforce contacts are changing. We are implementing a new nationwide process to support this.</p> <p>However, at any time, if you are unsure who to contact, please feel free to call 0800 277 486, or email info@careerforce.org.nz.</p> <p>Careerforce Workplace Advisors (CWA) contact details can also be found on our website.</p>
Lack of communications, or inconsistent information	<p>We endeavour to cover off all important updates and developments in our monthly employer newsletter, Skills for Good (see back issues here). If you are not receiving this, or indeed our regular training progress reports, please contact us so we can update our records.</p> <p>We are also very conscious of the importance of strong internal communications within Careerforce, to support consistent external messaging.</p>
Simplify the enrolment process	<p>We are continually exploring ways in which we can simplify the enrolment process. However, please be aware that all the information we collect via the training agreements (including proof of identity) is required for statutory compliance and reporting purposes by our funders.</p> <p>We are continuing to explore the potential for online training agreements.</p>
Confusion around domestic vs non-domestic learners	<p>The introduction of the Unified Funding System (UFS) and the closure of the Targeted Training & Apprenticeship Fund (TTAF) led to changes around eligibility for domestic enrolment fees. We appreciate this led to some confusion as indeed it did for us as we navigated these changes.</p> <p>Up to date eligibility information and training agreement identification requirements can be found here, or discuss with your Careerforce Advisor.</p>

Issue Themes Emerging	Careerforce Actions to Address
Lack of time for learners	<p>Our mode of learning is workplace-based learning, and we appreciate that our learners are employees first and learners second. Notwithstanding this, lack of time is consistently expressed (by employers and learners) as the most significant barrier to learner progress and completion.</p> <p>If you are able to provide some study time for your learners, we know that this will perhaps make the single most significant difference in their learning success. We do however appreciate this needs to be balanced against general workforce challenges.</p> <p>Careerforce has also been increasing its face-to-face learning sessions across the country – please encourage and enable your staff to join these valuable opportunities. We get fantastic feedback from our learners to these sessions.</p>
Training costs	<p>While relevance of training programmes is your most important consideration when considering training options, we also understand that costs are also important. We are committed to keeping our enrolment costs as low as possible– Careerforce has not lifted its enrolment fees since before 2016.</p> <p>We also hasten to add however that cost should not be considered in isolation, but rather in the context of the service offering you actually receive for the cost – please refer to The Careerforce Difference here.</p>
Enrolment costs a barrier to training	<p>We appreciate the cost constraints that many of our employers face, and that can impact upon levels of training. There are however a number of grants and scholarships available, and that you should discuss with your Careerforce contact. These include the likes of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Disability training grants • Peer support training grants • Apprenticeship Boost has been extended until June 2028 (\$500/mth subsidy to employers of first year apprentices) – occupations covered are subject to change from 1 January 2025. <p>As new grants and scholarships become available that are relevant to your workforce training needs, we will let you know. They can also be found here.</p>

Issue Themes Emerging	Careerforce Actions to Address
Concerns with Te Pūkenga & Reform of Vocational Education (RoVE)	<p>The National-led Government is disestablishing Te Pūkenga, and has recently released a proposal for organisational structures that will replace it. This includes keeping work-based and campus-based provision separate. Final outcomes are expected to be announced in November 2024.</p> <p>In the meantime, and just as we have done throughout the last five years of RoVE, we continue business-as-usual, with no disruption to our employers and learners.</p>
Lack of assessor capacity/capability	<p>Careerforce offers our employers the flexibility of either ‘employer-led’ delivery (supported by a workplace-based assessor), or ‘full service’ (where Careerforce will provide full assessment support). You can also access a pool of contract assessors.</p> <p>Please contact Careerforce (assessor-admin@careerforce.org.nz) to discuss options when or if assessor capacity becomes a problem at your workplace.</p>
Challenges around assessor training.	<p>We have a dedicated and committed team of Learning Engagement Advisors that support existing assessors (over 800 across Aotearoa) and the training of new workplace-based assessors. We also continue to run regular REAL Observer workshops to train new observers.</p> <p>Assessor hubs for Māori assessors are being considered to enhance confidence and capability in assessment within culturally safe environments.</p>
Allow more flexibility in assessment submission	<p>As we have shared previously, we have a very strong focus on supporting our priority learner groups (Māori, Pasifika, disabled) to support improved and equitable outcomes.</p> <p>Over recent years, we have introduced greater flexibility in learner assessment modes to reflect that all learners learn differently. This includes the availability of korero matanga (assessment by conversation), and also the ability to assess in te reo Māori.</p>

Issue Themes Emerging	Careerforce Actions to Address
Use plain English, and reduce repetition in assessments	<p>All programmes undergo regular reviews to ensure they remain relevant and fit-for-purpose. They are also subject to Consistency Reviews for NZQA. As a result, we are continually refining our learning and assessment resources, and this includes addressing issues around the use of plain English, and reducing repetition in assessments.</p> <p>All learning and assessment resources are reviewed by our Literacy & Numeracy Advisor.</p> <p>When invited to provide your feedback to these reviews, please engage in these opportunities as we can only act upon the feedback that is shared with us.</p>
Training takes too long to complete	<p>All Careerforce programmes have an 'expected duration', and which is based on the credit value of the programme.</p> <p>However, a strength of work-based learning programmes is that they are all competency based, and the sooner the learner demonstrates their competency, the sooner they can complete their programme and be awarded the qualification. Some will finish sooner, some will take longer.</p>
More support for learners	<p>In recent years, we have significantly ramped up the levels of direct learner support and engagement. This includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Expanding the number of face-to-face learner support sessions across Aotearoa, be it in the form of Achieve Study Hubs, Wananga/ Noho Marae for our Māori learners, or Talanoa for our Pasifika learners. • Free mental health support for learners. • Free counselling for learners going through a tough time through the professional employee assistance provider (EAP) Vitae. • Manaaki Fund to support learners experiencing financial hardship, and that may be impacting upon their learning. <p>In tandem with our annual employer survey, we also consistently survey our learners to better understand their learning journey experience, and how they could potentially have been better supported, and act upon these findings.</p>

Issue Themes Emerging	Careerforce Actions to Address
Review of programme content	<p>Careerforce regularly reviews all learning resources and assessments, as we are accountable to NZQA for ensuring our qualifications and programs remain relevant and meet employer needs.</p>
Challenges with usability of Aka Toi (online learning platform).	<p>Over the 7 years of the survey, we have continued to invest heavily in Aka Toi, and have seen the satisfaction with Aka Toi improve significantly across the same period.</p> <p>Plans are currently underway to enhance upfront training for both assessors and learners on Aka Toi.</p> <p>Coaching sessions are available on Aka Toi, we have a team of experts who can help with training and support. Please reach out to a member of our e-learning team by contacting 0800 277 486</p>
Financial strains placing pressure on learners	<p>The Careerforce Manaaki Fund has been designed to provide temporary financial assistance to learners facing unexpected hardship that is impacting upon their studies. Please alert your Careerforce learners to this fund.</p>
Issues with Dementia LCP learner progress	<p>We are aware of challenges with learners completing this programme, and recently completed a pilot programme offering facilitated learning sessions. We are now looking to expand this offering.</p>



A big thank you to all that completed this year's survey and provided such valuable feedback.

While our annual survey provides an important feedback mechanism, please feel free to share feedback at any time of the year. We are always striving to improve, but can only act upon feedback that is shared with us.

If you have any questions or comments about this survey, please get in touch at:

Phone: 0800 277 486

Email: info@careerforce.org.nz

Web: careerforce.org.nz