

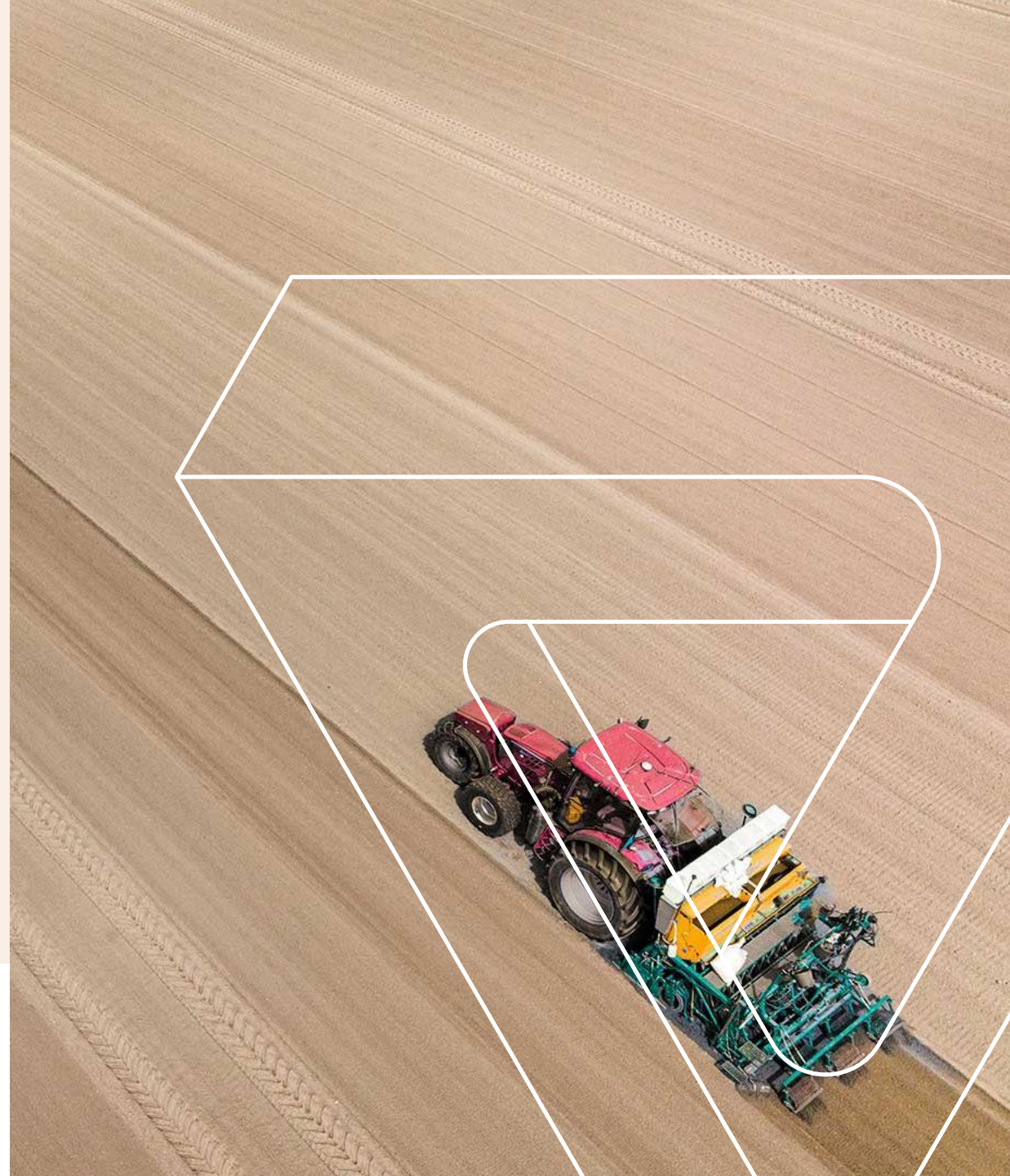
THE 2025 EMPLOYMENT MONITOR

Perceptions and experiences of employers
and workers in New Zealand

Revised report
10 June 2025



**MINISTRY OF BUSINESS,
INNOVATION & EMPLOYMENT**
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01

Research purpose, method and summary

Research purpose

The employment monitor delivers a comprehensive view of New Zealand workers' and employers' perceptions, experiences and pressures in the employment market, as well as those of temporary migrant workers and employers of temporary migrant workers.

The primary objective of the New Zealand employment monitor is to inform the on-going design and targeting of MBIE's education and engagement activities with employers and workers, and to monitor success in changing these groups' understanding of their rights and responsibilities. Specific measurements covered in the surveys of NZ workers and NZ employers are shown to the right.

Temporary migrant worker exploitation (TMWE) research

MBIE has led part of a government initiative to address temporary migrant worker exploitation (TMWE) in New Zealand. In 2021, MBIE commissioned Verian (formerly Kantar Public) to carry out baseline qualitative and quantitative research to segment and understand the temporary migrant worker population and employers who hire and potentially exploit these migrants. Follow-up quantitative measures have been undertaken in 2023, 2024 and 2025. **The TMWE research now forms part of MBIE's wider worker and employer monitor.** Pages 99 to 172 in this report therefore present the findings from these surveys of employers of migrants and migrant workers. Key comparisons are also made to the surveys of all NZ workers and employers to benchmark employers of migrants against all employers in NZ, and migrant workers against all workers in NZ.

The surveys of migrant workers and employers of migrants also cover the measurements listed to the right (with the exception of Māori business views).

Employer measurements include:

- Knowledge of employment rules and obligations
- Attitudes towards workers
- Views of Māori businesses ('all employer' survey only)
- Communication channels, useful sources of information and helpfulness of various support channels
- Suggestions on ways to encourage compliance with employment law.

Worker measurements include:

- Knowledge of employment rights
- Employment context
- Satisfaction with employment situation and trust in employer
- Attitudes towards employment situation
- Employment concerns
- Commitment to speaking up
- Use and perceptions of communication and support channels
- Perceptions of government agency support
- Demographic characteristics.

The employment monitor consists of four separate surveys in 2025.

Baseline surveys were conducted in 2024 for the surveys of NZ workers and employers. Surveys were previously undertaken in 2021, 2023 and 2024 for the migrant worker survey and survey of employers of migrants.

All workers	All employers	Migrant workers	Employers of migrants
<p>A survey of 1,699 New Zealanders aged 18+ who are in paid employment (excludes self-employed).</p> <p>Average interview length of 18 minutes.</p> <p>Two methods used:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">Online panel surveyPush to web survey to boost workers in key industries: viticulture, horticulture, sex industry, forestry and fisheries, and couriers. Sample was sourced from the Electoral Roll. <p>Maximum margin of error: +/-2.4¹. Data are weighted by industry, region, ethnicity, age within gender for Māori and non-Māori. Pacific and Asian workers were also weighted by gender to correct any imbalances.</p> <p>Fieldwork ran from 17 February to 28 March 2025.</p>	<p>A survey of 931 NZ employers.</p> <p>Average interview length of 19 minutes.</p> <p>Method consisted of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">Online business panel survey primarily targeting small businesses (fewer than 10 employees).Push to web survey using phone pre-calls to identify best person in the business to complete the survey.Sample frames: online business panel, Martins database, and Companies Office's NZ Business Number (NZBN) bulk data using their Māori business identifier. <p>Maximum margin of error: +/-3.2¹. Data are weighted by business size within industry.</p> <p>Fieldwork ran from 13 February to 30 March 2025.</p>	<p>A survey of 1,450 temporary migrant workers.</p> <p>Average interview length of 26 minutes.</p> <p>Research method consisted of an online survey, with the questionnaire available in 8 languages: English, Samoan, Fijian, Tongan, Punjabi, Hindi, Tagalog, and simplified Chinese.</p> <p>Respondents were sourced from a contact list provided by MBIE.</p> <p>Maximum margin of error: +/-2.6¹. Data are unweighted.</p> <p>Fieldwork ran from 4 March to 4 April 2025.</p>	<p>A survey of 333 employers of migrant workers (either currently employed or in the last five years) .</p> <p>Average interview length of 23 minutes.</p> <p>Method consisted of an online survey, with respondents sourced from a contact list provided by MBIE.</p> <p>Maximum margin of error: +/-5.4¹. Data are unweighted.</p> <p>Fieldwork ran from 18 February to 21 March 2025.</p>

¹Maximum margins of error have been calculated at the 95% confidence level and assume simple random sampling.

Notes to the reader

Definitions of terms used in this report

- Business sizes are defined as follows:
 - Micro: 1-5 employees
 - Small: 1-19 employees
 - Medium: 20-49 employees
 - Large: 50+ employees.
- **Māori business or organisation.** In this report, this refers to employers who have identified as working for or representing a Māori business/organisation or that their business has strong Māori leadership or a Māori values base.
- Self-reported knowledge or confidence refers to **respondents' own ratings of how well they feel they understand employment rights or obligations.**
- Tested knowledge refers to whether a respondent gave a correct answer when asked to say whether a statement about employment rights is correct or incorrect.
- Lapsed employers of migrants. These are employers who **don't currently employ migrants but have in the last five years.**
- Migrant workers. For the migrant worker survey and employers of migrant workers survey, migrant workers are defined as migrants who are currently living in New Zealand, arrived in the last five years, and have been in paid work during that time either as an employee or contractor.

Reporting conventions

Percentages in a graph may not add to 100% due to rounding or because respondents could select more than one response category.

A 'nett' result refers to a combined percentage that summarises responses in a question. For example, 'nett agree' consists of those who answered 'strongly agree' or 'agree'.

Significance testing



Statistically significant increases and decreases between survey waves (either at a total sample level or subgroup level) are denoted with arrows.



Subgroups in 2025 that are statistically significantly higher or lower than the total sample (or other subgroups) are denoted with triangles.

Most statistical significance testing has been carried out at the 95% confidence level. Differences that are only statistically significant at the 90% confidence level are marked with an asterisk*. Significance testing has been done using a columns proportion test in Q (our primary analysis software). Q significance testing includes an optional false discovery rate correction for running multiple tests.

Quality and privacy standards

This research has been carried out in accordance with the Research Association of New Zealand Code of Practice and Privacy 2023, the ESOMAR code of conduct, and ISO 20252 standards. All survey responses were collected and stored in accordance with data privacy standards. Respondent identities remain anonymous and no personally identifiable information is reported.



Summary of findings – NZ workers and employers

01

With a tighter labour market in 2025, specific segments of the workforce are experiencing poorer work environments.

Most workers remain satisfied with their employment situation, but perceptions of supportive management and flexible working have weakened. Trust in employers has also softened for some demographic groups. *See pages 15 and 16.*

Compared to 2024, young workers and women express significantly more concern about their working conditions (related to pay, hours, and workplace safety/culture). *See page 18.*

Employers have grown a little more confident in replacing staff, with fewer reporting difficulty finding good workers. Employers are also somewhat less critical of government resources to identify non-compliance and less critical of employment rules, seeing them as less of a barrier to doing business (although the latter is not statistically significant). *See pages 87 and 88.*

03

Public sector agency communications effectively bypass employer-driven barriers to workers speaking up.

More workers in 2025 report feeling better about speaking up about exploitation and **know it's important. Significant barriers remain** – many still find it difficult, especially in workplaces where trust is low or management is unsupportive. Fear of retaliation continues to be a major deterrent. *See pages 26-34.*

New analysis (from a Bayesian Belief Network¹) **highlights that a worker's willingness to speak up can depend heavily on trust in their employer.** However, easy access to reliable online information is playing a key role in short circuiting employer influences – both by increasing knowledge and by reducing fear through a sense of support. Direct government contact (via email or service centres) further reinforces this willingness. *See pages 29-34.*

02

Worker knowledge of employment rights has improved and both employers and workers are finding it easier to find information online.

Tested knowledge of four employment rights has improved among workers since 2024: annual leave entitlement (up 4 points to 91%), the right to an employment contract (up three points to 96%) the consequences of employers mistreating migrants (up 6 points to 79%), and the adult minimum wage (20% could name it in 2025). Young workers' knowledge in particular has improved. *See pages 23 and 24.*

The revamp of Employment New Zealand's website appears to be paying off. Since 2024, finding information on employment rights online is easier for workers and employers who lack confidence in their own knowledge. Students, low-income workers, and medium/large businesses rate Employment New Zealand's website more positively than in 2024. *See pages 41, 42, 75 and 76.*

04

Public sector reputation matters.

The new analysis also underscores that workers' general perceptions of government agencies as effective supporters of workers is a key driver of trust and precursor to workers engaging directly with government agencies via email and service centres. This in turn is reducing the fear of retaliation if a worker speaks up in an exploitative situation. *See pages 31 and 34.*

Summary of findings – migrant workers and employers of migrants in NZ

01

Strong uptake of employer accreditation under the AEWV scheme in 2025 aligns with shifts in who's hiring migrants and who those migrants are.

The vast majority of migrant employers have applied to be an accredited employer under the Accredited Employer Work Visa scheme (95%, up from 69% in 2024). *See page 149.*

Compared to 2024, the profile of employers of migrants includes fewer 'lapsed' employers of migrants and more employers with fewer than five migrant workers, with many of these likely to be first-time employers of migrants. *See page 143.*

And compared to 2024, the demographic profile of migrant workers has more partner visas (doubled since last year) and recent arrivals. The profile also has more older workers and workers of non-European ethnicity (especially Filipino, Fijian, and Indian). *See page 100.*

03

Communication has strengthened, with rising interest in learning more.

Since 2024, migrant workers have found it easier to find information online about employment rights. Perceptions of the usefulness of the Immigration NZ, Employment NZ, and Live and work NZ websites have all strengthened. *Refer pages 125 and 126.*

Both migrant workers (especially those on partner visas) and employers of migrants (including first time employers of migrants) show a growing appetite to learn more about their rights and obligations. Compared to 2024, both groups showed a higher interest in many of the ideas presented for getting information and support. *See page 128 and 154.*

02

The risk of exploitation is lower in 2025 – workers know more about their employment rights and are happier with their employment conditions.

Since 2024, improvements are evident across a range of measures of worker wellbeing including job satisfaction, feelings of gratitude, as well as family and community support. In 2025 migrant workers are more trusting of their employer, Employment NZ, and Immigration NZ (this especially stems from workers on partner visas). On the flip side, migrant workers feel more financially reliant on their job than we observed last year. *Refer pages 103, 106, 107, 110, 121, and 122.*

Further, since 2024 migrant workers' knowledge of employment rights has improved (sick leave and annual leave entitlements). Their understanding of where to go for support and awareness of the MEPW have also improved. In 2025, migrant workers also feel better about 'speaking up' in an exploitative situation. *Refer pages 114, 116, 110, and 119.*

These shifts have resulted in a significant increase in the size of the *Capable* segment (migrant workers with high knowledge and low risk of exploitation). *See page 136.*

04

Despite this more positive picture in 2025, challenges remain.

More than one in five (22%) migrant workers voiced concerns in this survey about their current employment conditions, with higher rates evident for Chinese workers and those on working visas. *See page 108.*

Around a quarter of migrant workers remain at risk of exploitation, falling into the disheartened (low knowledge and high risk of exploitation) or knowledgeable, but trapped segments. *See page 135.*

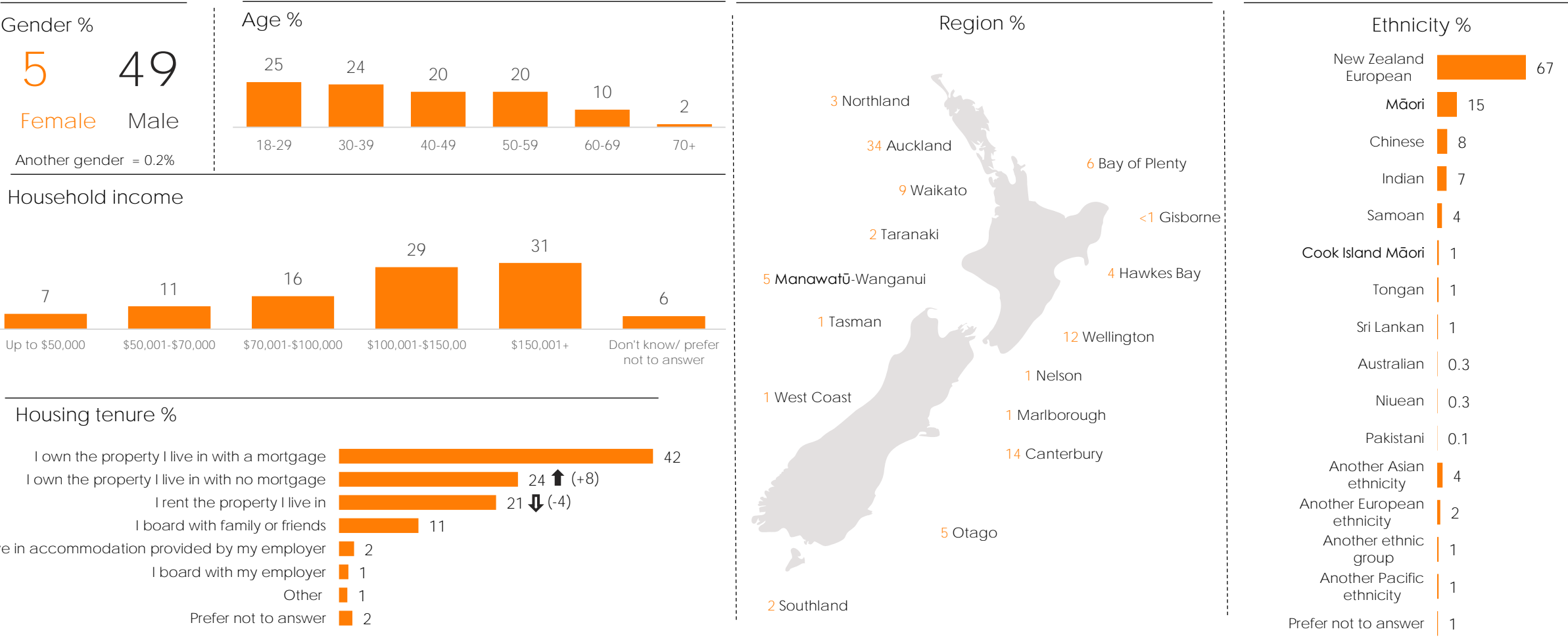
Likewise, around a quarter of employers of migrant workers are at potential risk of exploiting workers, sitting in either the 'conflicted' or 'potential exploiters' segments. *See page 135.*

02

NZ workers



Profile of New Zealand workers – weighted



Base: All workers (n=1,699)
Questions: S1 (Age), S3 (Gender), S4 (Ethnicity), S5 (Region), S6 (Household income), Q38 (Housing tenure)

Employment context of NZ workers

Workers in New Zealand continue to primarily source their employment online.

Slightly more are sourcing jobs from recruitment or government agencies this year. Friends and family are a much more common source for workers in micro workplaces.

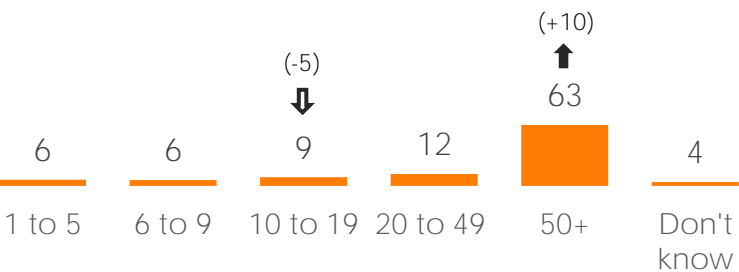


Base: All NZ workers (n=1,699)
S8. Which of these best describes the industry you work in?, S9. What is your current job title?, Q8. How did you get your main job?

The New Zealand employment landscape is diverse.

Union membership, out of work study, and accommodation entitlements vary by industry and worker demographics.

Business size (number of employees)
%



20% ↑ (+4)

of New Zealand workers are also studying.


- ▲ This is higher among:
- Domestic work (53%)
 - Workers in the Technology industry (45%)
 - Workers aged 18-29 (42%)
 - Union members (28%)
 - Workers who don't have family support (27%).

23% of New Zealand workers are union members.

- ▲ Union membership is more common among:

 - Government (central and local) workers (44%)
 - Health & aged care (41%)
 - Education (40%)
 - Pacific workers (33%)
 - Māori (32%)
 - Large employers (31%)
 - Workers who are also studying (32%).
- ▽ And less common among:

 - Workers in small workplaces (5%)
 - Workers in low-income households - <\$50k (12%)
 - Retail (11%)
 - Horticulture (1%)
 - Viticulture (0%).

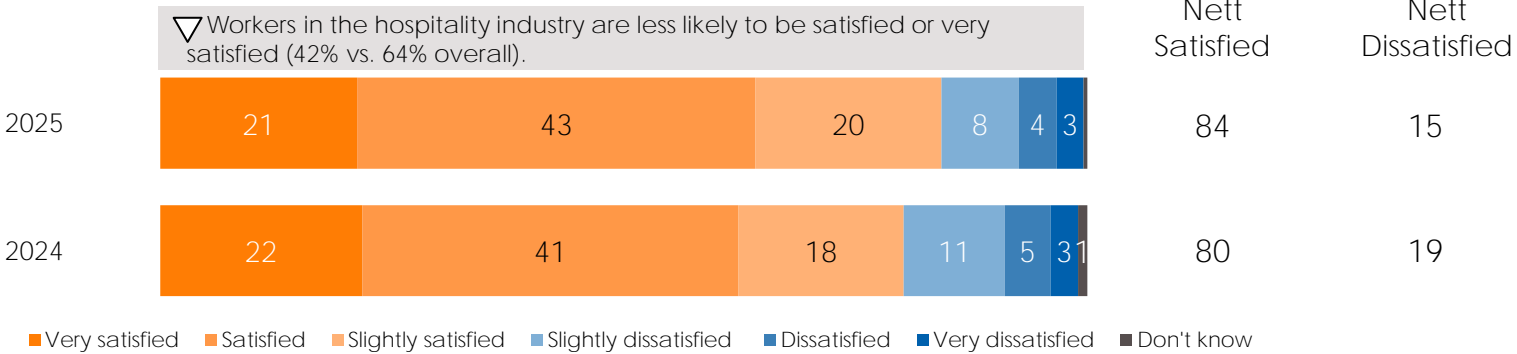
 5% ↑ (+3)
of New Zealand workers are entitled to accommodation in their employment contracts.

- ▲ This is higher among:
- Workers aged 18-29 (10%)
 - Workers in the technology industry (16%)
 - Workers in the manufacturing industry (11%)
 - Union members (11%).

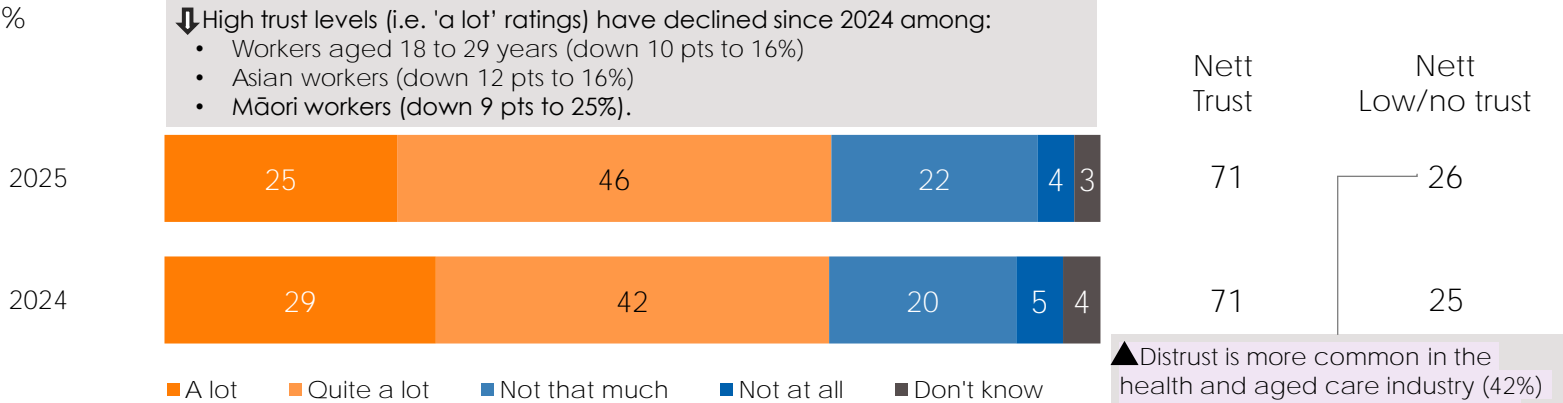
NZ worker perceptions of their employment

In a tighter labour market, workers' satisfaction with their employment situation is stable but trust in employers has declined among some demographic groups.

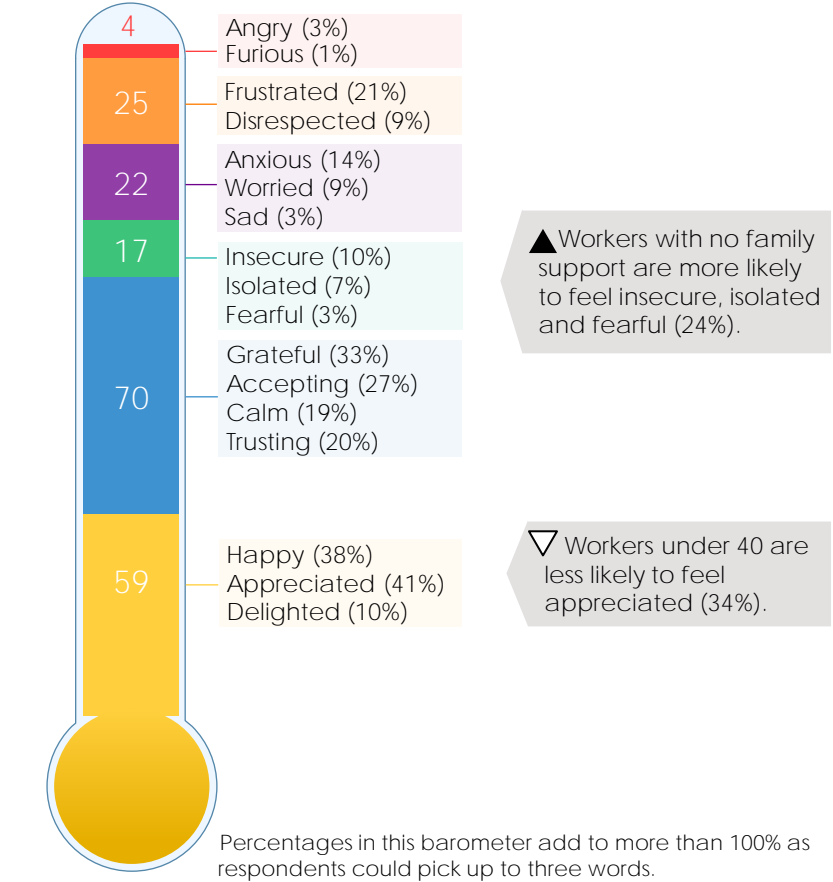
Overall satisfaction with employment situation %



Trust in employer %

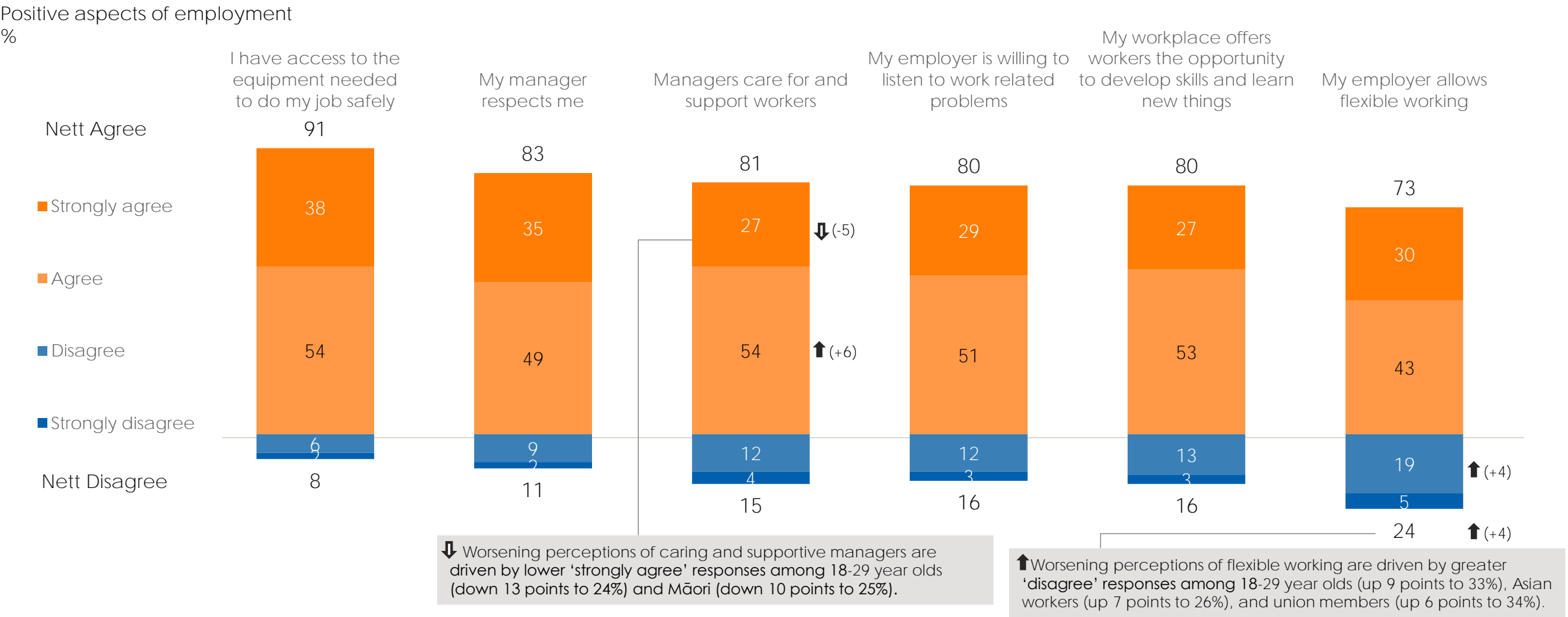


Emotions barometer %



Base: All NZ workers 2025 (n=1,699), 2024 (n=1,754)
Q2. Overall, how satisfied or dissatisfied are you with your current employment situation?
Q25c. Overall, how much do you trust your employer? Q24. Please select three words to describe how you feel about your current work.
Verian | The employment monitor

Perceptions of supportive managers and flexible working have weakened (especially among youth).



Base: All NZ workers (n=1,699)
Q3b. Thinking about your current job, how much do you agree or disagree with the following?
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'Don't know' responses are not shown on the chart. These vary from 1% to 6% across the statements.

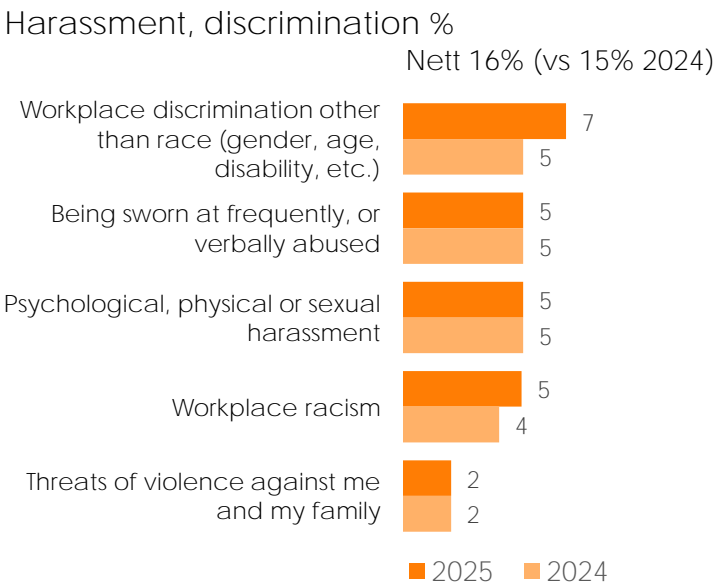
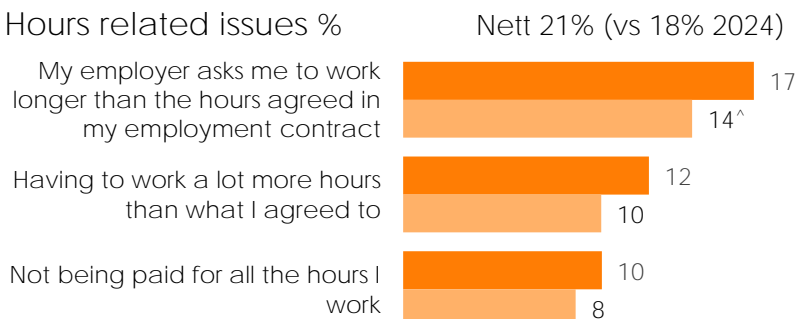
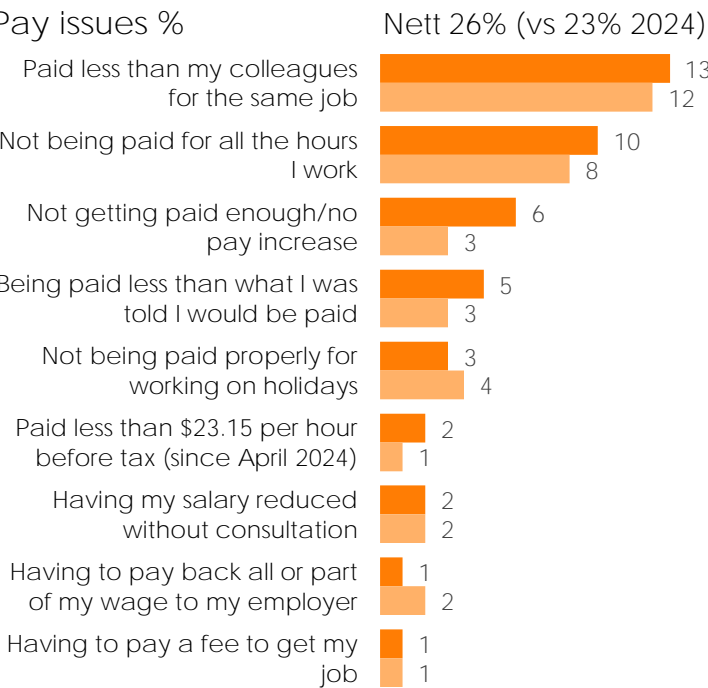
↑↓ Significant increase/decrease since last wave

Employment concerns continue to centre on under-payment, overwork, harassment and discrimination, and workplace and culture issues.

Youth and health/aged care workers are disproportionately affected.

49% of New Zealand workers have at least one employment concern (vs 45% in 2024)

- ▲ Employment concerns are more common among:
- 18-29 yrs (59%)
 - Health and aged care workers (64%)
 - Those who don't have family support (58%)



- Other concerns mentioned:
- The job is not what was promised (6%)
 - Having little or no contact with people outside of my work or accommodation (4%)
 - No written employment contract (3%¹)

¹ This figure differs to the result reported on page 19 as this 3% was an unprompted mention.

Base: All NZ workers 2025 (n=1,699), 2024 (n=1,754)
Q3/Q3a. Which of the following things, if any, have you experienced in your current employment situation?

[^]For both 2024 and 2025 data, this response category now includes similar responses that the respondent placed under 'other'. This explains why the 2024 result may be slightly different to the result shown in the 2024 report.

Women and younger workers voice more employment concerns than in 2024.

Shifts in the prevalence of employment concerns since 2024

		% point movement since 2024			
	Prevalence among total worker population aged 18+	18 to 29 year-olds	Women	Women under 40	Women who are <u>not</u> members of a union
Pay issues	26%	↑ Up 10 pts to 34%	↑ Up 7 pts to 27%	↑ Up 11 pts to 33%	↑ Up 10 pts to 27%
Hours related concerns	21%	↑ Up 11 pts to 33%	↑ Up 6 pts to 22%	↑ Up 9 pts to 27%	↑ Up 7 pts to 21%
Harassment/discrimination	16%			↑ Up 8 pts to 21%	
Workplace safety/culture issues	22%	↑ Up 9 pts to 32%	↑ Up 7 pts to 22%	↑ Up 11 pts to 29%	↑ Up 8 pts to 22%
Any concern	49%	↑ Up 10 pts to 59%	↑ Up 7 pts to 49%	↑ Up 8 pts to 54%	↑ Up 9 pts to 47%

Base: NZ workers (varies by subgroup).
Q3/Q3a. Which of the following things, if any, have you experienced in your current employment situation?

↑↓ Significant increase/decrease since last wave (at the 95% confidence level).

Nearly one in four workers in micro workplaces don't have a written employment contract.

Self-reported levels of exploitation

5%¹ say they **don't** have written employment contracts.

vs. 4% in 2024

- ▲ More common among:
- Northland workers (19%)
 - Workers without family support (8%)
 - Workers in micro workplaces (23%)

¹ Note, this figure of 5% is higher than the result reported on page 17 as the 5% is sourced from a prompted question (see footer).

1% of full-time workers (40+ hours per week) report being paid an amount less than the minimum wage.

vs. 1% in 2024

- ▲ More common among:
- Those aged 18-39 yrs (3%)
 - Technology workers (6%)

Mindsets and situational contexts that can lead to risk of exploitation have largely remained steady since 2024, but young workers are a little more fearful of employer retaliation than last year.

Self-reported risk of exploitation

82% agree it is essential they stay in their job to financially support themselves and their family.
vs. 80% in 2024

- ▲ More common among:
- Those aged 18-49 yrs (87%)
 - Wholesale trade (96%)
 - Those with no nearby family support (88%)

↑ Up six points to 84% among men.

28% **don't have family or whānau** support nearby.
vs. 32% in 2024

- ▲ Those who are currently studying towards a formal qualification are more likely to not have family support nearby (38%).

23% agree bad things would happen to them or their family if they were to speak out about their employer.
vs. 22% in 2024

- ▲ More common among:
- Technology industry workers (41%)
 - Workers studying for a formal qualification (38%)
 - Workers aged 18-29 (34%)
 - No nearby family support (32%)
 - Asian workers (32%)
 - Men (28%)

↑ Fear of employer retaliation has increased among younger workers aged 18 to 29 years, with fewer now strongly rejecting this concern than in 2024 ('strongly disagree' down 14 points to 18%).

5%¹ of full-time workers (40+ hours per week) report usually working 60 hours per week or more.
vs. 7% in 2024

Base: All full-time workers 2025 (n=1,104) 2024 (n=1,126)

69% of workers say their employer could easily replace them if they left their job.
vs. 67% in 2024

- ▲ More common among:
- Pacific workers (82%, up 16 pts*)↑
 - Asian workers (78%)
 - Retail workers (83%)
 - Local or central government workers (81%)

Base: All NZ workers 2025 (n=1,699) 2024 (n=1,754)
Q23. Thinking about your current job, how much do you agree or disagree that..., Q4. About how many hours do you usually work per week in your job?
Q29. Do you have close family or relatives living locally that you can rely on for support?
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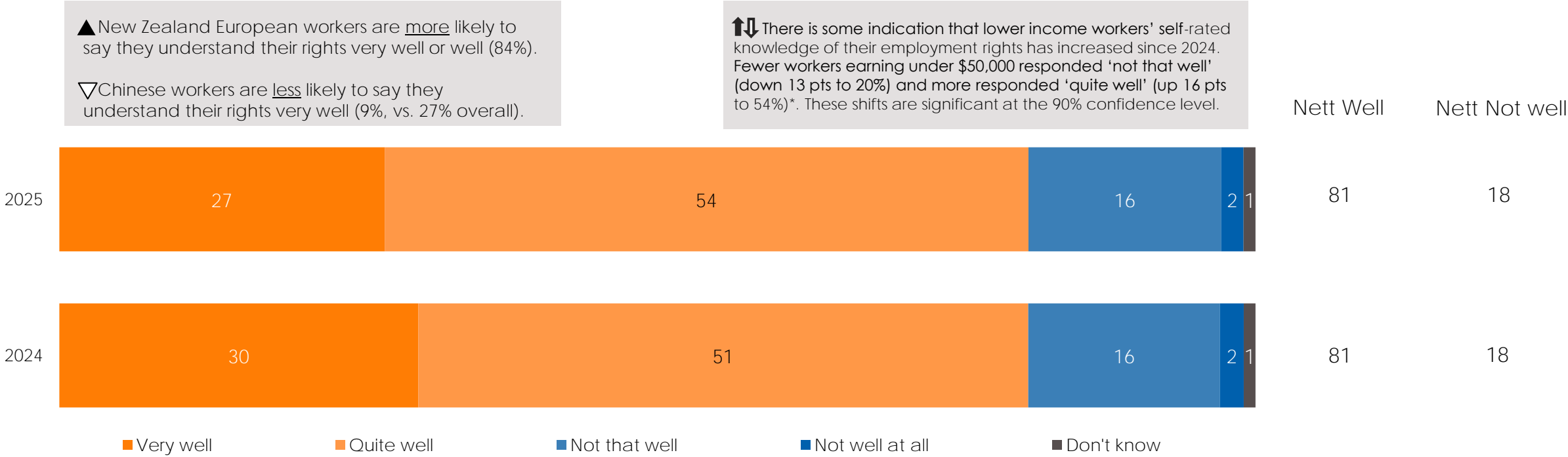
↑ ↓ Significant increase/decrease since last wave at the 95% confidence level (or 90% if marked with *).

▲ ▽ Significantly higher or lower than 2025 total sample or other subgroups (at 95% confidence level).

NZ worker knowledge of employment rights

While most workers feel they understand their employment rights, nearly one in five do not. There are signs that lower income workers' understanding is gradually improving.

Self-rated understanding of employment rights
%



Base: All NZ workers 2025 (n=1,699), All NZ workers 2024 (n=1,754)
Q9. How well do you think you understand your employment rights in New Zealand?

↕ Significant increase/decrease since last wave at the 95% confidence level (or 90% if marked with *).

▲▽ Significantly higher or lower than 2025 total sample or other subgroups (at 95% confidence level).

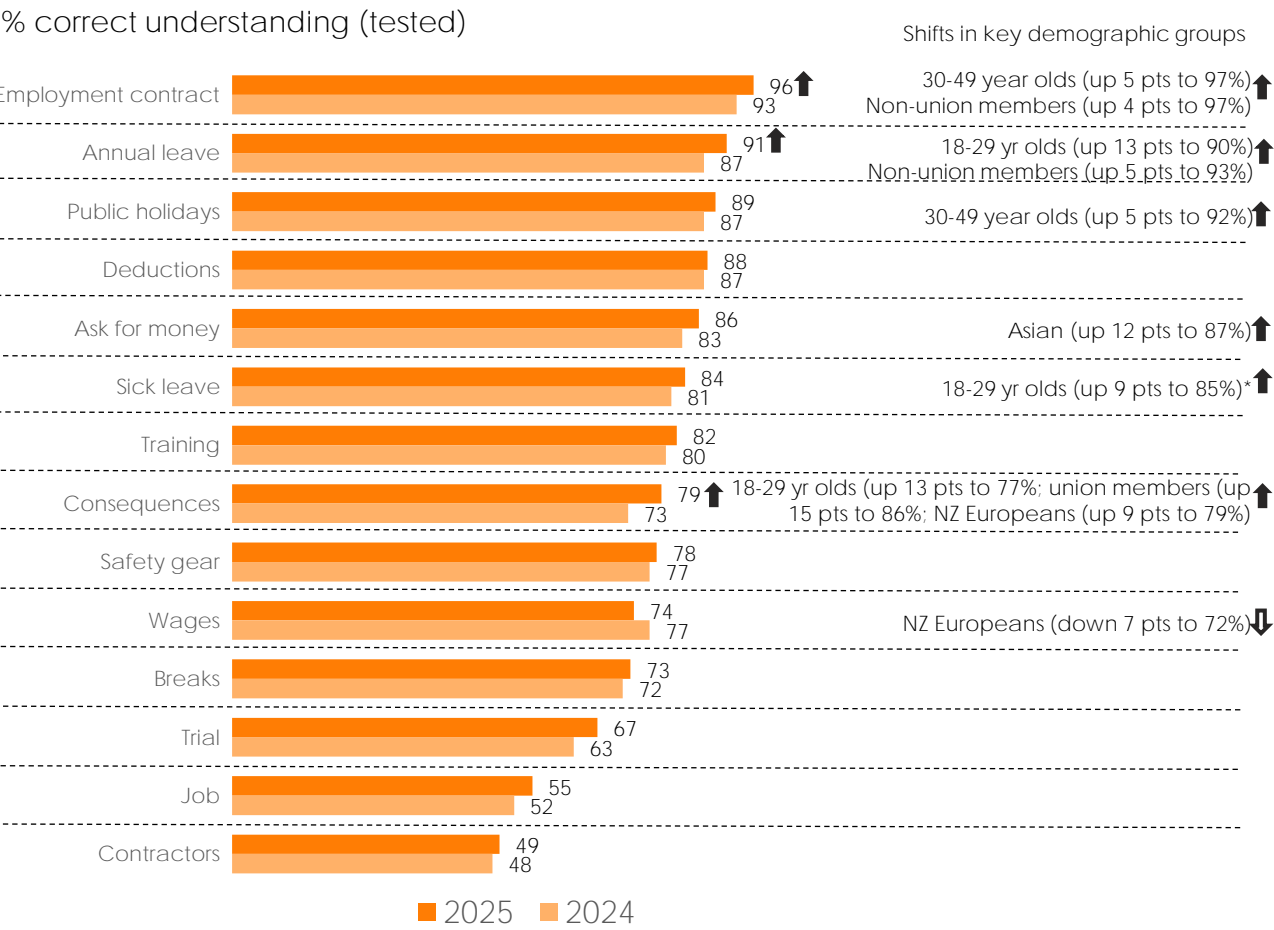
| 22

We showed workers a range of statements on employment rights, and for each they indicated whether it was correct or incorrect. They were also asked to state the adult minimum wage.

Employment right / regulation	Right answer
Annual Leave: Workers have the right to at least 4 weeks of paid annual leave after one year of continuous employment in their job.	Correct
Sick Leave: After working for six months for an employer, a worker has the right to 10 days' sick leave per year.	Correct
Public holidays: If a worker works on a public holiday and it would normally have been one of their working days (e.g. their normal day of the week to work), they are entitled to get paid 1.5 times their normal pay and have another day off.	Correct
¹ Employment contract: Employers must provide the worker with a copy of the employment contract (agreement).	Correct
Consequences: Employers caught exploiting or mistreating migrant workers can be banned from hiring migrants in the future.	Correct
Trial: A 90-day trial period is only valid if it is written in the worker's employment contract (agreement) before they start working.	Correct
Training: Employers need to pay workers when they are being trained for the job.	Correct
Contractors: Contractors don't have the same rights as employees.	Correct
Breaks: All breaks are unpaid (i.e. morning tea, lunch, afternoon tea).	Incorrect
Ask for money: An employer can ask for money from a potential worker to give the worker a job.	Incorrect
Safety gear: Workers must pay for their own health and safety equipment.	Incorrect
Wages: The adult minimum wage in NZ for workers is \$18.70 now.	Incorrect
Job: An employer can employ a worker as a chef but have them work as a waiter.	Incorrect
Deductions: An employer can make deductions from an worker's wages or salary for any reason they want to without their consent.	Incorrect

¹ In 2024 this statement was worded 'Employers must provide the worker with a copy of the employment contract (agreement) before they start their job'.

Tested knowledge has improved for the annual leave entitlement, the consequences of mistreating migrants, and the right to an employment contract. And more workers can now name the adult minimum wage.

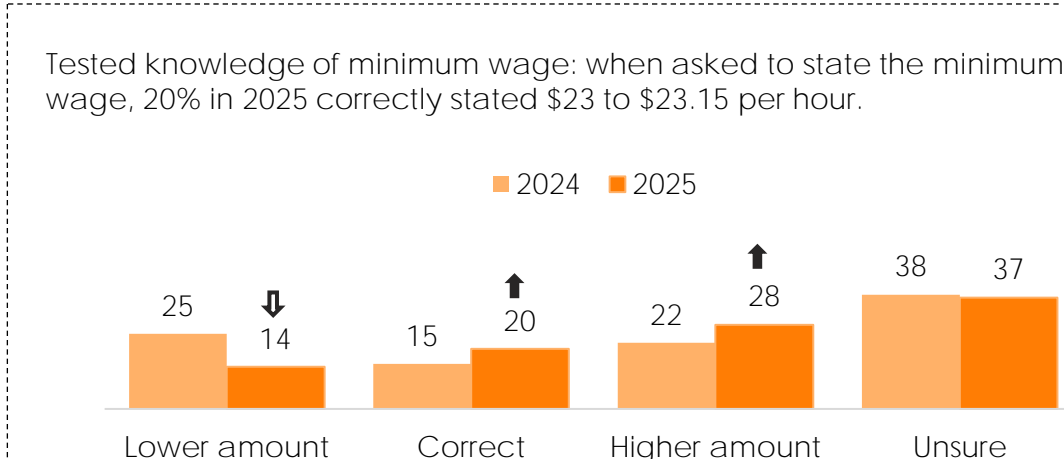


62% of workers had a correct understanding of 11 or more employment rights (out of 14). This compares to 59% in 2024.

The average worker has an **incorrect** understanding (or are unsure) about 3 of the 14 employment rights tested.

▲ Incorrect knowledge is higher among:

- Low-income workers(<\$50k), 4 incorrect areas
- Those in cleaning or domestic work, 5 incorrect areas

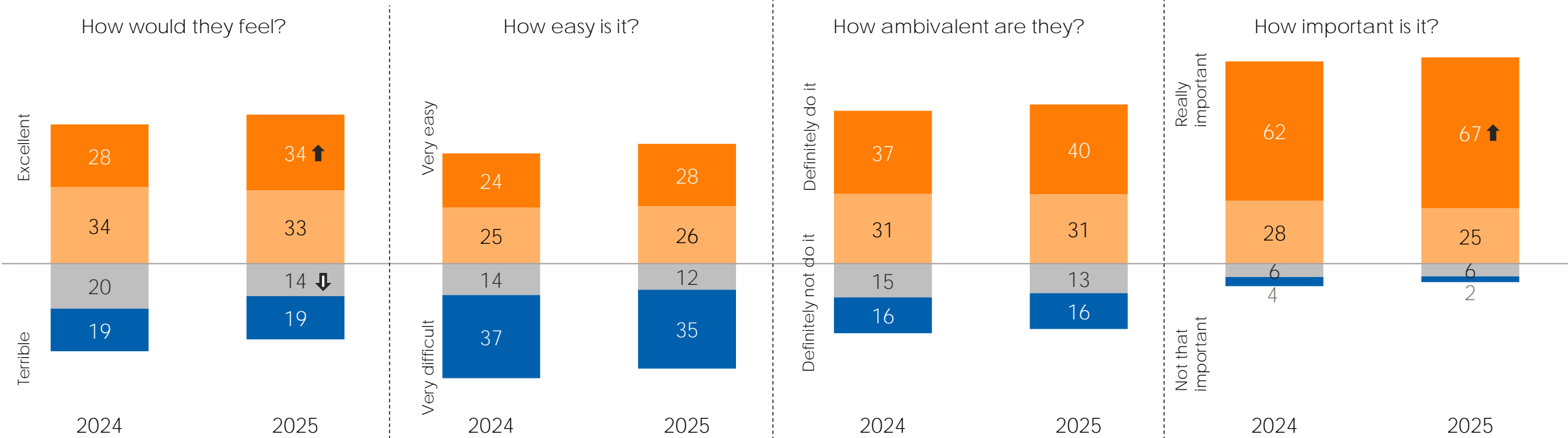


Base: All NZ workers 2025 (n=1,699), All NZ workers 2024 (n=1,754)
Q10. Based on what you know about New Zealand law, do you think this is correct or not correct?

NZ workers' commitment to speaking up

Since 2024, workers place greater importance on, and feel better about, speaking up about an exploitative situation. However, this remains difficult for many.

Four determinants of commitment to speaking up in a situation where an employer is not providing a worker all their employment rights under the NZ employment law



↑ The improvement in how workers feel about speaking up especially stems from workers under 50 (up 8 pts to 35%), workers in large workplaces (up 9 pts to 37%), and union members (up 10 pts to 33%). We see moderate increases across genders.

▲ Women are more likely to find speaking up very difficult (42% vs 28% of men).
↑ Since 2024, 18 to 29 year olds are more confident about speaking up ('very easy' up 10 pts to 30%).

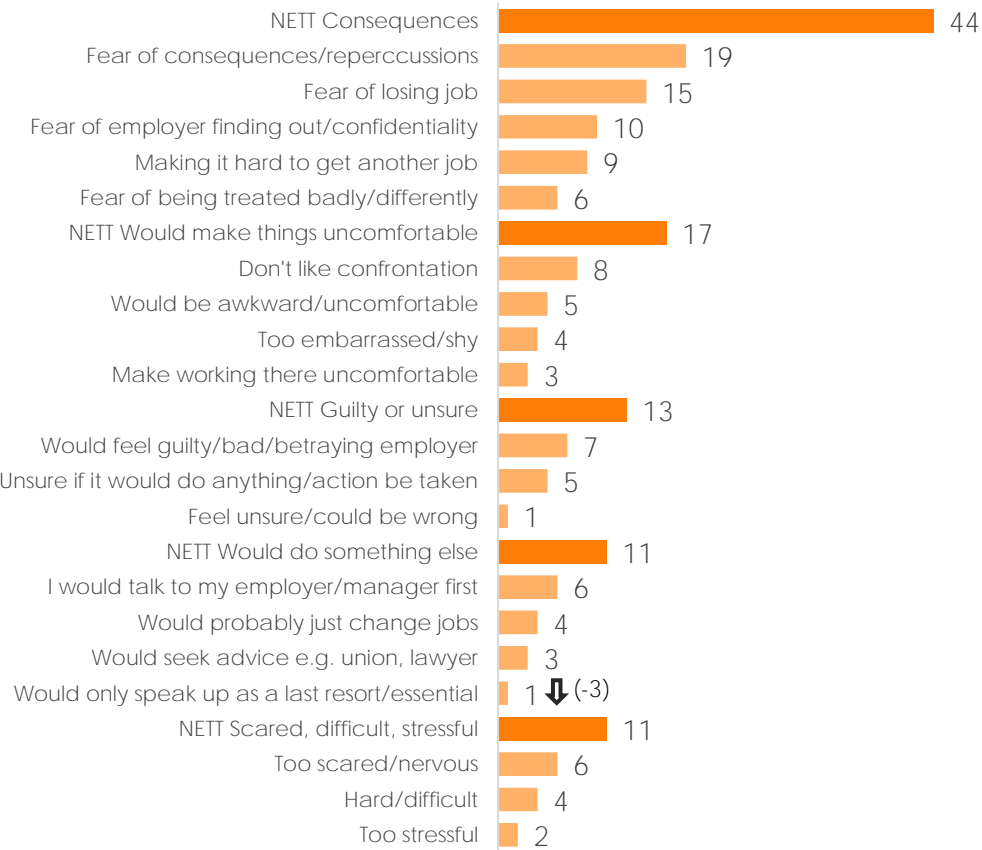
↑ Since 2024, men are more optimistic about speaking up (up six points to 43%).

↑ The increase in importance since 2024 is especially strong among 18 to 29 year olds (up 13 pts to 61%), and employees in smaller workplaces (up 9 pts to 65% of workers in small businesses*).
▽ However, young workers continue to place less importance on their rights than older workers.

Base: All NZ workers 2025 (n=1,699), All NZ workers 2024 (n=1,754)
Q22b/c/d/e. The figures in the bar chart are sourced from questions using an 11 point scale. Dark orange is the % who gave a rating of 8-10, light orange is the % who gave a rating of 6 or 7, grey is the % who gave a rating of 5, and blue is the % who gave a rating of 0 to 4.
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Reasons for not feeling good about speaking up in an exploitative situation largely centre on fear of retaliation and discomfort.

Reasons for not feeling good about speaking up
%



In their own words...

"I don't know enough about the process to talk to Employment NZ and would prefer to try sort an issue out in-house then reach out to an outside group." Manufacturing worker

"I work in a small industry, and it would be terrible to hurt my chances of future employment." Health worker

"Because I might have to file a report and wait for 6 months, and my problem might not be a big deal." Construction worker

"I would prefer to work it through with my employer first. Engaging with Employment NZ first would be an indication of an inability to achieve an effective resolution with your employer." Government (central or local) worker

"I worry that it would come back to bite me. I have successfully used the personal grievance mechanism, and it was very stressful and damaging to my reputation." Technology worker

"Probably because I don't think they would do anything except make the situation worse." Education worker

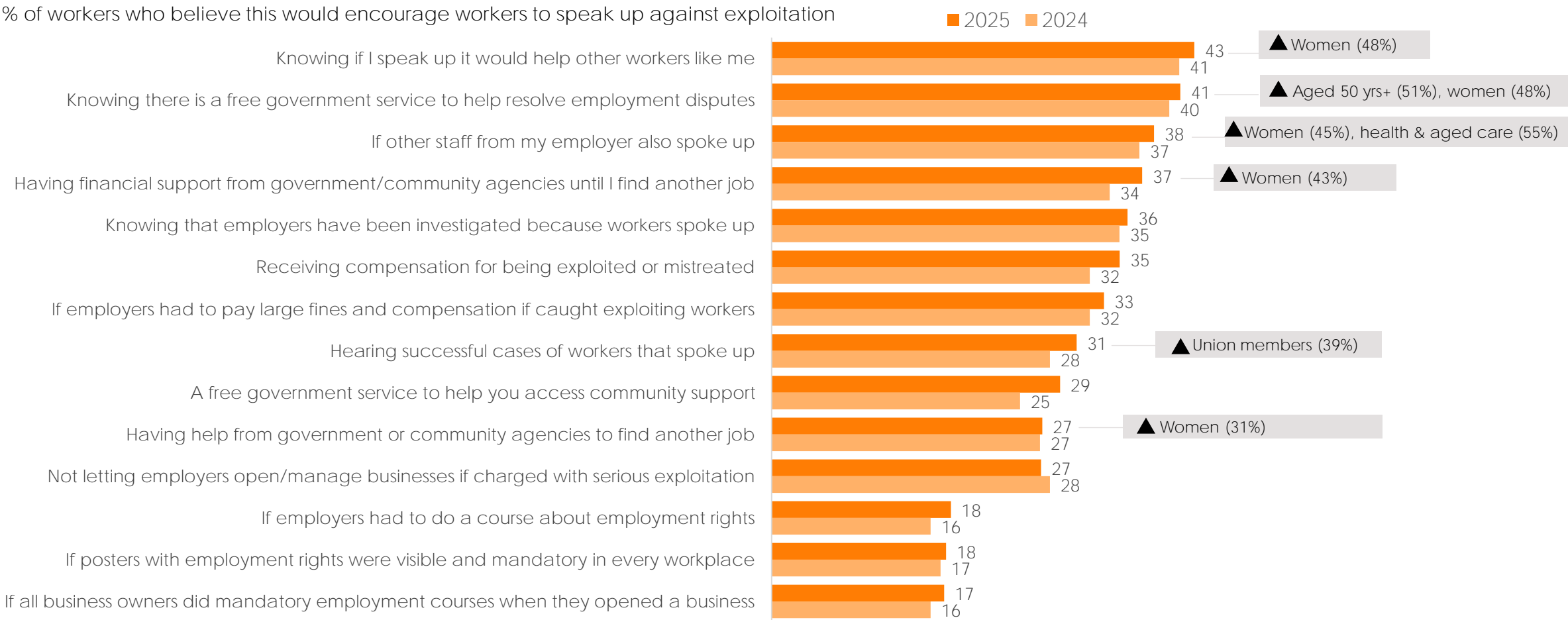
"I don't know my rights, and I also have a fear of getting in trouble or losing my job and income." Hospitality worker

"It puts you in a difficult position with your employer as it could potentially be used against you in the future." Retail worker

Base: NZ workers who would not feel good about speaking up (n=330)
Q22f In your own words, please tell us why you personally think you wouldn't feel good about speaking to Employment NZ about a situation.

↑↓ Significant increase/decrease since last wave

As in 2024, many of the beliefs that encourage workers to speak up are rooted in a shared sense of solidarity and the perception that employer consequences are genuine. Government support and services continue to play a crucial role.



Base: All NZ workers 2025 (n=1,699), All NZ workers 2024 (n=1,754)
Q28m. What would encourage you to speak up if you were in a situation where your employer were exploiting or mistreating you?

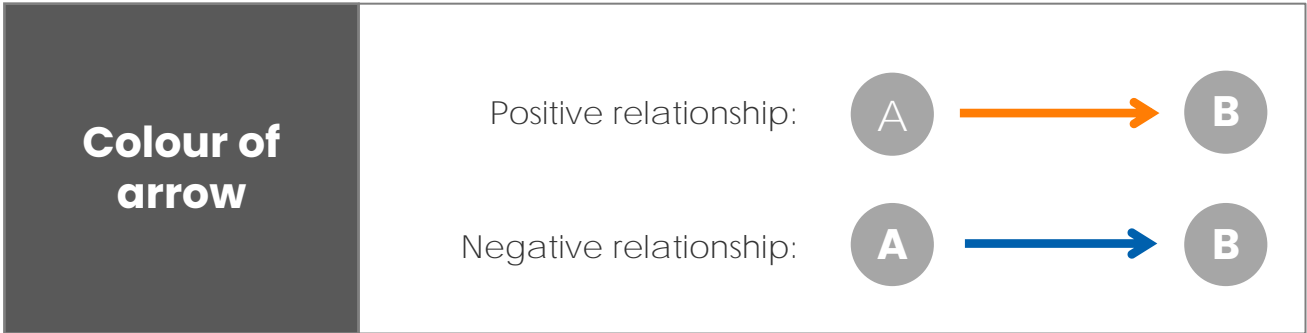
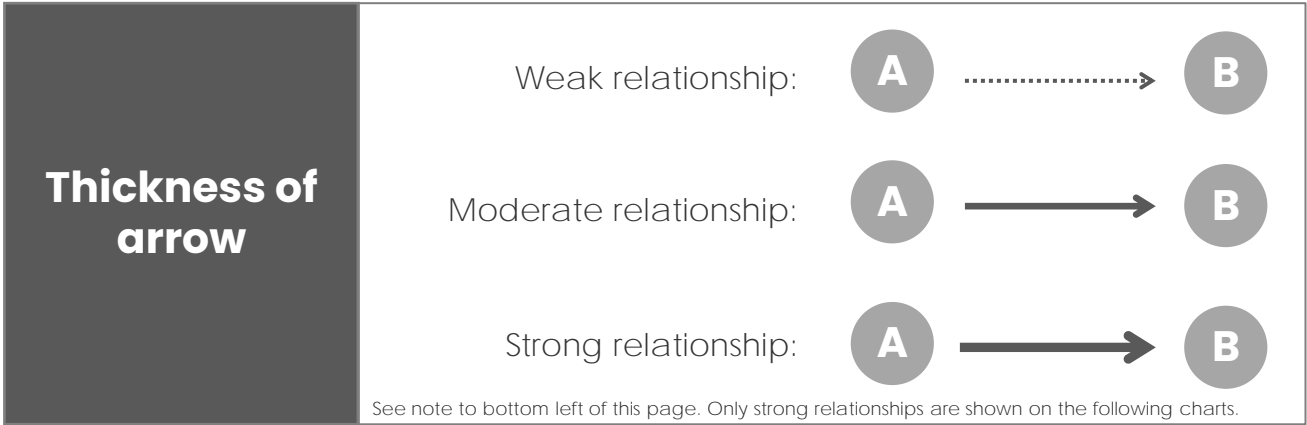
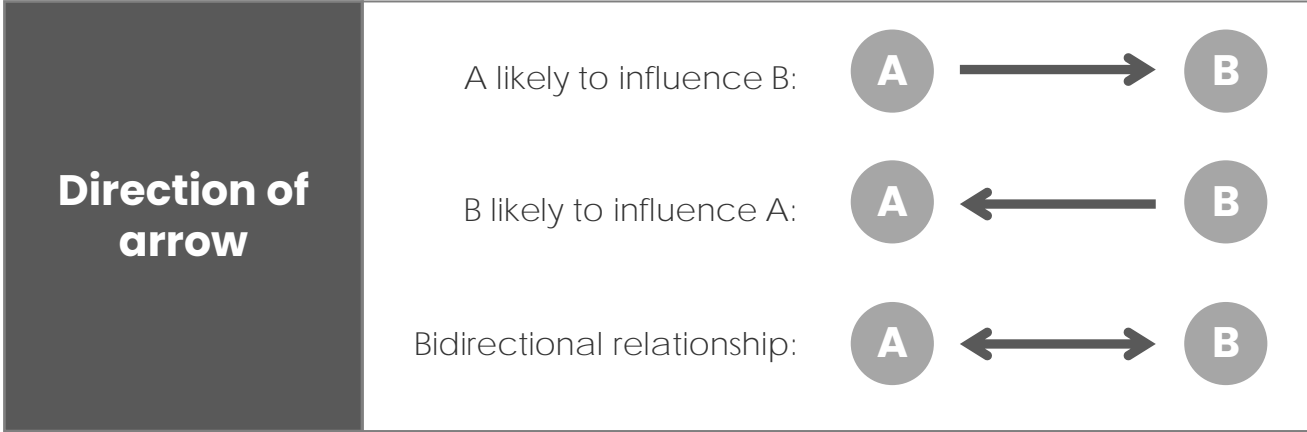
What drives worker willingness to speak up?

To understand what drives workers' willingness to speak up – i.e., the factors they are influenced by, the relative importance of those factors, and how the factors interact to influence the worker – we used a Bayesian Belief Network.

Bayesian Belief Networks use a machine learning algorithm to determine the underlying structure of data – how one driver affects another, in what direction, and how powerfully. A technical description of Bayesian Belief Networks can be found in the Appendix.

The diagram to the right illustrates how the relationships revealed by the Bayesian Belief Network are depicted on the following pages.

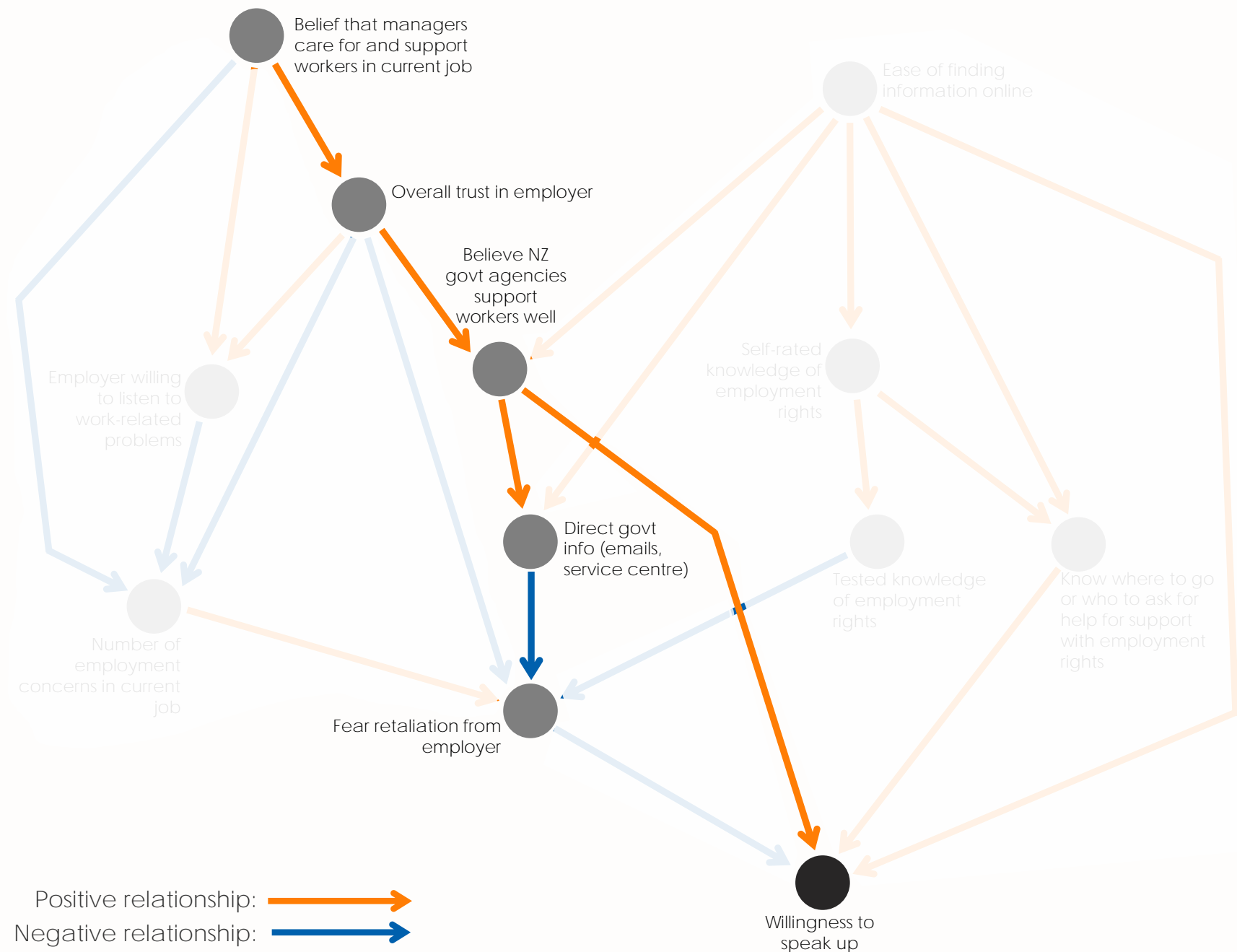
Note. (1) Thirty potential drivers of willingness to speak up were included in the survey. (2) Before conducting the Bayesian Belief Network analysis, a correlation analysis was used to identify which of the 30 potential drivers should be taken into the BBN. Twenty-one of the 30 potential drivers had at least a moderate level of influence on willingness to speak up and were taken into an initial BBN. The initial BBN revealed that 11 of the 21 drivers had a strong direct or indirect impact on willingness to speak up and so these 11 were included in the final BBN presented on the following pages.



Workplace culture can empower workers...

Trust in an employer in combination with a belief that government agencies are effective in supporting workers can 1) directly encourage workers to speak up, and 2) mitigate the fear of retaliation from the employer.

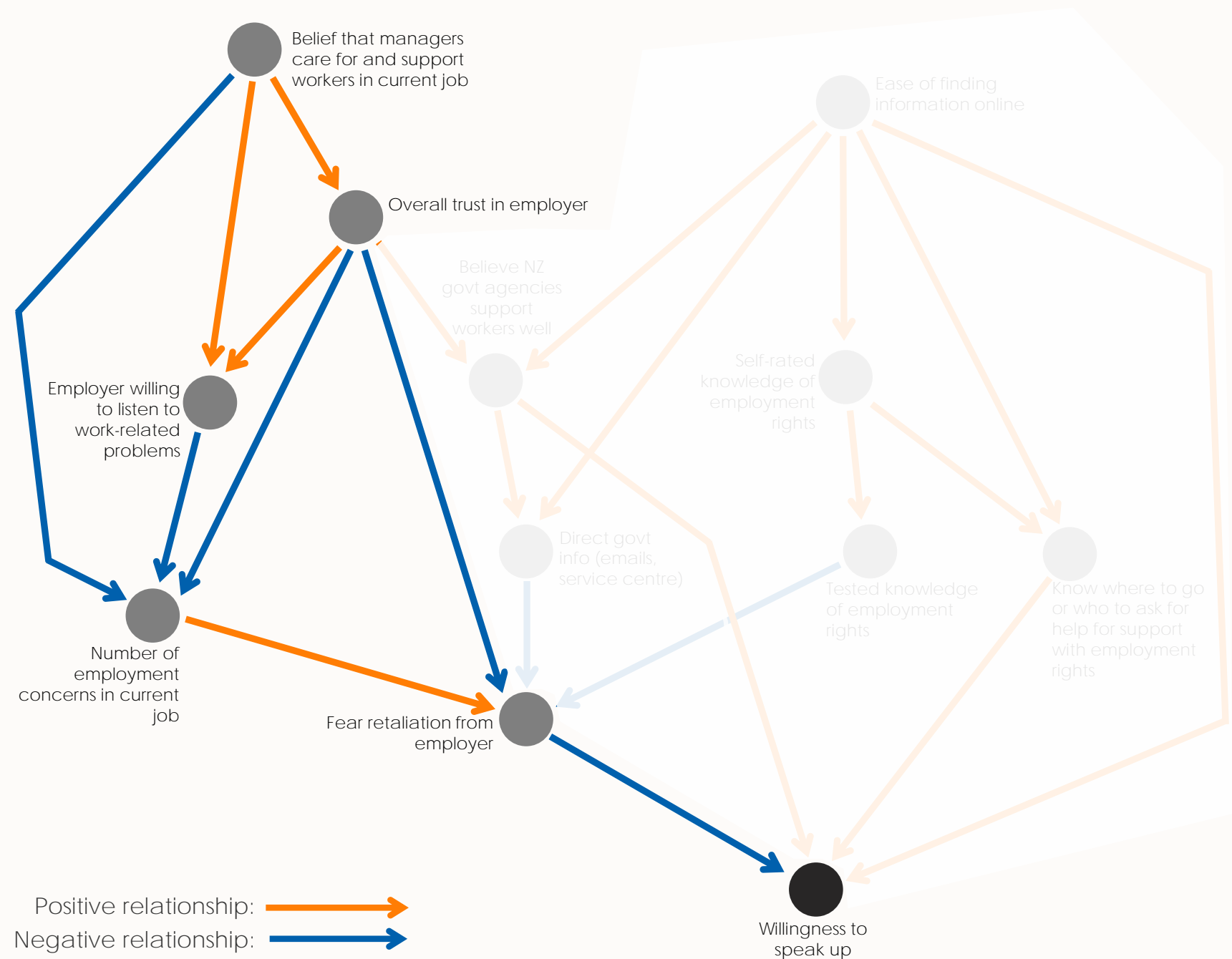
This pathway highlights two key insights about the role of general perceptions of New Zealand government agencies' effectiveness in supporting workers. First, **this impression is shaped by workers' day-to-day experiences** – those who trust their employer are more likely to believe the broader system is working in their favour. Second, it serves as a precursor to finding direct government resources, such as emails or service centres, useful and trustworthy.



Threshold=95%

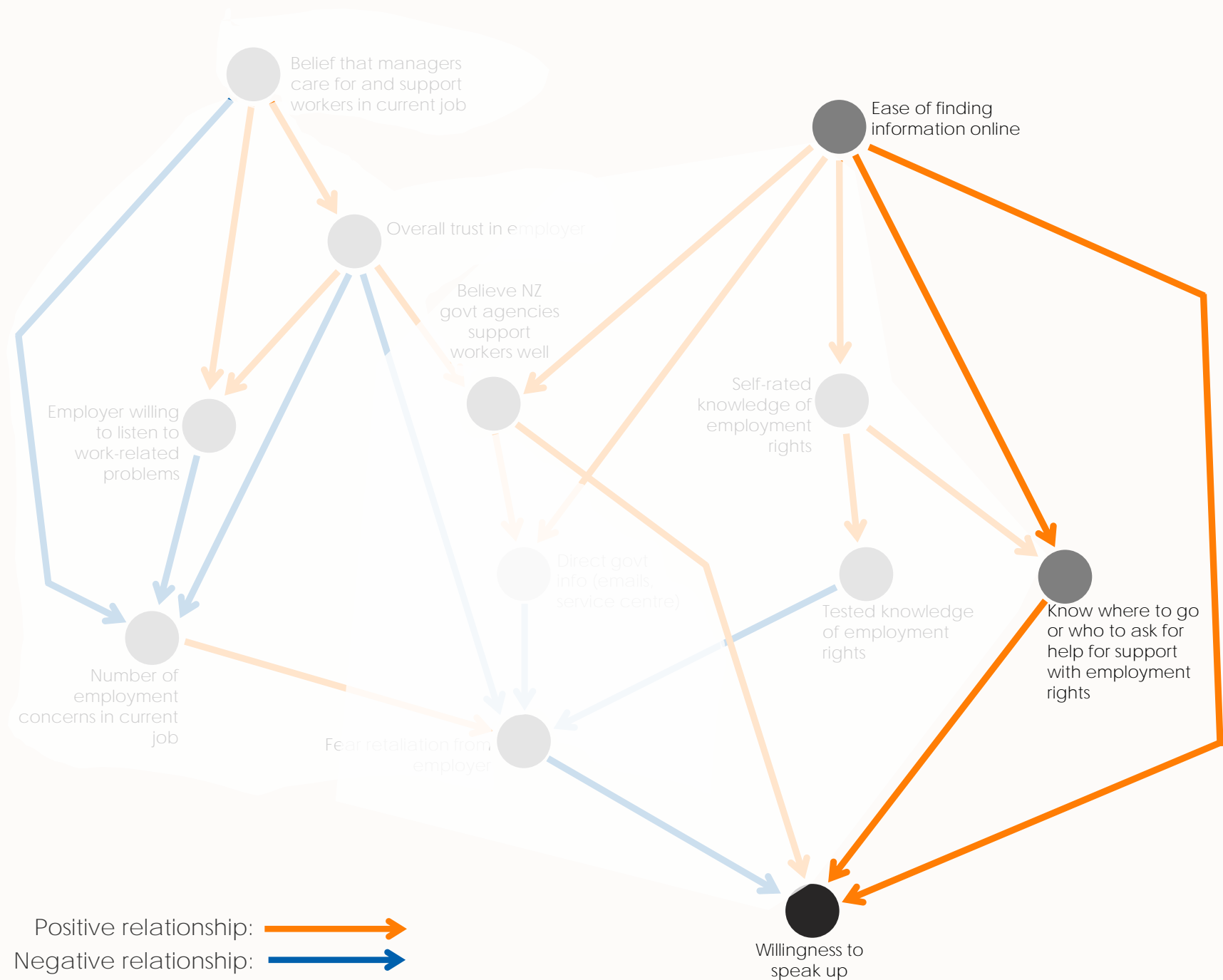
...but workplace culture can silence workers.

Low levels of trust in an employer and the presence of employment issues drive a fear that the employer might retaliate if the worker speaks up and this in turn drives down the likelihood the worker will speak up.



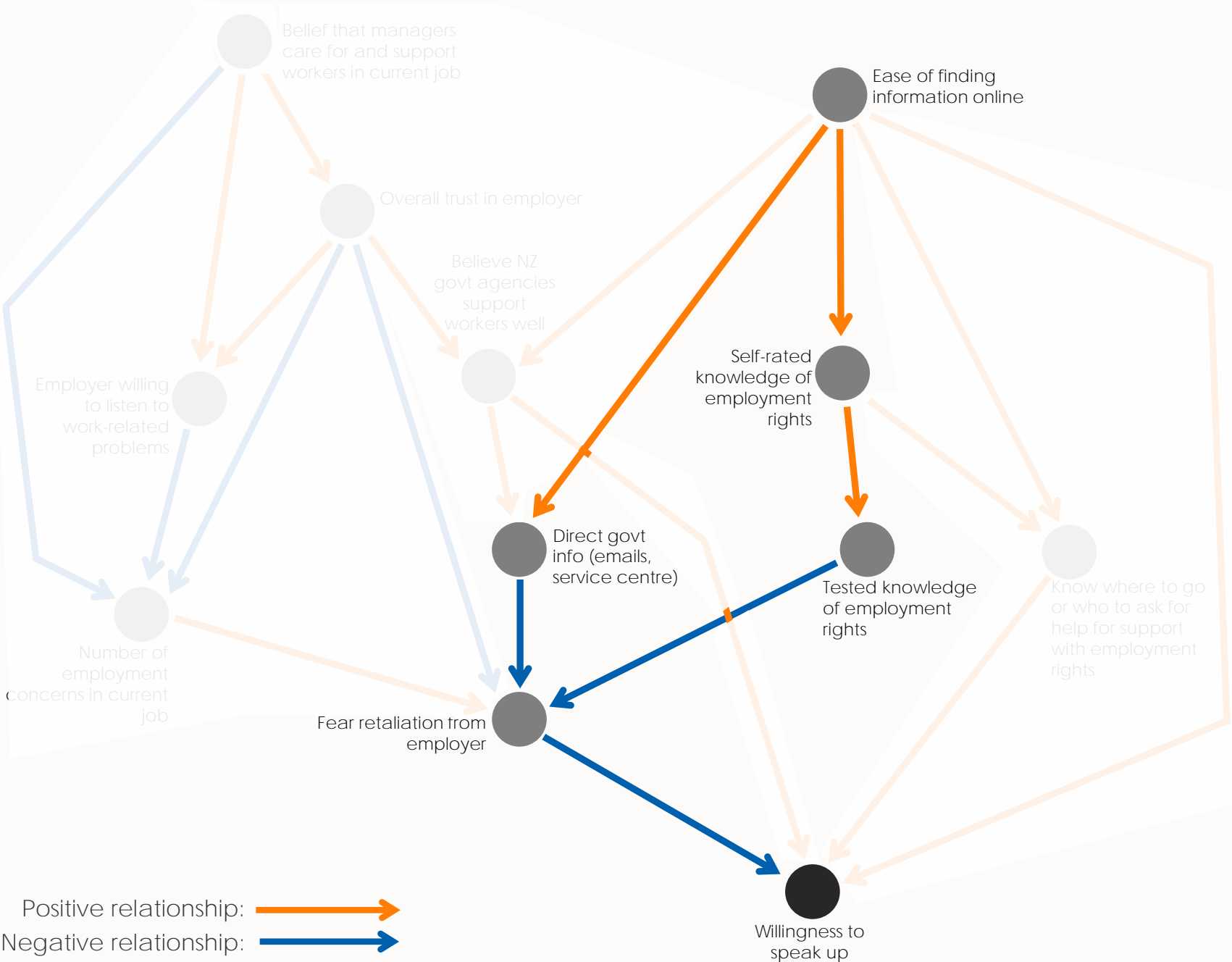
Effective online communications short circuit poor workplace cultures...

The ease of finding information has both a direct positive influence on willingness to speak up and an indirect one. Online information can direct them to someone who can help them.



...and communications mitigate fear.

Effective online information mitigates the fear of employer retaliation by building worker knowledge and/or paving the way for direct government communications (email and service centre).

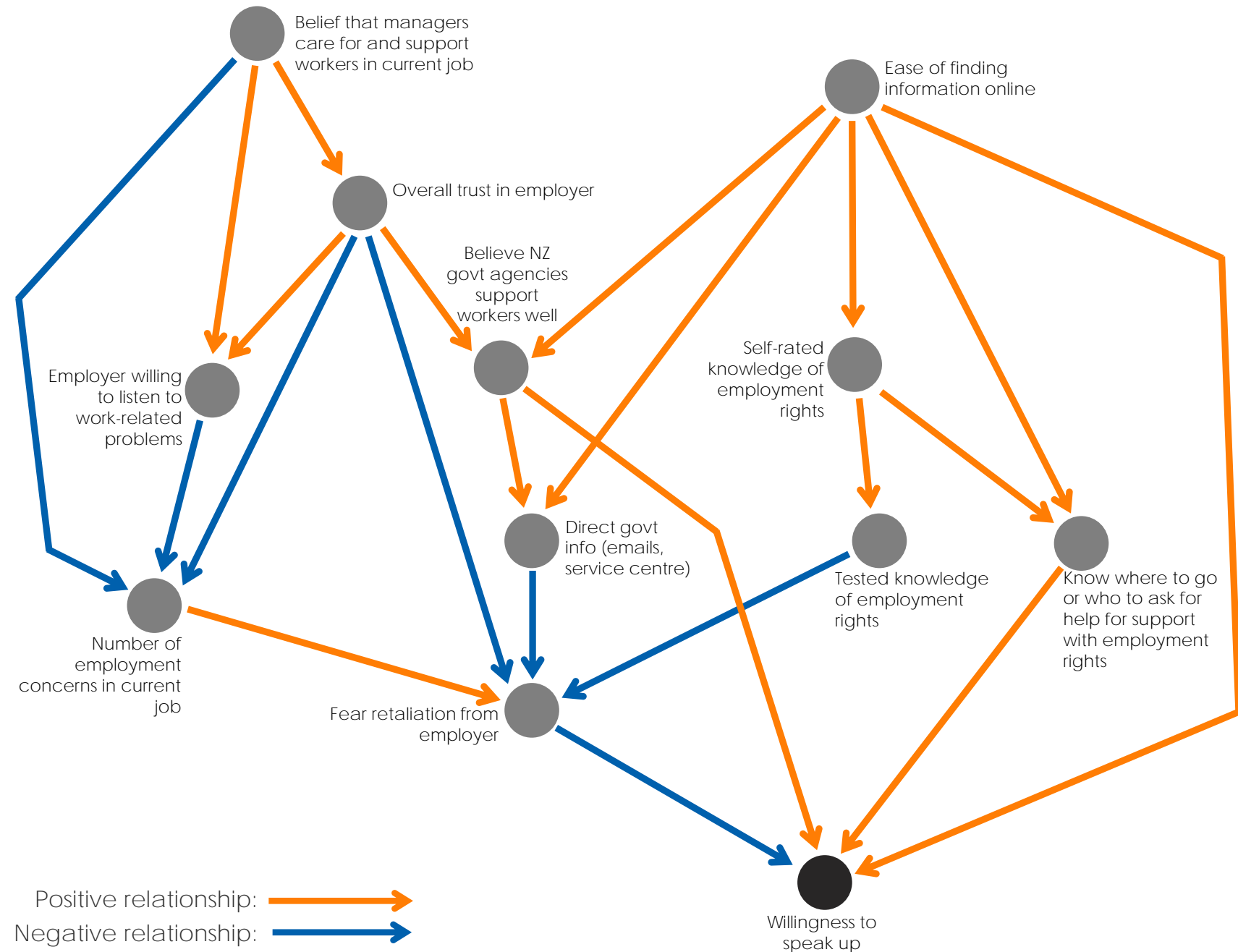


The full network

The full network reveals a multitude of pathways that lead to a worker's willingness to speak up, grounded in effective communication and workplace culture.

Worries about retaliation – especially in unsupportive workplaces – are intensified by distrust, poor treatment, and limited understanding of worker rights. A lack of direct contact with government agencies, whether via email or one-on-one interactions, further compounds these fears.

Trust, government agency reputation, and worker knowledge all play key roles in shaping the decision to speak up.

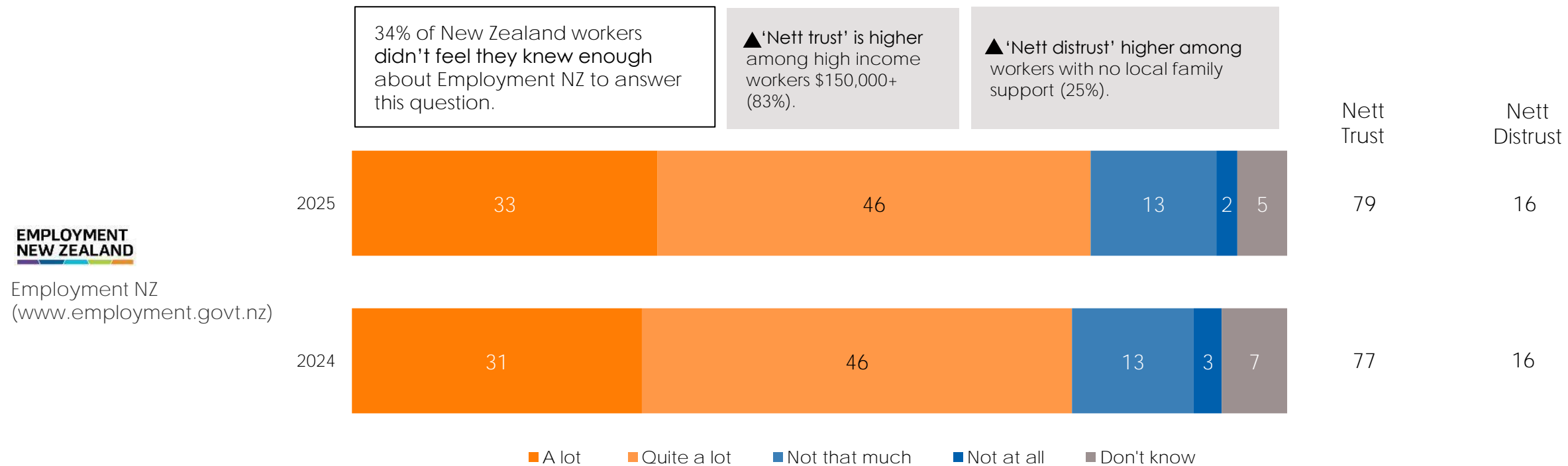


NZ worker perceptions of government agency support

Worker trust in Employment NZ remains stable.

Nearly eight in ten workers who know enough about Employment NZ to offer an opinion trust Employment NZ. Distrust sits at 16% and is highest among workers who have no local family support.

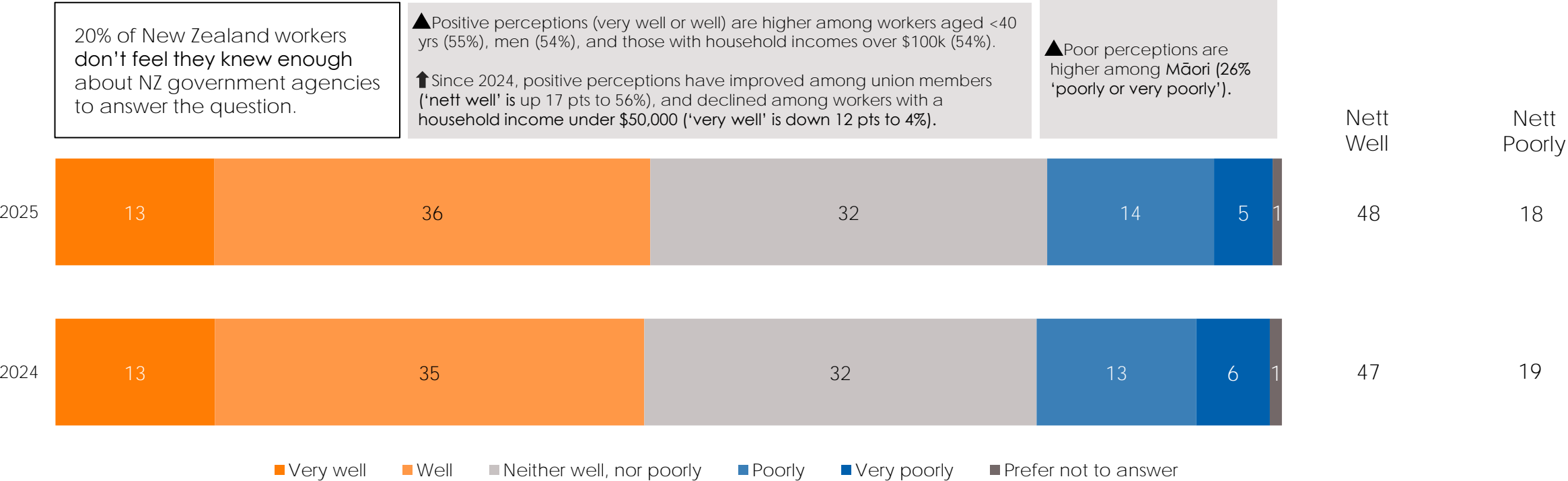
Trust in Employment NZ
%



Base: NZ workers who know enough about Employment NZ to answer the question 2025 (n=1,085), 2024 (n=1,044).
Q25b Overall, how much do you trust Employment New Zealand?

Perceptions of how well NZ government agencies support workers remains somewhat divided, with around half saying they support workers well or very well. Since 2024, union members’ perceptions have improved, and low-income earners’ perceptions have worsened.

Perceptions of how well NZ government agencies support workers
%

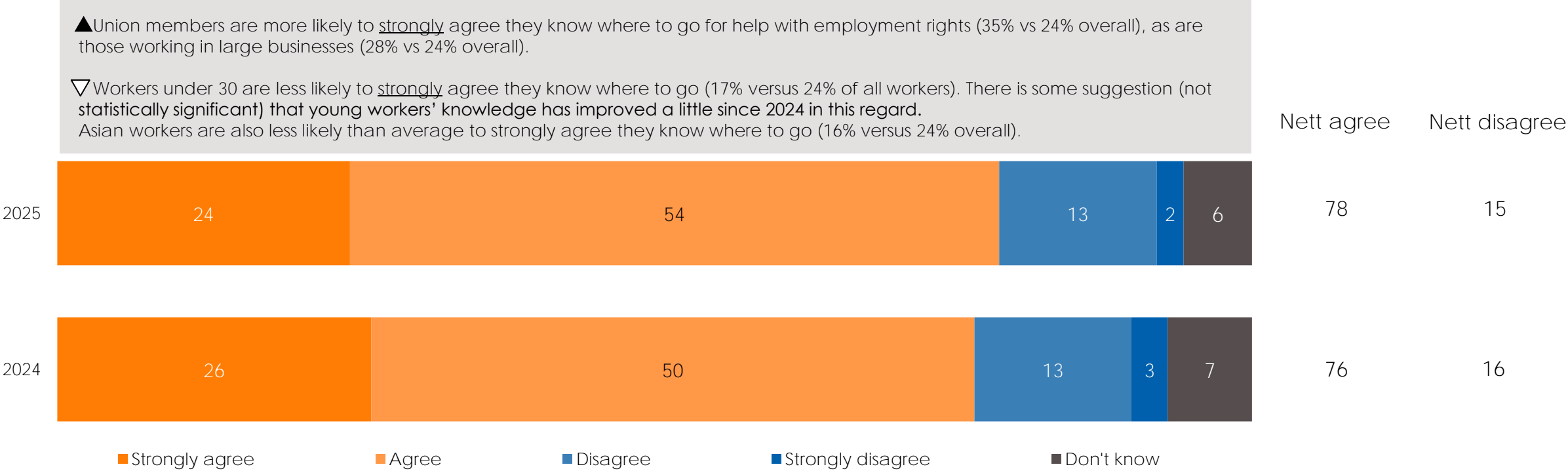


Base: NZ workers who feel they know enough about NZ government agencies to answer the question. 2025 (n=1,382), 2024 (n=1,363).
Q26. Overall, how well do you think New Zealand government agencies support workers?

Engaging NZ workers

Knowing how to get help with employment rights has remained stable since 2024. Most workers feel they know where to go for help with their employment rights, but around one in five (21%) either **feel they don't or are unsure**. Younger workers, especially, lack knowledge.

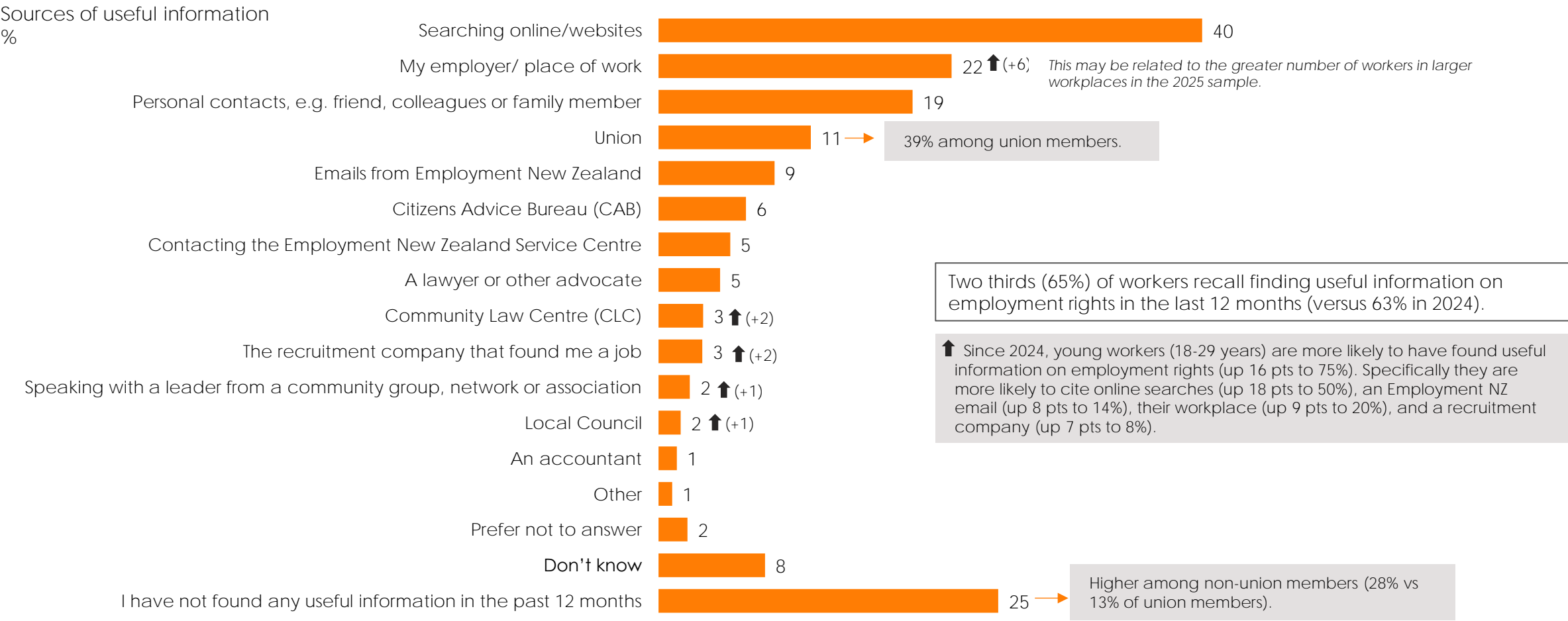
Knowing where to go for help with employment rights
%



Base: All NZ workers 2025 (n=1,699), 2024 (n=1,754)
Q23. Thinking about your current job, how much do you agree or disagree that... 'I know where to go or who to ask for help if I need support with my employment rights'.
Verian | The employment monitor

↑↓ Significant increase/decrease since last wave
▲▽ Significantly higher or lower than 2025 total sample or other subgroups | 39

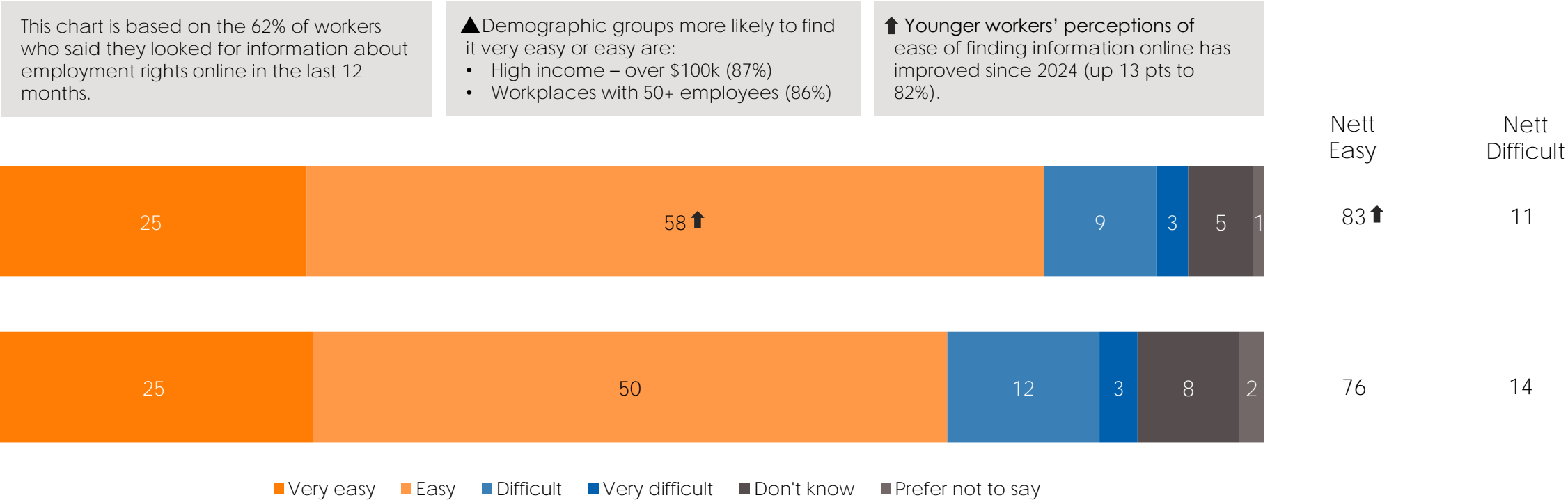
Two thirds of workers recall finding useful information on employment rights in the last 12 months, with an emphasis on online searches and employer-supplied information. Young workers are more active in searching for information than in 2024.



Base: All NZ workers (n=1,699)
Q24a. Where have you found useful information about your employment rights in the last 12 months?

Finding information on employment rights online is easier for workers than it was in 2024. This is especially evident for young workers.

Ease of finding employment rights information online
%

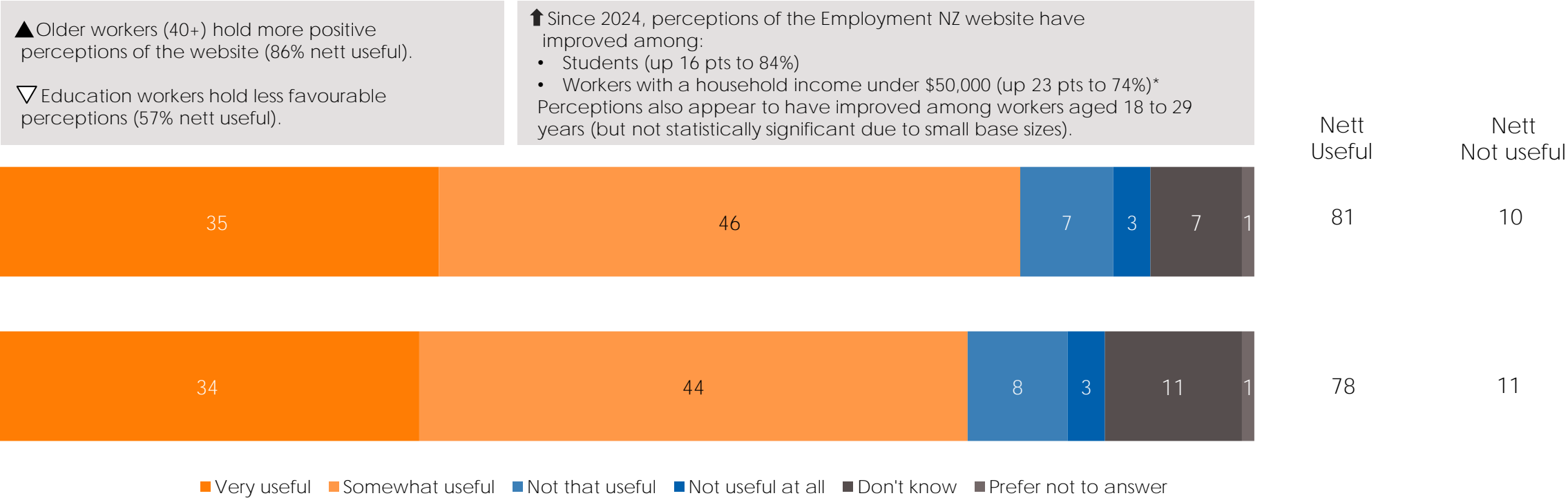


Base: All NZ workers who have looked online for employment rights information in the last 12 months 2025 (n=1,077), 2024 (n=1,007) Q24c. In the last 12 months, how easy or difficult was it to find information you need about employment rights online?

Since 2024, perceptions of Employment NZ’s website have improved among students and low-income workers.

Visitors’ perceptions of Employment NZ website

%



Base: NZ workers who have searched online visited the Employment NZ website in the last 12 months 2025 (n=791), 2024 (n=724)
Q24b. In the last 12 months, how useful have you found this website for information on employment rights?

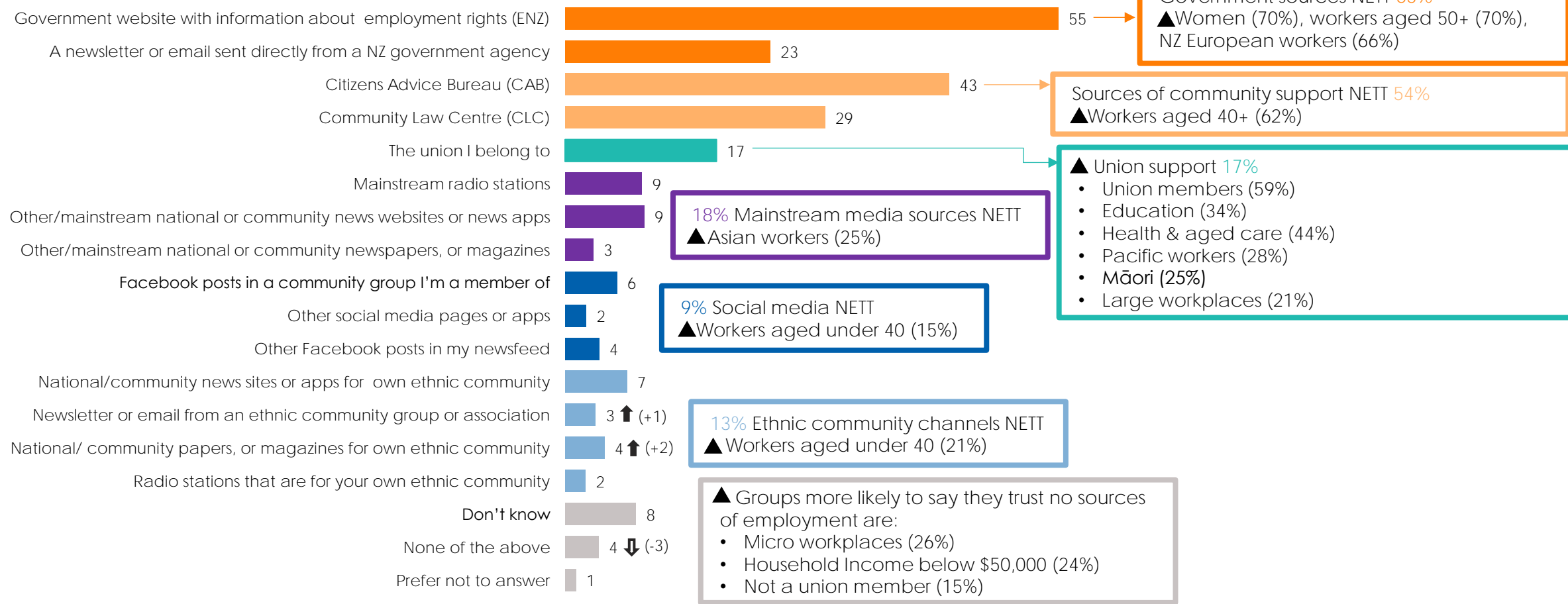
↑ ↓ Significant increase/decrease since last wave at the 95% confidence level (or 90% if marked with *).

▲ ▼ Significantly higher or lower than 2025 total sample or other subgroups (at 95% confidence level).

| 42

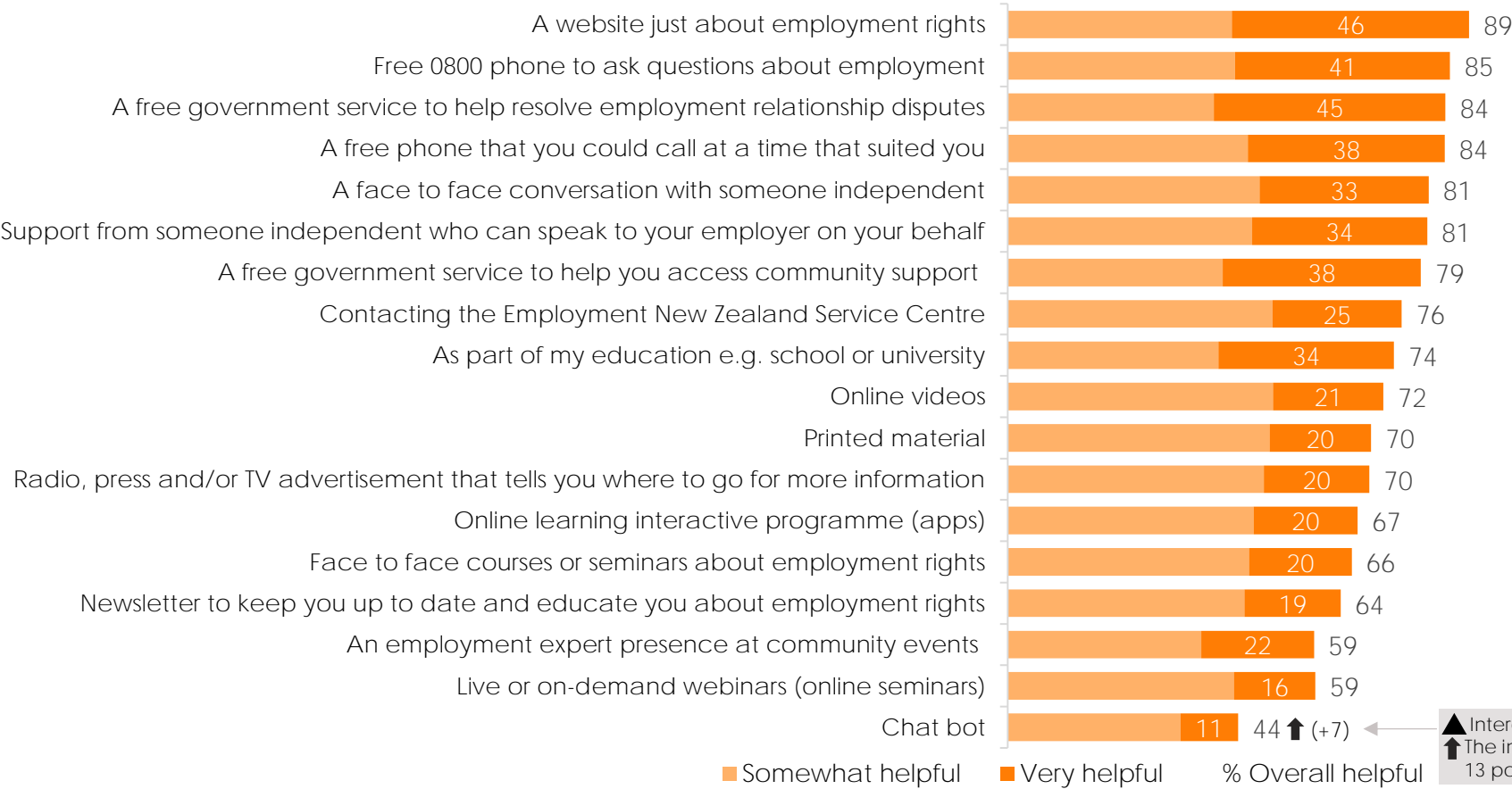
Government sources and community support services are the most common trusted sources of information. Union members commonly rely on unions for this.

Most trusted sources of employment law %



A dedicated website remains the most popular way to access information and support, but one-on-one services are also highly valued. Since 2024, interest in several services has grown among young workers.

Appeal of information and support ideas
%



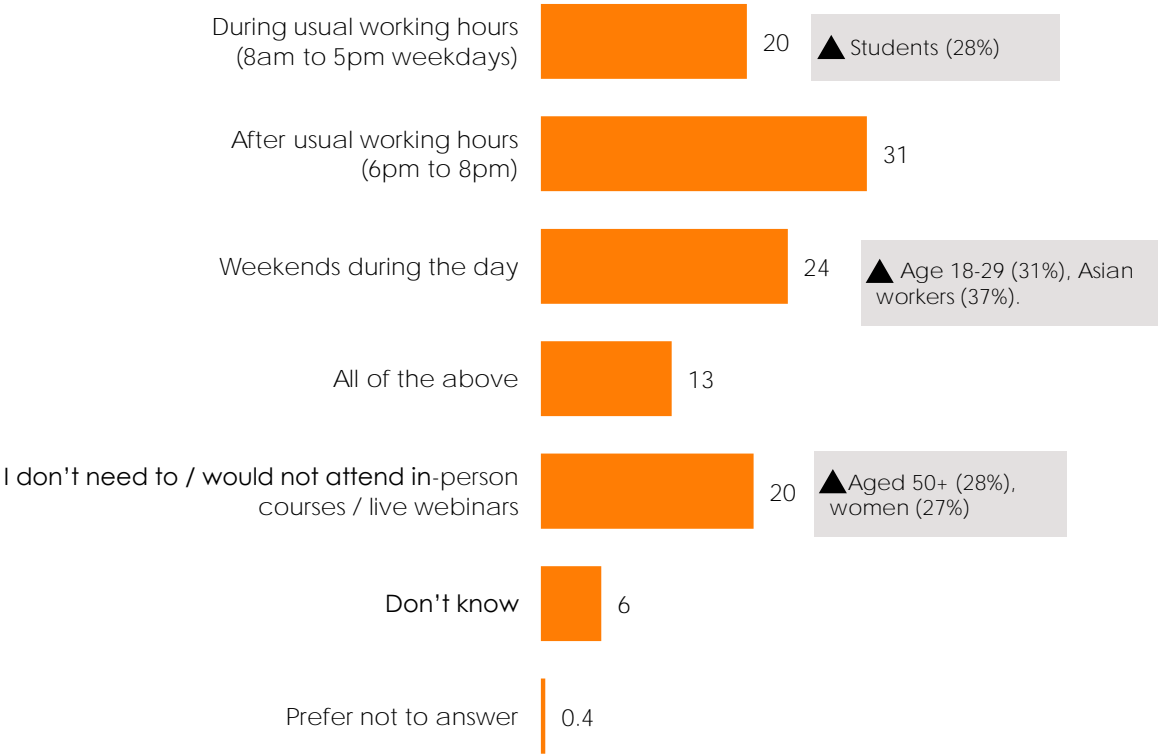
↑ Since 2024, younger workers (18-29 years) find greater appeal in a free phone to ask questions (up 14 pts to 85%) and at a suitable time (up 13 pts to 83%), an independent support person (up 11 pts to 83%), the ENZ service centre (up 11 pts to 77%), and a newsletter (up 15 pts to 69%).

▲ Interest in a chatbot is higher among workers aged <50 yrs (51%).
↑ The increase since 2024 stems from workers aged 30 to 49 years (up 13 points to 49%).

Base: All NZ workers (n=1,699) Q27c. Next, we're going to show you some ideas for helping you get information and support about employment rights. We'd like to know how helpful these would be for you now (or would have been once you arrived in NZ). How helpful or unhelpful would this be?

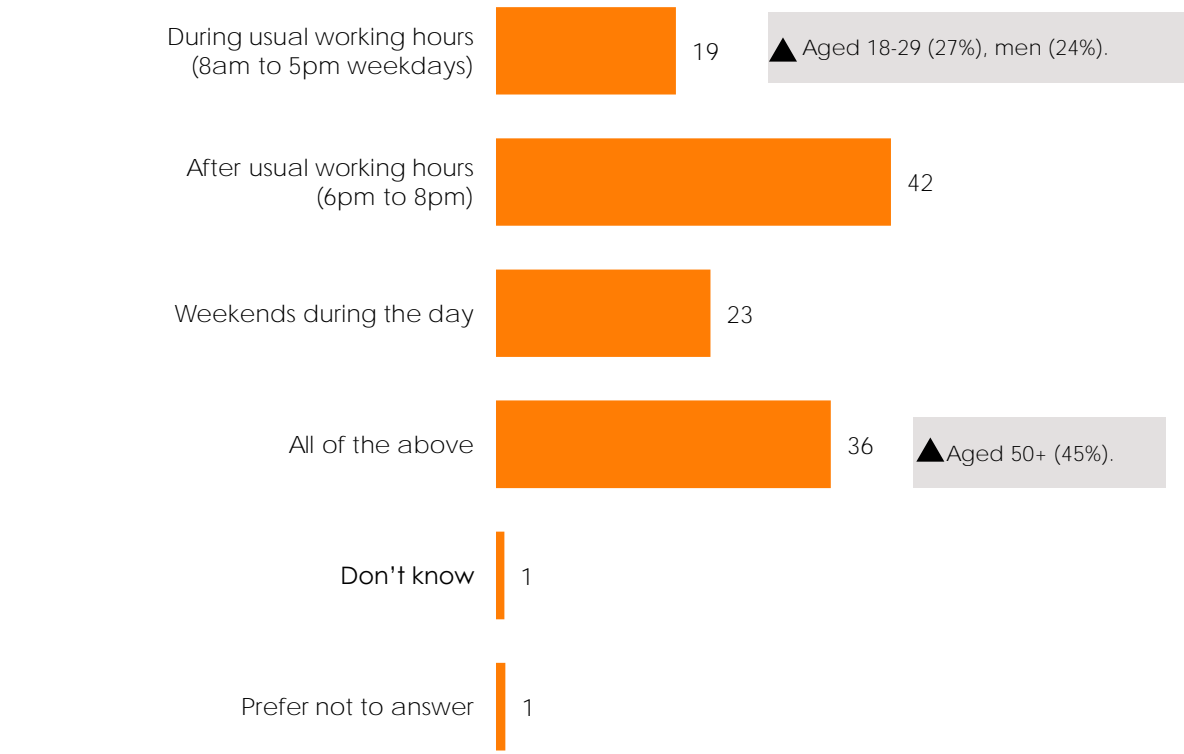
Weekday evenings are the most popular times to attend courses or call a free phoneline.

Best time for in-person courses and webinars
%



Base: NZ workers who indicated they would find in person courses or live webinars helpful (n=1,305)
Q27e. Would you be more likely to attend in-person courses / live webinars if they were

Best time to call a freephone
%



Base: NZ workers who indicated they would find a free phoneline helpful (n=1,553)
Q27ci. You said a freephone to call would be helpful. When would be easier for you to call it...

Social media consumption has increased since 2024.

Two thirds of workers spend at least three hours a week on social media. Social media use is higher among younger workers and women. Facebook remains most popular but is declining.

Most common social media channels
%

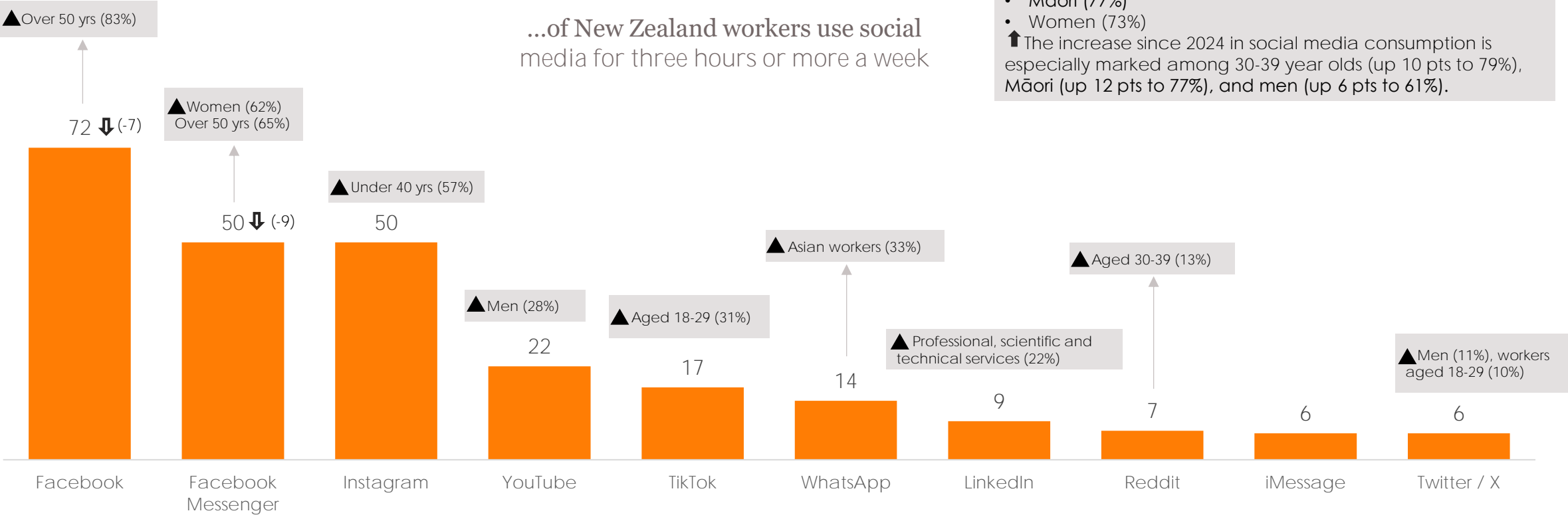
67% ↑(+7)

...of New Zealand workers use social media for three hours or more a week

▲ Overall social media consumption in 2025 is higher among:

- Workers aged <40 yrs (78%)
- Māori (77%)
- Women (73%)

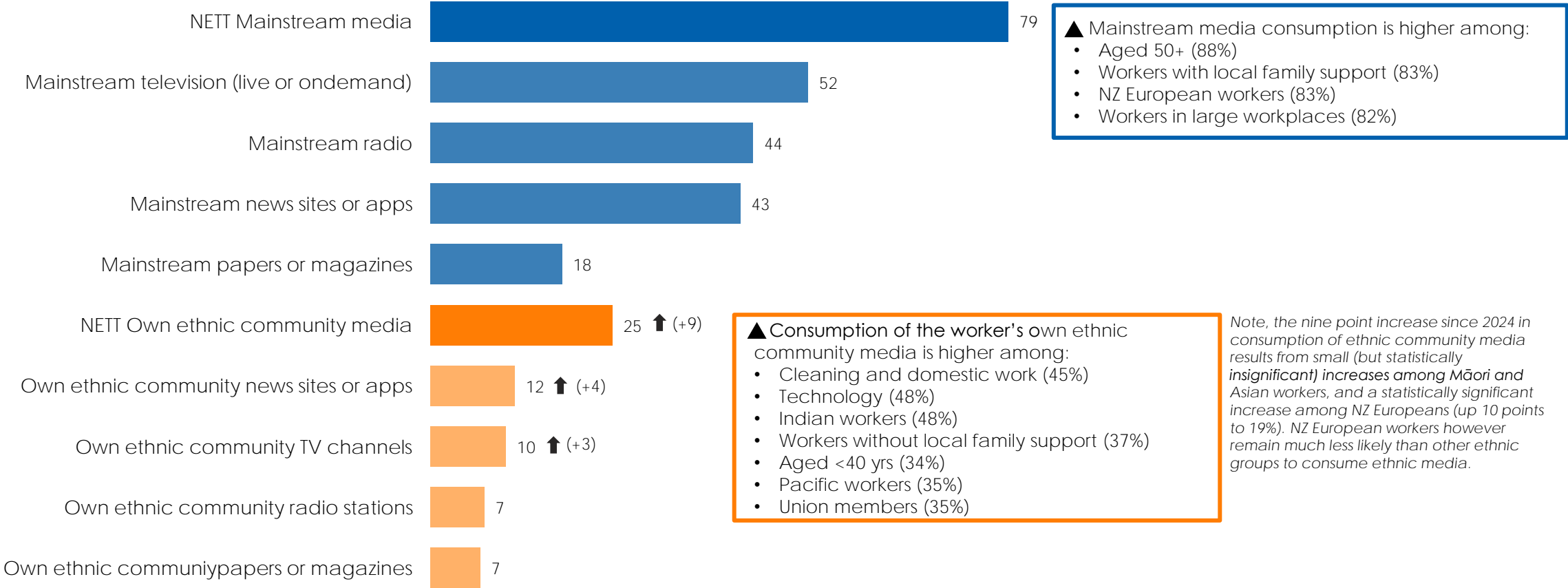
↑ The increase since 2024 in social media consumption is especially marked among 30-39 year olds (up 10 pts to 79%), Māori (up 12 pts to 77%), and men (up 6 pts to 61%).



Q28b. Do you look at social media pages or apps for...Base: All NZ workers (n=1,699)
Q28g. What social media sites or apps do you use most weeks? Base: Workers who use social media at least three hours a week (n=1,093)

Consumption of other media is highest for mainstream media, but consumption of ethnic community media has increased since 2024.

Other media consumed for at least three hours a week
%



Base: All NZ workers (n=1,699)
Q28a Which of the following do you do for at least three hours in a usual week?

NZ worker segments

We know workers are not all the same.

Our research shows that workers' knowledge about their employment rights and their risk of exploitation varies.

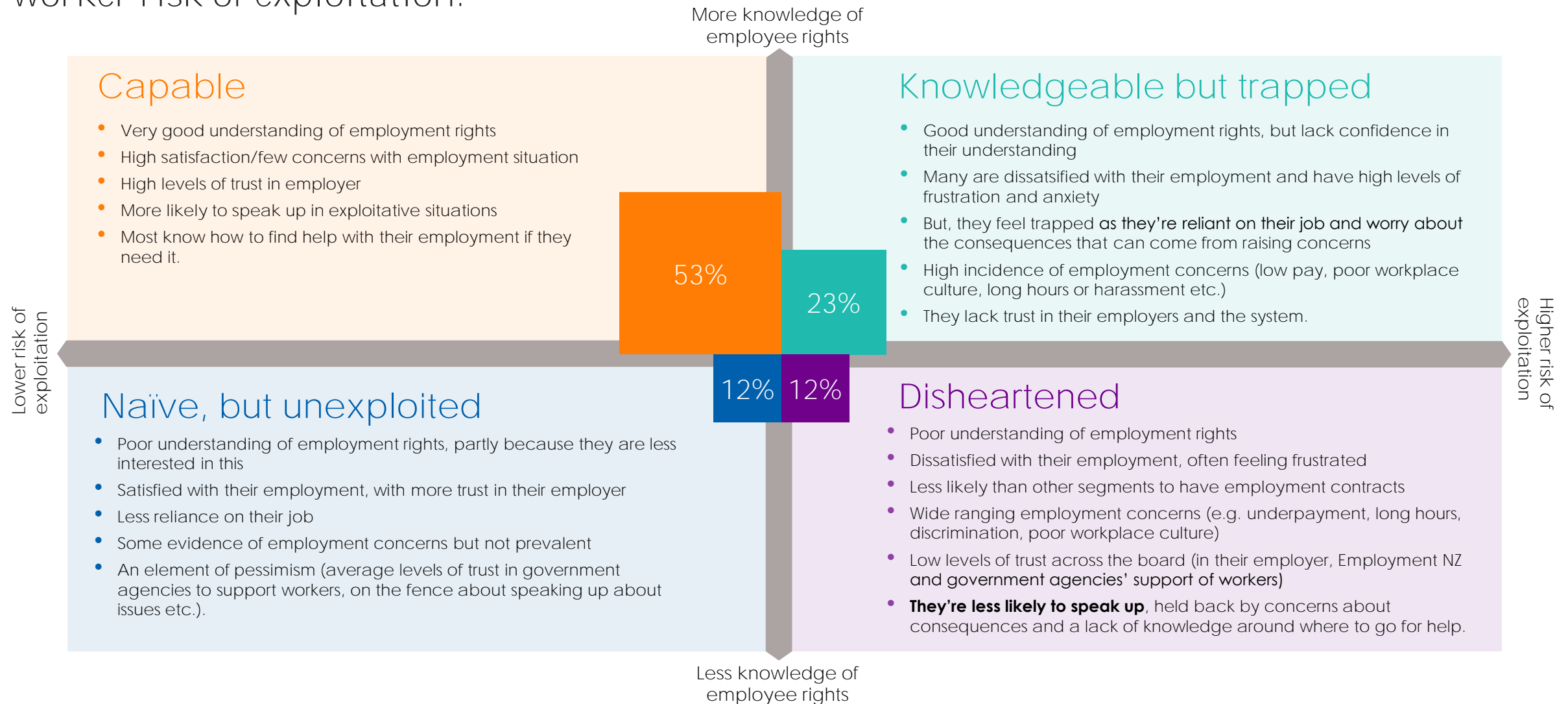
Worker knowledge is shown by:

- How well they feel they understand their employment rights
- Tested understanding of rights on wages, leave, breaks, employment contracts, trial periods, training, contractors, employer behaviours, and work safety.
- Knowing where to go to find useful information
- Ease of finding useful information
- Use of Employment NZ website.

Worker risk of exploitation is reflected in:

- Job satisfaction and trust in employer
- Non-compliant employers
- Support from family
- How easily the employee is to replace
- Reliance on job to support family
- Commitment to speaking up in exploitative situation
- How well government agencies support workers.

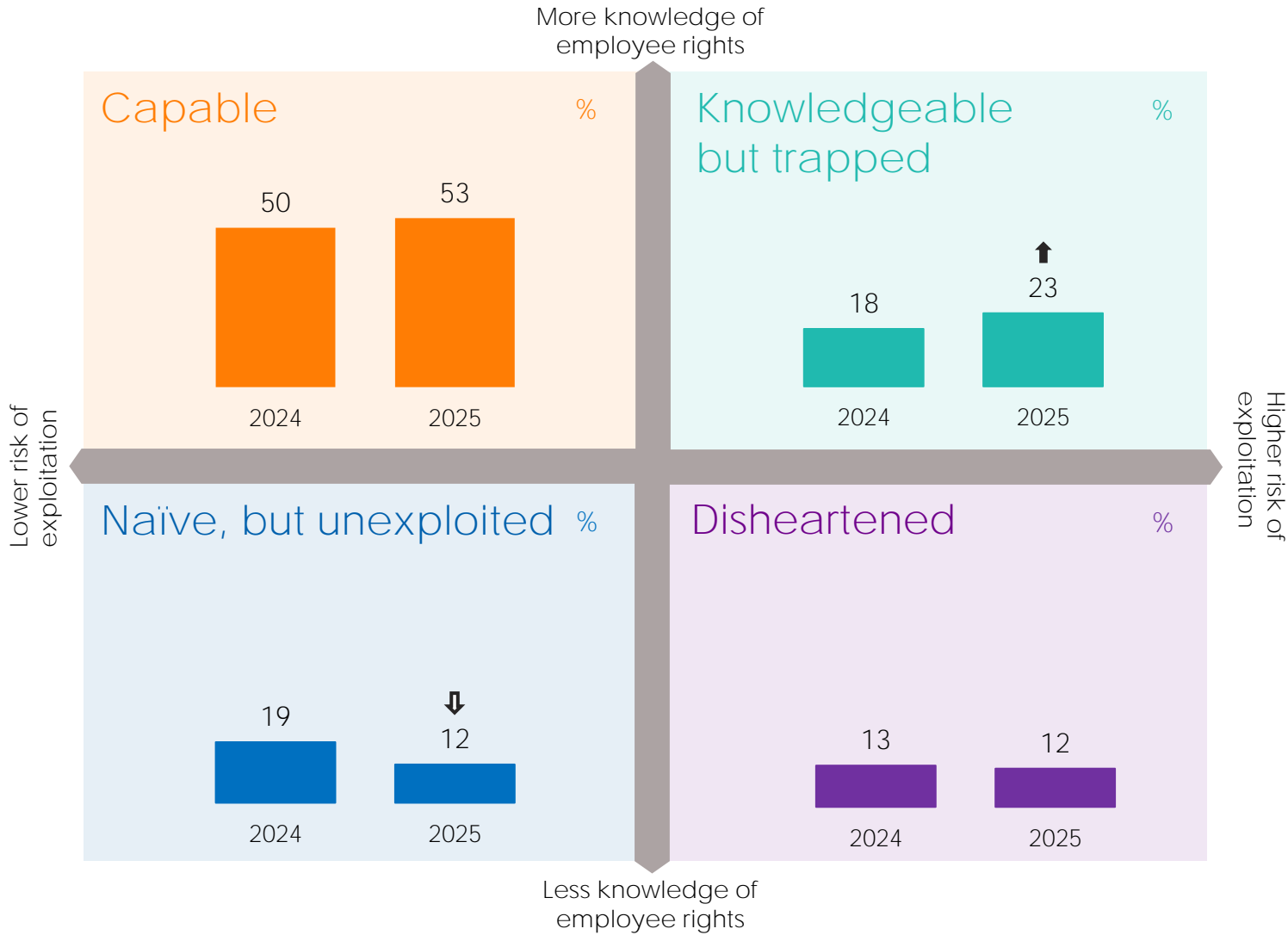
We get four worker segments by crossing worker knowledge of employment rights and worker risk of exploitation.



An improvement in worker knowledge of employment rights (highlighted earlier), coupled with growing financial dependence on their jobs and heightened job concerns (including worry about job security)¹, has led to a decrease in the size of the *Naïve but unexploited* segment and increase in the size of the *Knowledgeable but trapped* segment.

Most workers are still at low risk of exploitation; around half (53%) are *capable* and know their rights. Over a third (35%) are potentially at risk of exploitation; 12% are *disheartened* lacking knowledge of their rights.

¹Small increases are evident in the proportions of workers who agree that their employer could easily replace them if they left their job, that it's essential to stay in their job to financially support them and their family, and who say they are anxious and worried about their job. These shifts are each statistically insignificant on their own, but together contribute to the significant shift in segment sizes (shown to the right).

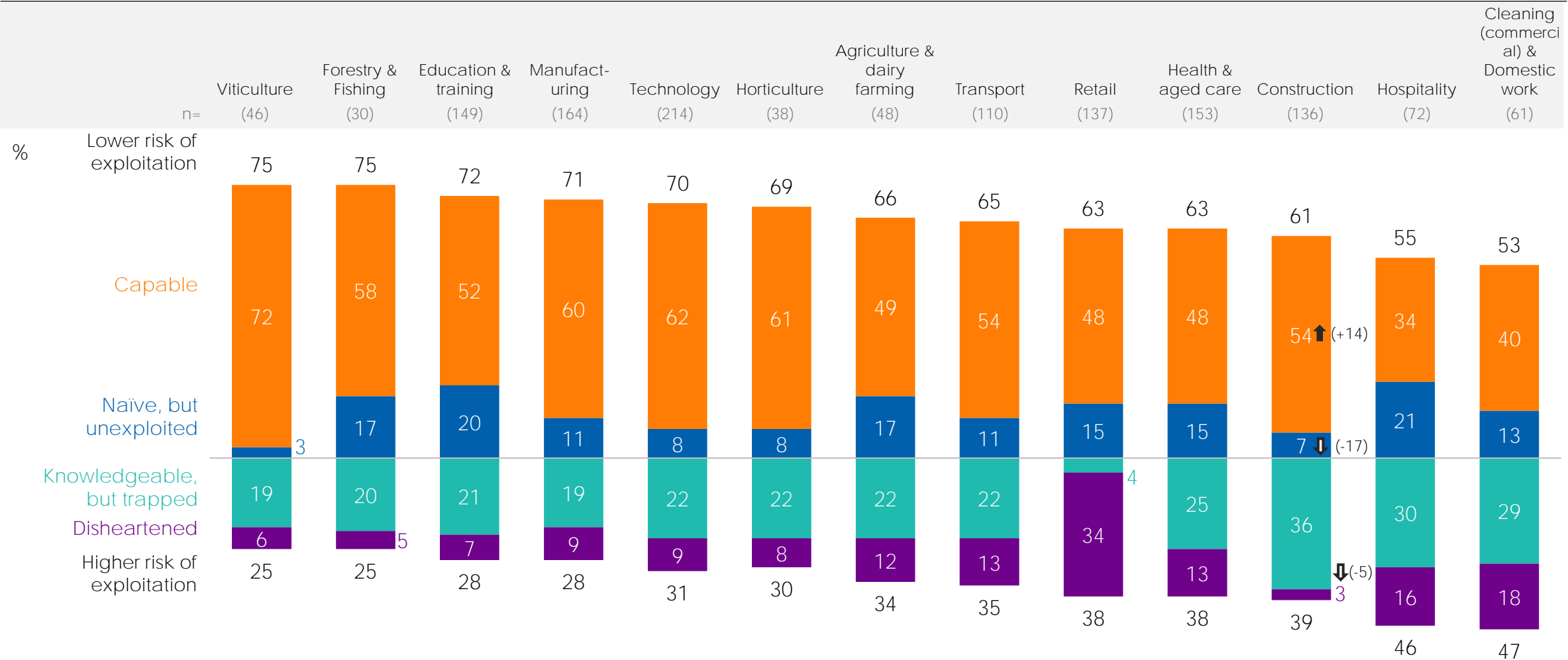


Base: All workers, 2025 (n=1,699), 2024 (n=1,754)

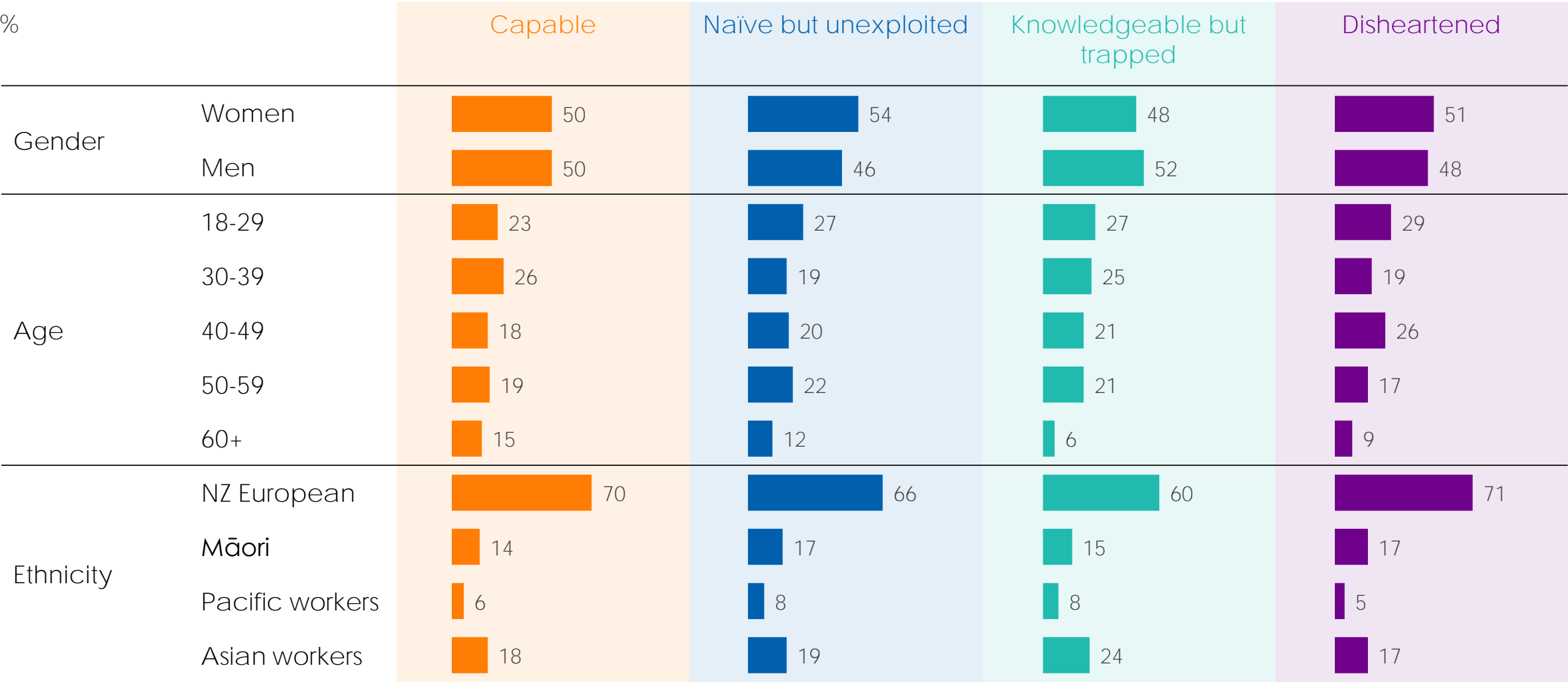
Disheartened workers are less supported than workers in other segments – they are least likely to belong to a union or know where to go for help.

	Capable	Naïve but unexploited	Knowledgeable but trapped	Disheartened
Low employment knowledge (average number <u>in</u> correct or unsure out of 14)	3	6 ▲	3	4
Union membership	25%	20%	23%	16% ▽*
Currently studying	19%	16%	23%	24%
Have local family support	74%	73%	64%	64%
Know where to go for help if they need it	89% ▲	68%	70%	59% ▽

The industries with the greatest risk of exploitation are retail, hospitality, health, transport, agriculture, domestic work and construction. Retail workers are the most disheartened.



The demographic profile of the segments shows that they intersect across demographics.



53% Capable

The capable are the happiest at work

- ▲ 97% Are satisfied, most often feeling...
- ▲ 57% happy ▲ 56% appreciated ▲ 41% grateful

They have the least negative experiences at work

- ▲ 69% Have experienced no issues at their job

They feel supported, saying their managers/employers...

- Care for/support workers 95% ▲
- Respect me 93% ▲
- Are willing to listen to work-related problems 92% ▲

And their employer works with them to...

- Give access to equipment needed to do my job safely 96% ▲
- Offer the opportunity to develop skills/learn new things 90% ▲
- Allow flexible working 82% ▲

They're less likely to be exploited

- ▲ 96% Have a written contract
- 1/4 Belong to a union (Although this isn't significantly higher than other segments)

They have a stable living situation and support available to them

- ▲ 74% Have relatives locally they can rely on for support
- ▲ 31% Own their home without a mortgage

They have the best understanding of their rights

- ▲ 93% Feel they understand their rights well
- 11.4 Highest average understanding of their rights out of 14

Almost all of them correctly understand many rules, especially rules around...

- Employment contracts 98% ▲
- Annual leave 95% ▲
- Public holidays 93% ▲
- Pay deductions (from employers with no warning) 92% ▲

And are empowered to speak up

- ▲ 73% Say employment rights are important to them

They're confident they know where to go for help and are likely to follow through

- Have easily found information about employment rights 91% ▲
- Know where to go for help with employment issues 89% ▲
- It'd be easy to speak up 35% ▲

They also have faith in their employer and the system more generally

- Trust Employment NZ 86% ▲
- Would go to Employment NZ if needed 48% ▲
- It'd feel good talking to Employment NZ if needed 41% ▲
- Trust my employer 87% ▲
- Government agencies support workers well 62% ▲

23%

Knowledgeable but trapped

They have a good understanding of their rights and **know they're at risk of being infringed**. They worry about consequences, so are less likely to speak up.

They're resigned to the fact they're unhappy at work

- ▲ 34% Are dissatisfied, most often feeling...
- ▲ 49% frustrated ▲ 38% anxious 32% accepting

They often have negative experiences at work

- ▲ 69% Have experienced at least one issue at work, including issues with...



They feel unheard, saying their managers/employers...



They know the rules but are worried about speaking up

They lack confidence, but actually have good understanding of their rights

▽ 74% Feel they understand their rights well

11.2 out of 14 Second highest average understanding of their rights

63% Say employment rights are important to them (8-10/10)

They have a few safety nets in place

- 92% Have a written contract
- 23% Are in a union (about average)

They also feel unsupported by employers who don't...



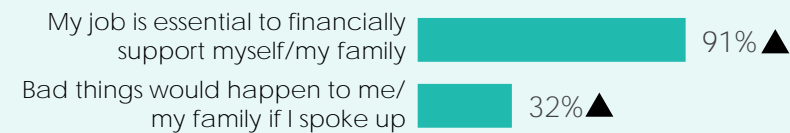
They're held back by a lack of trust

- ▲ 51% Distrust their employer
- ▲ 27% Feel government agencies don't support workers sufficiently

They're unlikely to speak up if needed, saying...



They're mostly held back because they're worried about consequences, saying...



12% Naïve, but unexploited

They often have high job satisfaction and fewer employment concerns and less exploitation currently, but they risk this in future with less interest in employment issues or willingness to speak up.

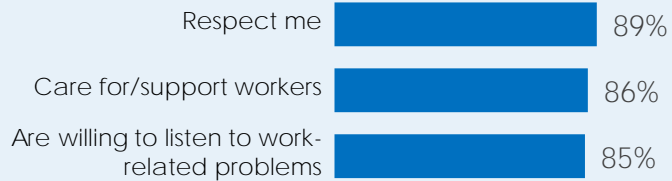
They're happy at work

- ▲ 91% Are satisfied, most often feeling...
- ▲ 55% appreciated 44% happy ▲ 42% grateful

They have fewer negative experiences at work than other segments (although, still some issues)

57% Have experienced no issues at their job

They feel supported, saying their managers/employers...



And their employer...

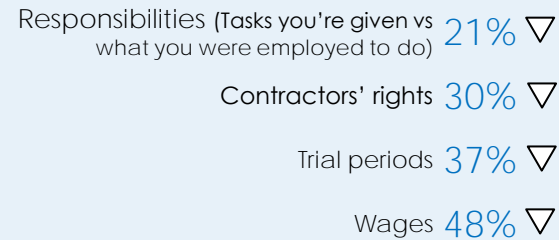


They aren't exploited currently, but risk this in future

They aren't currently exploited, but are at higher risk due to their poor understanding of their rights

- ▲ 33% Feel they don't understand their rights well
- 7.8 out of 14 Lowest average understanding of their rights

They have low understanding of all rights, but struggle most with...



And they're less reliant on their job which may contribute to their lower rates of exploitation

- ▼ 72% Feel their job is essential to financially support themselves/their family

But they have a few safety nets in place

- 90% Have a written contract
- 21% Are in a union (about average)

They're less worried about employment rights than other segments

- ▼ 55% Feel employment issues are important to them (8-10/10)

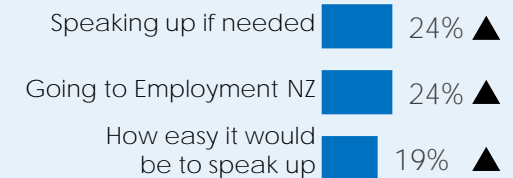
Partly because they trust others



They're unsure about speaking up, possibly because they haven't given it much thought (because they haven't had to)

- ▼ 68% Feel they know where to go for help with employment issues

And are on the fence about speaking up (rating of 5 out of 10)



12% The disheartened

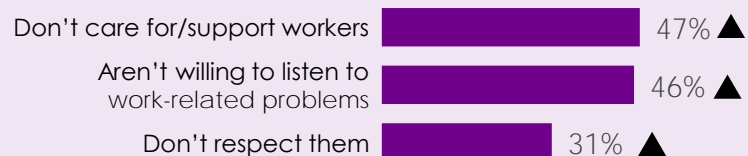
The disheartened are the least happy at work

- ▲ 48% Are dissatisfied, most often feeling...
- ▲ 59% frustrated ▲ 28% insecure ▲ 26% Anxious

They have the most negative experiences at work



They feel unheard, saying their managers/employers...



They also feel unsupported by employers as they...

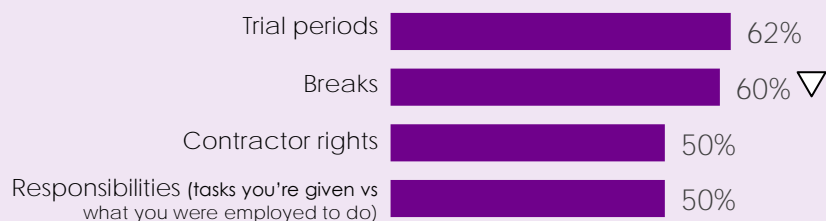


What's holding them back?

One in ten don't have written contracts, making them easier to take advantage of.

They have poor understanding of their rights

- ▲ 37% Feel they don't understand their rights
- ▲ 48% Have low actual understanding when tested¹, particularly around...



A lack of trust holds them back, with a strong distrust in...

- ▲ 61% their employer ▲ 36% Employment NZ
- ▲ 39% think government agencies support workers well

As a result they're unlikely to raise employment issues



▲ 53% Think it'd be hard to raise issues. Partly because...

- ▲ 80% Feel easily replaceable ▲ 43% Worry bad things will happen to them/their family
- ▲ 41% Don't know or disagree they know where to go to get help if needed

How can they be reached?

Addressing financial worries would encourage action, i.e. I'd speak up if...



They also want to feel like part of a group before speaking up, i.e. I'd speak up if...



They're mostly drawn to interpersonal conversations as a way to get help

- 82% Face to face conversations with an independent person
- 81% an 0800 number to ask about employment

As well as more traditional sources

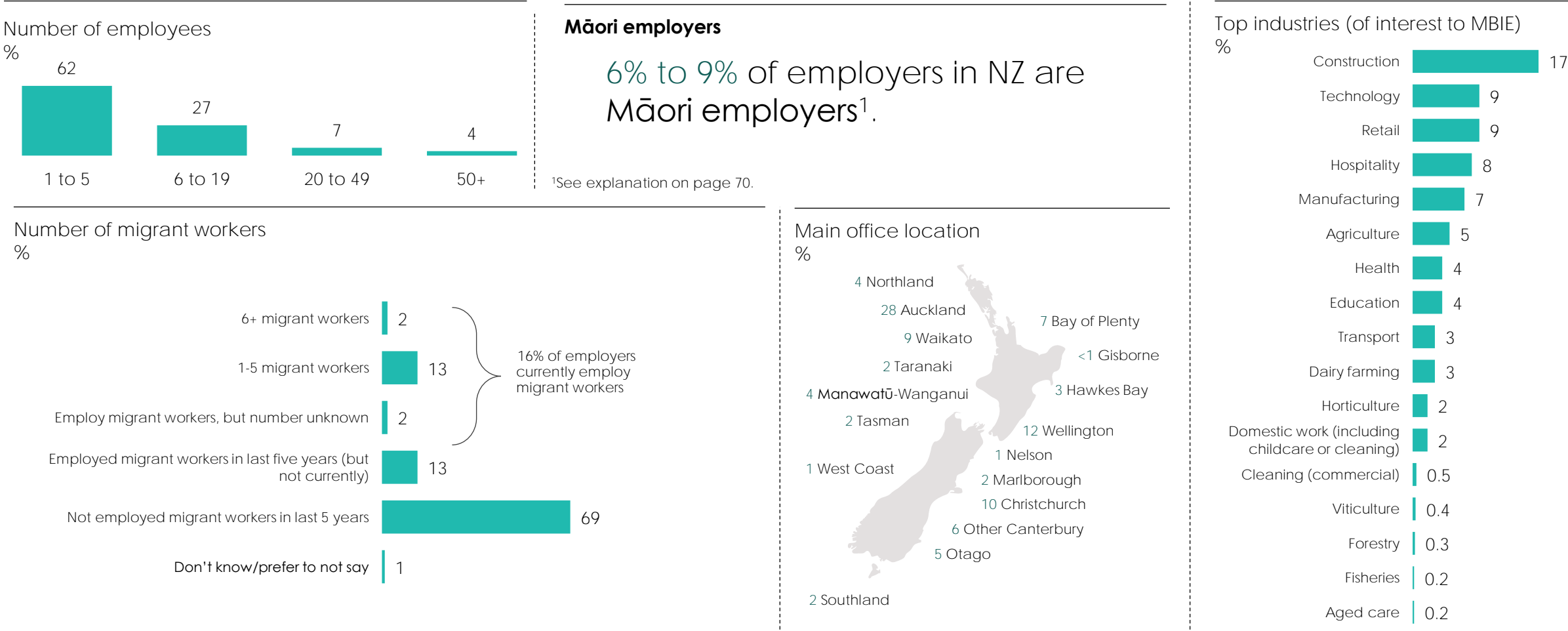
- 87% would go to a website about employment rights

Employers



Profile of New Zealand employers - weighted

A total of 931 employers from across New Zealand took part in the survey.



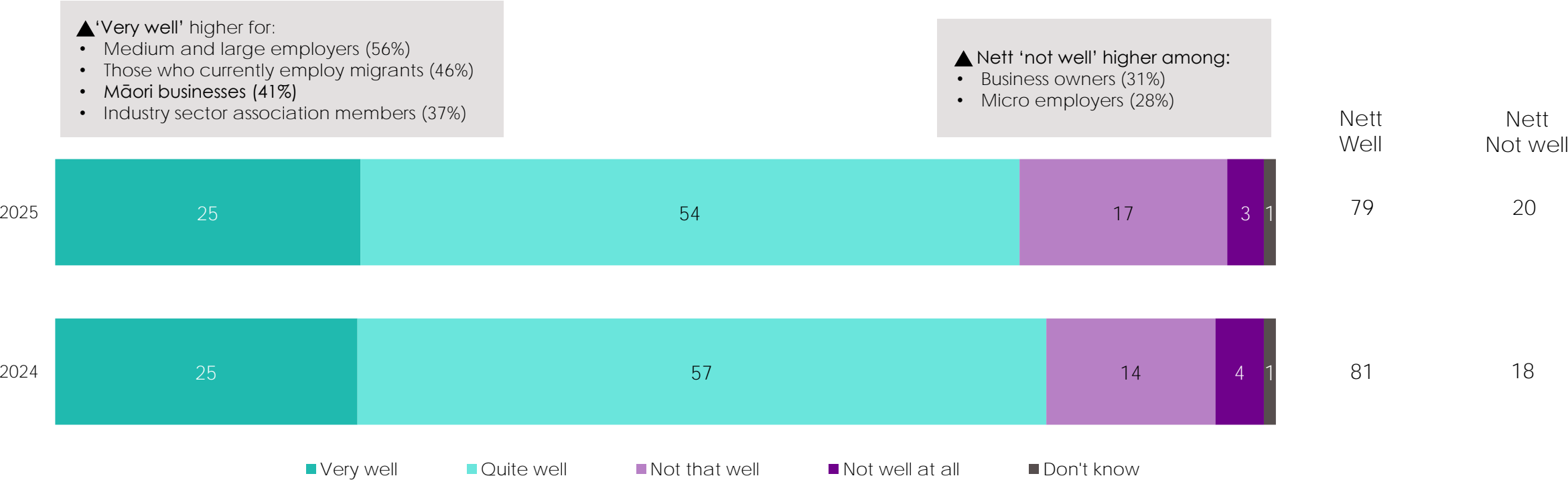
Base: All NZ employers (n=931)
S8. Number of employees,, S3/Q19. Industry, S5. Employment of migrant workers, S4. Number of migrant workers, Q60. Māori organisations, Q20. Main office location

NZ employer knowledge of employment rules and regulations

Employers' self-rated understanding of employment rules and regulations is stable.

Most (79%) employers feel they understand employment rules and obligations very well or quite well, but one in five do not. Micro employers are most likely to lack knowledge.

Self-rated understanding of employment rules and regulations
%



Base: All NZ employers 2025 (n=931), 2024 (n=855)
Q1. How well do you think you understand employment rules and regulations?

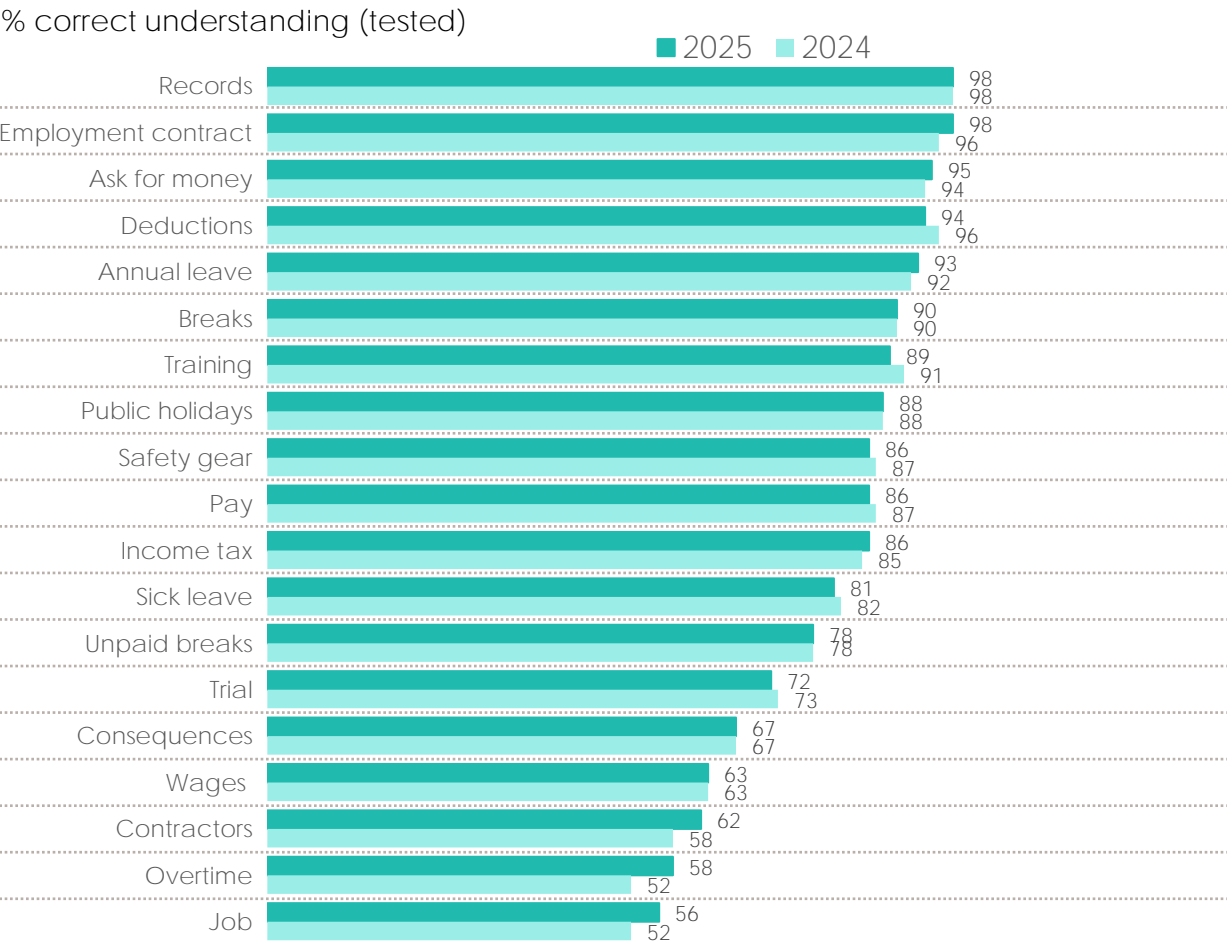
We showed employers a range of statements on employment rights, and for each they indicated whether it was correct or incorrect. They were also asked to state the adult minimum wage.

Employment right / regulation	Right Answer
Annual Leave: Workers have the right to at least four weeks of paid annual leave after one year of continuous employment in their job	Correct
Sick Leave: After working for six months for an employer, a worker has the right to 10 days sick leave per year	Correct
Public holidays: If a worker works on a public holiday and it would normally have been one of their working days, they are entitled to get paid 1.5 times their normal pay and have another day off	Correct
¹ Employment contract: Employers must provide workers with a copy of the employment contract (agreement).	Correct
Records: Employers must keep records of worker wages, hours work, leave (sick, annual, etc.) and deduction	Correct
Consequences: Employers caught exploiting or mistreating migrant workers can be banned from supporting migrant visas for up to two years	Correct
Trial: A 90 day trial period can be added to the employment contract after the worker starts working	Incorrect
Training: Employers need to pay workers when they are being trained for the job	Correct
Contractors: Contractors don't have the same rights as employees	Correct
Unpaid breaks: All breaks are unpaid (i.e. morning tea, lunch, afternoon tea)	Incorrect
Wages: An employer can ask a worker to work half a day without pay if they are asked to show their skills before they are employed	Incorrect
Ask for money: An employer can ask for money from a potential worker to give the worker a job	Incorrect
Safety gear: Workers must pay for their own health and safety equipment	Incorrect
² Overtime: An employer never to pay a salaried worker overtime if they work a lot of extra hours.	Incorrect
Job: An employer can employ a worker as a chef but have them work as a waiter.	Incorrect
Deductions: An employer can make deductions from a worker's wages or salary for any reason they want to without their consent.	Incorrect
Pay: It is ok for employers to pay a New Zealander more than a migrant who is doing the same job because the New Zealander is a citizen of New Zealand	Incorrect
Income tax: An employer can ask an employee to pay their own income tax to the Inland Revenue	Incorrect
Breaks: People who work in stores, cafes and restaurants are not allowed to have rest breaks if they are too busy	Incorrect

¹In 2024 this statement was worded 'Employers must provide the worker with a copy of the employment contract (agreement) before they start their job'.

²In 2024 this statement was worded 'An employer does not need to pay a salaried worker overtime if they work a lot of extra hours.'

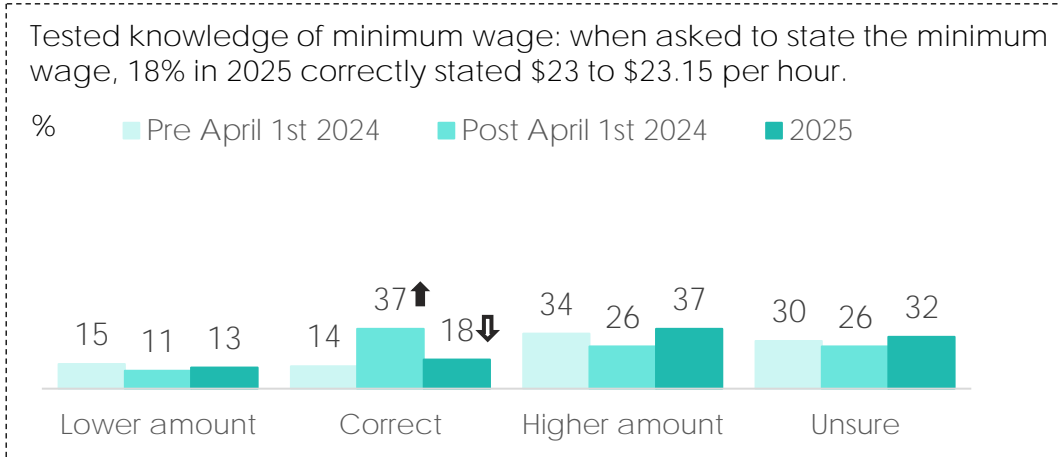
Employer levels of tested knowledge of employment law are similar to 2024.



18% of employers correctly understand 18 or 19 of the 19 employment rights. This compares to 15% in 2024.

The average employer has an incorrect understanding of (or is unsure about) 4 of the 19 employment rights tested.

▲ Incorrect knowledge is highest among micro businesses, with four areas of incorrect understanding compared to two areas for large employers.

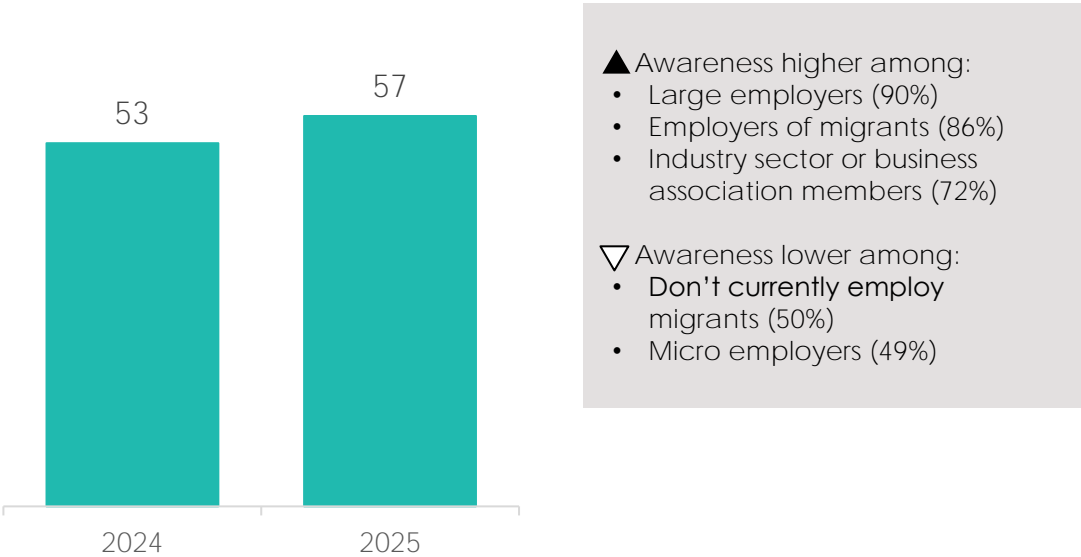


Base: All NZ employers 2025 (n=931), 2024 (n=855)
Q2a. Based on what you know about New Zealand law, do you think this is correct or not correct?
Q2b. As far as you know, what does New Zealand employment law say is the current adult hourly minimum wage?
Verian | The employment monitor

Employer knowledge of work visas has not changed significantly.

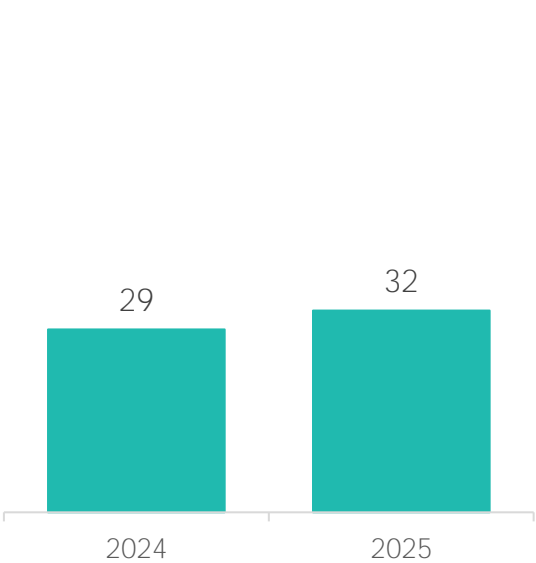
Over half of employers have heard of the Accredited Employer Work Visa; awareness is much higher among large employers and employers of migrants. Around one third of employers of migrants now know about the MEPV.

Awareness of the accredited employer work visa
%



Base: All employers 2025 (n=931), 2024 (855)
Q50. In 2022, the New Zealand Government introduced the Accredited Employer Work Visa. Had you heard of this visa before today?

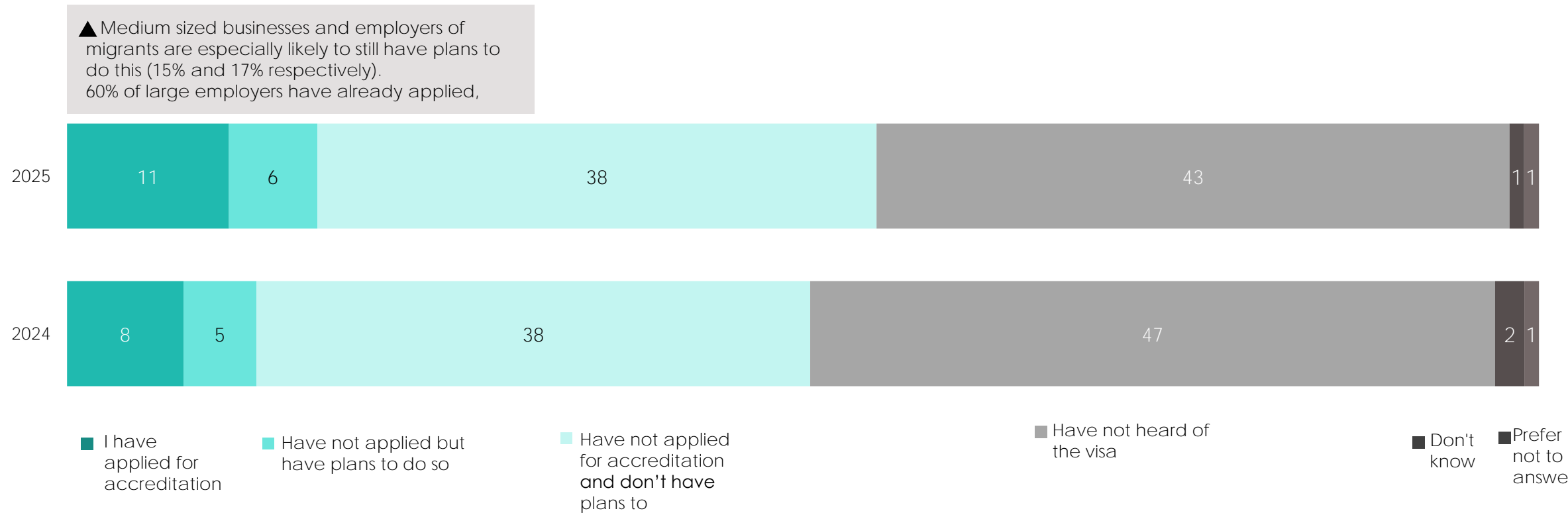
Awareness of Migrant Exploitation Protection Work Visa
(among employers of migrants)
%



Base: Employers of migrants 2025 (n=340), 2024 (245)
Q9. A migrant worker with an employer supported work visa and who has reported exploitation can apply for a Migrant Exploitation Protection Work Visa. This visa allows them to leave their job quickly and stay in New Zealand while the employer is being investigated. Before today, had you heard of the Migrant Exploitation Protection work visa?

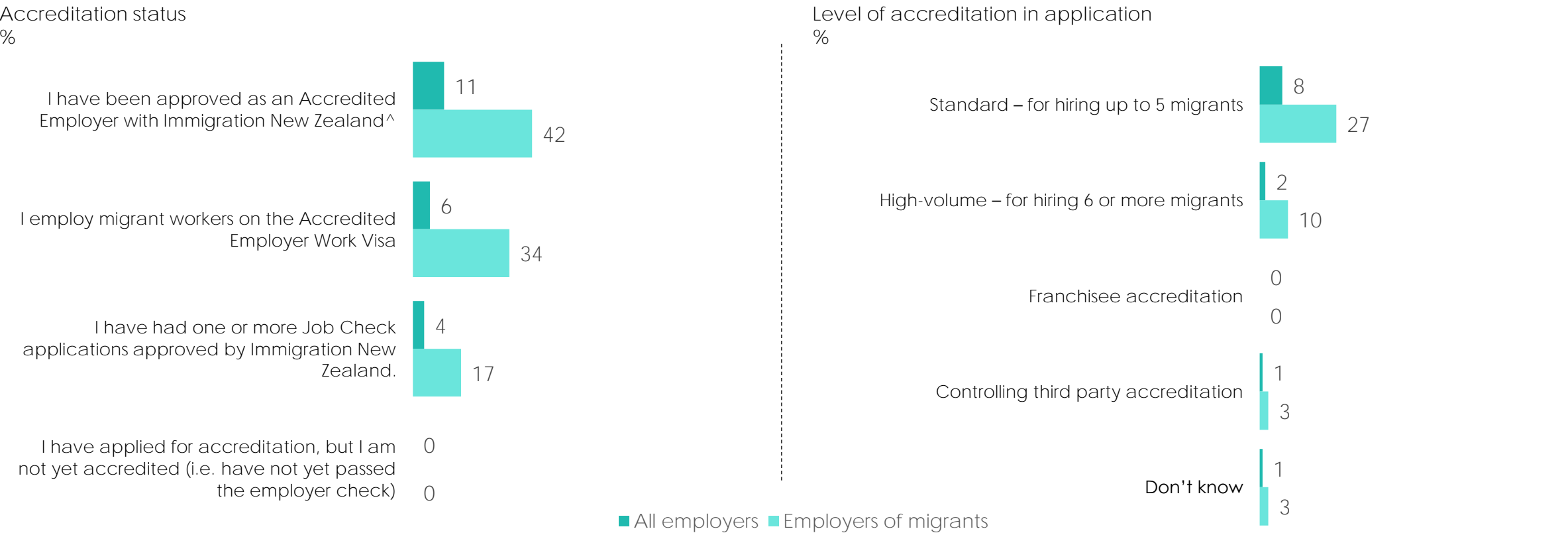
With most large employers having already applied for accreditation, medium sized businesses are now the group most likely to pursue it.

Accredited Employer Work Visa applications
%



Base: All NZ employers 2025 (n=931), 2024 (n=855)
Q51. Still thinking about the accredited employer work visa, which of the following best applies to you and your business?

More than one in ten employers have been approved as an accredited employer with Immigration NZ, with the standard level being most common.



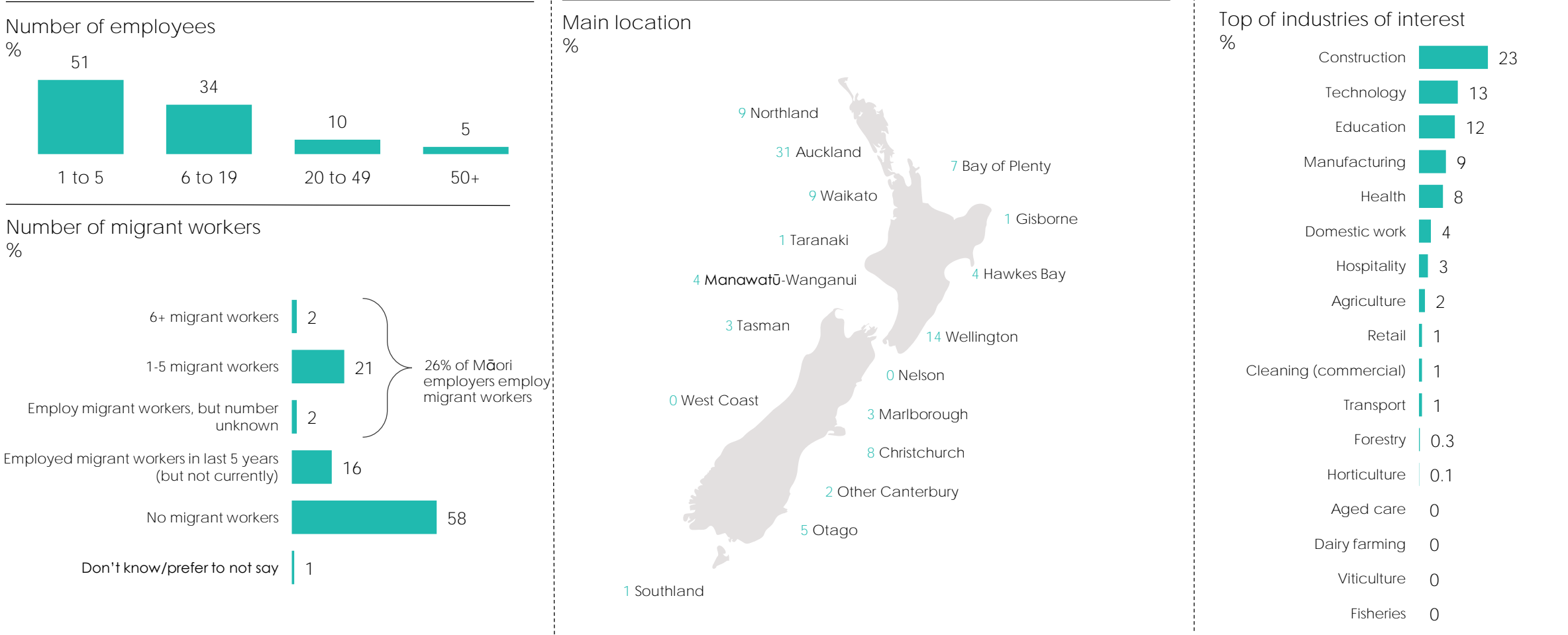
^7% of all employers and 25% of employers of migrants selected this response in the survey. However, some respondents may have felt they didn't need to select that they had been approved, as they had progressed further than that. Therefore, the 11% and 42%, respectively, are the proportions that selected any of these first three categories.

Base: All NZ employers (n=931), Employers of migrants in the 'all employer' survey (n=218)
Q52. Which of the following applies to you? Q53. Which level of accreditation did you apply for?

Māori employers

Profile of Māori employers

A total of 96 employers identified as working in a Māori business or organisation or having a strong Māori leadership or values base.



Key statistics on Māori employers

Between...
6% to 9%¹
...of employers in NZ are
Māori businesses.

i.e. the survey respondent either represents
a Māori business, or the business has a
strong Māori leadership or Māori values
base.

¹Fifty one of the 931 employers surveyed were sourced from the NZBN database using a Māori business identifier. This has the effect of boosting the number of Māori businesses in a non-random manner. However, it is possible that Māori businesses are under-represented in the other sources (online panel and Martins database). Therefore, a range is provided to estimate the % of Māori businesses in NZ. The lower end is the % of the random sample of employers (online panel and Martins business database) that indicated they were Māori, and the upper limit is the % of all employers surveyed (including the NZBN boost) that indicated they were Māori led. Māori employers are defined as employers who 1) work for or represent a Māori business or organisation, or 2) indicate that the business or organisation has a strong Māori leadership or Māori values base.

A further
7%
...of NZ employers aspire
to be Māori value based
in the future.

Employers in the education and training sector are most likely to be Māori businesses (26% versus 9% on average) and aspire to be Māori value based in the future (24% versus 7% on average).

Te Ao Māori influences nearly two thirds¹ of Māori employers.

¹63% of Māori businesses agreed to one or both of the two statements described below.

57%

agree working for a Māori business influences how they approach their obligations as an employer.

“I am mindful that there are differences in values and cultures, and more than one way of seeing things.”

“More understanding and allowance around bereavement leave e.g. tangihanga – to culturally appropriate farewell.”

“We value our employees. We run our business with the understanding that the people are the most important aspect to us, and we treat them as such by giving them more than their minimum entitlements.”

“We are obligated to the wellbeing of our employees. For example, introducing employees to potential business that could develop their skills.”

“I am more open to providing job opportunities to unemployed Māori.”

“High level of ethics applied to decision-making, long-term holistic view of the employee career journey, human-centred thinking where people are valued and not deemed of lesser importance than economic factors.”

56%

agree working for a Māori business influences how they think about and approach the way they support the rights of their employees.

“We are more understanding of different culturally sensitive situations, and social dynamics with our staff.”

“I am conscious of the need to ensure that my employers are appropriately supported and made aware of their rights so that they can give me their best performance.”

“Building a whānau culture – encouraging support, loyalty, co-operation and clear communication.”

“Building whānaungatanga means that we ensure that workers get their rights and more than their contract states. We get more back and engender loyalty as a result.”

“By fostering an inclusive environment respecting people's cultures and values.”

“Using Māori concepts like manaakitanga, allows both the employer and employee to build trust and feel supported.”

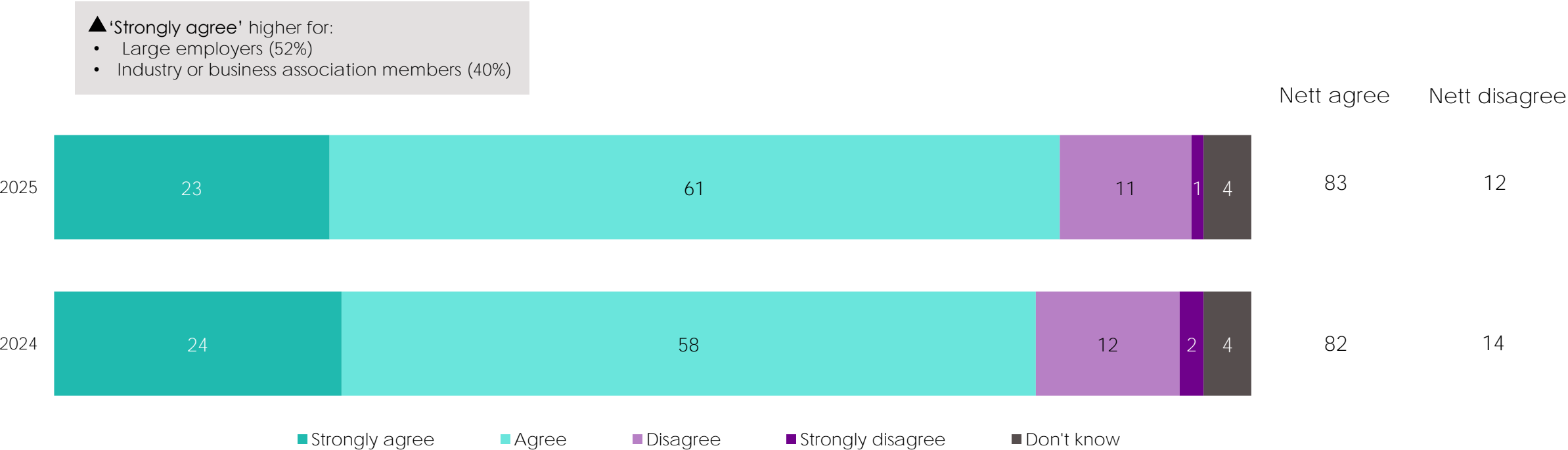
“It influences how we interact and share our values with our employees – valuing whānau, mokopuna, well-being and whānaungatanga.”

Base: Māori employers (n=96)
Source: Q61, Q61a, Q62, Q62a

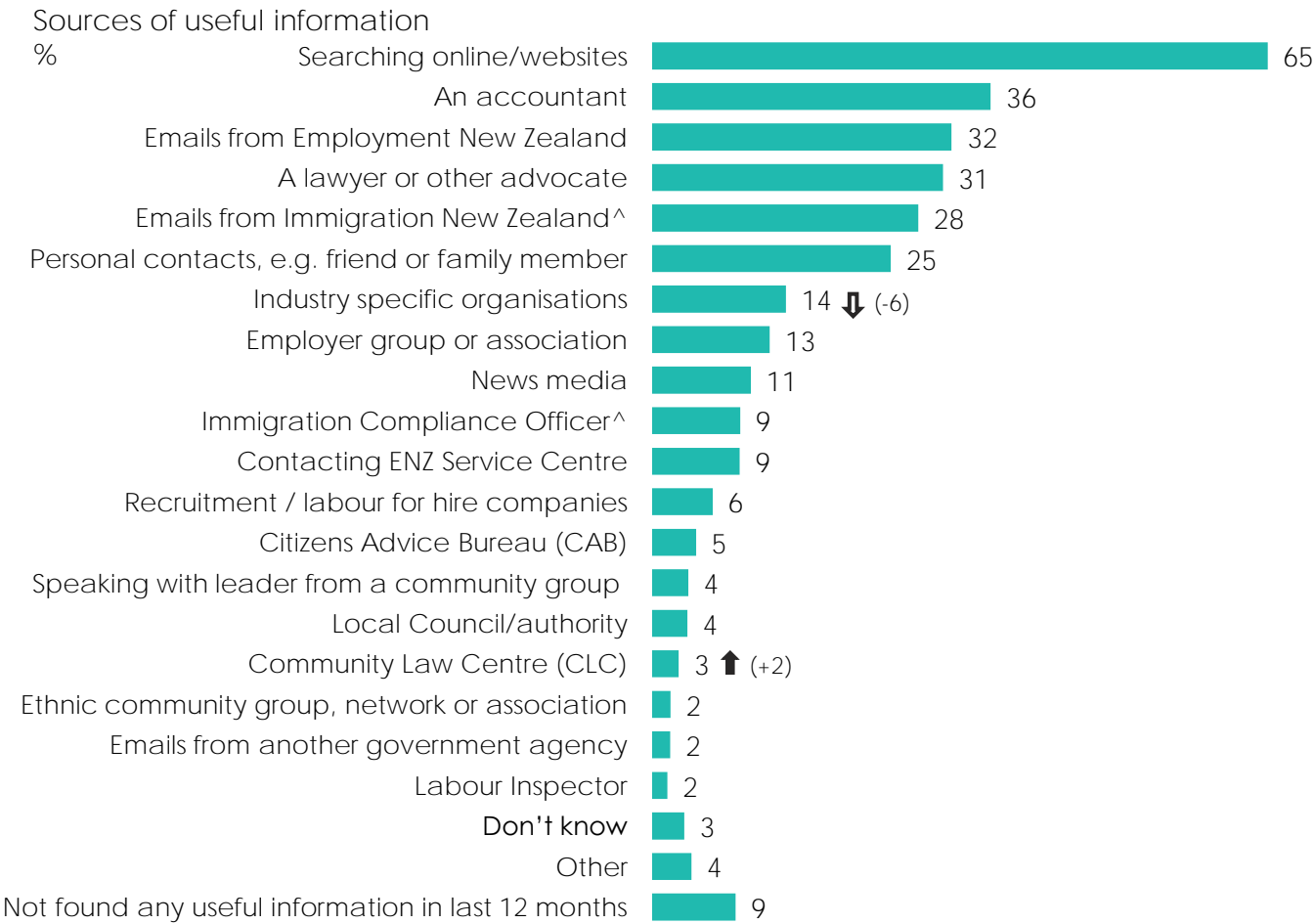
Engaging NZ employers

Consistent with 2024, most employers know where to go to get help with their employment obligations, but around one in six don't.

Knowing where to go for help with employment obligations
%



Two thirds of employers have sourced useful information on employment obligations through online searches in the last 12 months. Professionals and government agencies are also common sources for many.



Group differences

- ▲ Large employers (50+ employees) are more likely than average to source useful information from:
 - Lawyer or other advocate (61%)
 - Employer group or association (40%)
 - Emails from Immigration NZ (35%)
 - Industry specific organisations (27%)
 - Recruitment/labour for hire companies (17%).
- ▲ Medium employers are more likely than average to source useful information from:
 - Employer group or association (26%)
 - Emails from Immigration NZ (17%).
- ▲ Small employers are more likely than larger employers to say they did not find any useful information in the last 12 months (10% vs 1%).
- ▲ Industry sector or business association members are more likely than average to source useful information from:
 - Industry specific organisations (31%)
 - Employer group or association (22%).
- ▲ Māori employers are more likely than average to source useful information from:
 - Contacting the Employment New Zealand Service Centre (20%)
 - Ethnic community group, network or association (12%)
 - Local Council/authority (11%)
 - Speaking with a leader from a community group (11%).

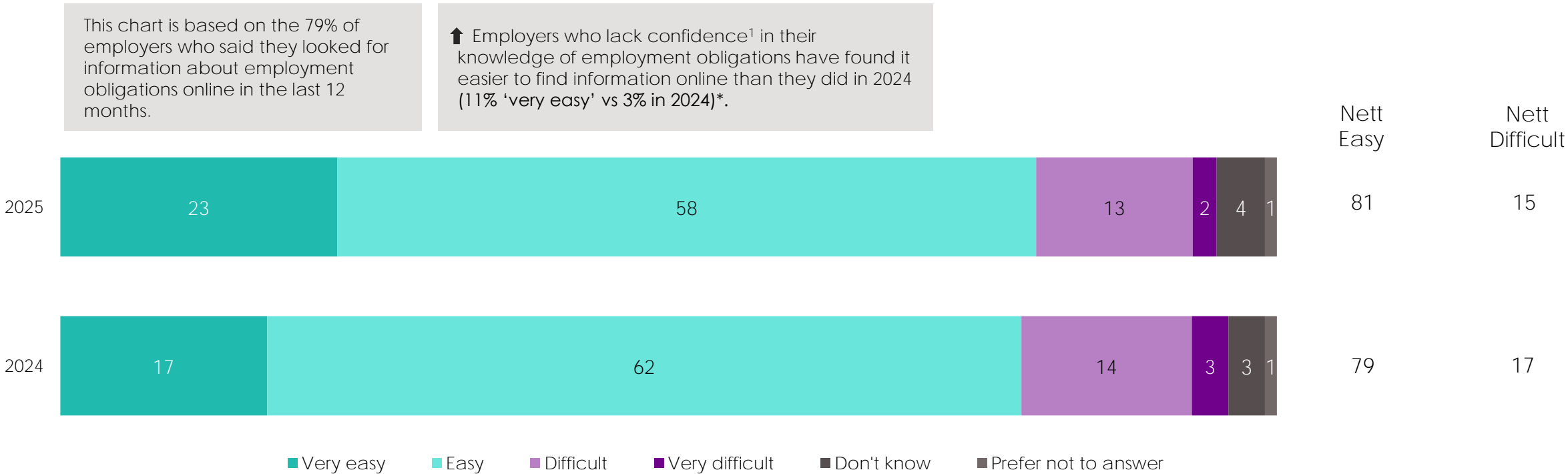
Base: All NZ employers (n=931) ^Base: Employers who employ migrants (n=340).
Q4. Where have you found useful information about your employment obligations in the last 12 months?

There is some suggestion that employers are finding it easier to find information about employment obligations than this time last year.

The increase in 'very easy' ratings is not statistically significant at the total sample level, but is among the less confident¹.

Ease of finding employment obligations information online
%

¹ This refers to employers who said that they understand employment rules and regulations not that well or not well at all.

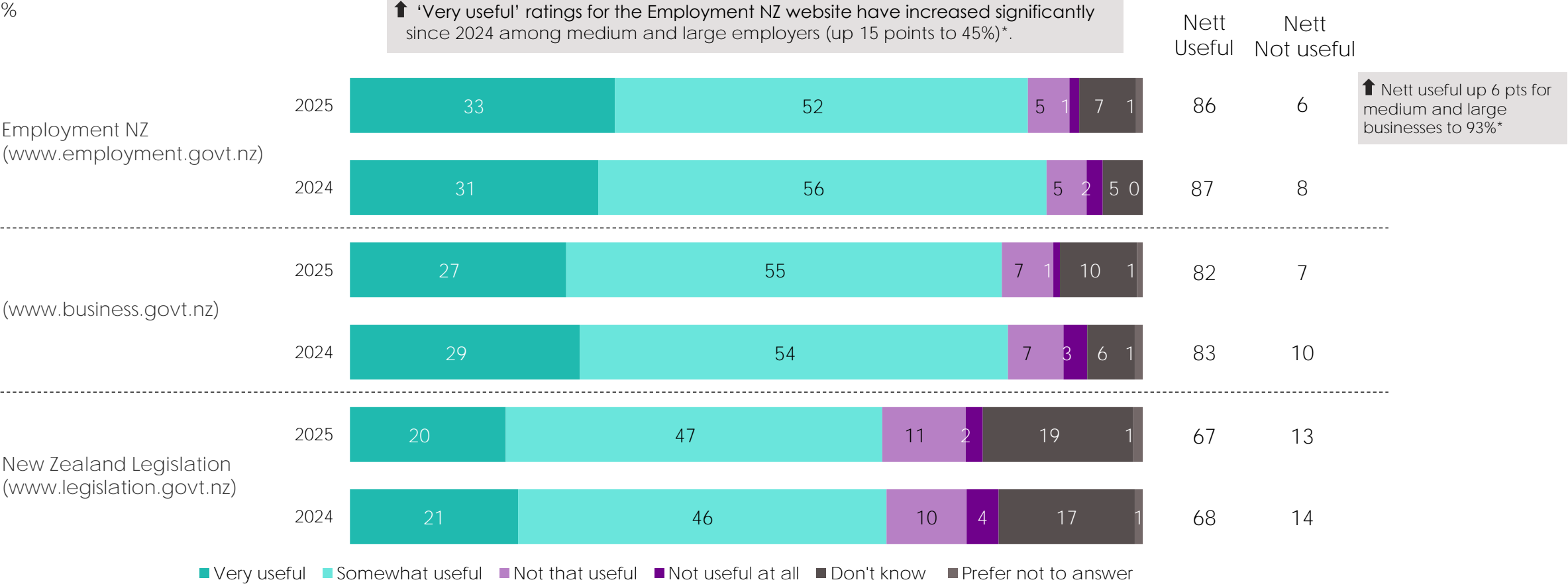


Base: All NZ employers who have looked for information about employment obligations online in the last 12 months 2025 (n=755), 2024 (n=700)
Q5b. In the last 12 months, how easy or difficult was it to find information you need about employment obligations online?

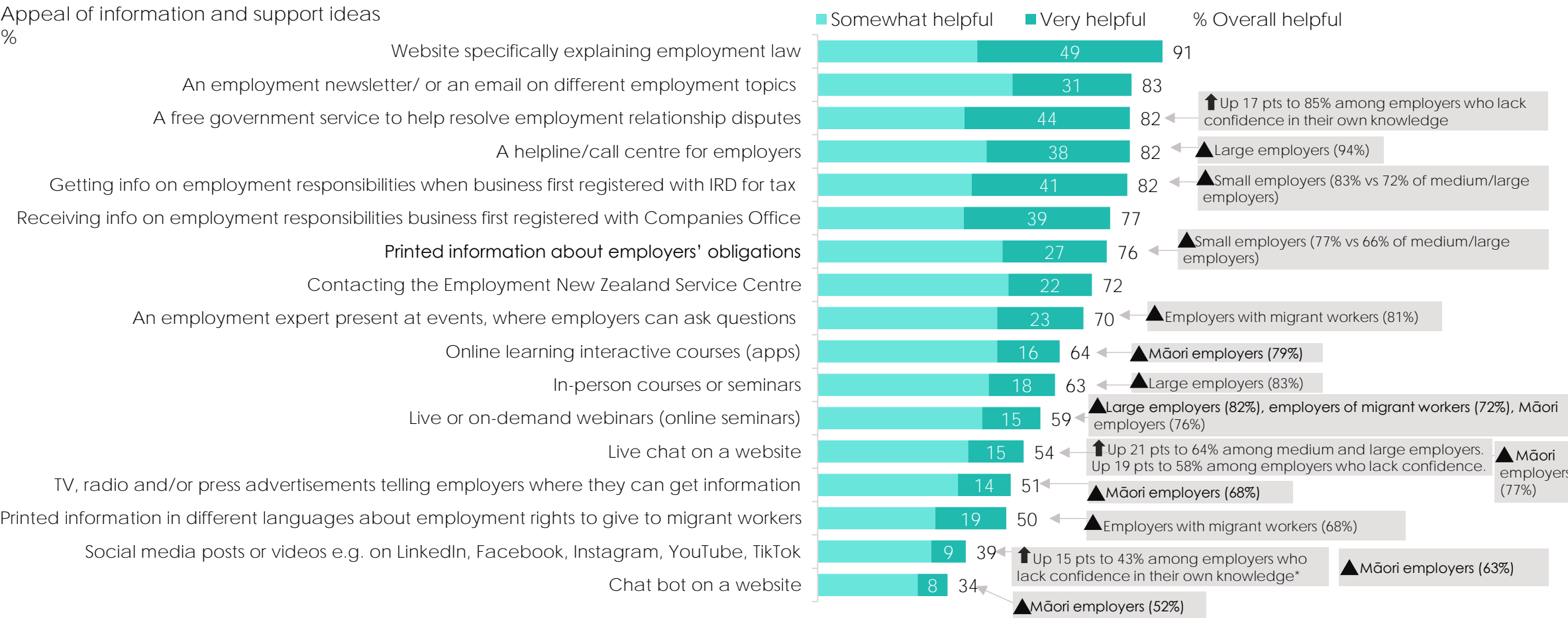
↑ ↓ Significant increase/decrease since last wave at the 95% confidence level (or 90% if marked with *).
▲ ▽ Significantly higher or lower than 2025 total sample or other subgroups (at 95% confidence level).

Medium and large employers' perceptions of Employment NZ's website are more favourable since the website revamp.

Visitors' perceptions of websites

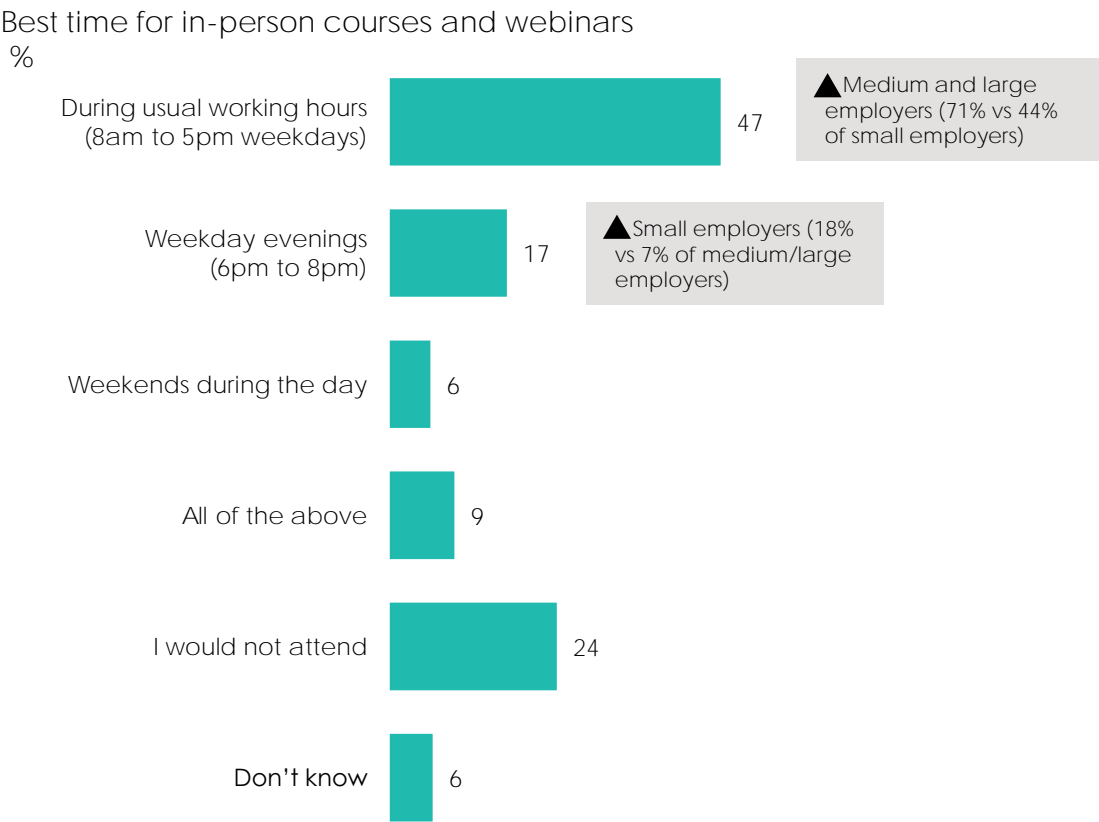


Both general sources and tailored advice on employment law hold appeal. Since 2024, interest has increased among some employer subgroups for an independent disputes resolution service, live chat on a website, and social media content.



Base: All NZ employers (n=931)
Q6. Next are some ideas for helping you get information and support on employment obligations. We'd like to know how helpful these would be for you.

Seven in ten employers want regular updates on employment law. Working hours is the most popular time for those interested in in-person courses and webinars.



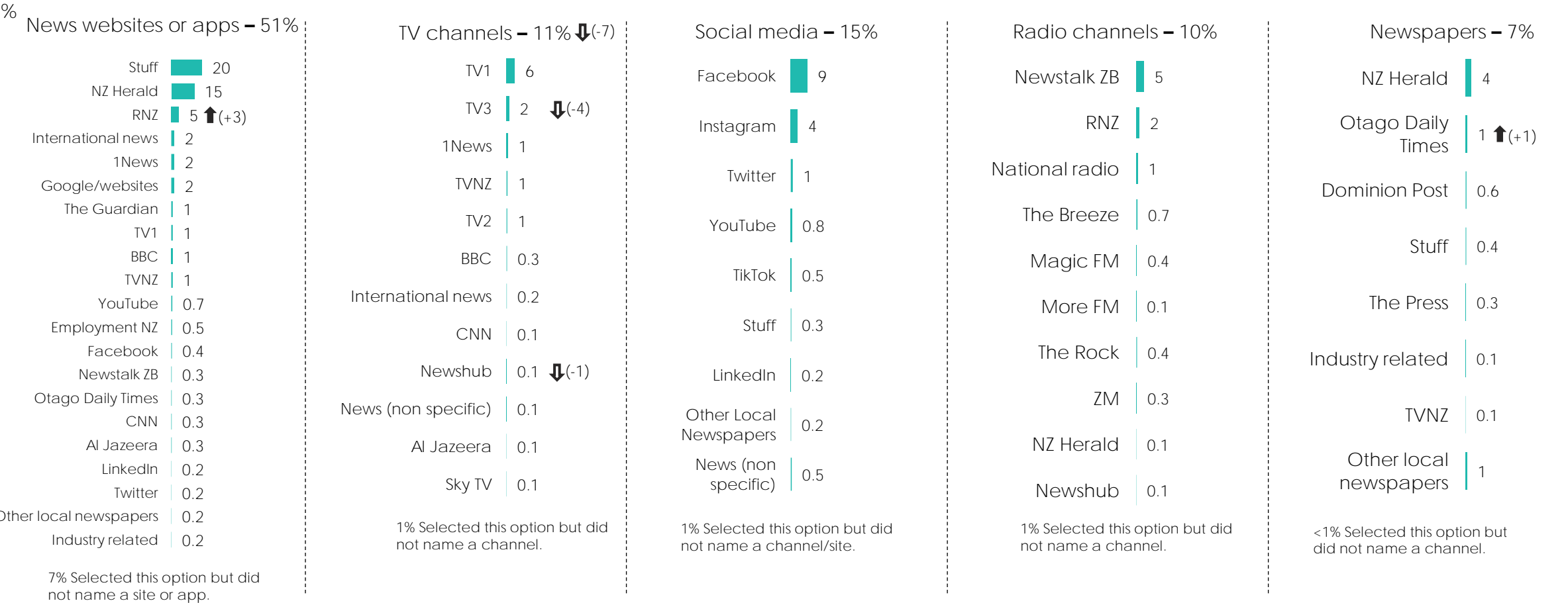
Base: NZ employers who indicated they would find in-person courses or live webinars helpful (n=826)
Q7. Would you be more likely to attend in-person courses / live webinars...



Base: All NZ employers (n=931)
Q8. What type of information about employment law would you be interested in?

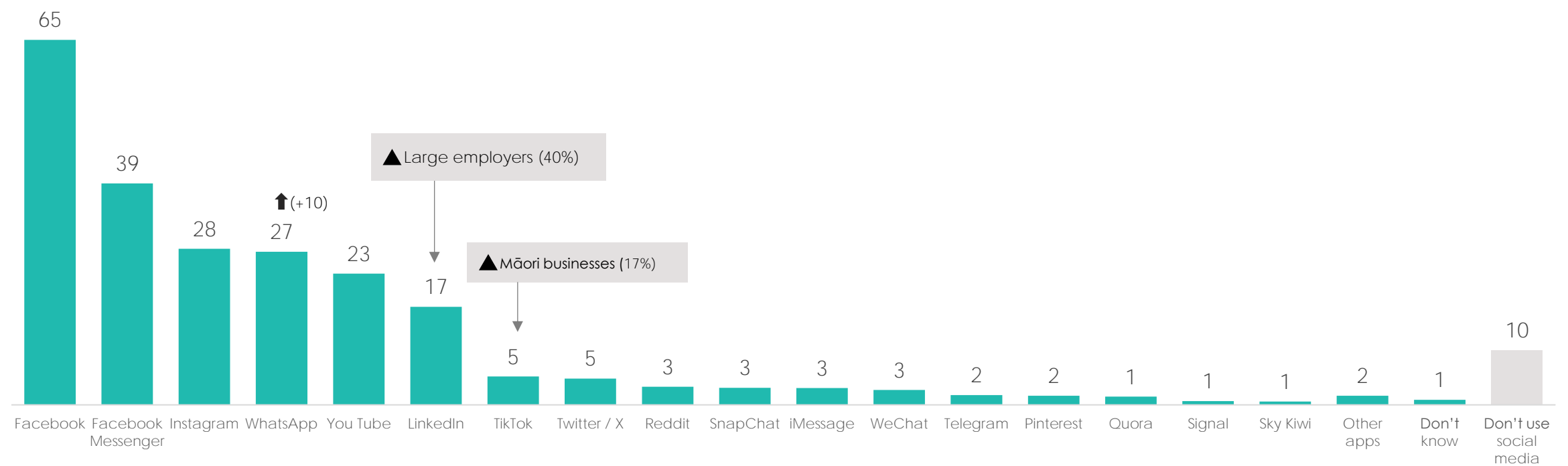
Employers most commonly use online sources of media for news and information.

Main source of media for news and information



Facebook and Instagram continue to be the most popular social media platforms among employers, though WhatsApp is gaining traction.

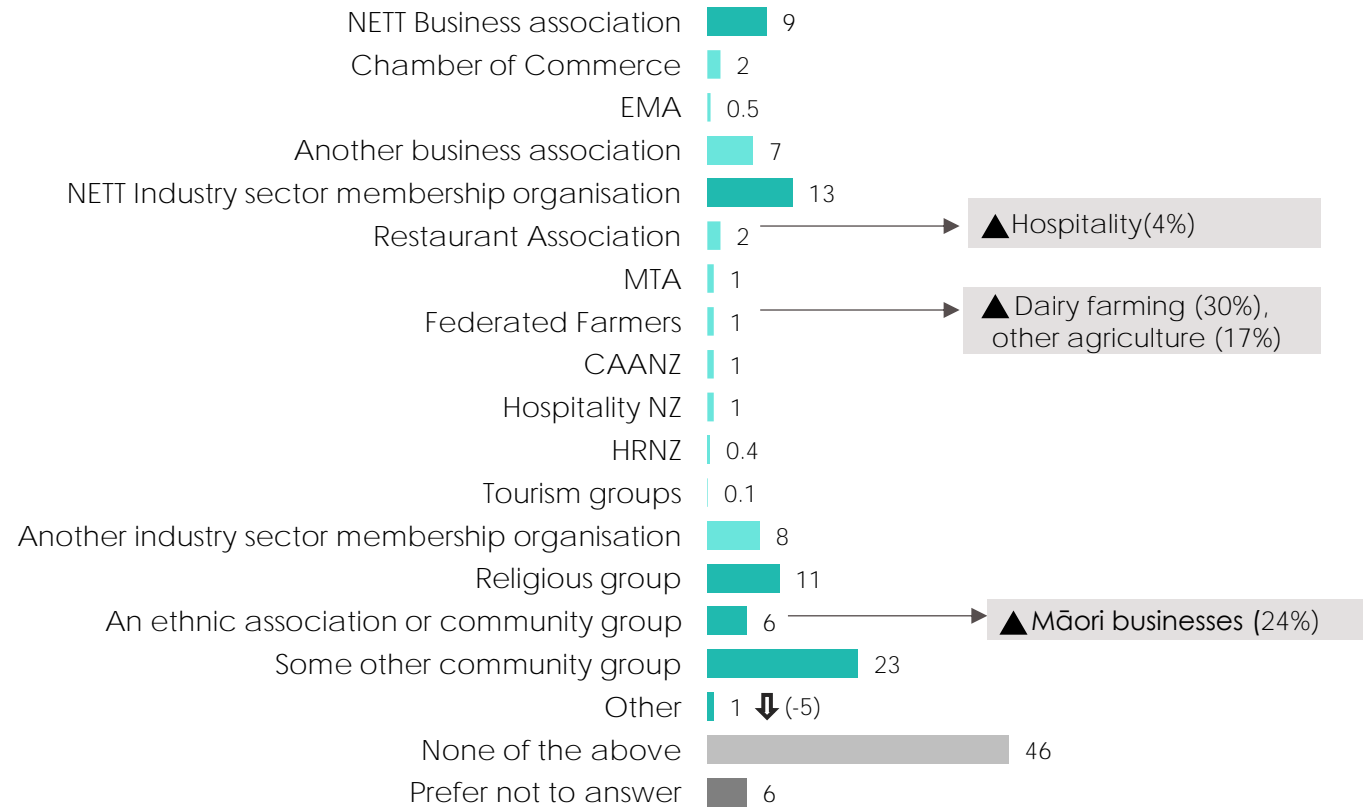
Social media use
%



Base: All NZ employers (n=931)
Q17 What social media sites or apps do you use most?

Nearly one in ten employers are members of a business association, and one in eight belong to an industry specific organisation. A quarter of Māori employers belong to an ethnic association or community group.

Professional and community group affiliations
%



Encouraging the compliance of NZ employers

Punitive measures continue to be favoured to drive compliance with employment law.

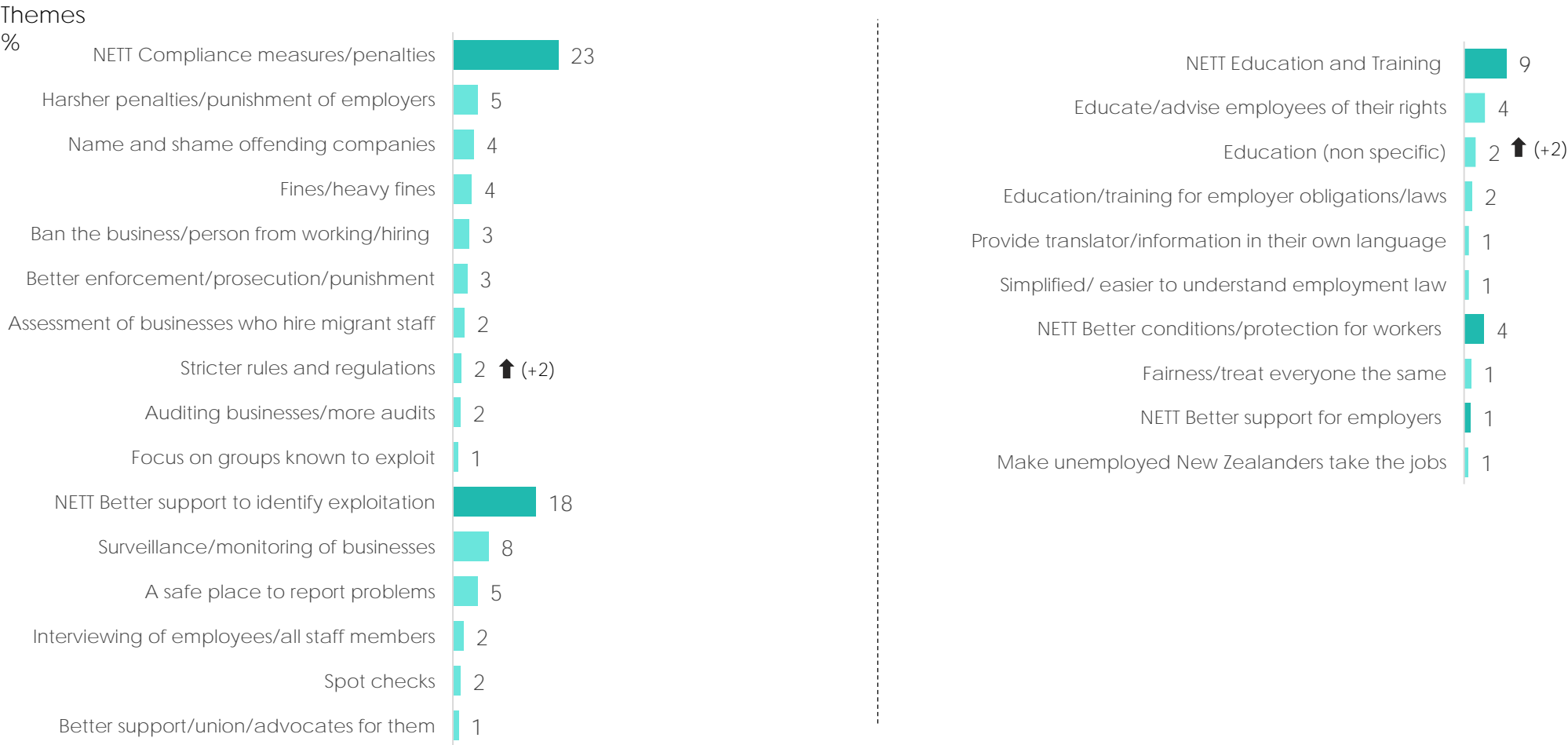
Employers in education and Māori businesses are strong advocates for union representation for all businesses.

Perceived likelihood of compliance initiatives working
%



Base: All NZ employers (n=931)
Q13. Do you think this would make it more or less likely employers in your industry will comply with employment law?

When asked how exploitation and mistreatment of workers in their industry could be reduced, employers typically point to stricter compliance measures and tougher penalties – often followed by calls for better tools to uncover hidden abuses.



Base: All NZ employers (n=931)
Q14. In your own words, what is the one thing you think could be done to reduce the exploitation and mistreatment of workers in your industry?

Suggestions for reducing exploitation and mistreatment of workers in their own words...

"Having a more effective labour inspectorate that can prosecute offenders and exact adequate compensation for abused workers."

- Technology industry

"Simplify the rules so everyone can understand them."

- Dairy farming industry

"Have tough consequences for those that are mistreating workers and encourage workers to know their rights and how to get help."

- Construction industry

"Tougher penalties for convicted employers."

- Education industry

"Have a confidential line where workers can talk to an authority about what is going on."

- Retail industry

"Easier to understand employment law, published in many languages as workers don't always have English as their first language."

- Professional, scientific and technical services industry

"Let the public know the names of the businesses that exploit workers."

- Manufacturing industry

"Having controls that require more than just tick box exercise, i.e. submitting an IEA with their IRD information doesn't mean the employee ever received it and that they're adhering to it."

- Health/Aged care industry

"The government and industry associations should work together to introduce a series of strict regulations and guidelines."

- Agriculture industry

"Stronger union representation."

- Viticulture/horticulture industry

"Regular communication with workers from a government organisation."

- Construction industry

"Workers should be supported so they aren't afraid to speak up."

- Hospitality industry

"Only employers who have been audited and passed are allowed to hire anyone on a visa."

- Transport industry

"More active MBIE oversight by way of spot checks on businesses hiring migrant workers and encouraging employees to report exploitation on an anonymous, private phonenumber or website."

- Wholesale trade industry

"Knowledge of exactly what a worker is entitled to, so they and the employer knows what to expect."

- Other services industry

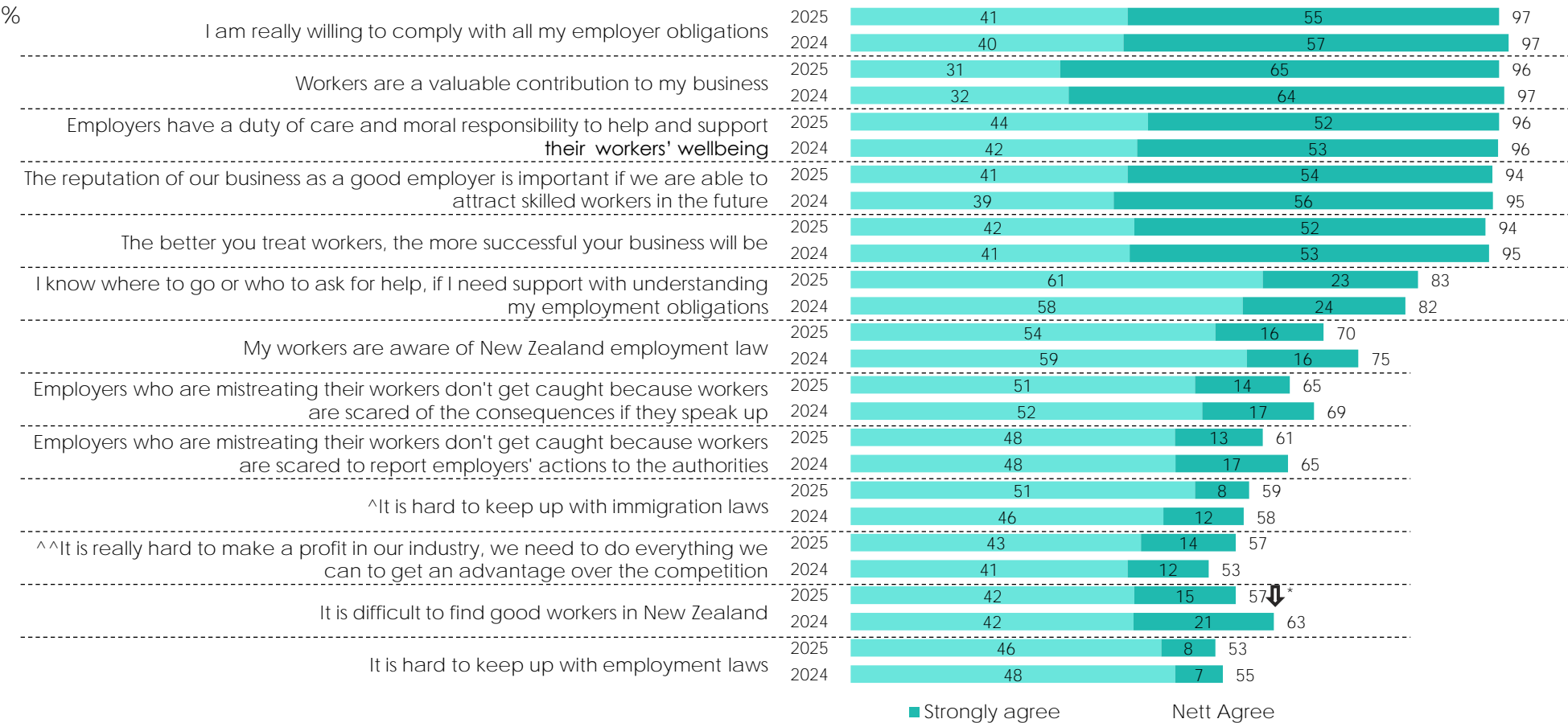
"Making directors and companies publicly named for mistreatment of workers. Large fines as well, with the fine money going directly to the workers who were abused."

- Technology industry

NZ employer attitudes

Employer attitudes have remained steady since 2024. However, employers are less likely in 2025 to feel it's difficult to find good workers in New Zealand.

Employer attitudes



2025 Base: All NZ employers (n=931) ^Base: Employers who employ migrant workers (n=340)

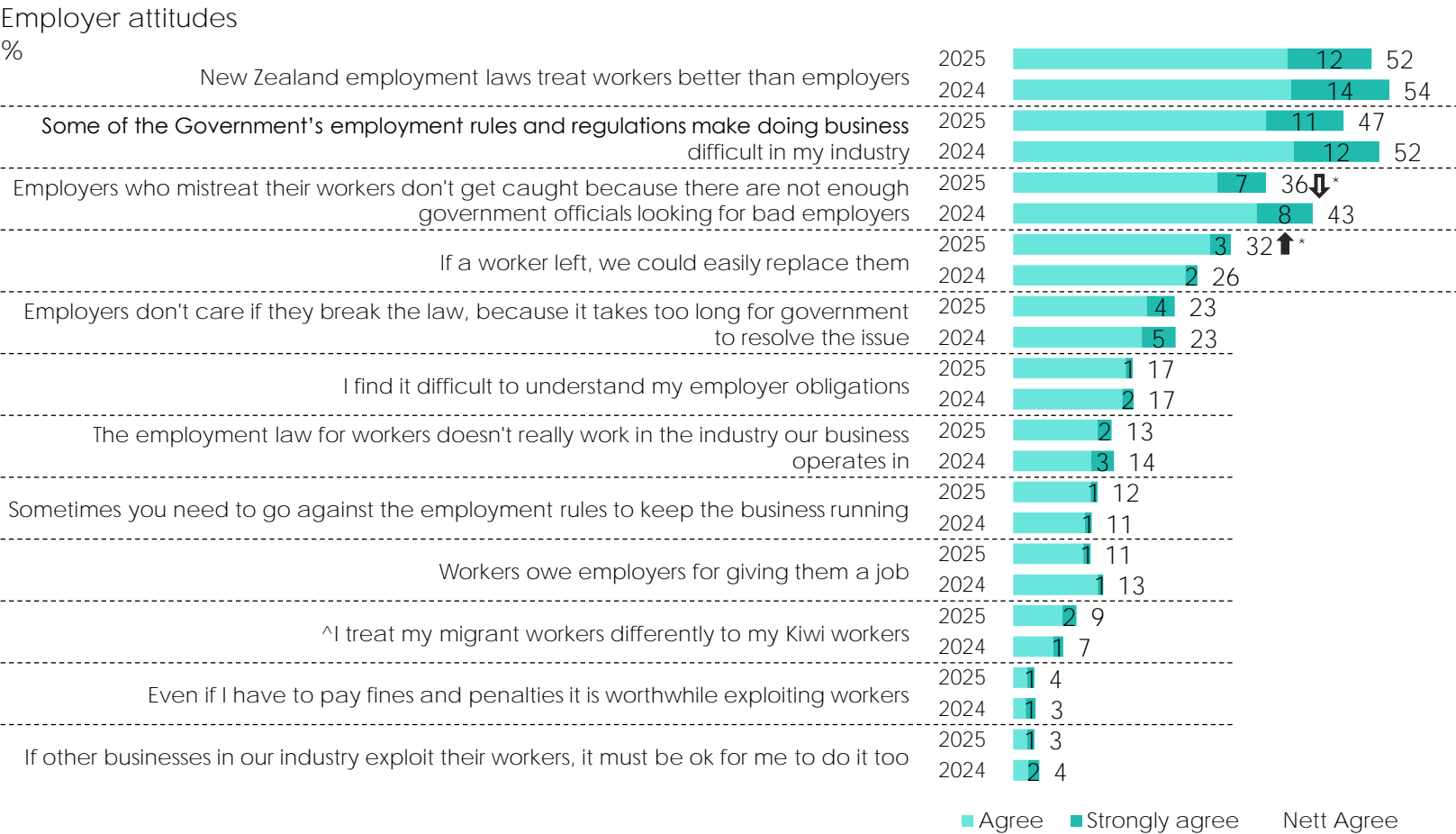
^^Base: Employers excluding those who selected 'not applicable' (n=853)

Q3. How much do you agree or disagree that...

↑↓ Significant increase/decrease since last wave at the 95% confidence level (or 90% if marked with *).

▲▽ Significantly higher or lower than 2025 total sample or 87 other subgroups

Likewise, employers feel workers are now easier to replace than they were in 2024, and employers appear a little less critical of government employment rules and the level of government resource available to address non-compliant employers.



2025 Base: All NZ employers (n=931) ^Base: Employers who employ migrant workers 2025 (n=340)
Q3/Q3a. How much do you agree or disagree that...

NZ employer segments

Employers vary in their approach to their obligations

Our research shows that employers differ in the strength of their moral obligation to workers and their compliance with employment law.

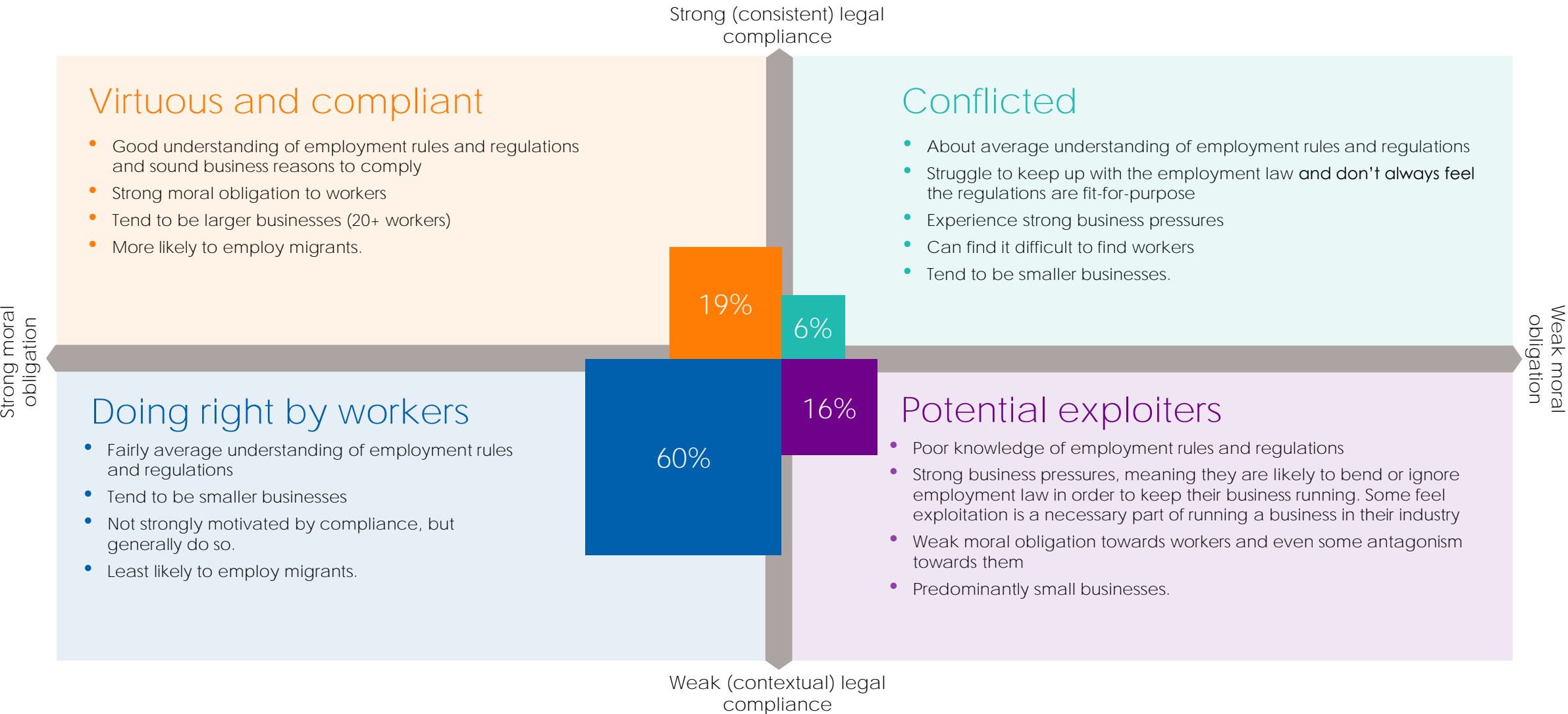
Moral obligation is reflected in:

- Attitudes towards, and treatment of, workers
- Impact of business pressures and norms

Legal compliance is influenced by:

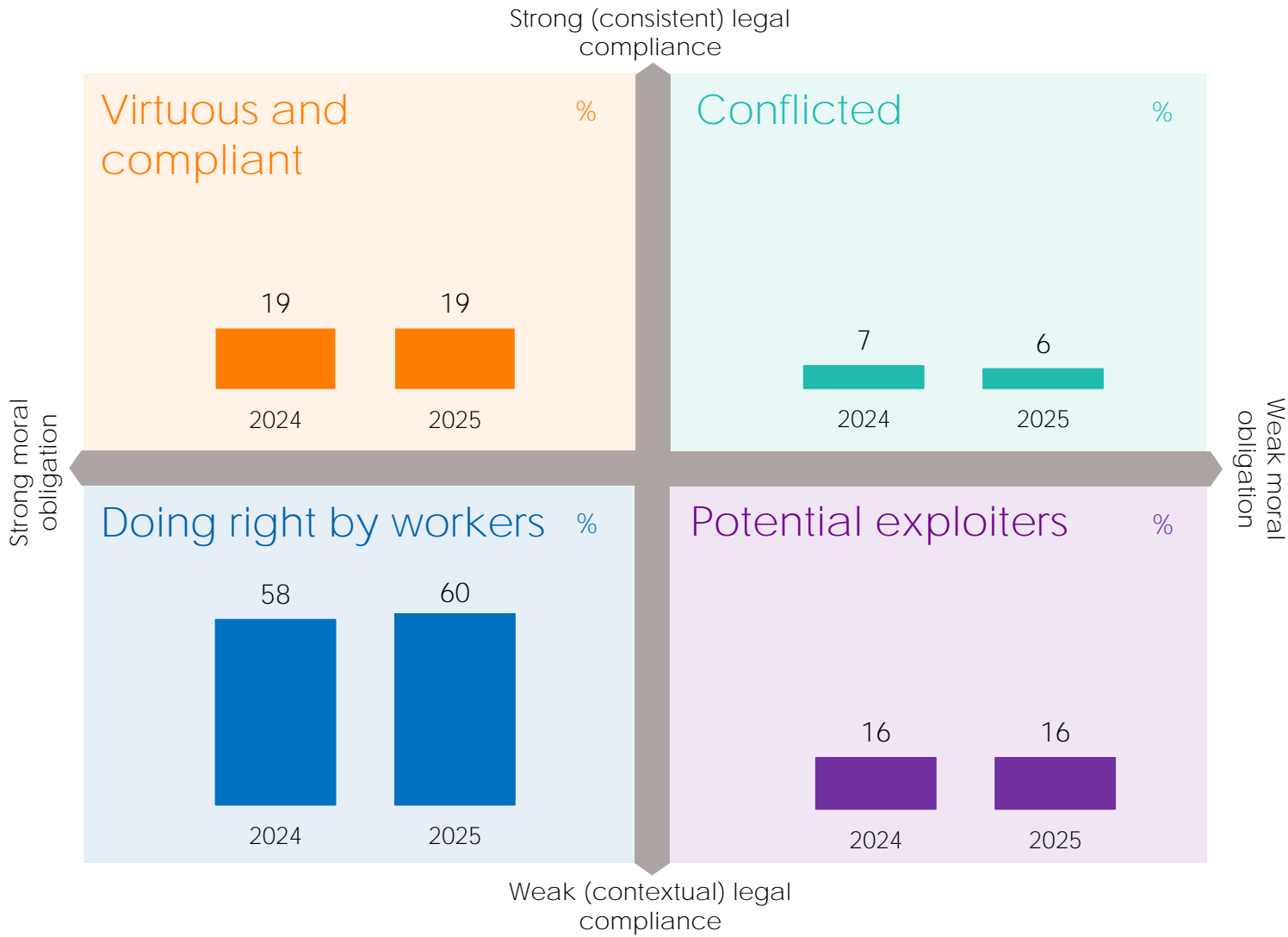
- How well they feel they understand their employer obligations.
- Tested understanding of employment laws on wages, leave, breaks, employment contracts, trial periods, training, contractors, employer behaviours, and work safety.
- Knowing where to go to find useful information.
- Attitudes towards compliance.

The four employer segments defined...



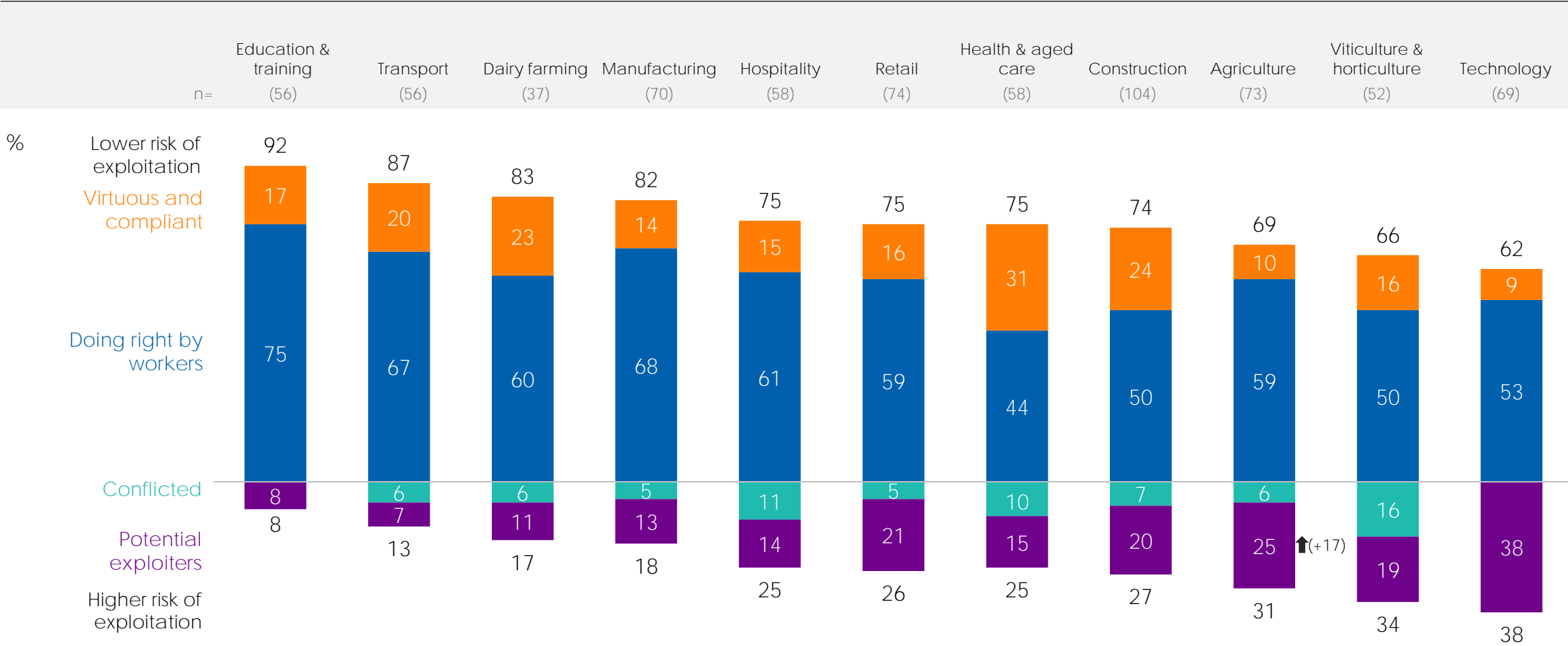
The segment sizes in 2024 and 2025 are very similar.

Most NZ employers have a strong moral obligation to their workers. About one in five employers have weaker moral obligation which could lead to worker exploitation: some of these employers are legally compliant but more have weak or contextual legal compliance.

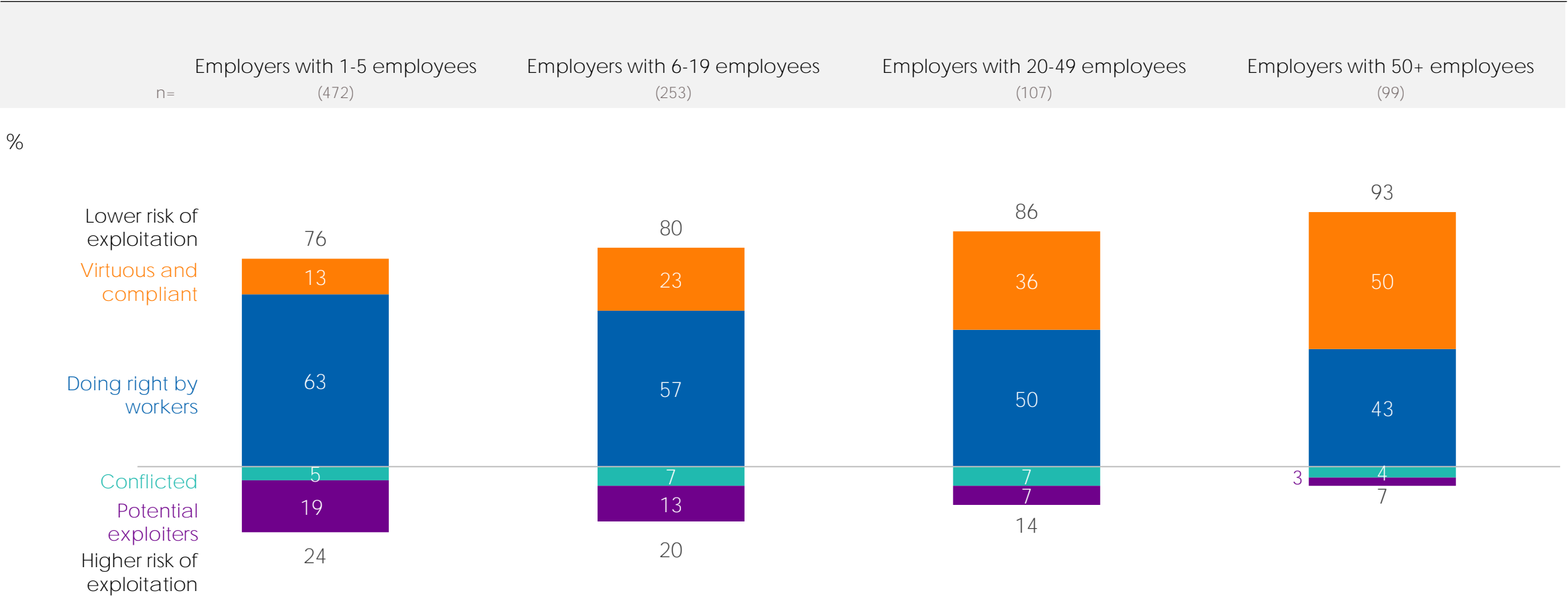


↑↓ Significant increase/decrease since last wave

Employers in technology, agriculture, retail, viticulture/horticulture and construction are most at risk of exploiting workers.



As business size increases, the risk of worker exploitation decreases.

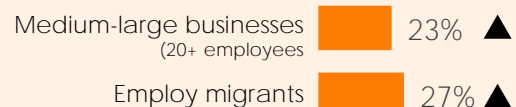


Base: NZ employers in each business size grouping.

19% Virtuous & compliant

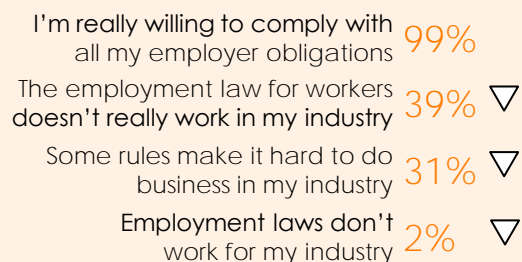
They're driven by their duty of care and reputation as an employer, fully supporting regulations.

Compared to other segments, they're more likely to be employees themselves at larger organisations with more migrant workers...



This may mean the volume of employees necessitates compliance, as well as less incentive/ability to exploit workers (i.e. compared with a small business owner personally managing their workers while also worrying about their profits etc.)

They're on board with the spirit of the regulations



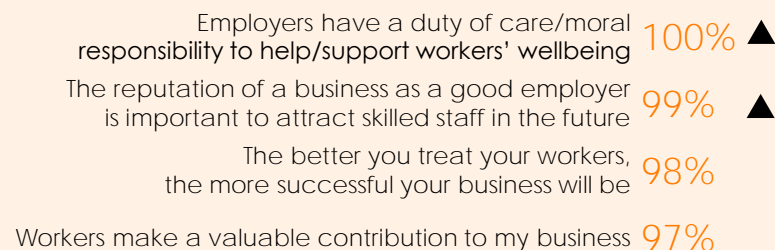
They have the highest knowledge of rules

They're confident in their understanding which is reflected in their actual understanding

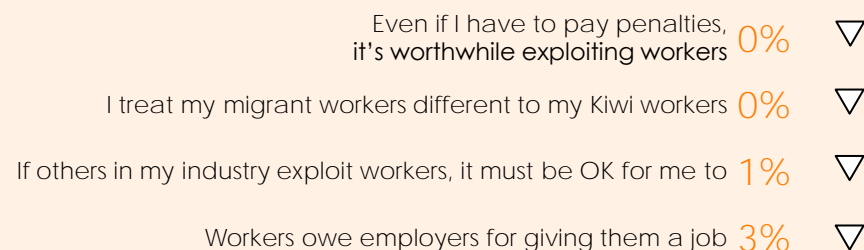
16.5 Highest average out of 19 understanding of rules / ▲ 94% Say they have a good understanding

They also feel their workers have better understanding than other segments (▲ 88% say their workers understand the rules)

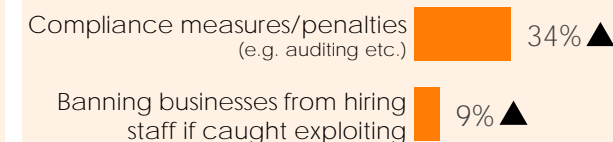
They generally prioritise their workers' needs and see this as tied directly to their business' reputation and success



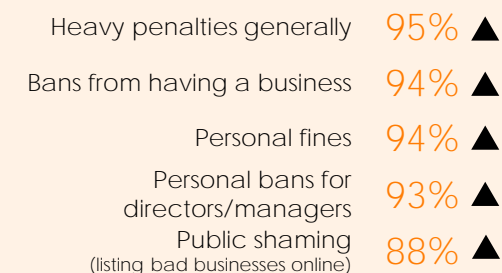
At the same time, they reject many harmful views



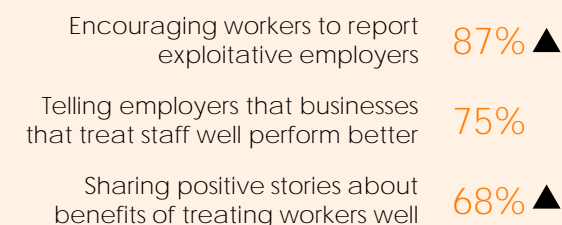
To address exploitation, unprompted, they recommend...



They most like the idea of penalties for those caught exploiting workers, including...



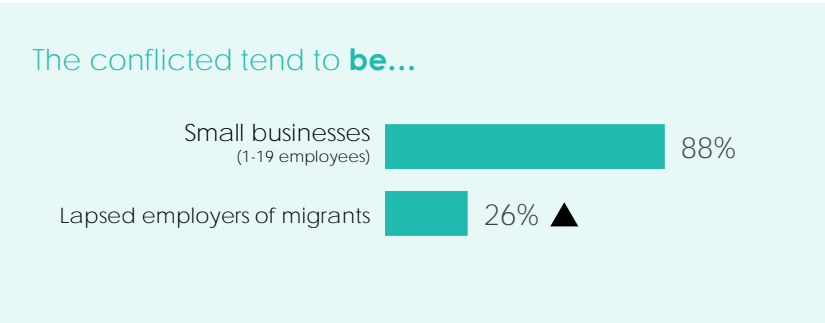
They also support empowering workers



6%

Conflicted

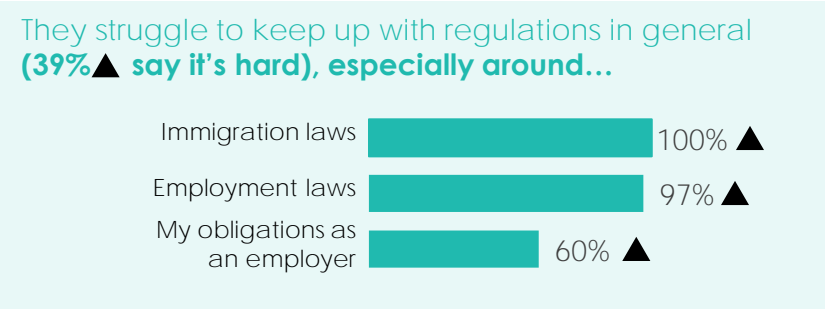
They generally want to do the right thing for their employees, but struggle to do so. They struggle with the regulations in practice, but not the spirit of the regulations in theory.



They mostly want to do what's right for their workers

I'm really willing to comply with all my employer obligations 94%

Employers have a duty of care/moral responsibility to help/support workers' wellbeing 95%



They struggle to follow the regulations

Their knowledge of regulations is about average, but they're aware they and their workers lack some understanding.

16.2 out of 19 Average understanding of the rules / 72% Say they understand regulations well

59% Feel their workers understand the rules

They disagree that the regulations are fit for purpose

The regulations treat workers better than employers 90% ▲

Some of the government's employment rules/regulations make doing business difficult in my industry 88% ▲

The employment law for migrant workers doesn't really work in my industry 41% ▲

Sometimes you need to go against employment laws to keep your business running 24% ▲

They don't have strong feelings for/against interventions to reduce exploitation.

They're most on board with...

Heavier penalties generally	85%
Personal fines	83%
Could get banned from operating a business	82%
Could get banned from directing/managing people	80%

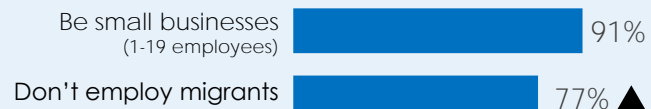
But, they're much less supportive of unions than other segments

Having union representation for all businesses 16% ▼

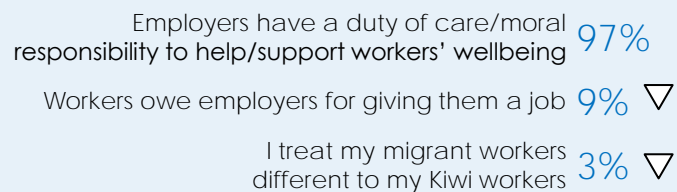
60% Doing right by workers

They are often middle of the road employers with decent knowledge and attitudes.

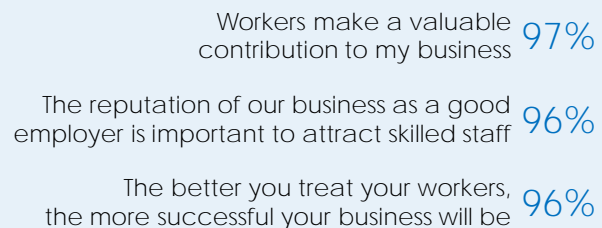
Employers doing right by workers tend to ...



Their attitudes towards workers are mostly positive



And they see the benefits of treating their workers well



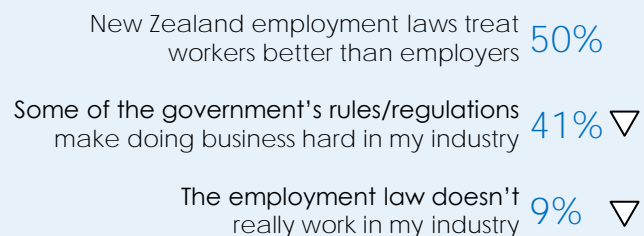
They're broadly on board with regulations

Their knowledge of regulations is about average, but they're not entirely confident in their knowledge

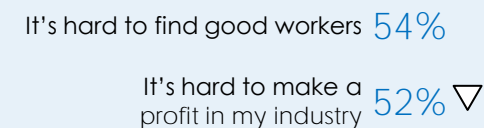
15.7 Average understanding / ▲59% Say they understand regulations quite well
out of 19 of the rules

And they feel their workers have poor understanding (▼69% say their migrant workers understand the rules)

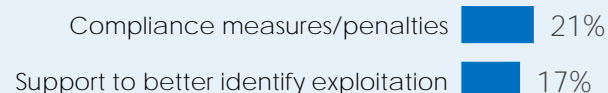
They're more on board with regulations than other segments and are less likely to agree that...



Their businesses also tend to be struggling less than other segments



They're most receptive to penalties. Unprompted, they suggest reducing exploitative practices by...



And they feel the following will encourage more compliance if employers caught exploiting workers were...



16% Potential exploiters

They generally see themselves as under immense business pressure, doing what they can to get by. As a result they see worker exploitation or non-compliance as an unavoidable part of doing business in their industry.

Potential exploiters tend to be smaller businesses, which may be a driver for exploitation (i.e. business owners with closer knowledge of profitability, and without the checks/balances of a larger business.)

Micro-small business (1-19 employees) 96%▲

They say it's hard to keep up with regulations, including...

Employment laws 65%▲

Immigration law 53%

My obligations as an employer 38%▲

They have an underlying antagonism towards their workers. And are less likely to see the value in treating them well

If a worker left, we could easily replace them 39%

I treat migrant workers different to my Kiwi workers 34%▲

Workers owe employers for giving them a job 27%▲

Employers have a duty of care/moral responsibility to help/support workers' wellbeing 90%▼

The better you treat your workers, the more successful your business will be 89%▼

The reputation of our business as a good employer is important to attract skilled staff 83%▼

They are often resistant to regulations

They have poor regulation knowledge, but don't fully recognise the gaps in their knowledge

12.6 Lowest average out of 19 understanding of rules / ▲35% Say they have poor understanding

And to some extent, rely on workers' poor understanding (▼60% say their workers understand the rules)

They're often dismissive of the rules in general

Some laws make it harder to do business in my industry 73%▲

Laws are unfair (in employee's favour) 59%

They don't work in our industry's favour 34%▲

And they are more willing to break the rules if needed

Sometimes you need to go against laws to keep your business going 34%▲

Even if I have to pay penalties, it's worthwhile exploiting workers 22%▲

If others in my industry exploit workers, it must be OK for me to 18%▲

And hard to reach

Partly because they're anti-intervention, saying the following would make exploitation worse

Union representation 21%

Annual audits 12%▲

Increased investigations 10%▲

Knowing about the possibility of being taken to court if caught 10%▲

They're also entrenched in their thinking

They offer the least suggestions to improve compliance, suggesting barriers to compliance may be excuses.

Or, they genuinely don't think it's possible to operate in their industry without exploitation, again thinking the following would have a negative impact on compliance.

Knowing most businesses in your industry comply with regulations 13%▲

Understanding the impact of exploitation on workers 9%▲

Telling employers that businesses that treat staff well perform better 9%▲

04

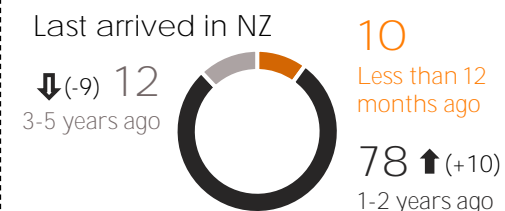
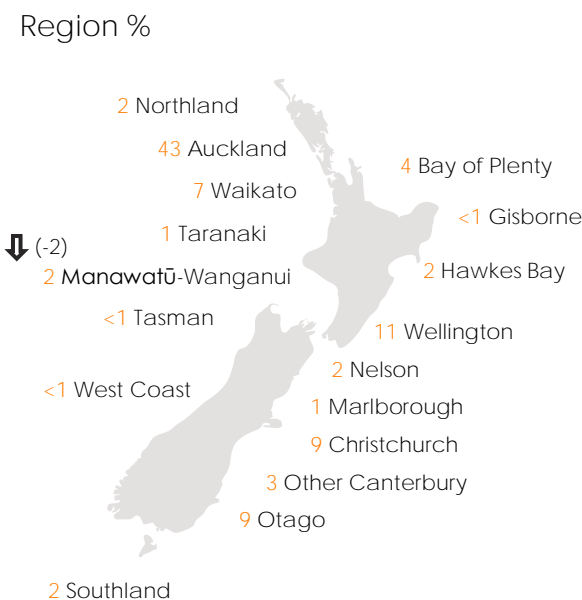
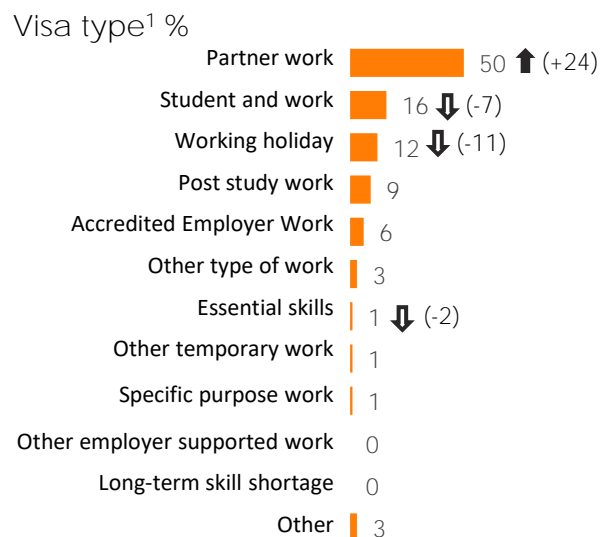
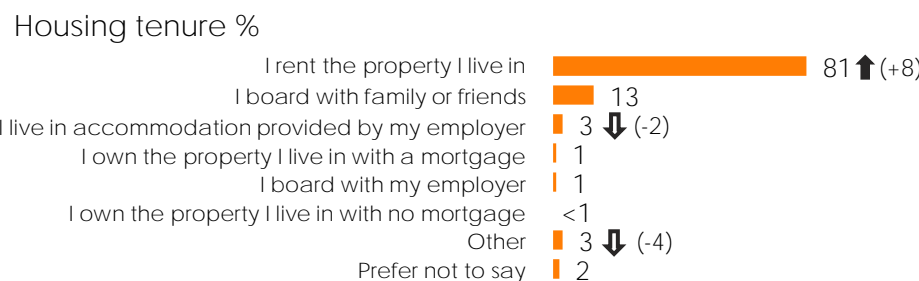
Migrant workers



Gender %

↓(-3)	↑(+5)
38	59
Male	Female

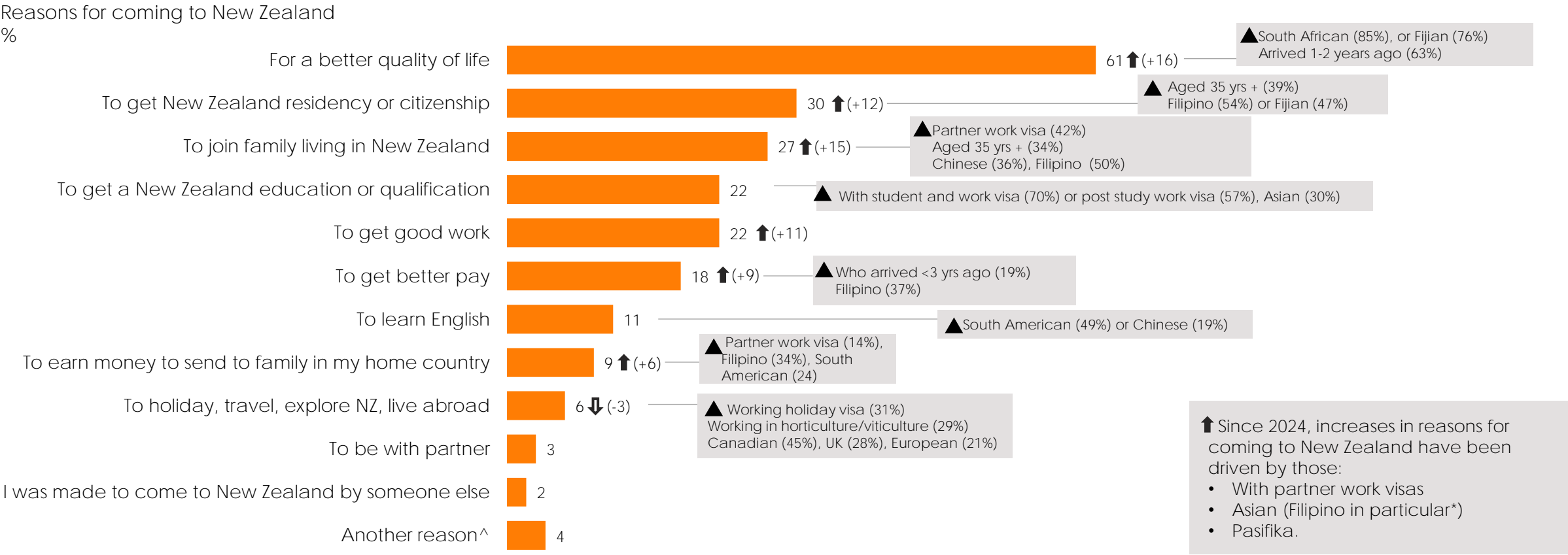
2% selected another gender or preferred not to disclose their gender



| 100

The lives and employment contexts of migrant workers

Many of the motivations for coming to NZ to work have grown stronger, partly reflecting the increased number of partner visa holders and change in ethnic mix in the sample.



^Includes 1% for each of the following reasons: Exchange student programme, work transfer/ partner's work, partner studying in NZ

Base: All migrant workers (n=1446). Excludes prefer not to say responses.
Q1. Why did you decide to come to New Zealand to work or live?

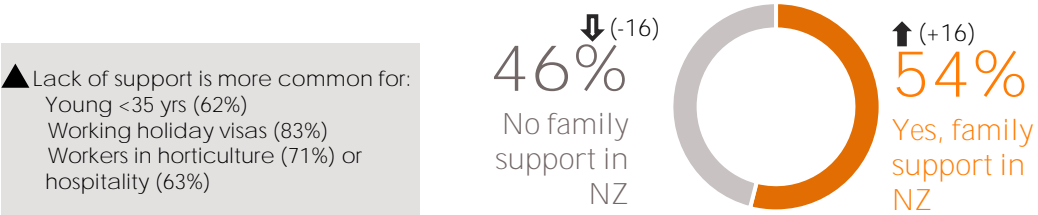
Many migrant workers continue to lack support in NZ, but family support and community group membership has increased since 2024.

Migrant workers' support

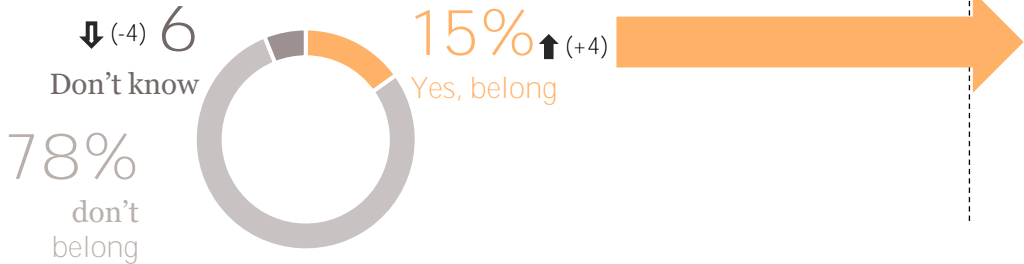
The total time migrant workers have spent in NZ is... %



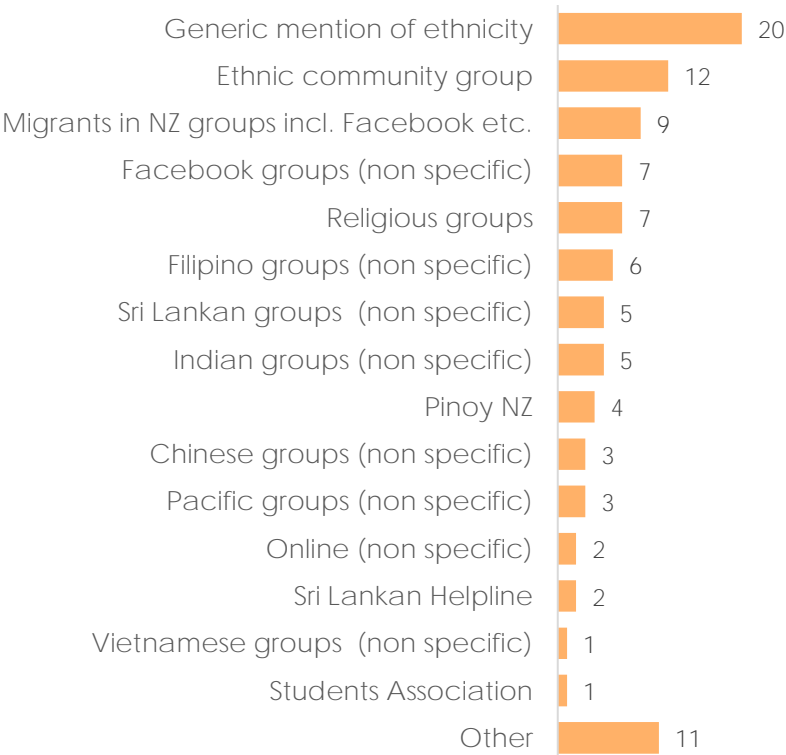
Close family or relatives living in NZ? %



Belong to an ethnic association or migrant community group? %



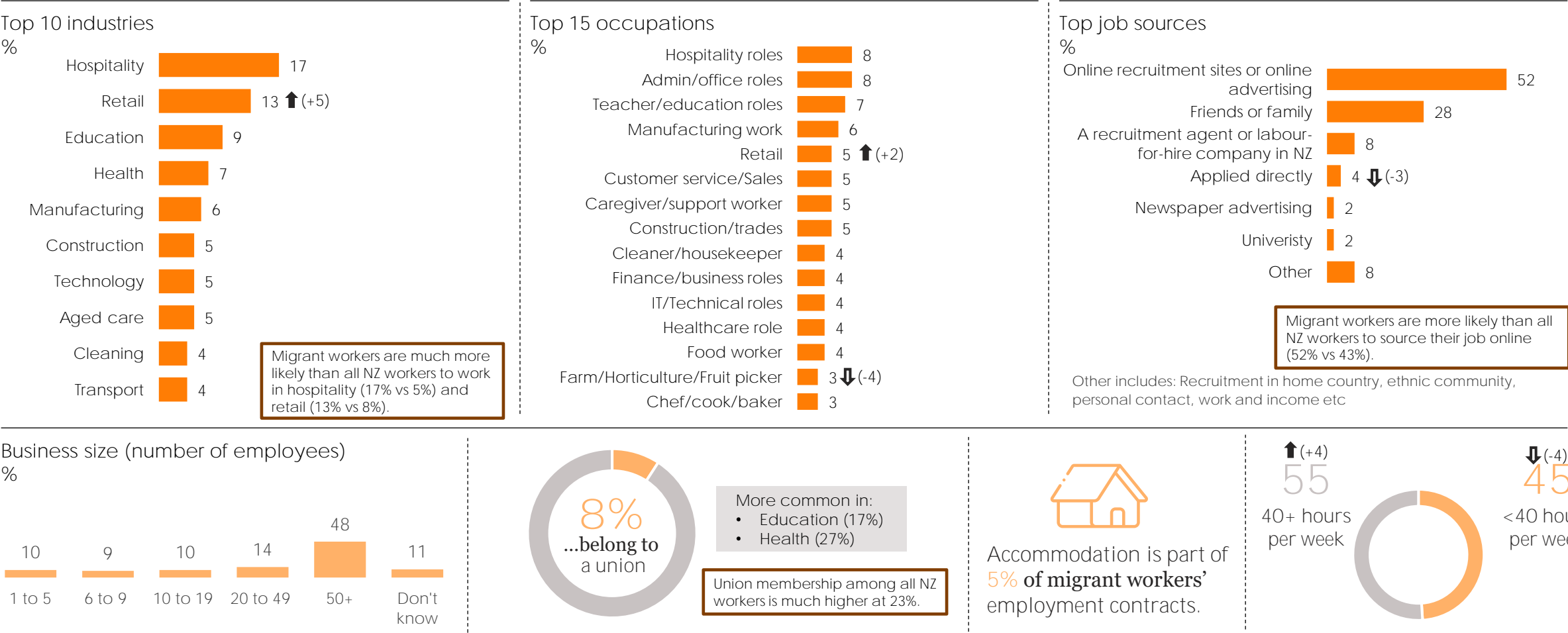
Ethnic association or migrant community group memberships %



↑↓ Significant increase/decrease since last wave
▲▽ Significantly higher or lower than 2025 total sample or other subgroups

Base: All migrant workers. Bases vary see below.
Q33. How long in total have you spent in New Zealand? (n=1450), Q29 Do you have close family or relatives living in New Zealand? (n=1424 excluding prefer not to say)
Verian | Q28i. Do you belong to an ethnic association or migrant community group in New Zealand? (n= 1416 excluding prefer not to say) Q28i2. What ethnic associations or migrant community groups do you belong to in New Zealand, if any? Please include any online or face-to-face groups in your answer. (Those who belong to an ethnic association or group n=219)

The employment context of migrant workers continues to be diverse.



Base: All migrant workers, bases vary see below.

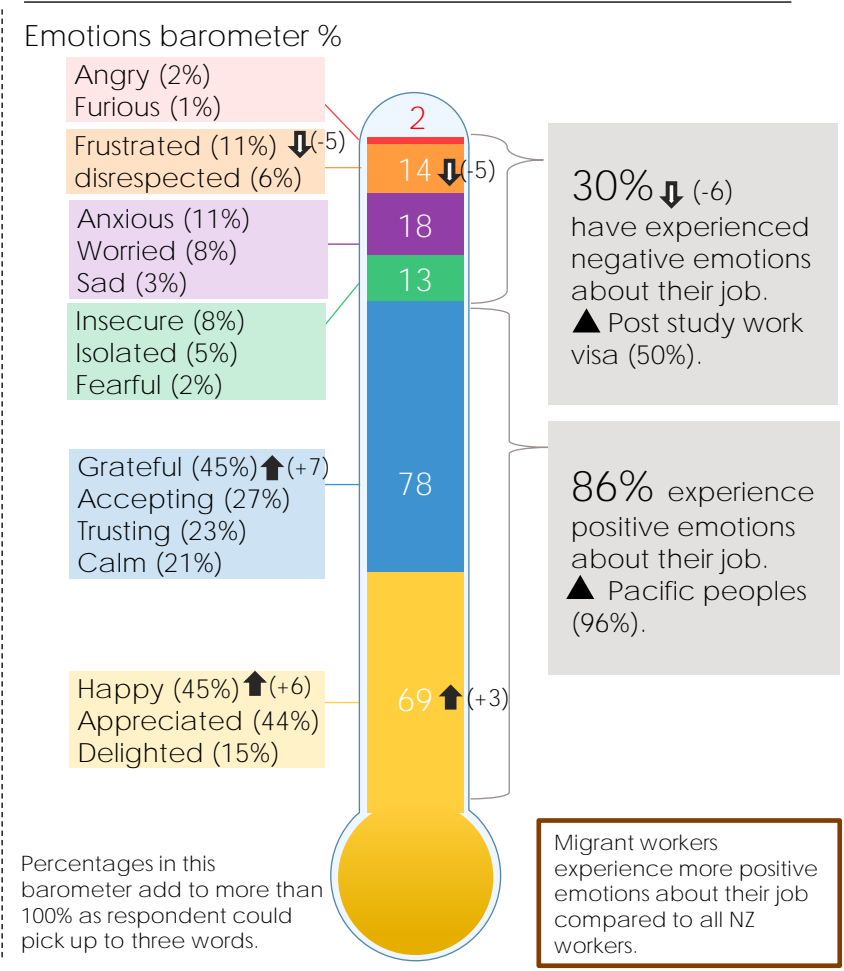
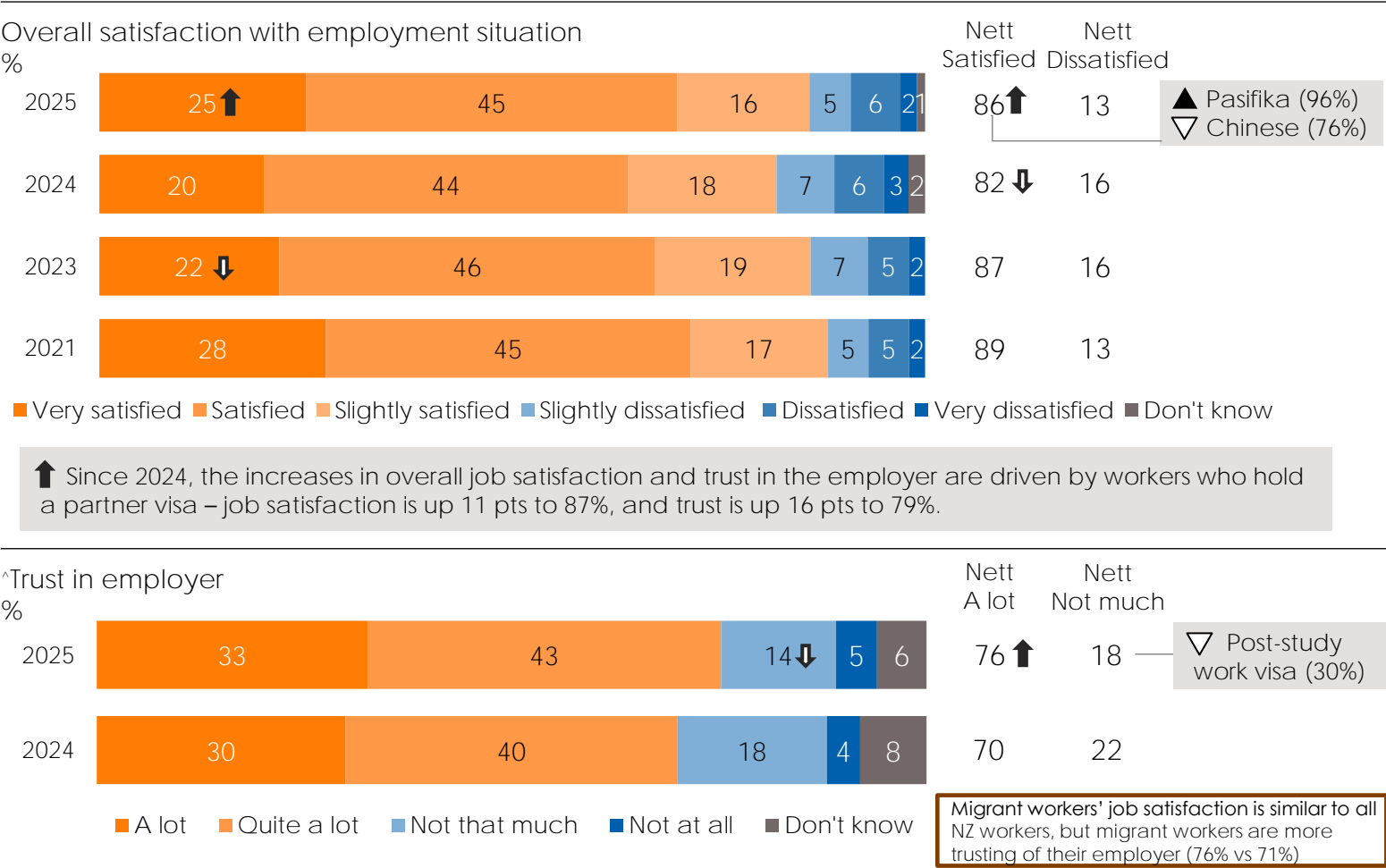
Q6. What is the main activity, industry or sector of the business you work for in your current/last job? (n=1,418 excluding prefer not to say), Q5 In your current/last job in New Zealand, what type of job/work do/did you do? (n=1450), Q8. How did you get your current/last job? (n=1450), Q7 Still thinking about your current/last job, approximately how many employees work for the business, across New Zealand? (n=1450), Q28j Do you belong to a union? (n=1428 excl Prefer not to say), Q38 Which of the following best describes your housing situation? (n=1432 excl prefer not to say). Q4 About how many hours (do/did) you usually work per week in your (current/last) job. (n=1450)

Verian | ↑↑ Significant increase/decrease since last wave

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Migrant worker perceptions of their employment

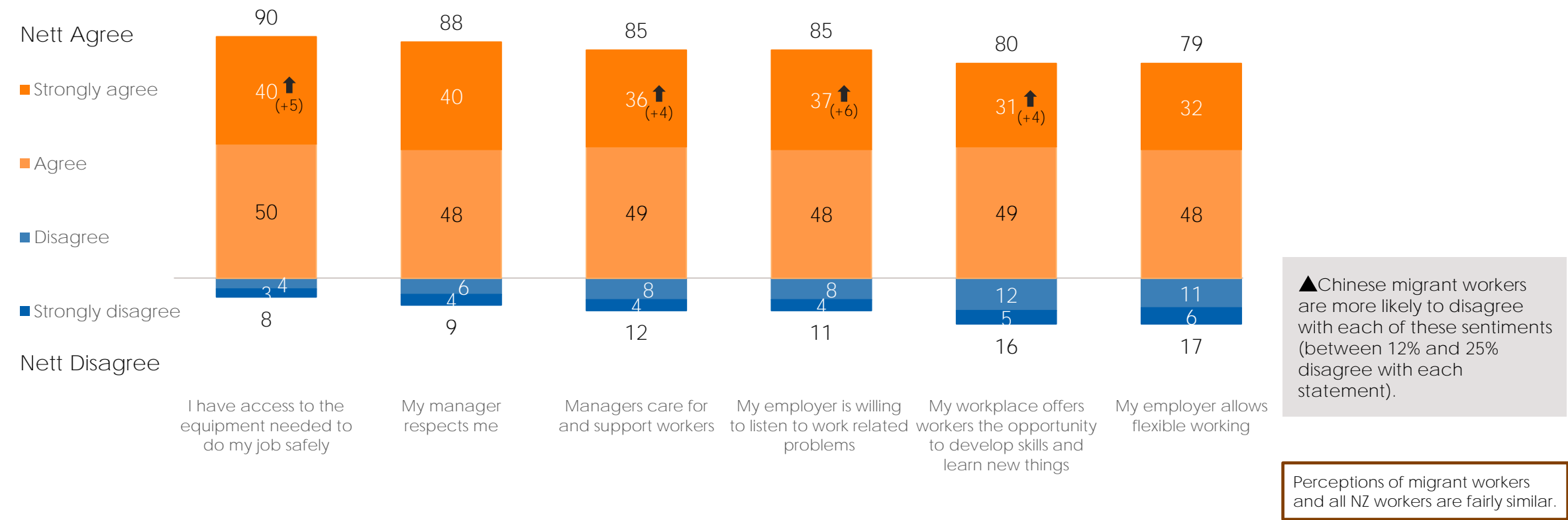
Migrant workers’ job satisfaction and trust in their employer have improved since 2024. This largely stems from workers on a partner visa.



Base: All migrant workers, bases vary see below. ^Data prior to 2024 is not shown due to a change in the scale used.
Q2. Overall, how satisfied or dissatisfied are you with your last/current employment situation? (n=1439 excluding prefer not to say),
Q25c1. Overall, how much did/do you trust your employer?
Verian Q24. Please select three words to describe how you feel about your current/last job in New Zealand (n=1430 excludes prefer not to say).

Since last year, migrant workers in NZ report stronger views that they can work safely, feel supported and heard by managers, and have more opportunities for learning and development.

Positive aspects of employment
%



Migrant workers report fewer employment concerns than in 2024.

↓ 22% of migrant workers have at least one employment concern (vs 28% in 2024)

↓ Since 2024, those with partner visas are less likely to have experienced employment issues (down 8pts to 20%).
▲ Working on holiday visa (32%)
Chinese (33%)

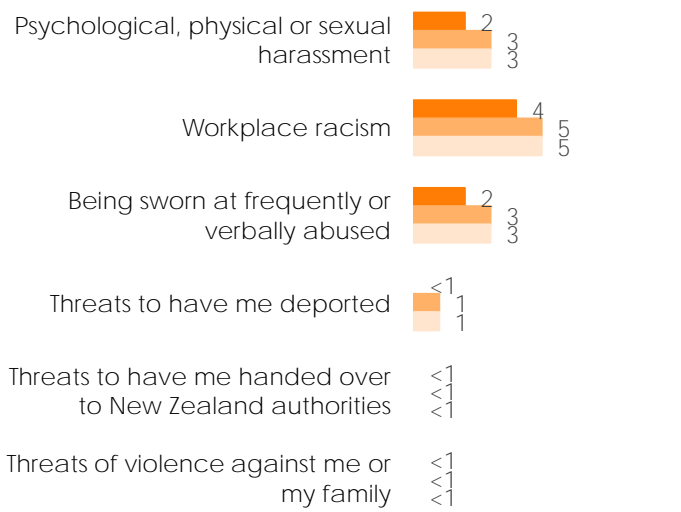
Pay issues %



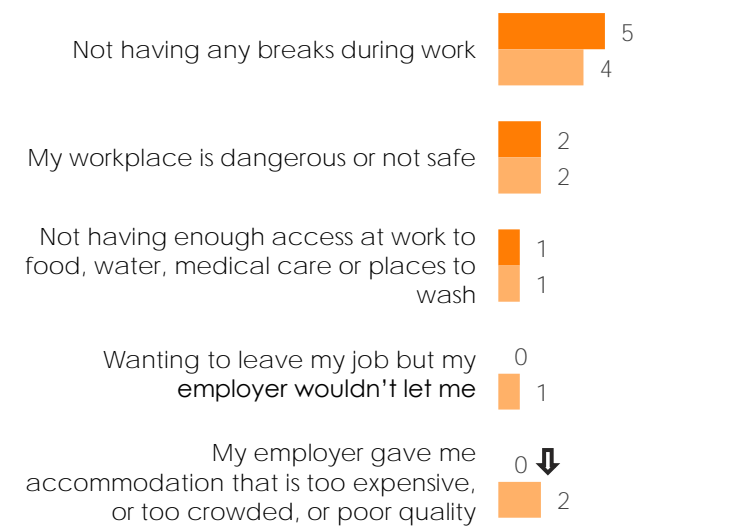
Hours related issues %



Harassment, discrimination %



Workplace safety and culture %



Other concerns mentioned:

- The job is not what was promised (4%)
- Having little or no contact with people outside of my work or accommodation (3%)
- No written employment contract (agreement) (2%)¹
- Giving my passport to my employer (1%)

¹ This figure differs to the result reported on the next page as this 2% was an unprompted mention.

These self-reported incidences of employment law breaches remain steady.

Self-reported levels of exploitation

12% say their employer sometimes does things against New Zealand employment law.
vs. 14% in 2024 and 13% in 2023

- ▲ Employer is Chinese (23%)
- Arrived in NZ less than 12 months ago (20%)

6%¹ **don't** have a signed written employment contract¹.
vs. 6% in 2024 and 4% in 2023

- ▲ Workers in micro workplaces (17%)
- South Americans (16%)
- Chinese 14%.

¹ Note, this figure of 6% is higher than the result reported on the previous page as the 6% is sourced from a prompted question (see footer).

This compares to 5% of all NZ workers.

3% of full-time workers (40+ hrs per week) report being paid an amount less than the minimum wage.
vs. 2% in 2024 and 1% in 2023

- ▲ Workers with student and work visas (10%)

This compares to 1% of all NZ workers.

Risk of exploitation

7% of full-time workers report usually working 60 hours per week or more.
vs. 3% in 2024 and 6% in 2023

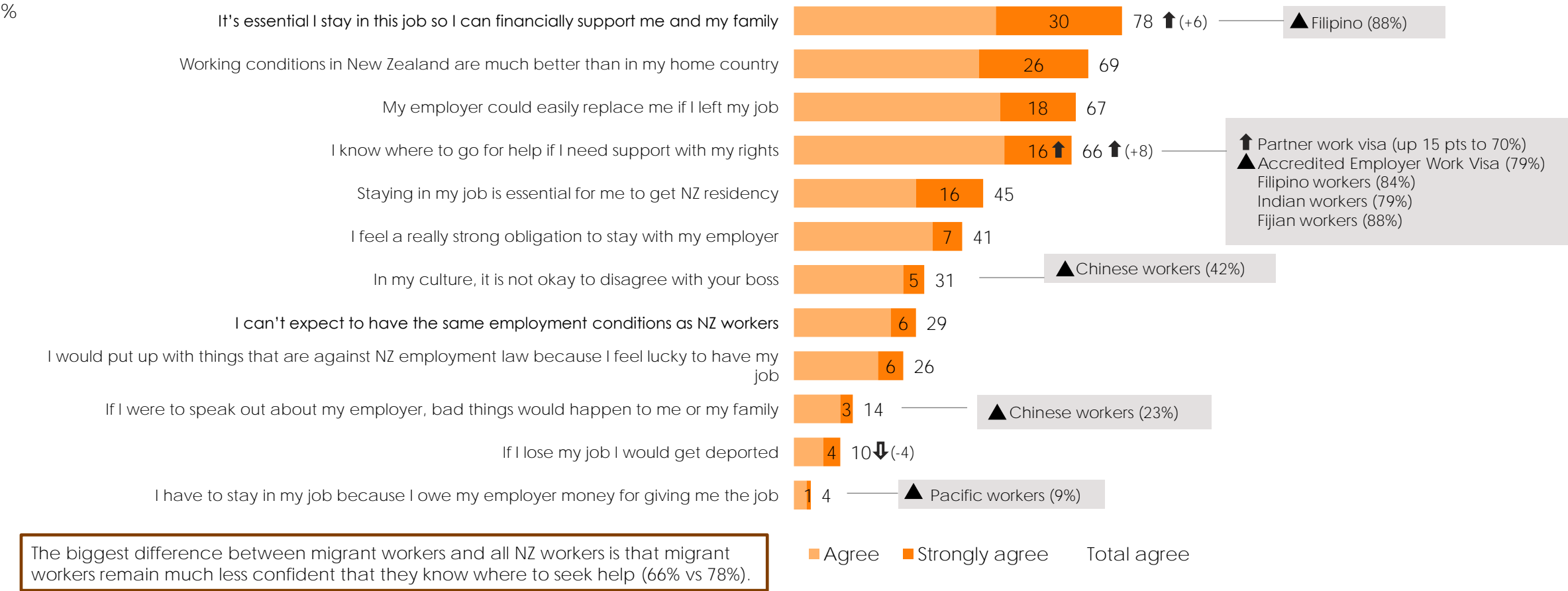
This compares to 5% of all NZ workers.

Base: All migrant workers
Q23. Thinking about your (current/last) job, how much do you agree or disagree that... 'employer sometimes does things against the law' (n=1450)
Q18 Do you have a signed written employment contract (agreement) for your (current/last) job? (n=1425 excluding prefer not to say). Q13 The current adult minimum wage is \$23.15 per hour, before tax. Since 1st April 2024, have you been paid more or less than this for your (current/last) job? (Work full time n=789 excluding prefer not to say). Q4 About how many hours (do/did) you usually work per week in your (current/last) job. (Work full time n=804)

▲ Significantly higher or lower than 2025 total sample or other subgroups

Migrant workers feel more financially reliant on their jobs in 2025. They also know more about where to get support with employment rights (although this remains significantly lower than the NZ worker benchmark average). Fear of deportation has lessened.

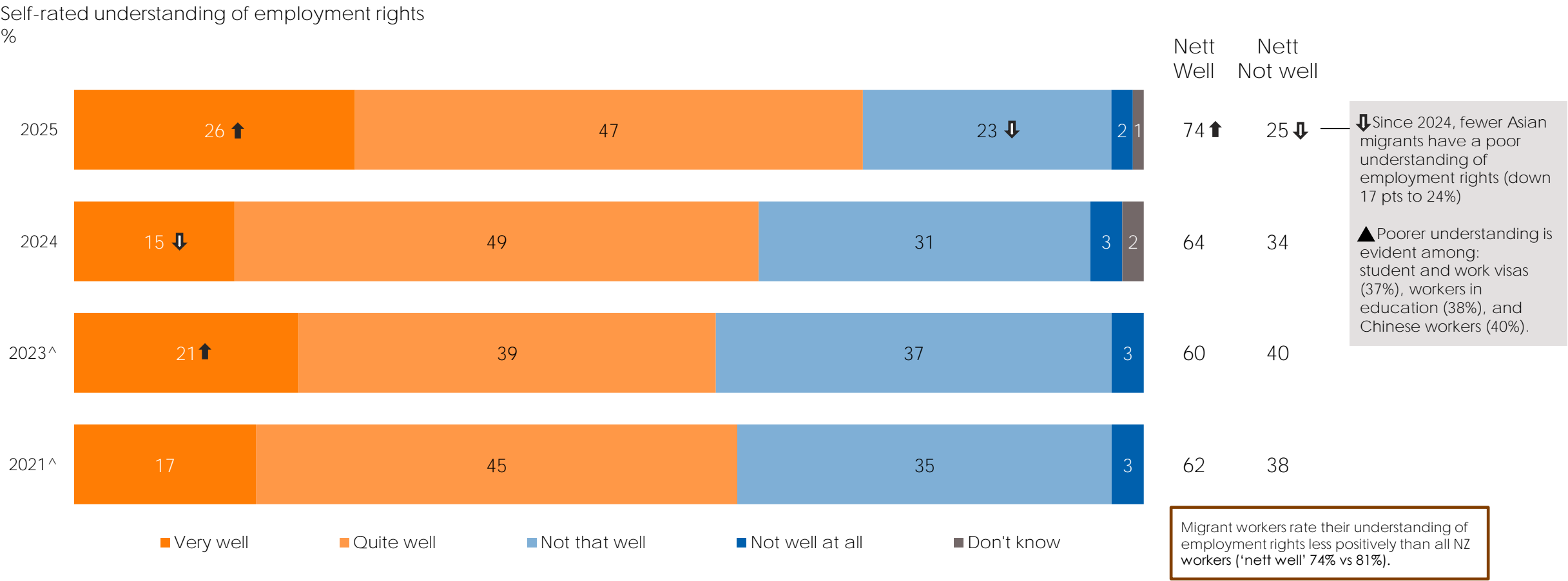
Attitudinal markers of vulnerability to exploitation



Base: All migrant workers, around n=1 450 (base varies slightly for each statement as 'not applicable' responses have been excluded)
Q23. Thinking about your (current/last) job, how much do you agree or disagree that...

Migrant worker knowledge of their rights

Migrant workers’ self-rated understanding of their employment rights has improved since 2024.



Base: All migrant workers. ^Note, a slightly different scale was used prior to 2024: Very well, Well, A little bit, Not at all.
Q9. How well do you think you understand your employment rights in New Zealand? (n=1441 excluding prefer not to say)

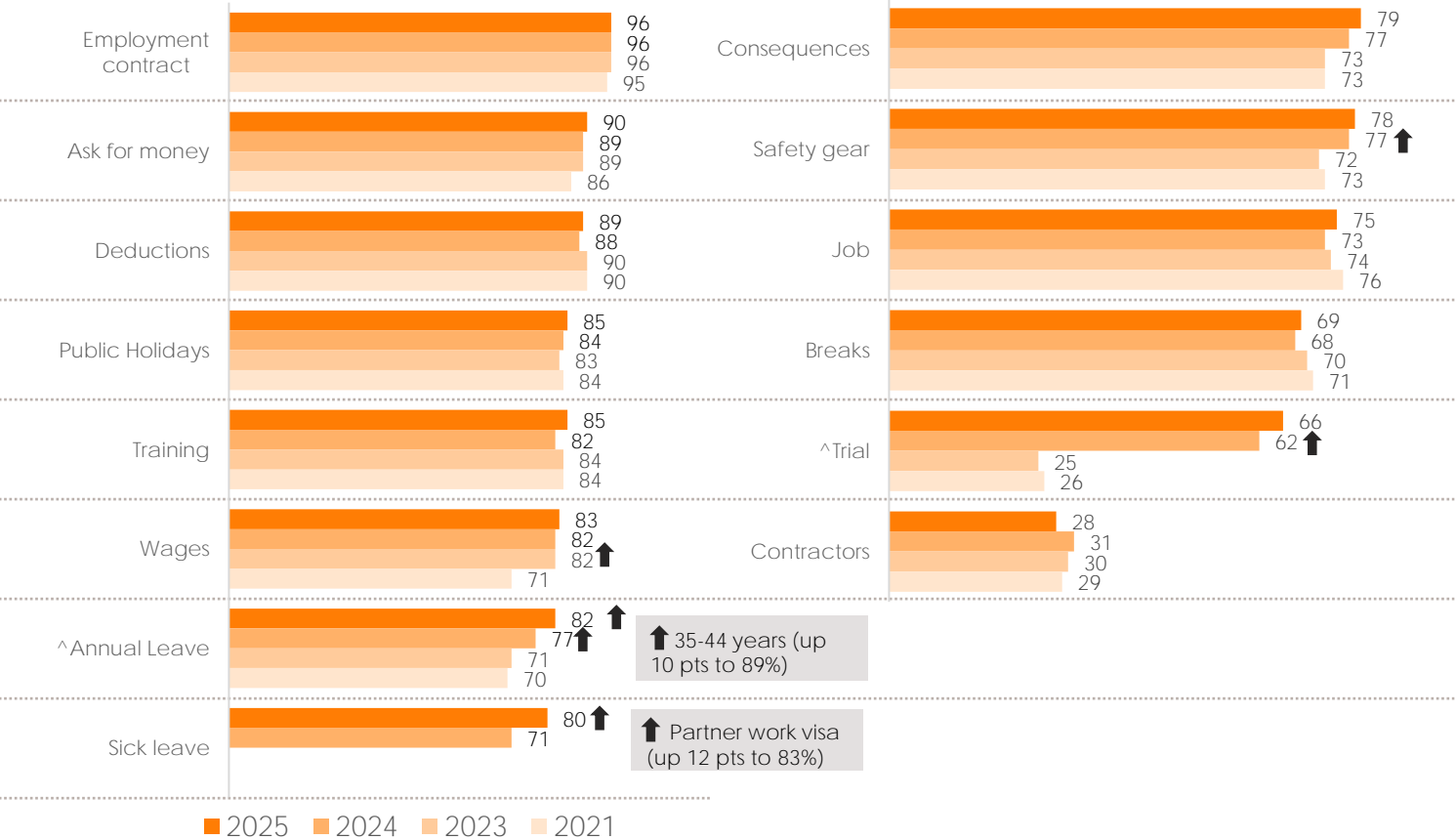
We showed migrant workers a range of statements on employment rights, and for each they indicated whether it was correct or incorrect. They were also asked to state the adult minimum wage.

Employment right / regulation	Right answer
¹ Annual Leave: Workers have the right to at least four weeks' paid annual leave after one year of continuous employment in their job.	Correct
Sick Leave: After working for six months for an employer, a worker has the right to 10 days sick leave per year.	Correct
Public holidays: If a worker works on a public holiday and it would normally have been one of their working days (e.g. their normal day of the week to work), they are entitled to get paid 1.5 times their normal pay and have another day off.	Correct
² Employment contract: Employers must provide the workers with a copy of the employment contract (agreement).	Correct
³ Consequences: Employers caught exploiting or mistreating migrant workers can be banned from hiring migrants for up to two years.	Correct
Trial: A 90-day trial period is only valid if it is written in the employee's employment contract (agreement) before they start working.	Correct
Training: Employers need to pay workers when they are being trained for the job.	Correct
Contractors: Contractors don't have the same rights as employees.	Correct
Breaks: All breaks are unpaid (i.e. morning tea, lunch, afternoon tea).	Incorrect
Ask for money: An employer can ask for money from a potential worker to give the worker a job.	Incorrect
Safety gear: Workers must pay for their own health and safety equipment.	Incorrect
Wages: The adult minimum wage in NZ for migrants is \$18.70 now.	Incorrect
Job: An employer can employ a migrant as a chef but have them work as a waiter.	Incorrect
Deductions: An employer can make deductions from a worker's wages or salary for any reason they want to without their consent.	Incorrect

¹ Prior to 2024 this statement was worded 'Employees have the right to at least 20 days annual leave after one year in the job.'
² In 2024 this statement was worded 'Employers must provide the worker with a copy of the employment contract (agreement) before they start their job.'
³ Prior to 2024 this statement was worded 'Employers caught exploiting or mistreating migrant workers can be banned from hiring migrants in the future.'

Knowledge levels remain high across most employment rights. Knowledge has grown since 2024 for sick leave and annual leave entitlements. And compared to last year, more migrant workers can now state the minimum wage.

% correct understanding (tested)

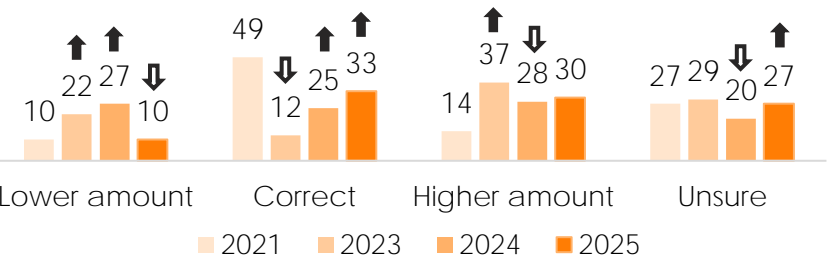


65% of migrant workers had a correct understanding of 11 or more employment rights (out of 14). This compares to 58% in 2024.

The average migrant worker has an incorrect understanding (or is unsure) about 3 of the 14 employment rights tested.

▲ Incorrect knowledge is higher among those in cleaning or domestic work (4 incorrect areas)

Tested knowledge of minimum wage: when asked to state the minimum wage, 33% in 2025 correctly stated \$23 to \$23.15 per hour.

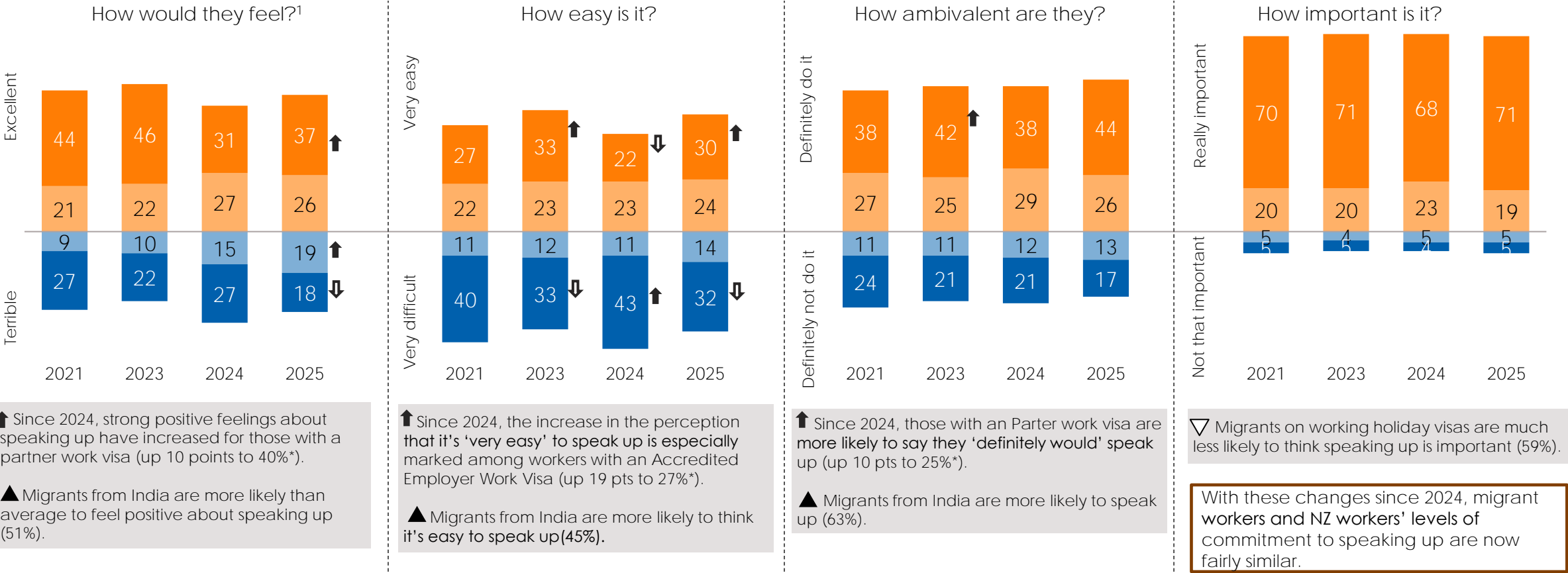


Base: All migrant workers (n=1450) ^ Statement wording changed in 2023 (see previous page for details).
Q10. Based on what you know about New Zealand law, do you think this is correct or not correct?
Q11. As far as you know, what does the New Zealand law say is the current hourly adult minimum wage?
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Migrant workers' commitment to speaking up

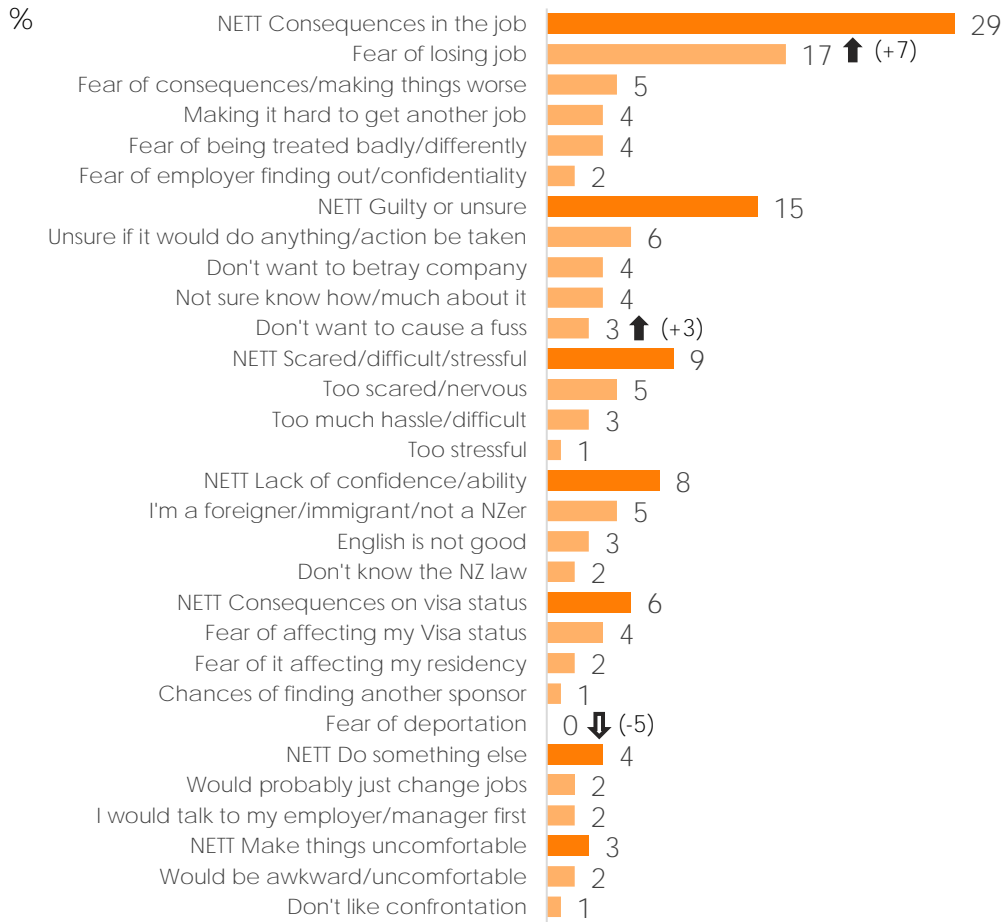
Migrant workers feel better about speaking up in an exploitative employment situation than in 2024.

Four determinants of commitment to speaking up in a situation where an employer is not providing a worker all their employment rights under the NZ employment law %



Migrant workers who say they would feel terrible about speaking up fear the consequences of doing so and feel unsure or guilty about the impact.

Reasons for not feeling good about speaking up



Base: Migrant workers who feel terrible about speaking up (n=255)
Q22f. In your own words, please tell us why you would feel scared about speaking to NZ authorities about a situation.

In their own words...

“The job market is quite tight at the moment. It could be devastating to lose a job, especially if that work was counting toward immigration requirements. It would also be financially distressing.”

“I need a job to get my residency and I need my employer to support my work visa. If I speak to Employment NZ, my employer will no longer be able to support my visa and help me with my residency. Then I will have to leave.”

“Afraid that my manager might cut my hours or fire me and I would not have enough money to pay for my bills.”

“Not sure if they will handle the language difference and it feels that they can judge you because you are from overseas and are kind of complaining.”

“Going outside of the organisation for a complaint may negatively impact the work culture/future employment.”

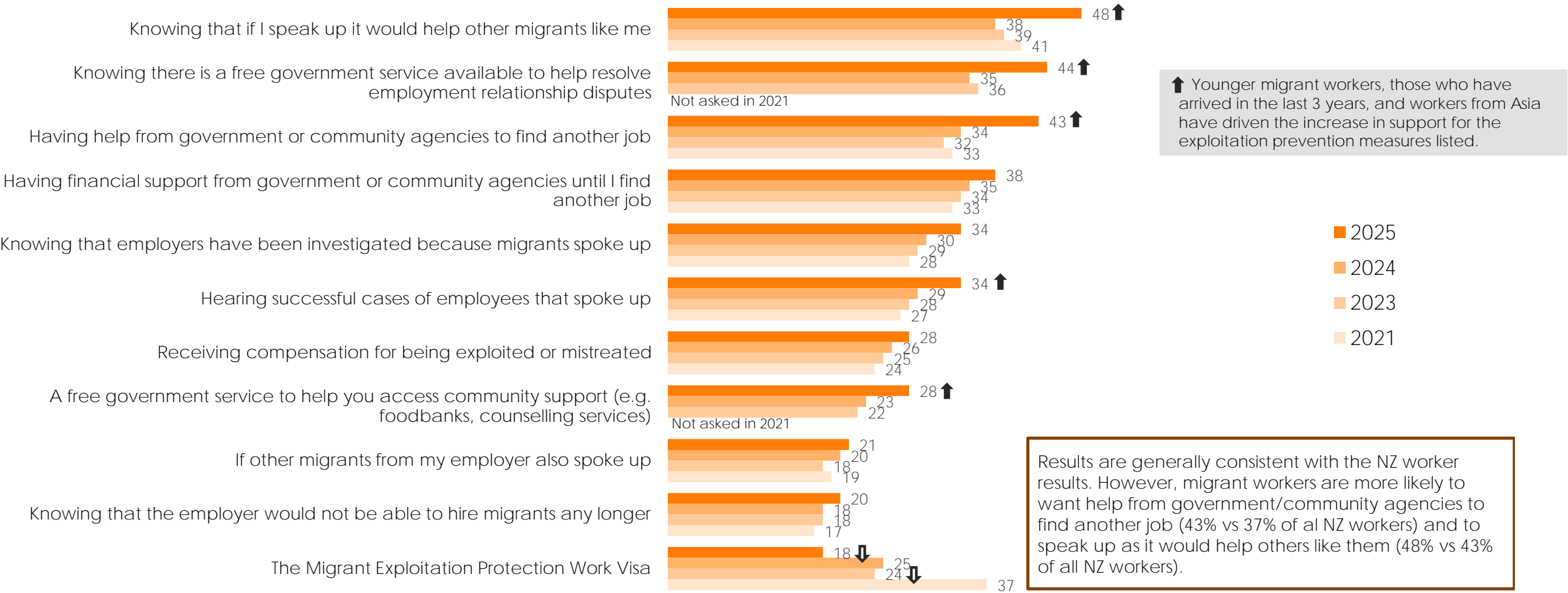
“Everyone here knows each other, and another employer might not want to hire me if I complained about the previous one. They can deport me if I lose my job.”

“It feels like I'm betraying the company and employer who accepted me to work when no one else wanted to hire me. Makes me feel like I'm being ungrateful to them.”

“Getting employed is hard enough as it is, and I'll try keep that job and try to avoid conflict whilst looking for a different job. By then it would already be too late. It's a perpetual loop to get stuck in because you'll be so stressed because you can't afford being without a job. Keep your head down and move forward.”

Migrant workers in 2025 are more supportive of a number of the ideas presented to encourage migrant workers to speak up against exploitation.

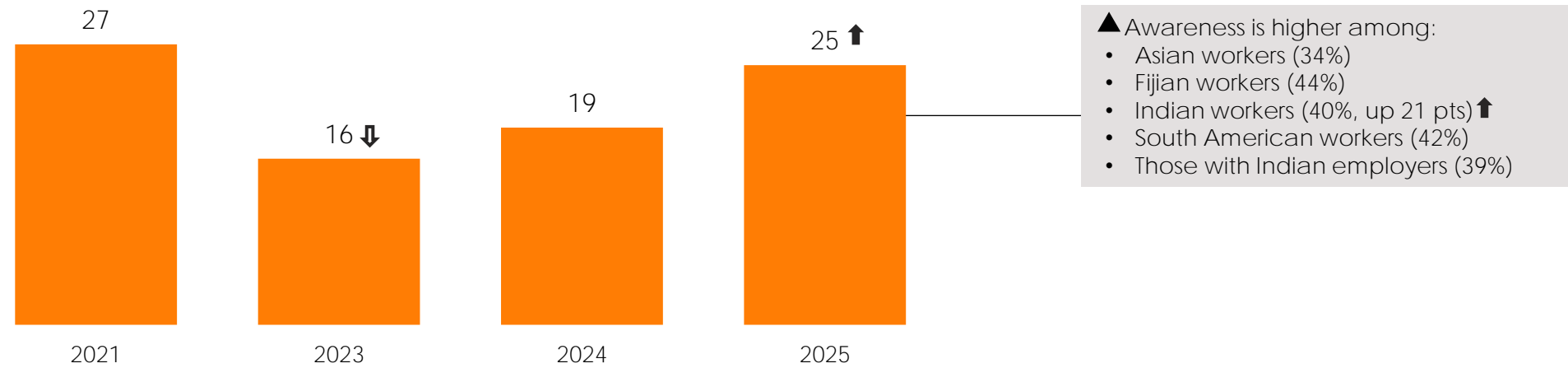
% of workers who believe this would encourage workers to speak up against exploitation



Base: All migrant workers 2025 (n=1,389 excluding prefer not to say), 2024 (n=868 excluding prefer not to say), 2023 (n=1,024), 2021 (n=964) Q28m. What would encourage you to speak up if you were in a situation where your employer were exploiting or mistreating you?

Awareness of the MEPV visa has risen in 2025, nearly matching the 2021 peak.

% Aware of Migrant Exploitation Protection Visa



↑↓ Significant increase/decrease since last wave

▲▽ Significantly higher or lower than 2025 total sample or other subgroups

Base: All migrant workers 2025 (n=1,420 excluding prefer not to say), 2024 (n=893 excluding prefer not to say), 2023 (n=1204), 2021 (n=964)
Q28l. A migrant worker with an employer supported work visa and who has reported exploitation can apply for the new Migrant Exploitation Protection Work Visa. This visa allows them to leave their job quickly and stay in New Zealand for six months looking for another job. Before today, had you heard of the Migrant Exploitation Protection Work Visa.
Verian | The employment monitor

Migrant worker general perceptions of government agency support

Perceptions of how well NZ government agencies support migrant workers have also improved.

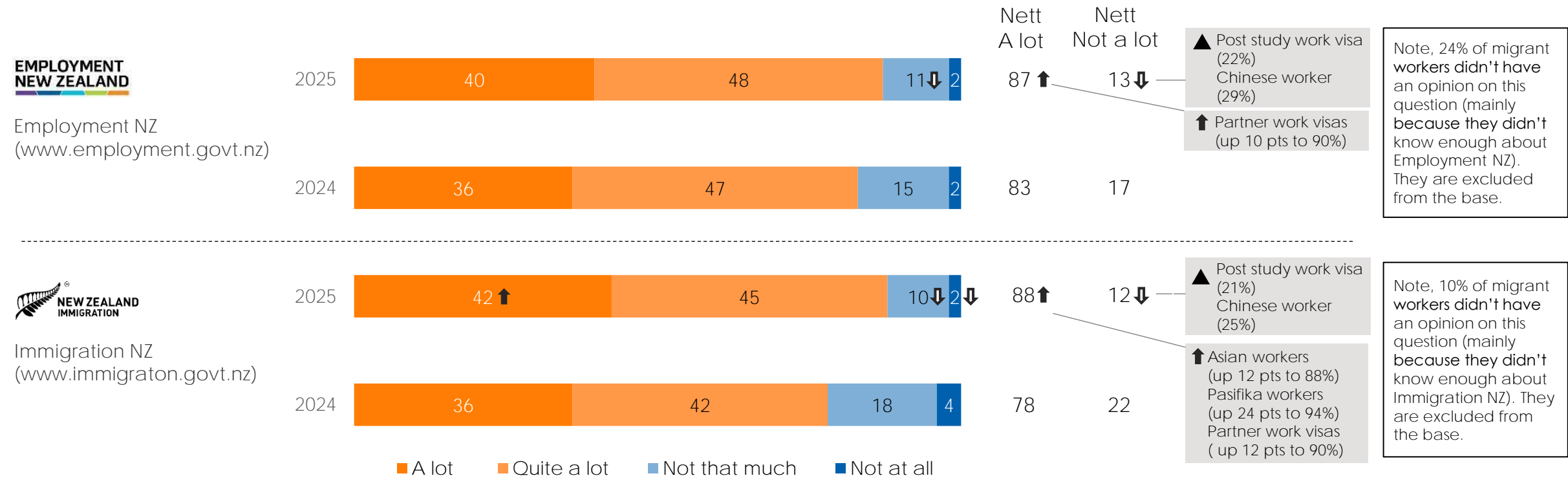
Perceptions of how well NZ government agencies support migrant workers
%



Base: Migrant workers excluding those who don't know enough about them and prefer not to say (n=1,186)
Q26_1. Overall, how well do you think New Zealand government agencies support migrant workers in New Zealand?

Migrant workers’ trust in Employment NZ and Immigration NZ has risen since 2024.

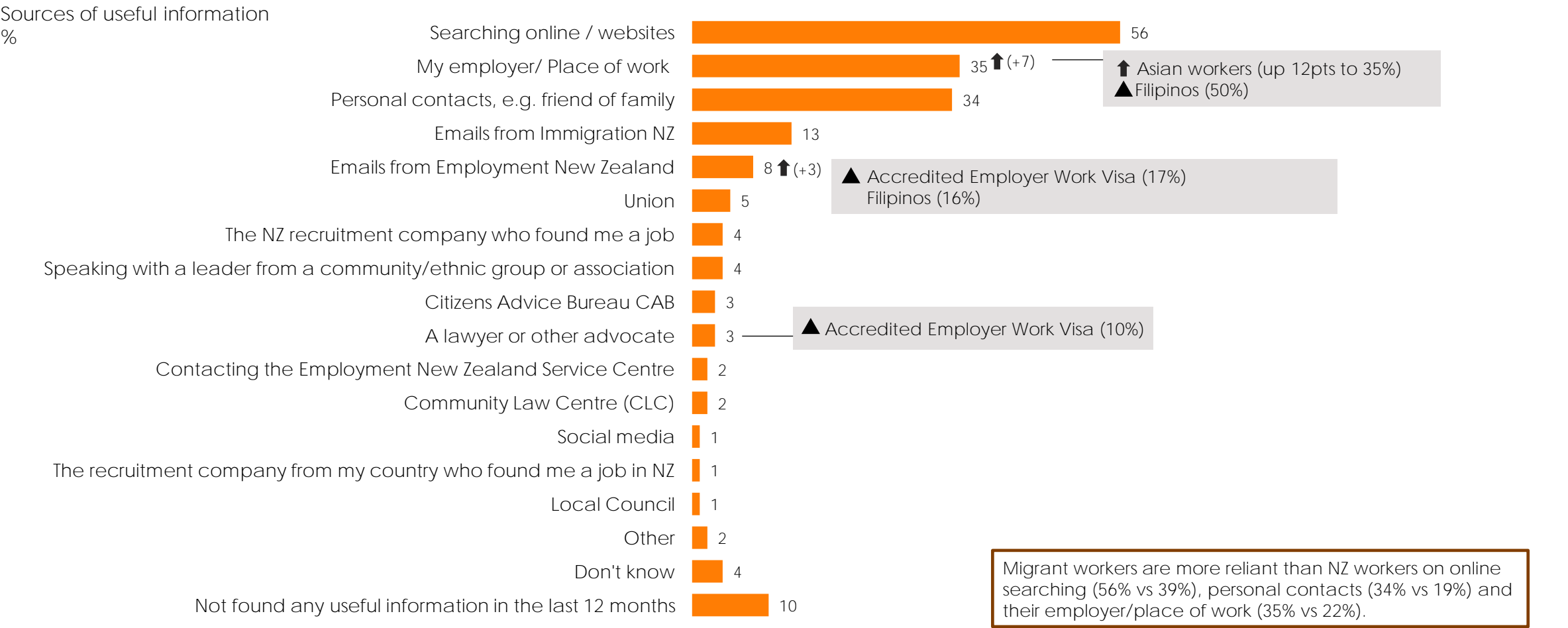
Trust perceptions
%



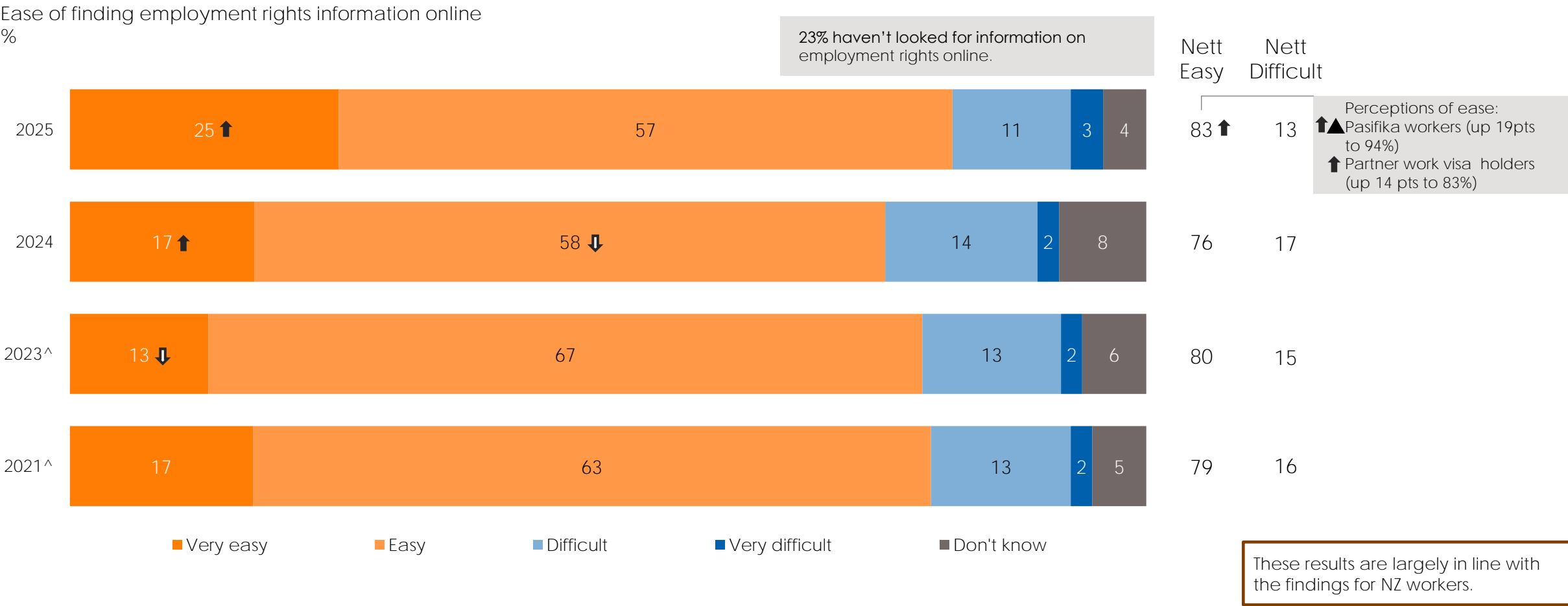
Base: Migrant workers excluding 'don't know enough about this organisation' and 'don't know'.
Q25a. Overall, how much do you trust Immigration New Zealand? 2025 (n=1,311) 2024 (n=724) Q25b. Overall, how much do you trust Employment New Zealand? 2025 (n=1,101) 2024 (n=521)
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Engaging migrant workers

Online searches continue to be the most common source of useful employment rights information. Since 2024, more migrant workers source useful information from their employer and Employment NZ emails.



Migrant workers feel it's easier to find information online in 2025.



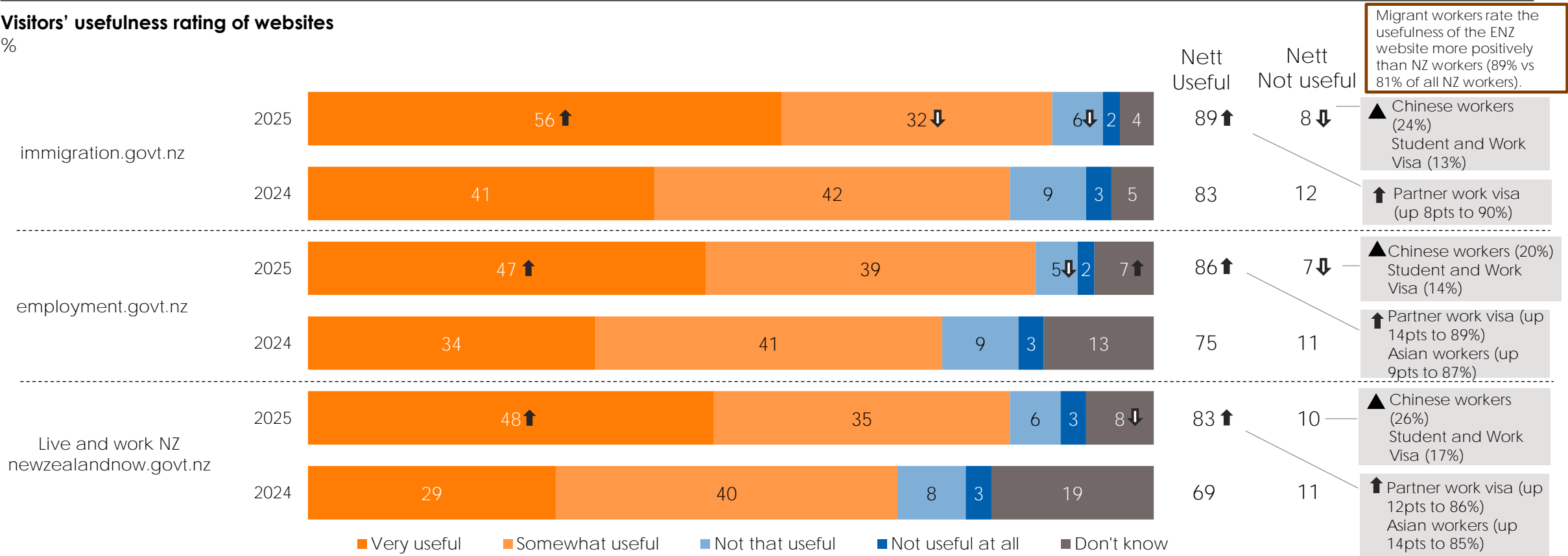
Base: Migrant workers who have looked online for employment rights information in the last 12 months (n=1,101, excluding those who prefer not to say)
^ Note a slightly different scale was used prior to 2024: Very well, Well, A little bit, Not at all.
Q24c. In the last 12 months, how easy or difficult was it to find information you need about employment rights online?
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↑↓ Significant increase/decrease since last wave
▲▽ Significantly higher or lower than 2025 total sample or other subgroups

125

Migrant worker perceptions of these three government websites have improved since 2025.

Visitors' usefulness rating of websites
%

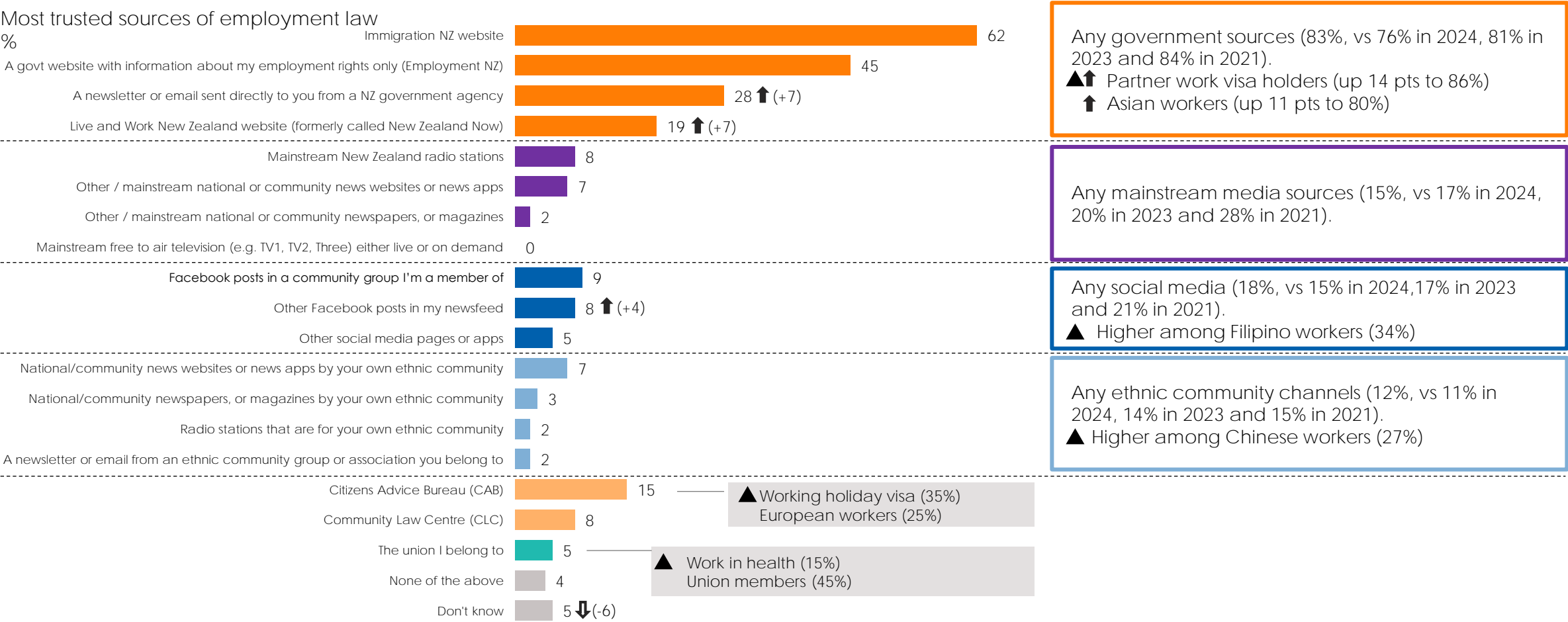


Base: Migrant workers who had visited the site in the last 12 months (excluding prefer not to say), immigration.govt.nz 2025 (n=1,054) 2024 (n=599), employment.govt.nz 2025 (n=877) 2024 (n=488), newzealandnow.govt.nz 2025 (n=840) 2024 (n=428). Q24b. In the past 12 months, how useful have you found these websites for information on employment rights?

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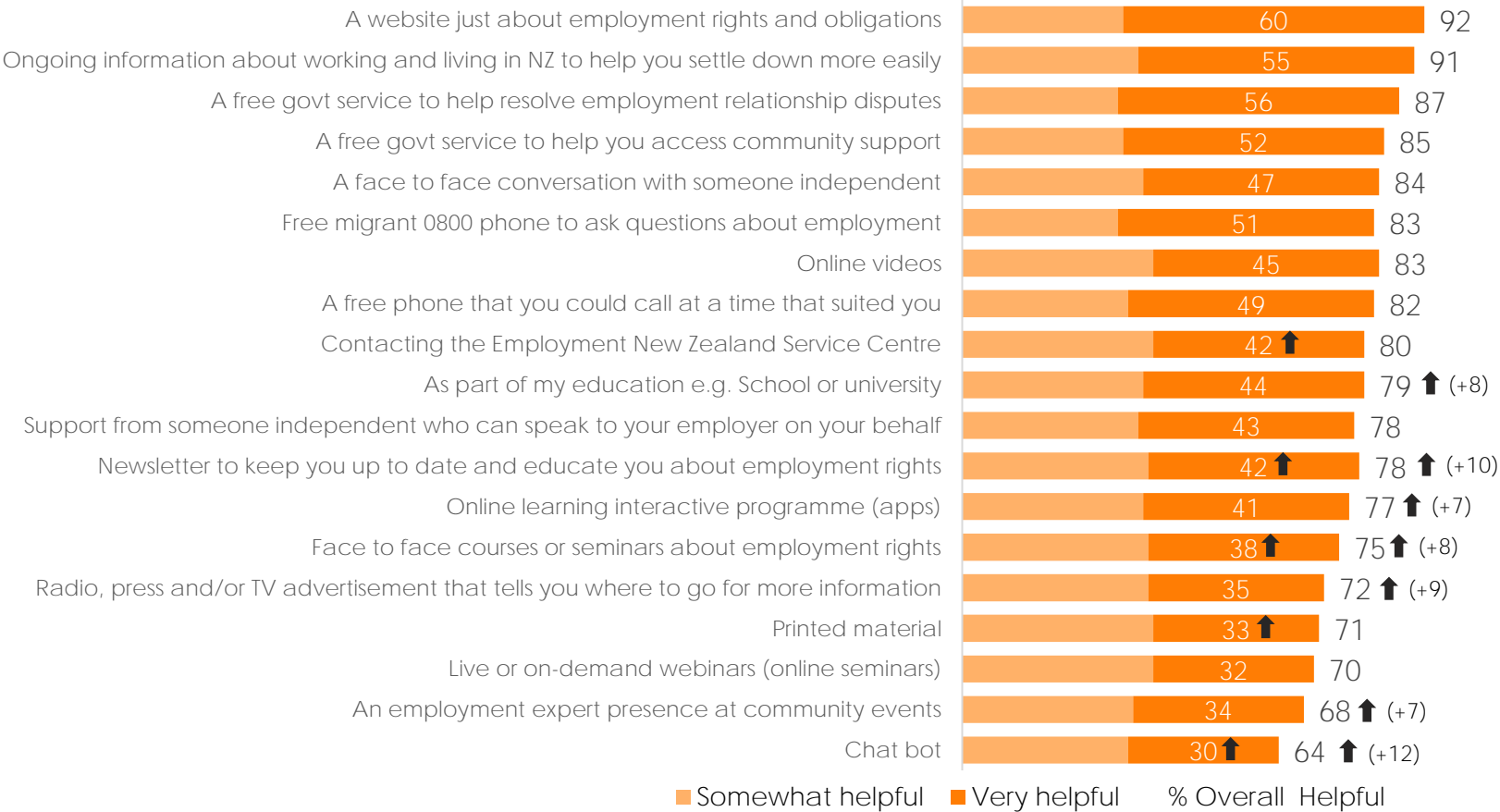
↑↓ Significant increase/decrease since last wave
▲▽ Significantly higher or lower than 2025 total sample or other subgroups | 126

The Immigration NZ and Employment NZ websites continue to be the most trusted sources of employment law. Trust perceptions of government newsletters/emails and the Live and Work NZ website have improved since 2024.



Migrant workers are more enthusiastic about seven of the 19 ideas presented for helping workers get employment rights information and support. General website information and channels with tailored advice continue to hold most appeal.

Appeal of information and support ideas
%



55%

...want communications in their own language.

Around one in five migrant workers surveyed were not able to read and understand English well¹.

¹i.e. Only fairly well (understand some things), Not very well (simple things), No more than a few words

↑ The increased proportion of migrants saying these methods would be helpful stems from those with partner work visas, Asian workers and Pasifika workers.

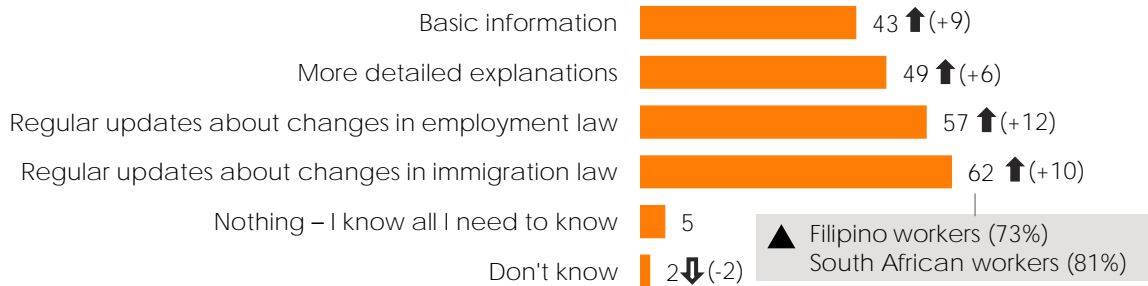
The top six rated ideas are the same for both migrant workers and all NZ workers, except for ongoing information about working living in NZ (which relates only to migrant workers).

Migrant workers in 2025 are more interested in all types of employment information – basic, detailed, and regular.

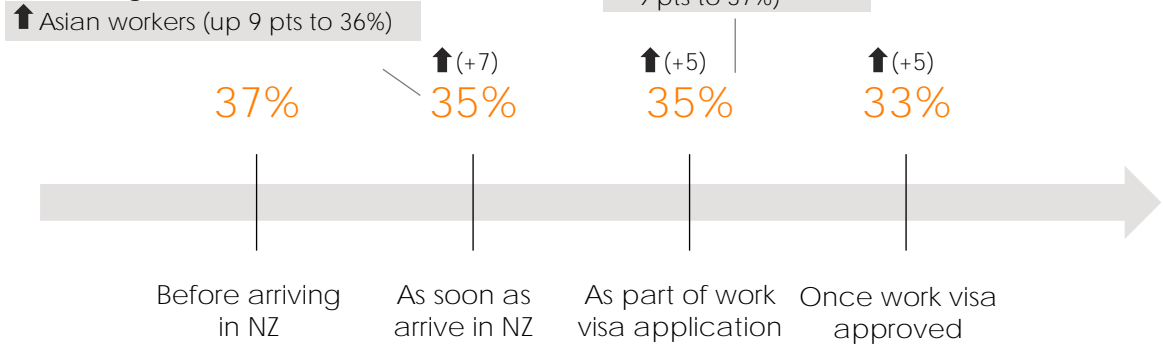
Specific needs

Type of information needed
%

↑ The increased appetite for information is largely driven by those with partner visas and Asian workers.



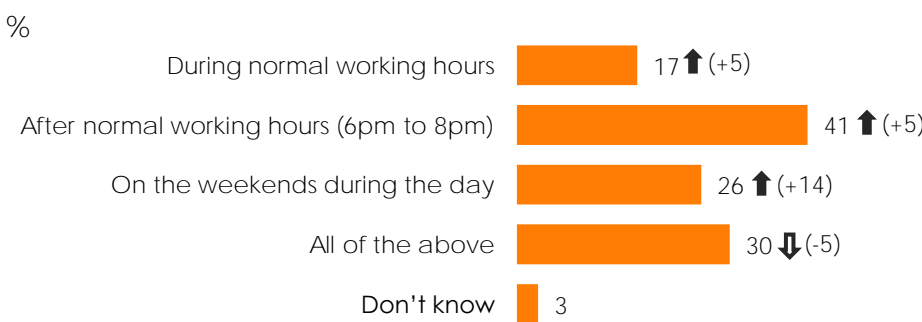
When migrant workers want information



Best time for in-person courses and webinars



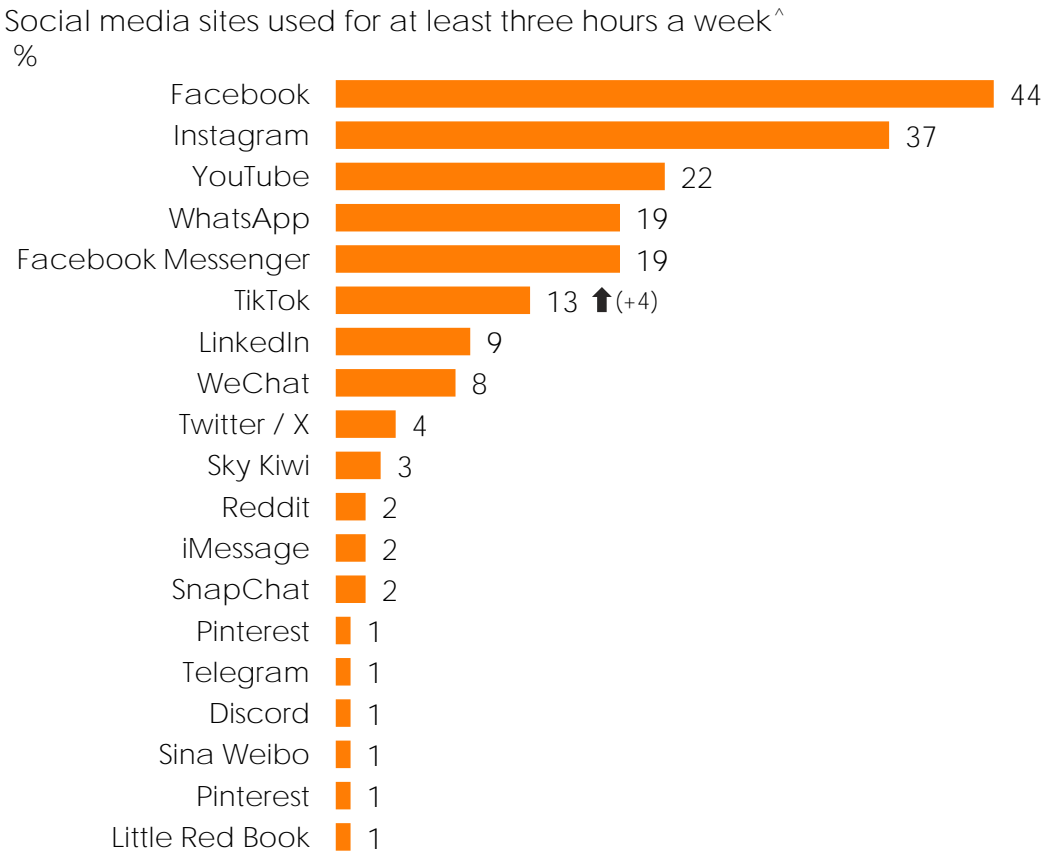
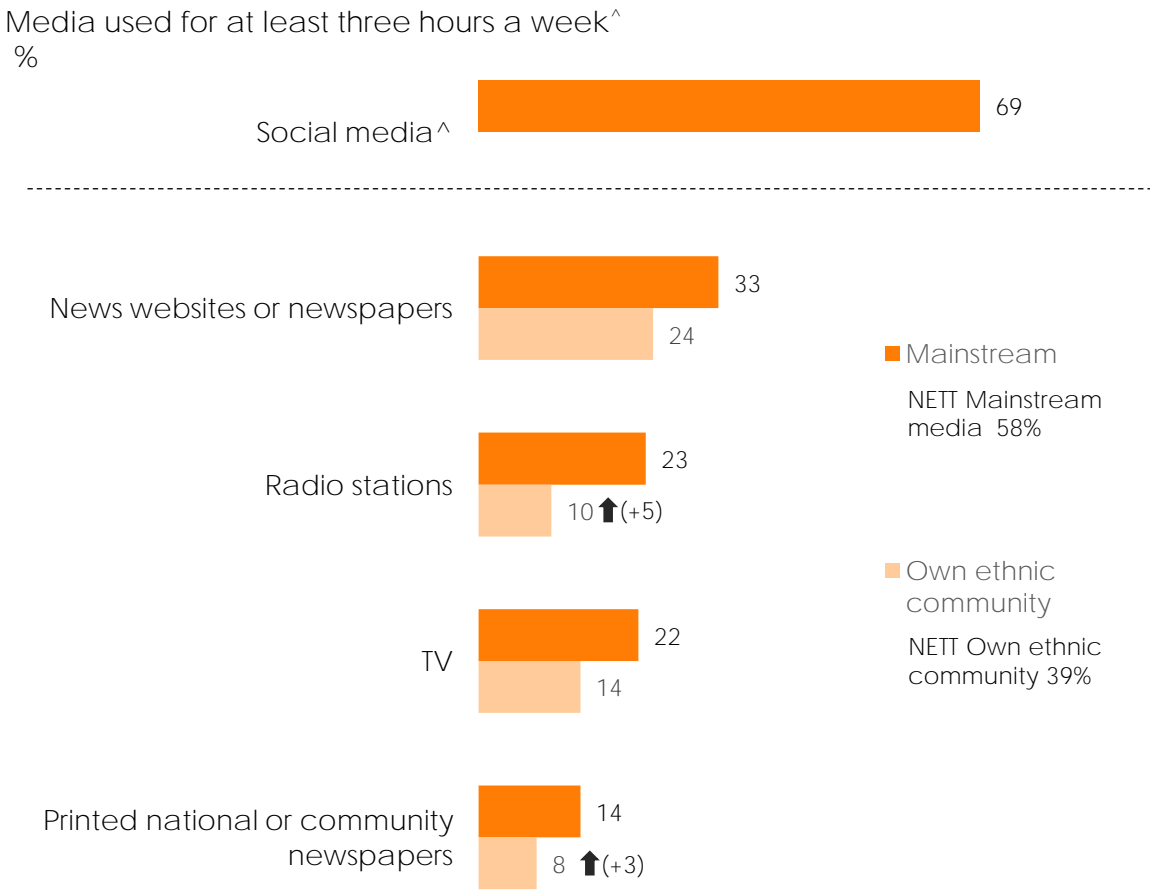
Best time to call a freephone



Base: Migrant workers. Bases vary (see below).
Q27d1. How much employment information would you be interested in? (n=1,429 excluding Prefer not to say). Q27a When would be most helpful to get info about employment rights? (n=1,426 excluding 'prefer not to say'), Q27e. Would you be more likely to attend in-person courses/live webinars if they were... Workers who indicated they would find in-person/live courses helpful (n=1,168 excluding Prefer not to say), Q27ci. You said a freephone to call would be helpful. When would be easier for you to call it? Workers who indicated they would find a free phoneline helpful (n=1,246 excluding prefer not to say).

↑↓ Significant increase/decrease since last wave
▲▽ Significantly higher or lower than 2025 | 129 total sample or other subgroups

Migrant workers’ consumption of social media (69%) remains higher than mainstream media (58%) and ethnic community channels (39%).



Base: All migrant workers (n=1,450) ^Note: Social Media = 3 hours or more a week, Other media = at least 3 hours.
Q28a. Which of the following do you do for at least three hours in a usual week?, Q28b. Do you look at social media pages or apps for ...
, Q28g. What social media sites or apps do you use most weeks? Note: Showing those >1%

↑↓ Significant increase/decrease since last wave

The popularity of social media sites varies by nationality.

Social media sites by worker ethnicity (2025)

	Base	Chinese	Filipino	Other South East Asian	Indian	Other Asian	Fijian	Other Pacific peoples	European incl. Great Britain / Ireland	African / South African	South American	Another ethnicity
Base	(n=1,450)	(210)	(172)	(105)	(144)	(144)	(113)	(35)	(269)	(114)	(62)	(41)
Facebook	44	20%	58%	60%	44%	42%	55%	71%	43%	50%	53%	38%
Instagram	37	19%	25%	50%	44%	31%	27%	29%	58%	30%	65%	45%
YouTube	22	26%	30%	30%	19%	23%	19%	23%	16%	17%	16%	20%
Facebook Messenger	19	6%	37%	18%	18%	13%	33%	57%	26%	17%	8%	13%
WhatsApp	19	11%	2%	15%	25%	24%	4%	3%	28%	34%	42%	20%
TikTok	13↑(+4)	9%	12%	17%	6%	10%	20%	9%	16%↑(+9)	12%	13%	16%
LinkedIn	9	6%	6%	10%	13%	15%	4%	3%	7%	16%	11%	9%
WeChat	8	53%	0%	0%	0%	1%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
Twitter / X	4	9%	1%	8%	2%	3%	0%	0%	7%	2%	6%	6%
Sky Kiwi	3	22%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	1%
Reddit	2	2%	2%	4%	0%	1%	0%	0%	4%	1%	3%	8%
iMessage	2	1%	2%	1%	1%	1%	1%	6%	3%	1%	2%	5%
SnapChat	2	1%	0%	0%	2%	0%	3%	0%	6%	1%	0%	1%

Top three sites for the worker ethnic group

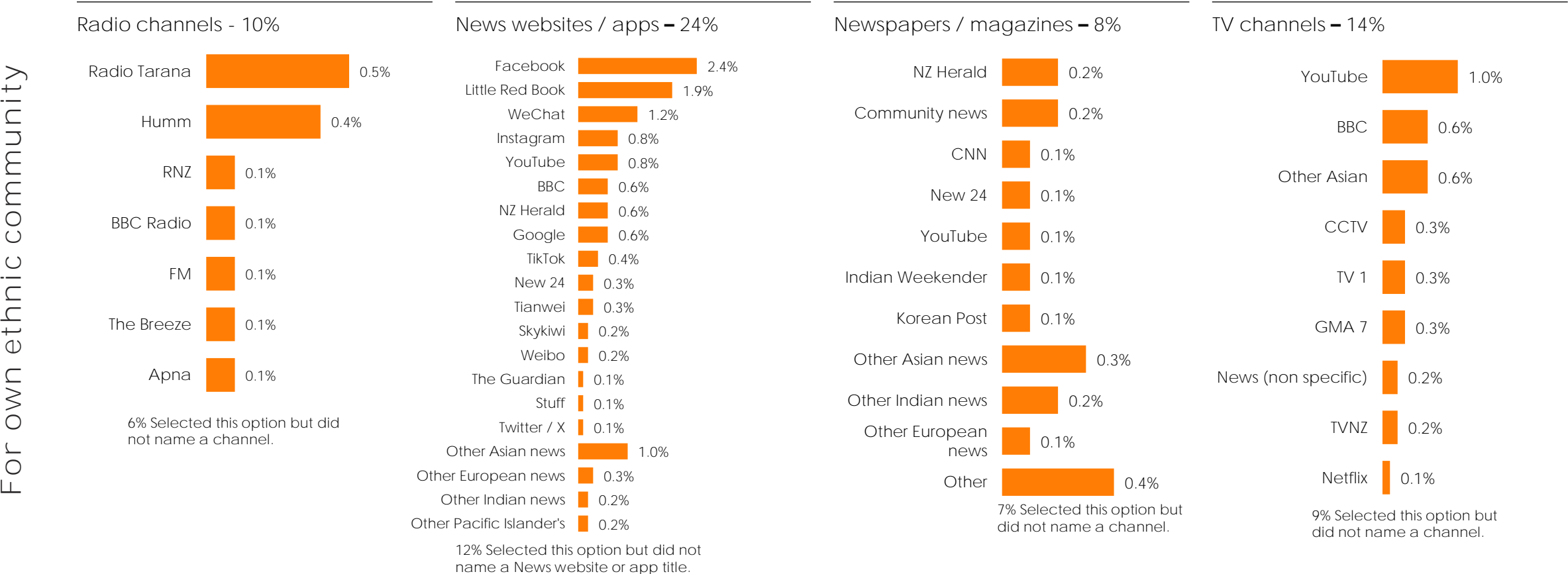
Base: All migrant workers (see table for base sizes). Note: Showing those >1%.
Q28g. What social media sites or apps do you use most weeks?

↑↓ Significant increase/decrease since last wave

A myriad of ethnic media channels are consumed.

Respondents who indicated they listened to, watched, or read each of the media sources in the previous question for their own ethnic community (at least three hours per week), were then asked which specific channels, websites, apps, newspapers and magazines they use the most. The graph below shows the respondent defined sources used. Results are based on all migrant workers in 2025.

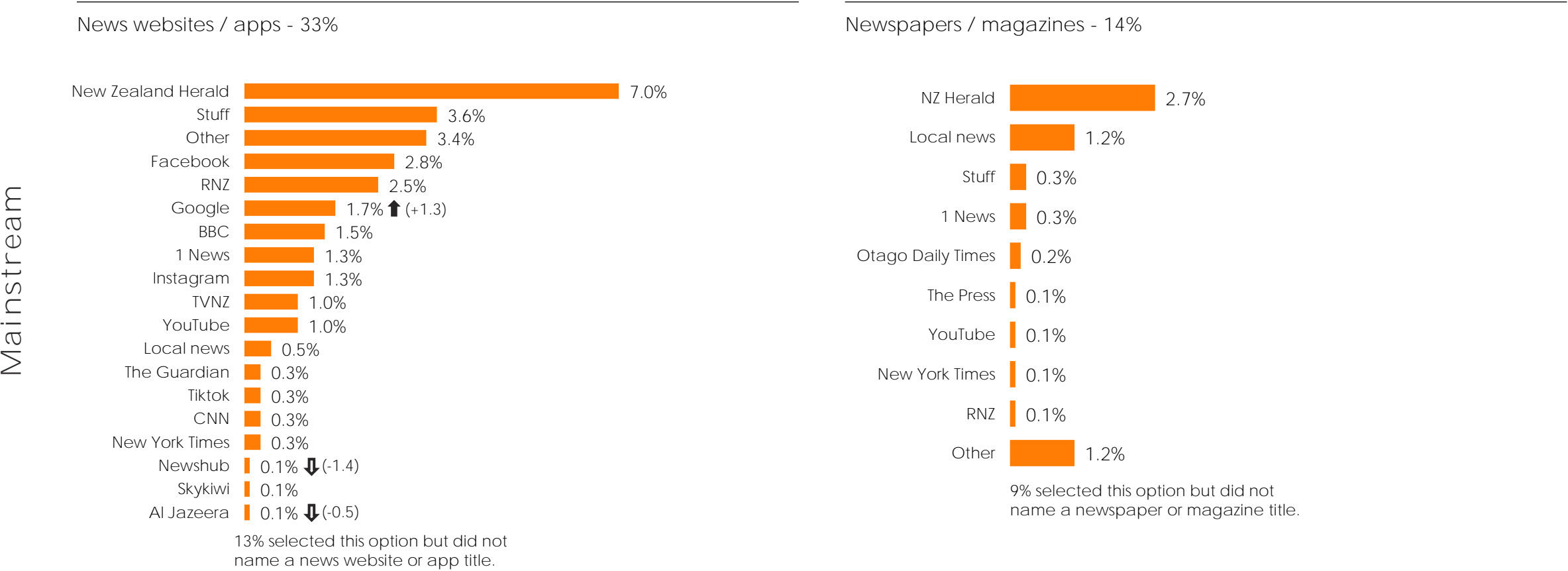
Ethnic media used for at least three hours per week



Base: All migrant workers (n=1,450)
Q28c. What [news websites or news apps/ newspapers, magazines] for your own ethnic community do you normally read/use? Q28e. What TV channels for your own ethnic community do you watch the most? Q28f. What radio channels for your own ethnic community do you listen to the most?

New Zealand Herald and Stuff are the most popular mainstream channels.

Mainstream media channels

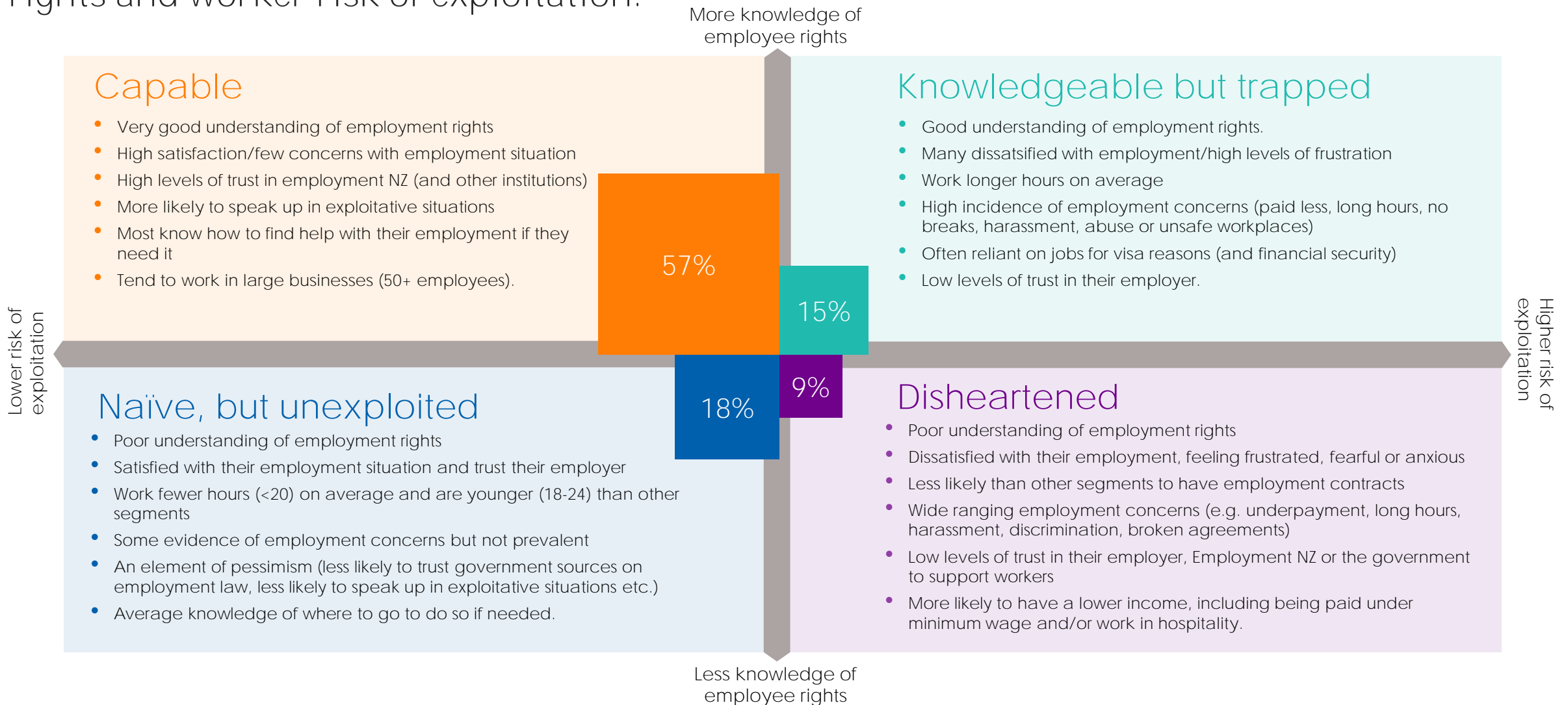


Base: All migrant workers (n=1,450)
Q28d. What mainstream news websites or news apps, newspapers, magazines do you usually read/use?

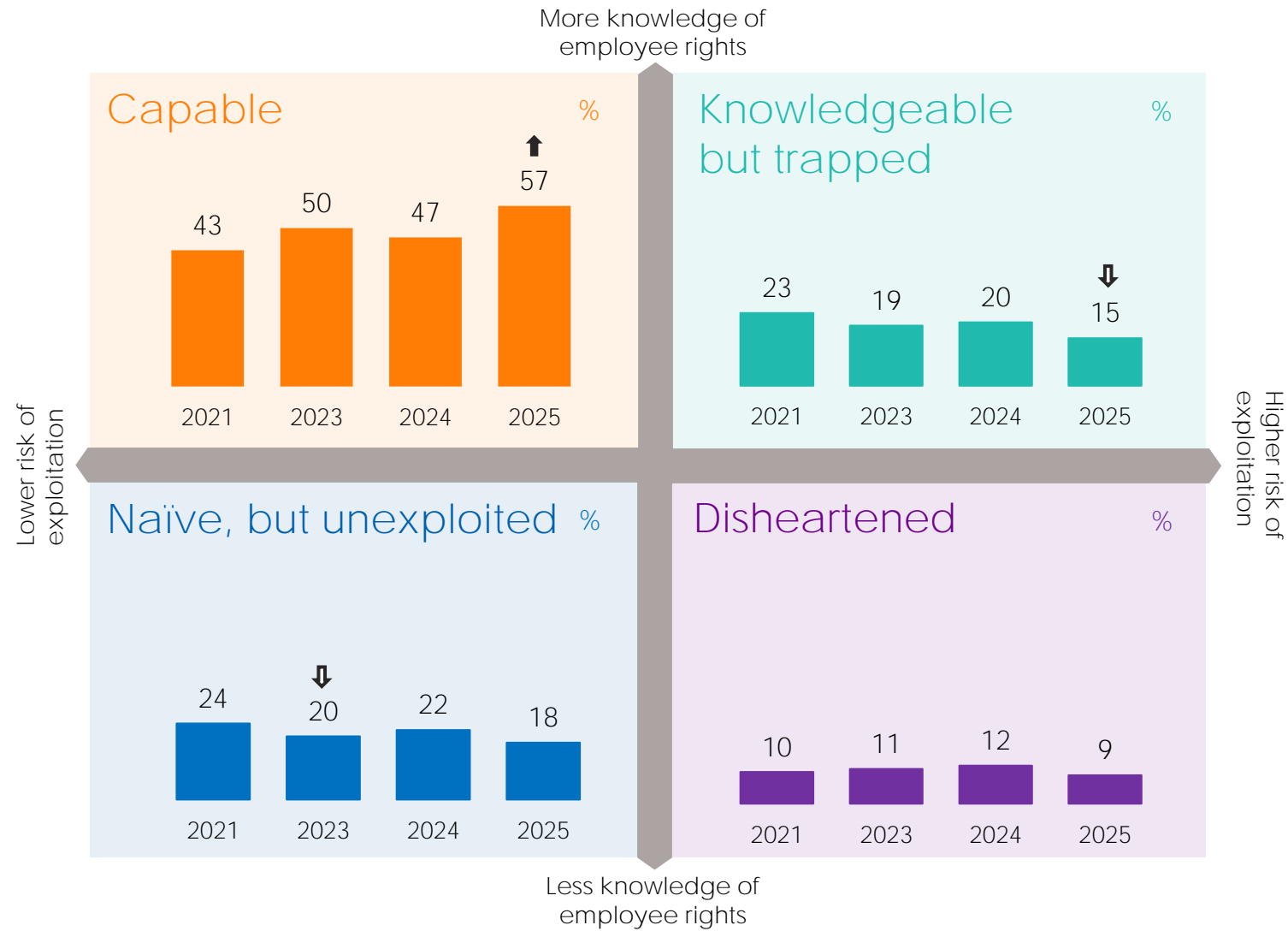
↑↓ Significant increase/decrease since last wave

Migrant worker segments

We have identified four worker segments by crossing worker knowledge of employment rights and worker risk of exploitation.



Knowledge and attitudinal improvements (and fewer employment concerns voiced) have resulted in growth in the size of the *Capable* segment (up 10 points to 57%). As a result the size of the other segments have reduced in size. Around a quarter of migrant workers remain at risk of exploitation; 9% are *disheartened* while 15% are *knowledgeable but trapped*.



↑↓ Significant increase/decrease since last wave

Disheartened workers have a high proportion of hospitality workers and workers with working holiday visas compared to the two more knowledgeable segments.

		Capable	Naïve but unexploited	Knowledgeable but trapped	Disheartened
Visa type	Student and work	15%	20%	19%	16%
	Partner work	55%▲	41%▽	52%	39%
	Working holiday	9%▽	19%▲	6%▽	24%▲
	Accredited Employer Visa	8%	5%	5%	5%
	Post study work visa	8%	6%	13%▲	11%
Ethnicity	European	17%	21%	16%	28%▲
	Chinese	13%	8%▽	25%▲	19%
	Filipino	15%▲	8%	10%	3%▽
Industry	Hospitality	15%	21%	8%▽	30%
Self-rated understanding of employment rights (average 74%)		85%	66%	59%▽	45%▽
Tested employment rights knowledge (Average no. correct out of 14)		11.8▲	8.0▽	11.6	9.5▽
Been in NZ for three years or less		89%	90%	87%	85%

53% Capable

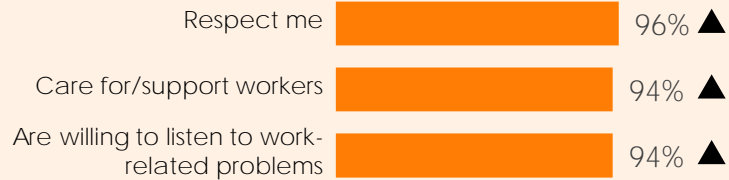
The capable are the happiest at work

- ▲ 96% Are satisfied, most often feeling...
- ▲ 56% happy ▲ 54% appreciated ▲ 51% grateful

They have the least negative experiences at work

- ▲ 99% Have experienced no issues at their job

They feel supported, saying their managers/employers...



And their employer works with them to...



They're less likely to be exploited

- ▲ 96% Have a written contract

They have a stable living situation and support available to them

- ▲ 55% Are working on a partnership visa
- ▲ 30% Moved to NZ to join family already here

They have the best understanding of their rights

- ▲ 85% Feel they understand their rights well
- ▲ 11.8 out of 14 And actually do (the highest average understanding of their rights)

They also tend to experience less exploitation and/or are less willing to accept it

- I can't expect to have the same employment conditions as NZ workers 25% ▼
- I would put up with things that are against NZ employment law because I feel lucky to have my job 22% ▼
- If I were to speak up, bad things would happen to me/my family 9% ▼
- My employer sometimes does things that are against NZ employment law 6% ▼

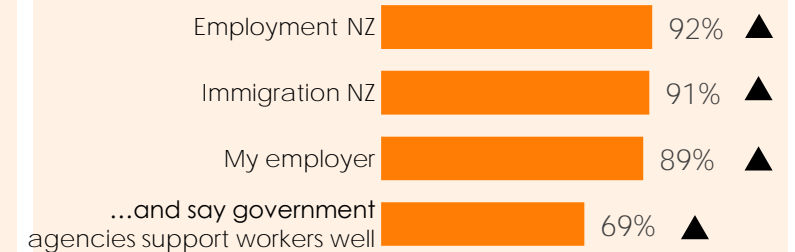
And are empowered to speak up

- ▲ 76% Say employment rights are important to them

They're confident they know where to go for help and are likely to follow through



They also have faith in their employer and the system more generally, saying they trust...



23%

Knowledgeable but trapped

They have a good understanding of their rights and **know they're at risk of being infringed**. They worry about consequences, so are less likely to speak up.

They're resigned to the fact they're unhappy at work

- ▲ 36% Are dissatisfied, most often feeling...
- ▲ 36% anxious ▲ 30% frustrated 25% accepting

They often have negative experiences at work

- ▲ 72% Have experienced at least one issue at work, including issues with...



They feel unheard, saying their managers/employers...



They know the rules but are worried about speaking up

They lack confidence, but actually have good understanding of their rights

- ▲ 39% Feel they don't understand their rights well
- ▲ 11.6 out of 14 Second highest average understanding of their rights
- 66% Say employment rights are important to them (8-10/10)

Their situation feels more precarious

- ▲ 13% Don't have a written contract
- ▲ 13% Are on a post-study work visa

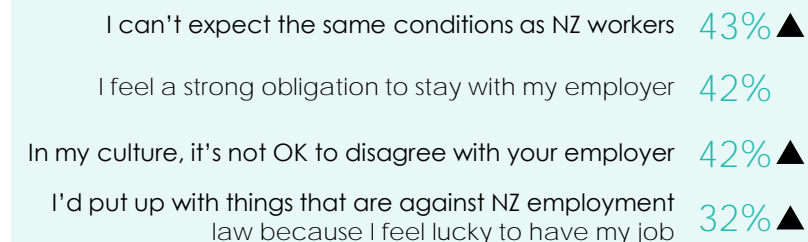
They're held back by a lack of trust

- ▲ 26% Distrust Employment NZ
- ▲ 22% Distrust Immigration NZ

They're partly held back because they're worried about consequences, saying...

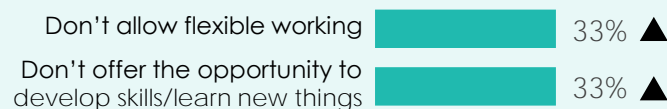


But they're also more willing to accept poor conditions and feel they owe their employer



- ▲ 41% Distrust their employer
- ▲ 28% Feel the Government doesn't support workers sufficiently

They also feel unsupported by employers who...



They're unlikely to speak up if needed, saying...



12% Naïve, but unexploited

They often have high job satisfaction and fewer employment concerns and less exploitation currently, but they risk this in future with less interest in employment issues or willingness to speak up.

They're happy at work

▲ 93% Are satisfied, most often feeling...
▲55% grateful ▲51% happy 48% appreciated

They have few negative experiences at work

▲ 93% Have experienced no issues at their job

They feel supported, saying their managers/employers...

Respect me 92% ▲
Care for/support workers 92% ▲
Are willing to listen to work-related problems 90% ▲

And their employer works with them to...

Give access to equipment needed to do my job safely 94% ▲
Offer the opportunity to develop skills/learn new things 84%
Allow flexible working 84%

They aren't exploited currently, but risk this in future

They aren't currently exploited, but are at higher risk due to their poor understanding of their rights

▲ 32% Feel they don't understand their rights well
▽ 8 out of 14 Lowest average understanding of their rights

They have low understanding for all regulations, but struggle most with...

Responsibilities (Tasks you're given vs what you were employed to do) 44% ▽
Trial periods 35% ▽
Contractors' rights 18% ▽

But they have some safety nets in place

93% Have a written contract

They're less likely to be held back by their views

I can't expect the same conditions as NZ workers 20% ▽
In my culture, it's not OK to disagree with your employer 20% ▽
Bad things would happen to me/my family if I spoke up 9% ▽
If I lose my job I would get deported 6% ▽

They're less worried about employment issues than other segments

▽ 62% Feel employment issues are important to them (8-10/10)

Partly because they trust others, which is fortunately not misguided currently

Trust Employment NZ 93% ▲
Trust Immigration NZ 92% ▲
Trust my employer 80%
Government agencies' support workers well 61%

They're unsure about speaking up, possibly because they haven't given it much thought (because they haven't had to)

64% Feel they know where to go for help with employment issues

And are on the fence about speaking up (rating 5 out of 10)

How it'd feel speaking to Employment NZ 31% ▲
Whether you would go to Employment NZ 17%
How easy it would be to speak up 17%

12% The disheartened

The disheartened are the least happy at work

▲ 52% Are dissatisfied, most often feeling...

▲ 39% frustrated ▲ 31% disrespected ▲ 26% anxious

They have the most negative experiences at work

▲ 91% Have experienced at least one issue at work, including issues with...

Getting paid less than Kiwis 31%▲

Workplace racism 23%▲

Job isn't what was promised 21%▲

No breaks 20%▲

They feel unheard, saying their managers/employers...

Don't care for/support workers 48%▲

Aren't willing to listen to work-related problems 44%▲

Don't respect them 37%▲

They also feel unsupported by employers as they...

Don't offer the opportunity to develop skills/learn new things 52%▲

Don't allow flexible working 46%▲

What's holding them back?

They have poor understanding of their rights

▲ 54% Feel they don't understand their rights

▽ 9.5 Second lowest average understanding of their rights
out of 14

Their situation is more precarious

▲ 15% Don't have written contracts ▲ 24% Are on working holiday visas

They're more reliant on their job

I need to stay in this job to financially support myself/my family 79%

And are thankful, while also having different expectations

I can't expect the same employment conditions as NZ workers 45%▲

I'd put up with things against NZ law because I feel lucky to have my job 39%▲

A lack of trust holds them back, with a distrust in...

▲ 64% Their employer ▲ 38% Employment NZ

▲ 35% NZ government support ▲ 31% Immigration NZ

▲ 62% Think it'd be hard to raise issues. Partly because...

▲ 77% Feel easily replaceable ▲ 36% Worry bad things will happen to them/their family

▲ 72% Don't know or disagree they know where to go to get help if needed

How can they be reached?

Addressing financial worries would encourage action, i.e. I'd speak up if...

I had financial support until I find a new job 44%

Government offered free help/conflict resolution 40%

Employers had to pay fines/compensation 36%

They also want to feel like part of a group before speaking up, i.e. I'd speak up if...

I knew speaking up would help others like me 51%

I heard success stories of other workers speaking up 43%▲

Knowing my employer wouldn't be able to hire migrants anymore 28%▲

They're also open to learning more

▲ 64% are interested in getting more detailed employment information

Especially from the government (in spite of some trust issues)

Immigration NZ website 58%

A government website about your rights 40%

Newsletter/email from government agency 29%

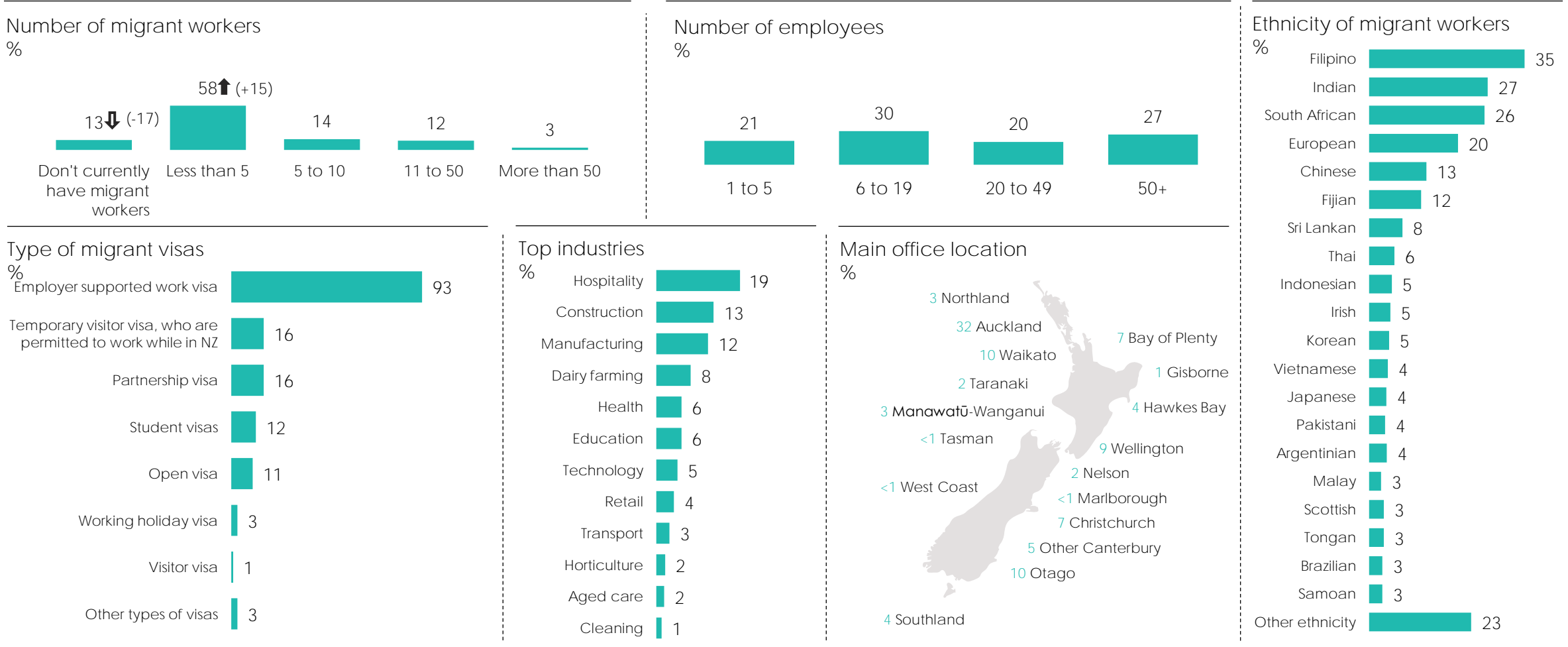
Employers of migrants

Note, more HR staff were surveyed in 2025 than previous survey waves. This has not influenced most of the significant increases or decreases shown in this section. We have noted where this has had a significant impact to aid the reader's interpretation of the survey results.



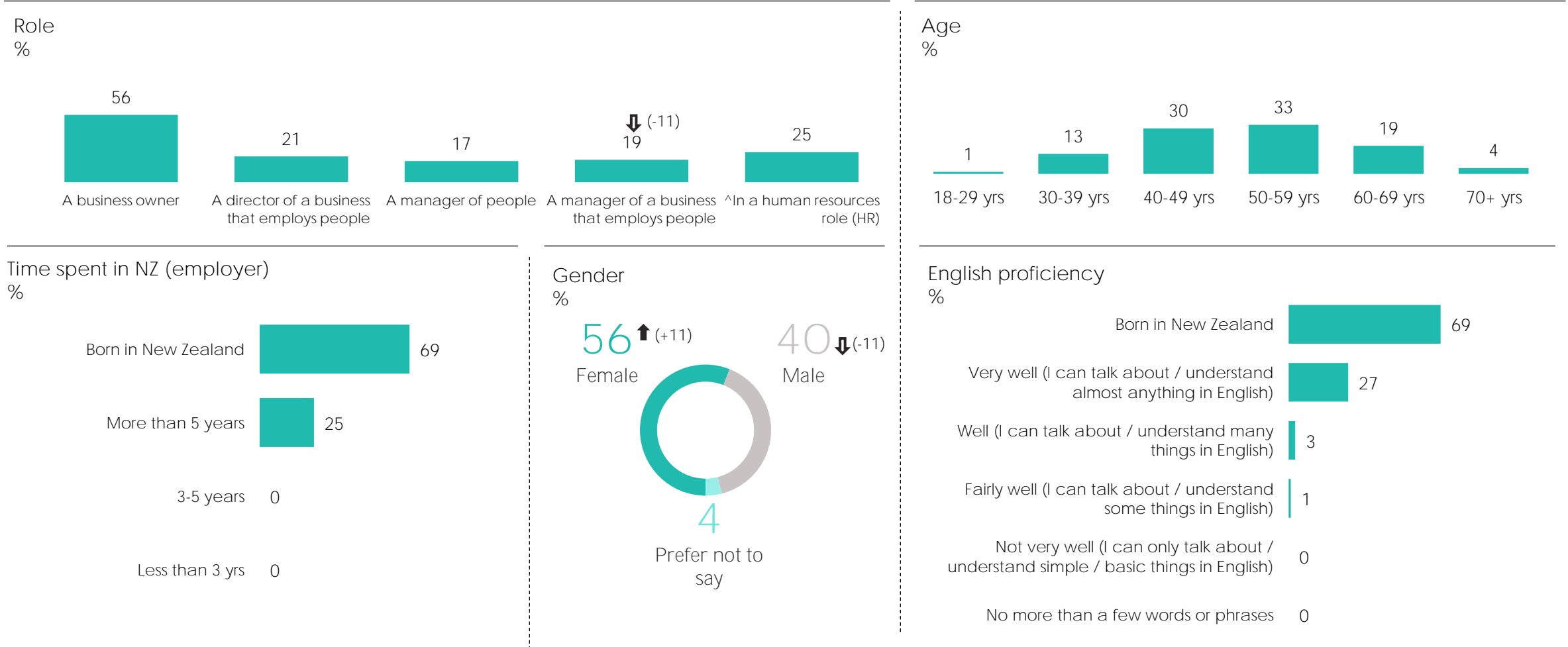
Employers of migrant workers – organisation profile

The 2025 profile of employers of migrants contains fewer lapsed employers of migrants and consequently more employers with fewer than five migrant employees. Nearly half of employers of migrants are medium or large businesses.



Employers of migrant workers – survey respondent profile

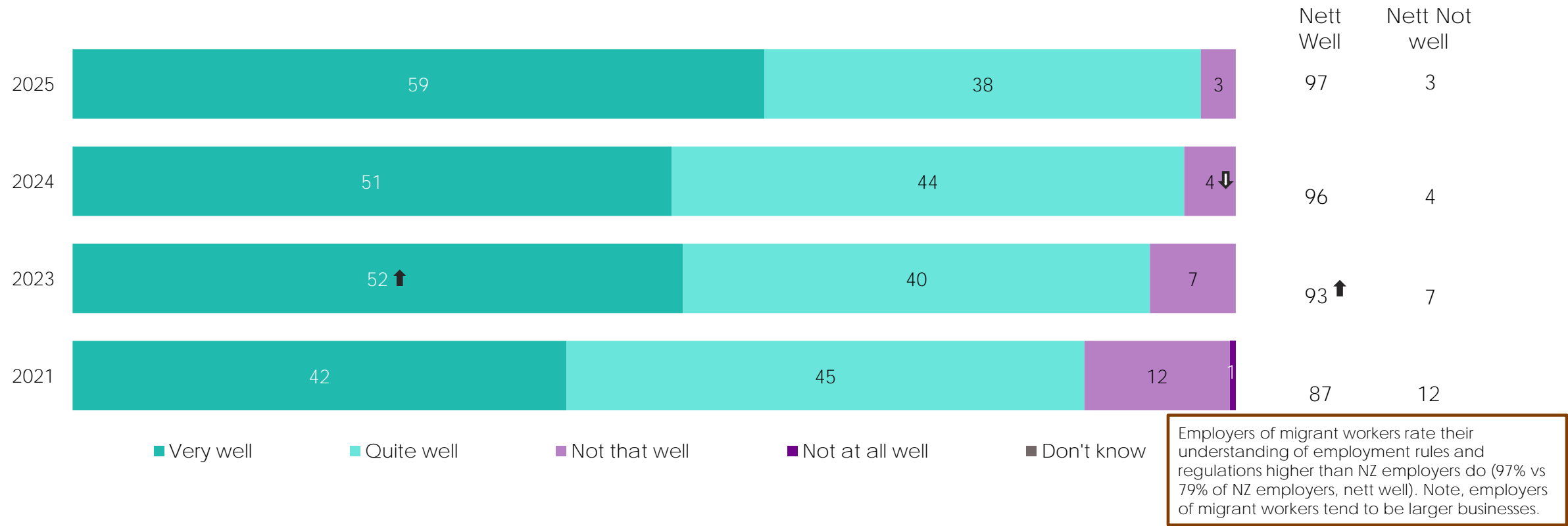
The change in profile of organisations' representatives who completed the survey likely relate to the additional category added to the survey in 2025 for HR personnel.



Employers of migrants – knowledge
of employment rules and
regulations

Self-reported understanding of employment rules and regulations has not changed significantly since 2024 and again exceeds that of the NZ employer benchmark.

Self-rated understanding of employment rules and regulations
%



Base: All employers of migrants, 2025 (n=333 excluding 'prefer not to answer'), 2024 (n=270 excluding 'prefer not to answer'), 2023 n=528, 2021 n=1,345
Q1. How well do you think you understand employment rules and regulations in New Zealand?
Note, a slightly different scale was used prior to 2024: Very well, Well, A little bit, Not at all.
Verian | The employment monitor

We showed employers of migrants a range of statements on employment rights, and for each they indicated whether it was correct or incorrect. They were also asked to state the adult minimum wage.

Employment right / regulation	Right Answer
¹ Annual Leave: Workers have the right to at least four weeks of paid annual leave after one year of continuous employment in their job.	Correct
Sick Leave: After working for six months for an employer, a worker has the right to 10 days' sick leave per year.	Correct
Public holidays: If a worker works on a public holiday and it would normally have been one of their working days, they are entitled to get paid 1.5 times their normal pay and have another day off.	Correct
² Employment contract: Employers must provide workers with a copy of the employment contract (agreement).	Correct
Records: Employers must keep records of worker wages, hours work, leave (sick, annual, etc.) and deduction.	Correct
³ Consequences: Employers caught exploiting or mistreating migrant workers can be banned from supporting migrant visas for up to two years.	Correct
⁴ Trial: A 90 day trial period can be added to the employment contract after the worker starts working.	Incorrect
Training: Employers need to pay workers when they are being trained for the job.	Correct
Contractors: Contractors don't have the same rights as employees.	Correct
Unpaid breaks: All breaks are unpaid (i.e. morning tea, lunch, afternoon tea).	Incorrect
Wages: An employer can ask a worker to work half a day without pay if they are asked to show their skills before they are employed.	Incorrect
Ask for money: An employer can ask for money from a potential worker to give the worker a job.	Incorrect
Safety gear: Workers must pay for their own health and safety equipment.	Incorrect
⁵ Overtime: An employer never needs to pay a salaried worker overtime if they work a lot of extra hours.	Incorrect
Job: An employer can employ a worker as a chef but have them work as a waiter.	Incorrect
Deductions: An employer can make deductions from a worker's wages or salary for any reason they want to without their consent.	Incorrect
Pay: It is ok for employers to pay a New Zealander more than a migrant who is doing the same job because the New Zealander is a citizen of New Zealand.	Incorrect
Income tax: An employer can ask a worker to pay their own income tax to the Inland Revenue.	Incorrect
Breaks: People who work in stores, cafes and restaurants are not allowed to have rest breaks if they are too busy.	Incorrect

¹ Prior to 2024 this statement was worded 'Employees have the right to at least 20 days annual leave after one year in the job.'

² In 2024 this statement was worded 'Employers must provide the worker with a copy of the employment contract (agreement) before they start their job.'

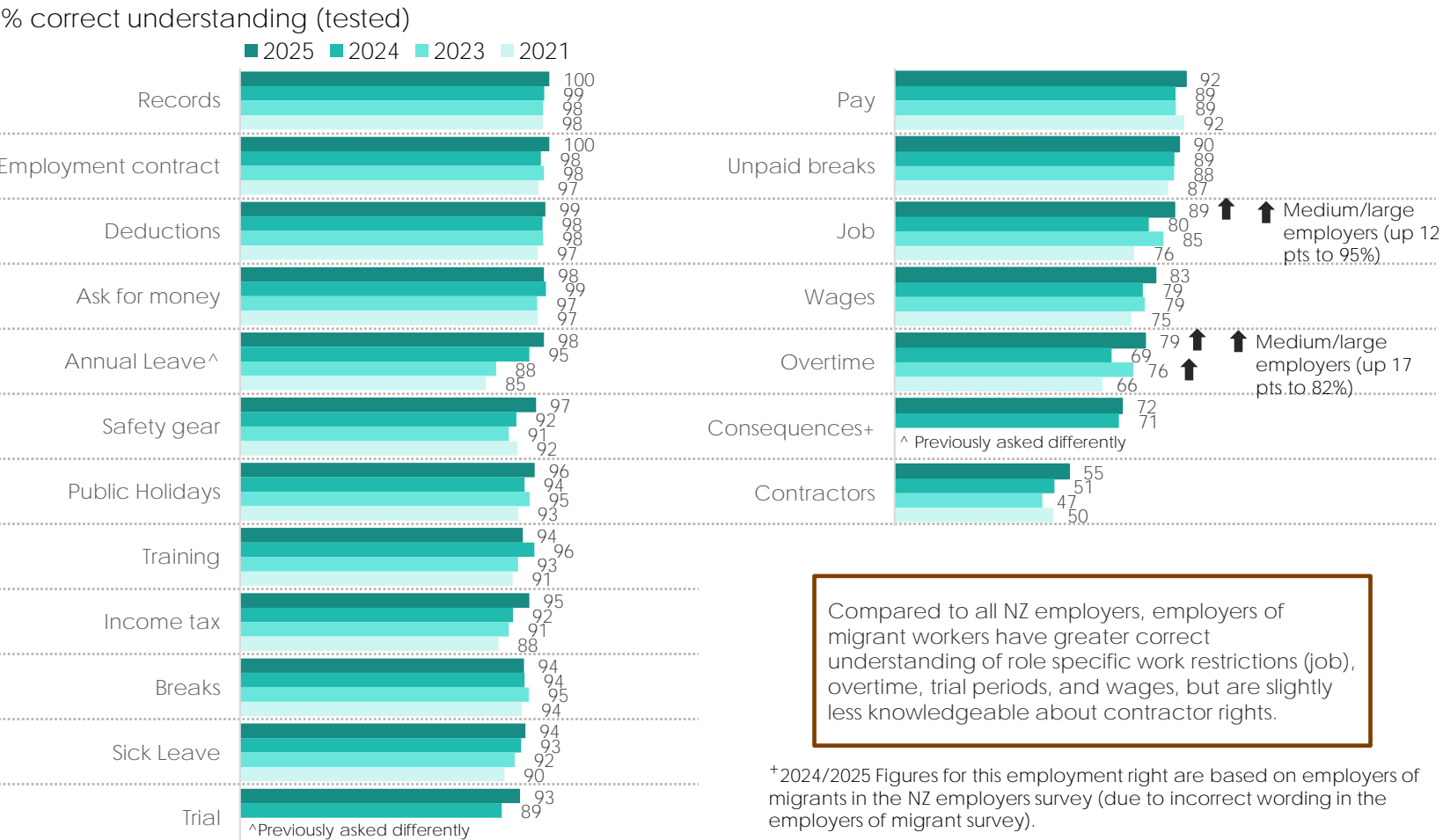
³ Prior to 2024 this statement was worded 'Employers caught exploiting or mistreating migrant workers can be banned from hiring migrants in the future.'

⁴ Prior to 2024 this statement was worded 'A 90-day trial period can be added to the employment contract after the employee starts working.' (asked of <20 employees)

⁵ In 2024 this statement was worded 'An employer does not need to pay a salaried worker overtime if they work a lot of extra hours.'

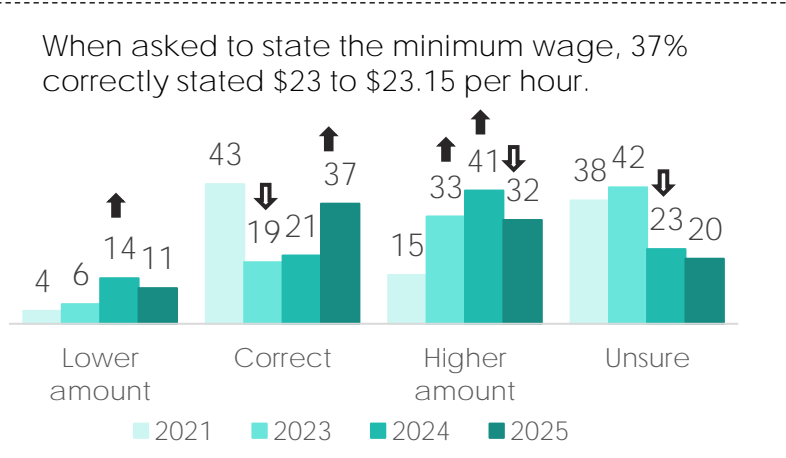
Tested knowledge of the role-specific work restriction and overtime rules¹ has improved among employers of migrants. More can also name the minimum wage.

¹See previous page for notes about changes in statement wording.



58% vs 41% in 2024
of migrant workers had a correct understanding of 17 or 18 or more laws (out of 18¹).
¹Excludes Consequences due to wording difference

The average employer of migrants has an incorrect understanding (or are unsure) about two of the 18 employment rights tested.

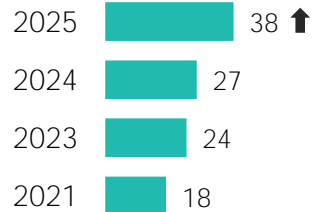


Base: All employers of migrants 2025 n=333, 2024 n=271, 2023 n=528, 2021 n=1,345
Q2a. Based on what you know about New Zealand employment law, do you think this is correct or incorrect? Q2b. As far as you know, what does NZ employment law say is the current adult hourly minimum wage?
Verian | The employment monitor

Awareness of the MEPV visa continues to climb (now at 38%). The vast majority of employers with migrants have now applied and employ migrant workers on the accredited employer work visa.

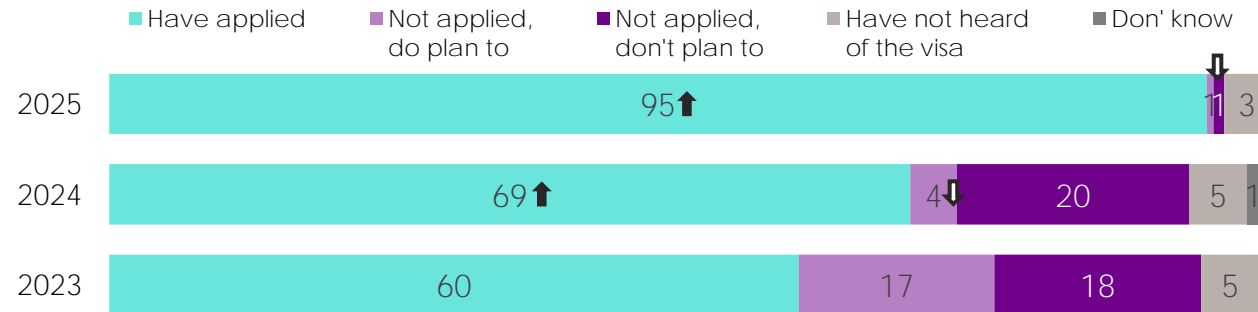
Awareness of Migrant Exploitation Protection Work Visa %

↑ Since 2024, awareness has risen strongly among employers with 5+ migrants (up 21 pts to 52%), and those employing student visa holders (up 32 pts to 60%) and partner visa holders (up 34 pts to 55%).



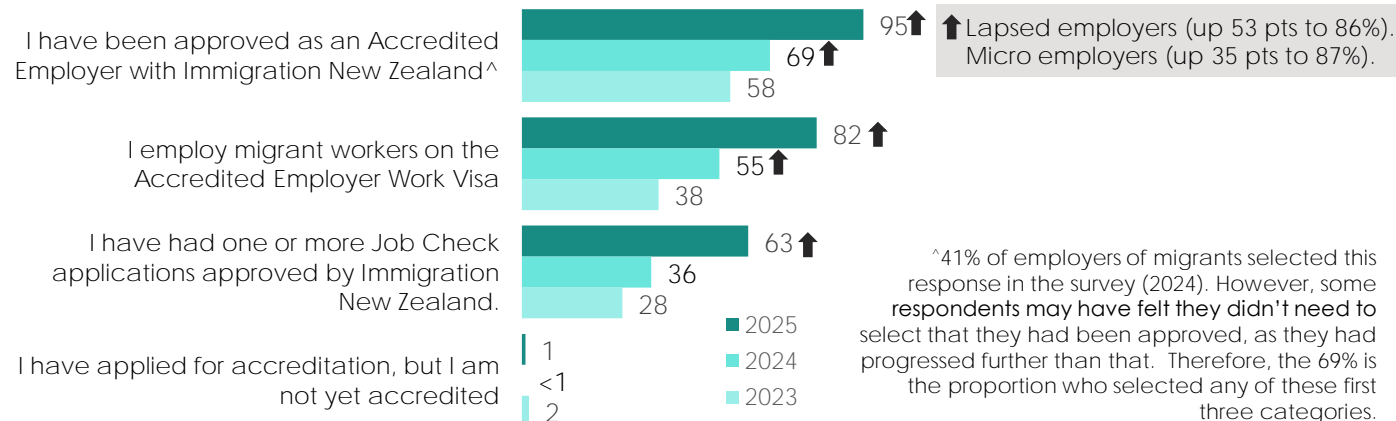
▲ Awareness higher among employers born overseas (55%)

Accredited employer work visa applications %

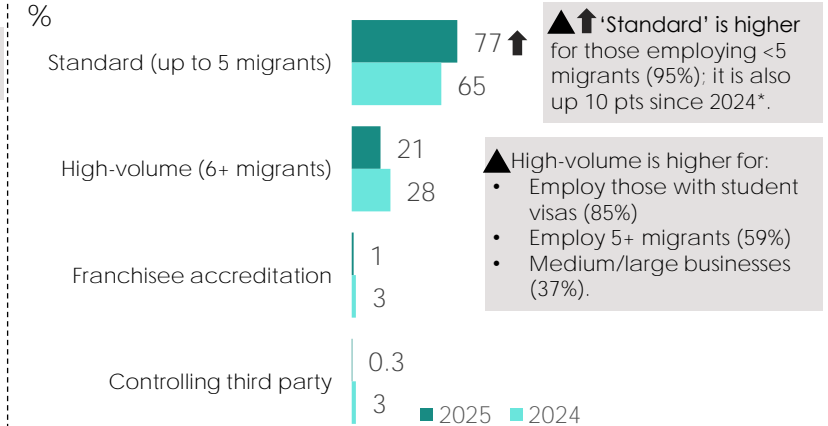


↑ Since 2024, the proportion of lapsed employers of migrants who have now applied has especially risen (up 57pts to 91%).

Accreditation status %



Level of accreditation in application %



Base: All employers of migrants except for Q53. 2025 (n=333), 2024 (n=271), 2023 (n=528)

Q9. Before today, had you heard of the Migrant Exploitation Protection Work Visa? Q51. Thinking about the Accredited Employer Work Visa, which of the following best applies to you and your business? Q52. Which of the following applies to you? Q53 Which level of accreditation did you apply for? Base: Been Verian approved as an accredited employer with Immigration NZ (n=317).

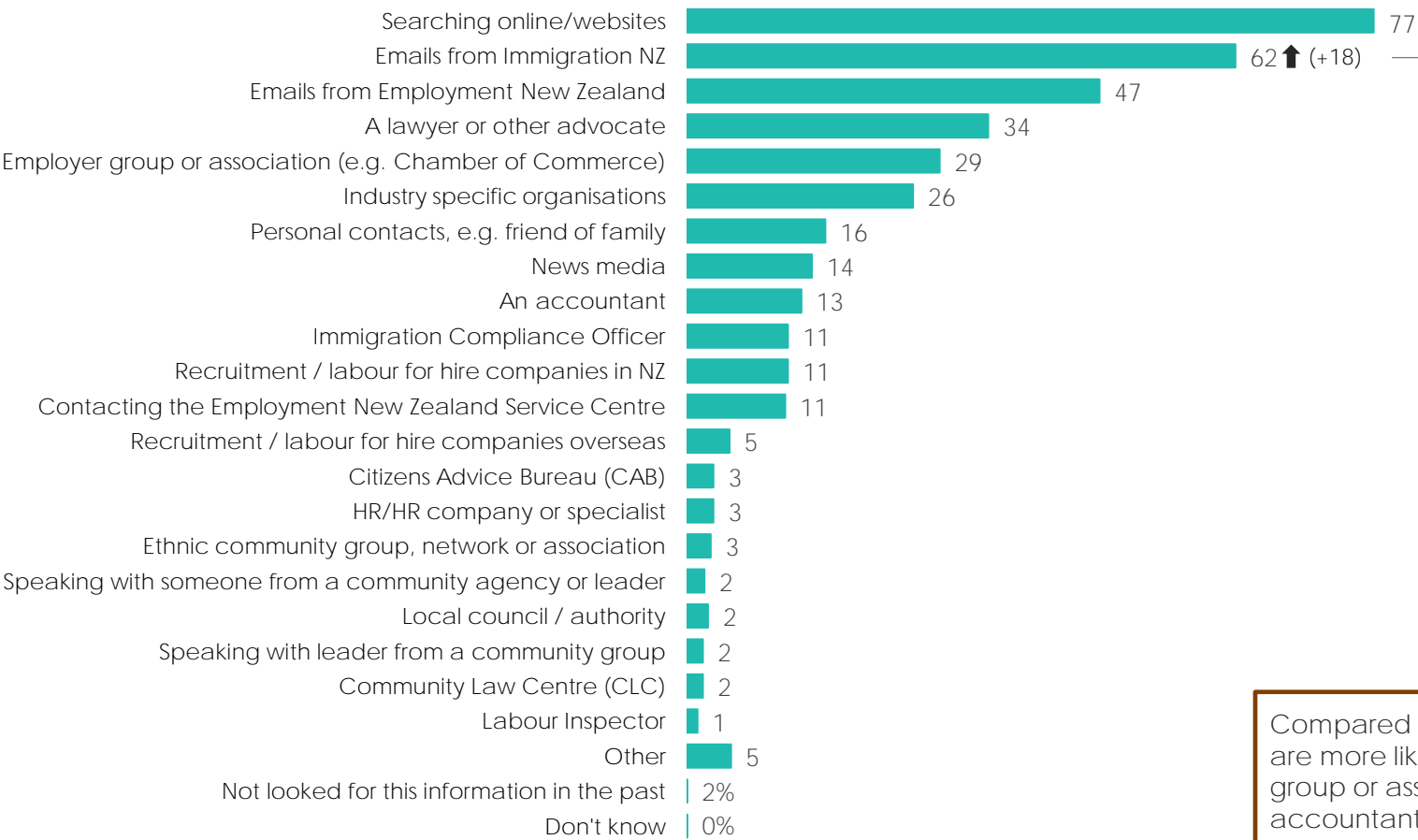
↑↓ Significant increase/decrease since last wave at the 95% confidence level (or 90% if marked with *).

▲▽ Significantly higher or lower than 2025 total sample or other subgroups

Engaging employers of migrants

Online information on employment obligations continues to be the most common useful source. Recall of Immigration NZ emails has risen since 2024.

Sources of useful information %



↑ This increase especially stems from employers with 5+ migrant workers (up 16 pts to 81%)

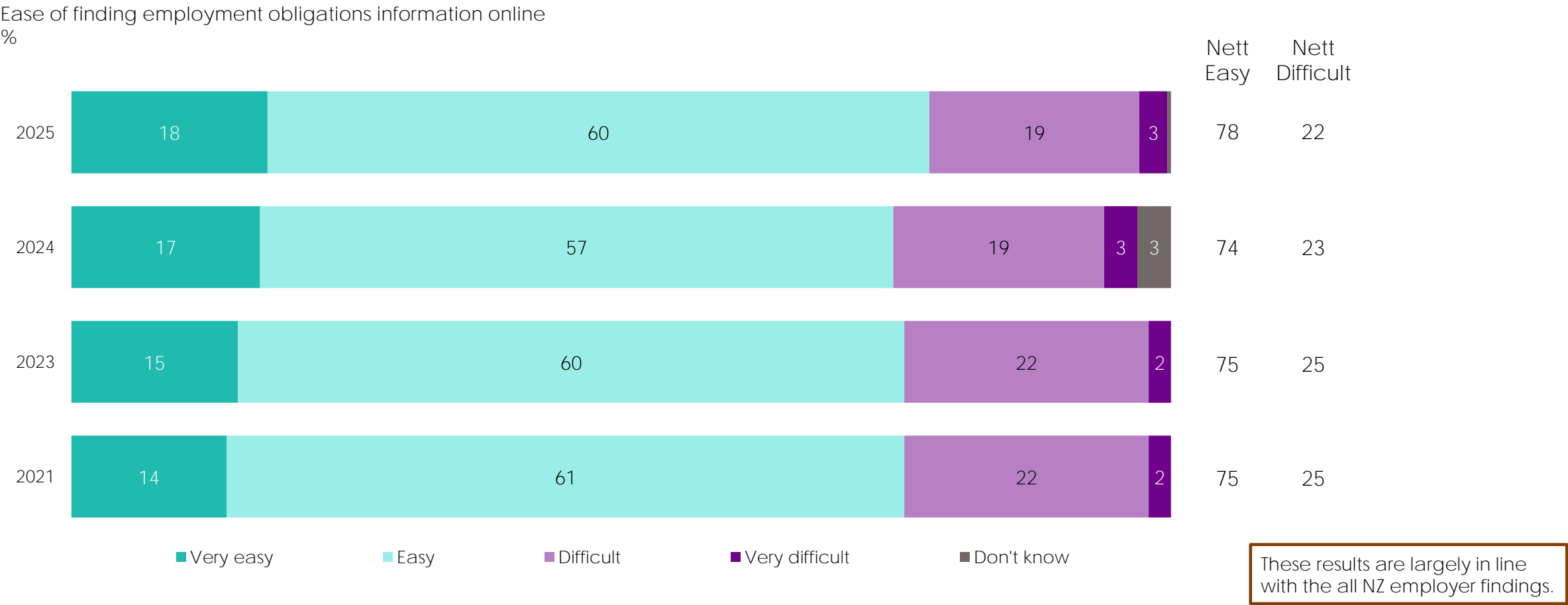
↑ Since 2024, more micro businesses source useful information from Immigration NZ emails and Employment NZ emails.

Compared to all NZ employers, employers of migrant workers are more likely to source useful information from an employer group or association (29% vs 13%), but less likely to use an accountant (13% vs 36%) and personal contacts (16% vs 25%).

Base: All employers of migrants (n=333)
Q4. Where have you got USEFUL information about your employment obligations in the last 12 months?

↑↓ Significant increase/decrease since last wave

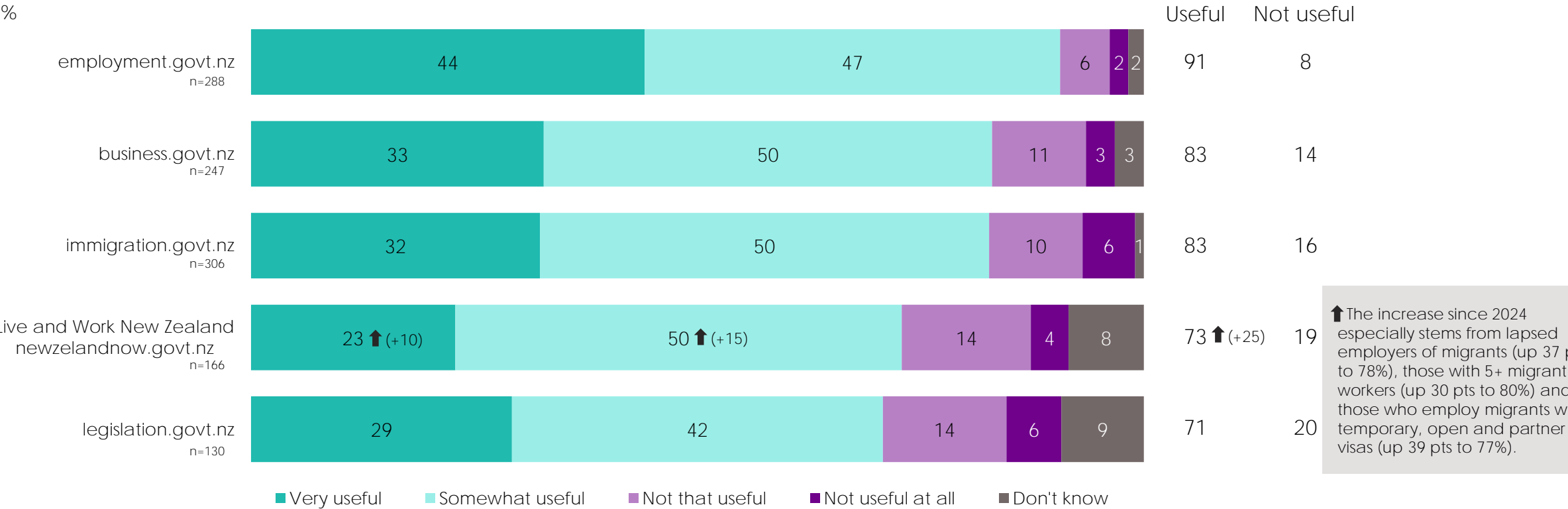
Consistent with previous waves, around three quarters of employers of migrants who looked online for information on employment obligations found this easy.



Perceptions of the Live and Work New Zealand website have improved since 2024.

More positive ratings given to other websites since 2024 are influenced by the inclusion of HR employees in the sample, as HR employees tend to rate these websites more positively than non-HR employees. This is not the case for Live and Work NZ.

Visitors' perceptions of websites

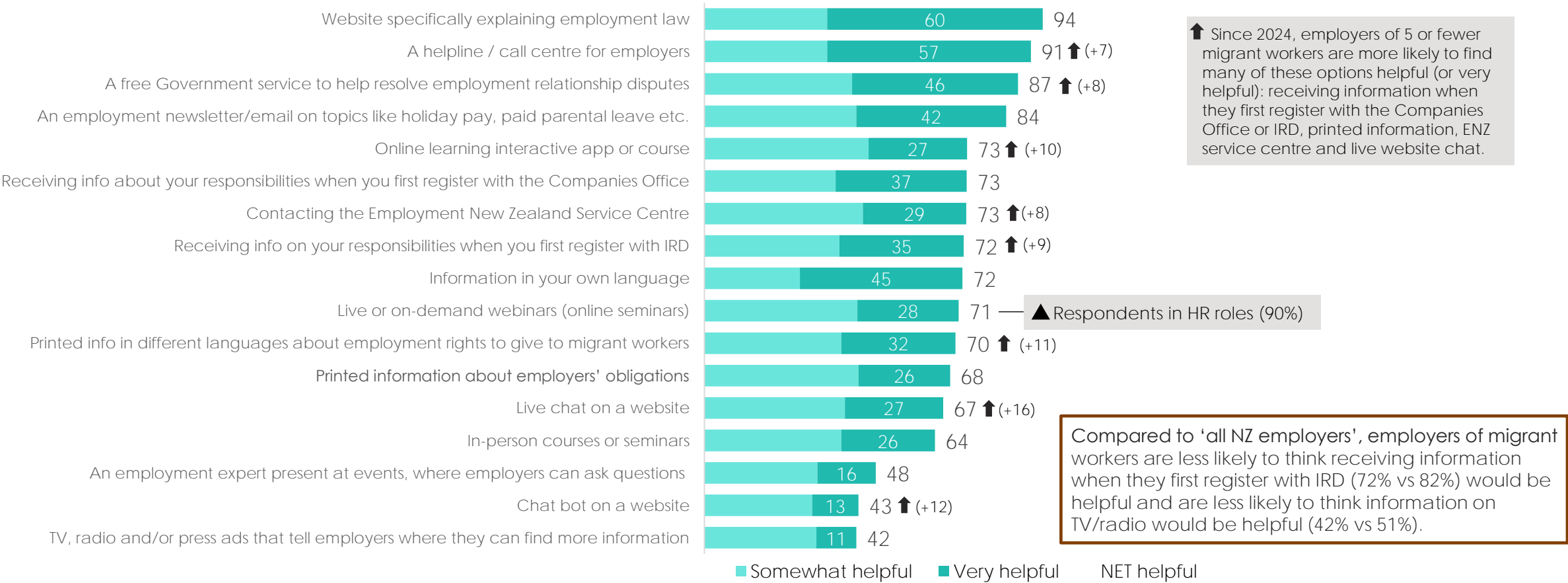


↑ The increase since 2024 especially stems from lapsed employers of migrants (up 37 pts to 78%), those with 5+ migrant workers (up 30 pts to 80%) and those who employ migrants with temporary, open and partner visas (up 39 pts to 77%).

Employers of migrants are more likely to rate the Employment NZ website as 'very useful' than all NZ employers (44% vs 33%).

Interest has increased since 2024 for many of the ideas presented for getting information and support about employment obligations – this stems largely from employers with a small number of migrant workers.

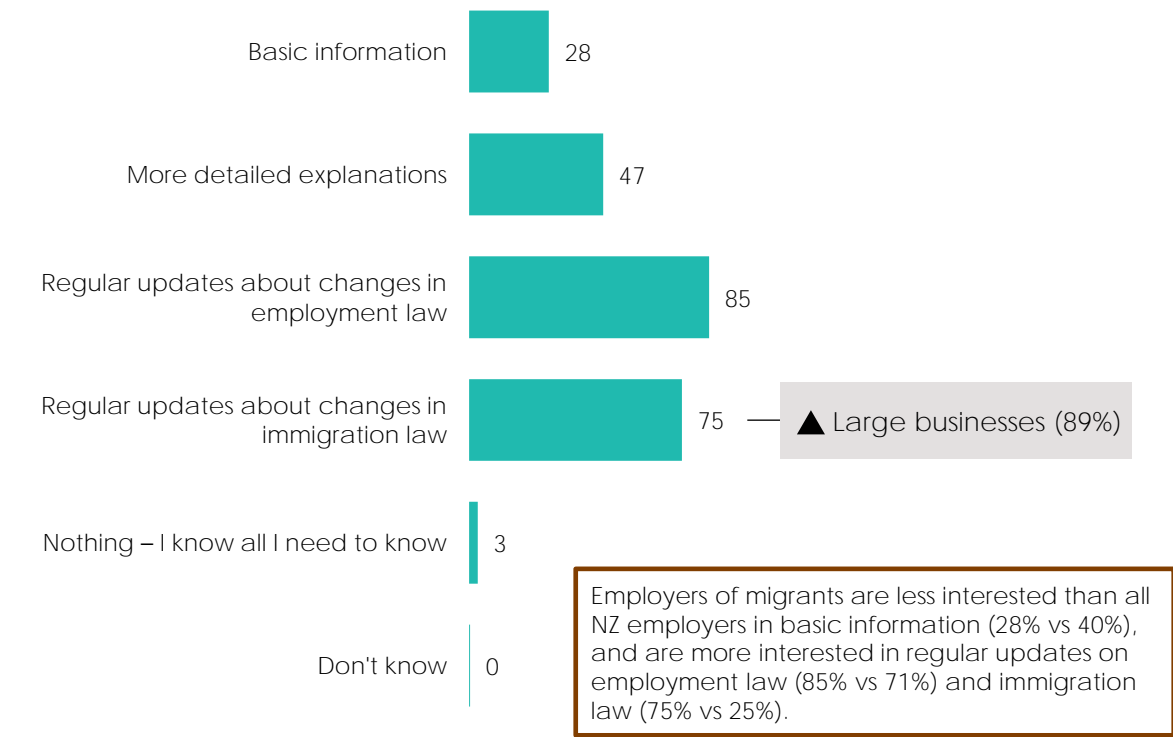
Appeal of information and support ideas
%



Base: All employers of migrants (excluding prefer not to say, n= min 331)
Q6. Next are some ways you can get information and support about employment obligations. We'd like to know how helpful these would be for you?

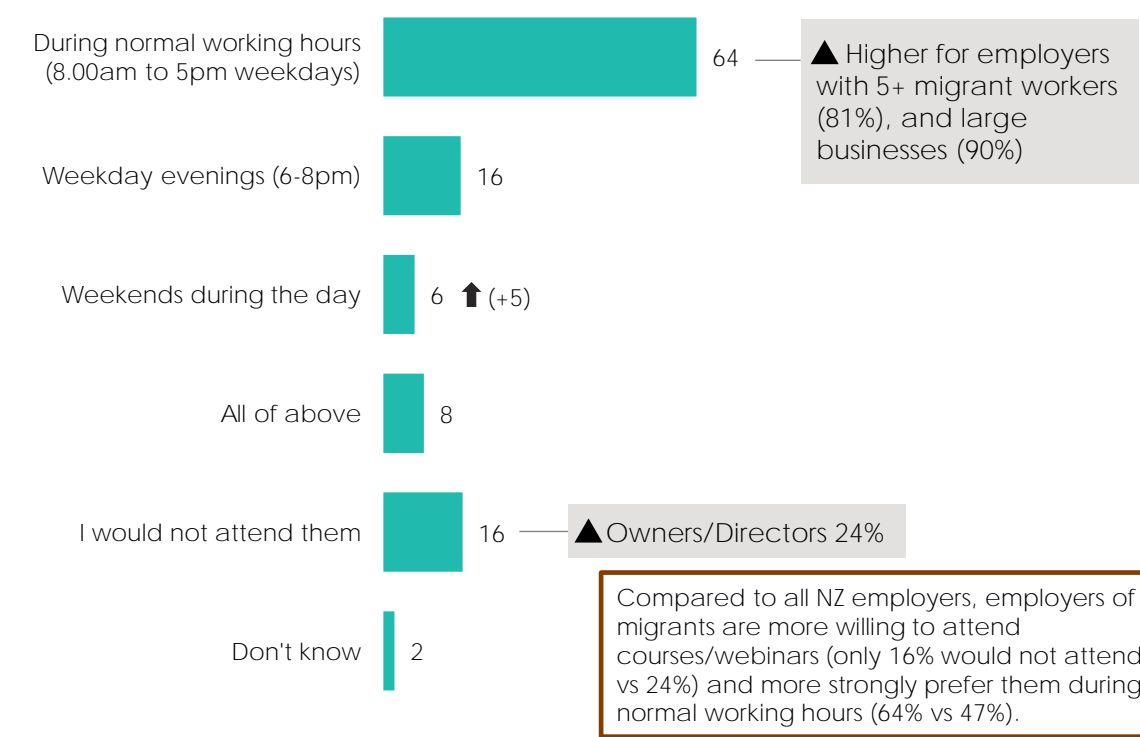
Employers of migrants continue to want regular updates rather than basic information and they want courses and webinars to be run in work hours.

Interest in type of employment law information %



Base: All employers of migrants excluding prefer not to say (n=333)
Q8. What type of information about employment law would you be interested in...?

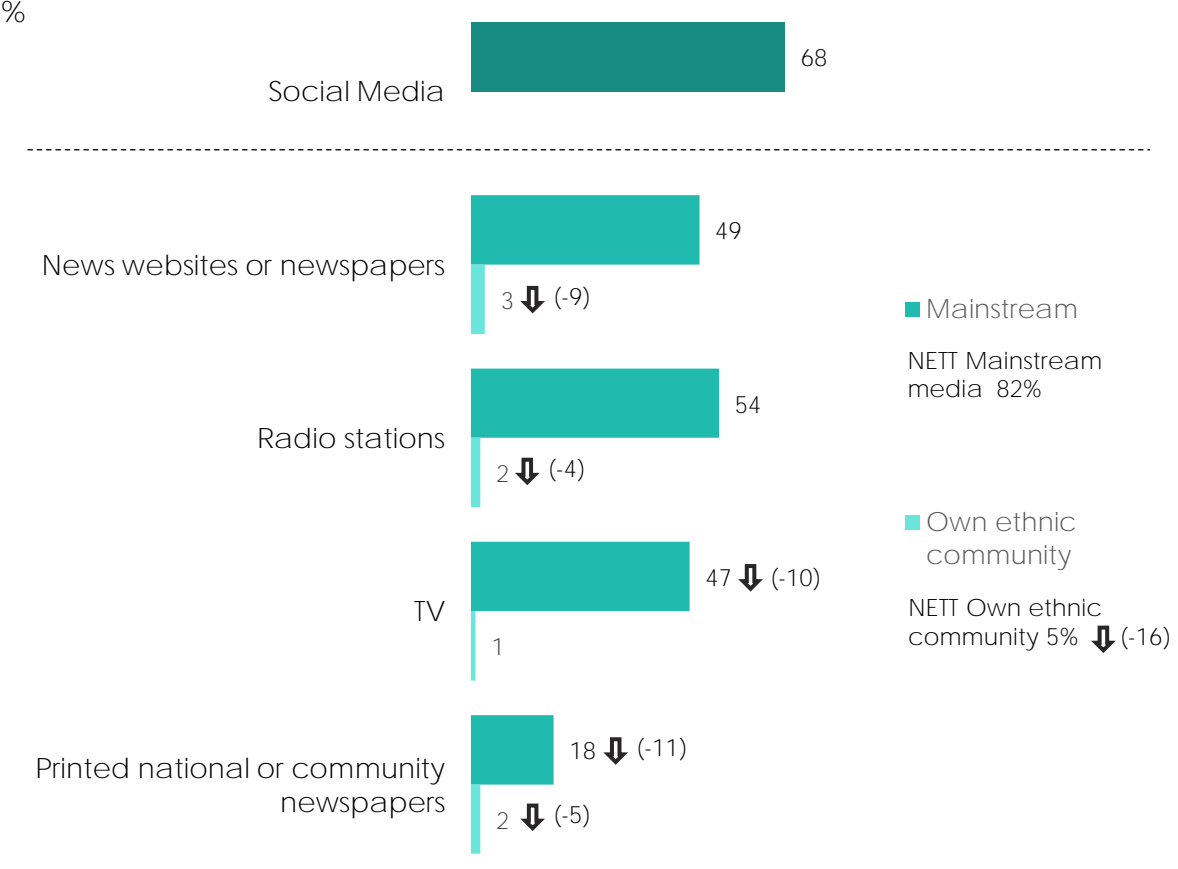
Best time for in-person courses and webinars %



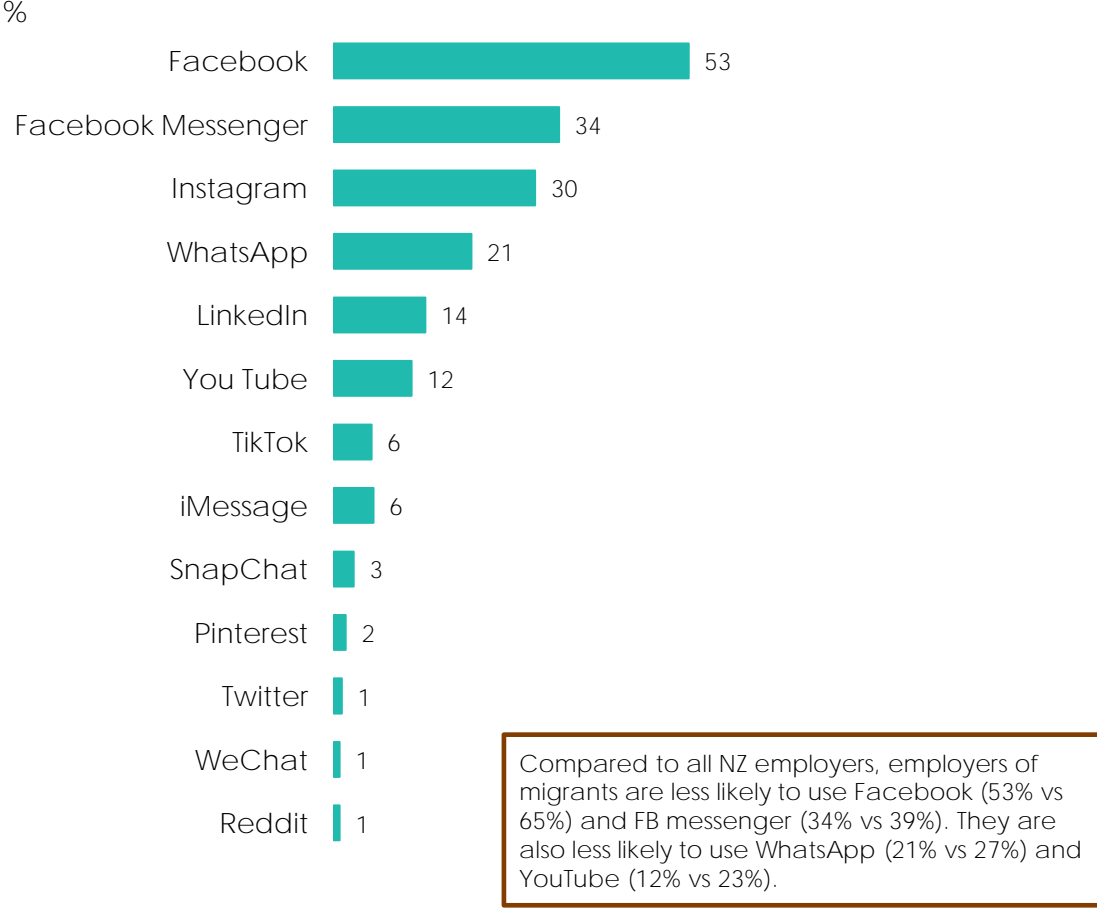
Base: Those who indicated they would find in person/live courses helpful, excluding prefer not to say (n=267)
Q7. Would you be more likely to attend in-person courses/live webinars if they were...?

Around eight in ten employers of migrants consume mainstream media, seven in ten consume social media and one in six consume ethnic community media (the latter has dropped since 2024).

Media used for at least an hour a week
%



Social media used for at least an hour a week
%

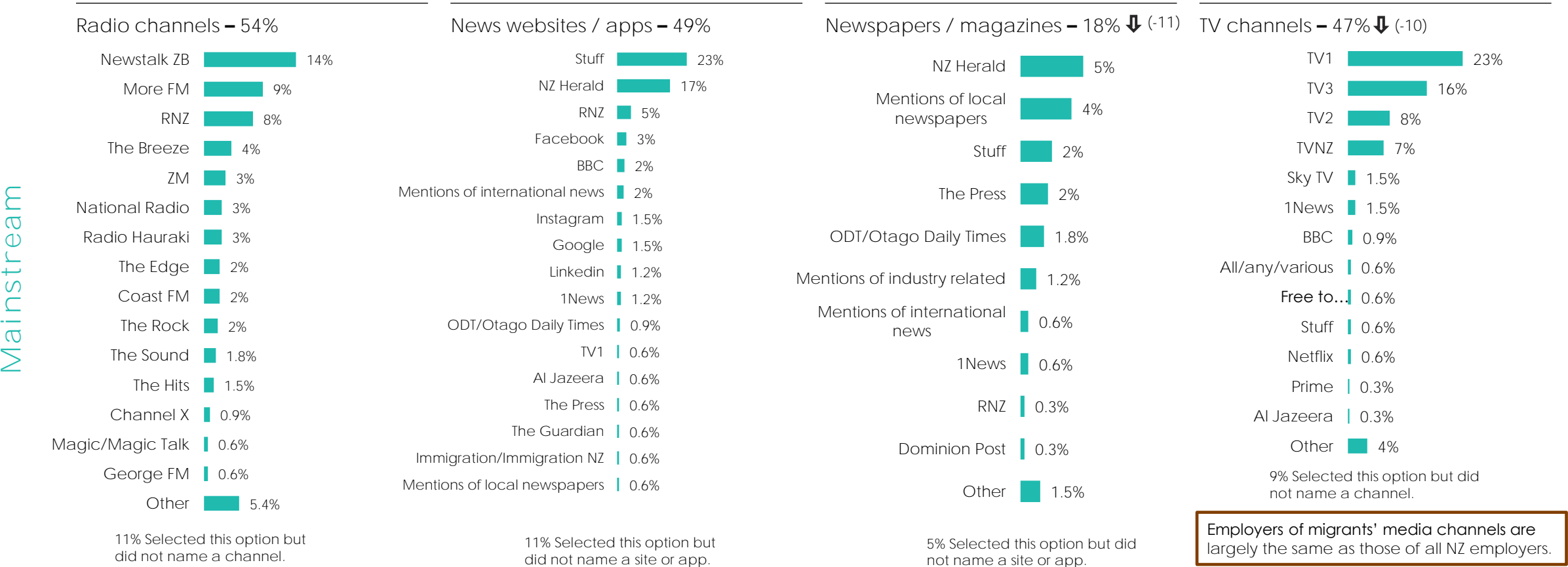


Base: All employers of migrants excluding prefer not to say (n=330) Note: Showing those >1%
Q15. Which of the following do you do for at least one hour a week? Q17. What social media sites or apps do you use most?

↑↓ Significant increase/decrease since last wave

A myriad of mainstream media channels are consumed.

Mainstream media channels

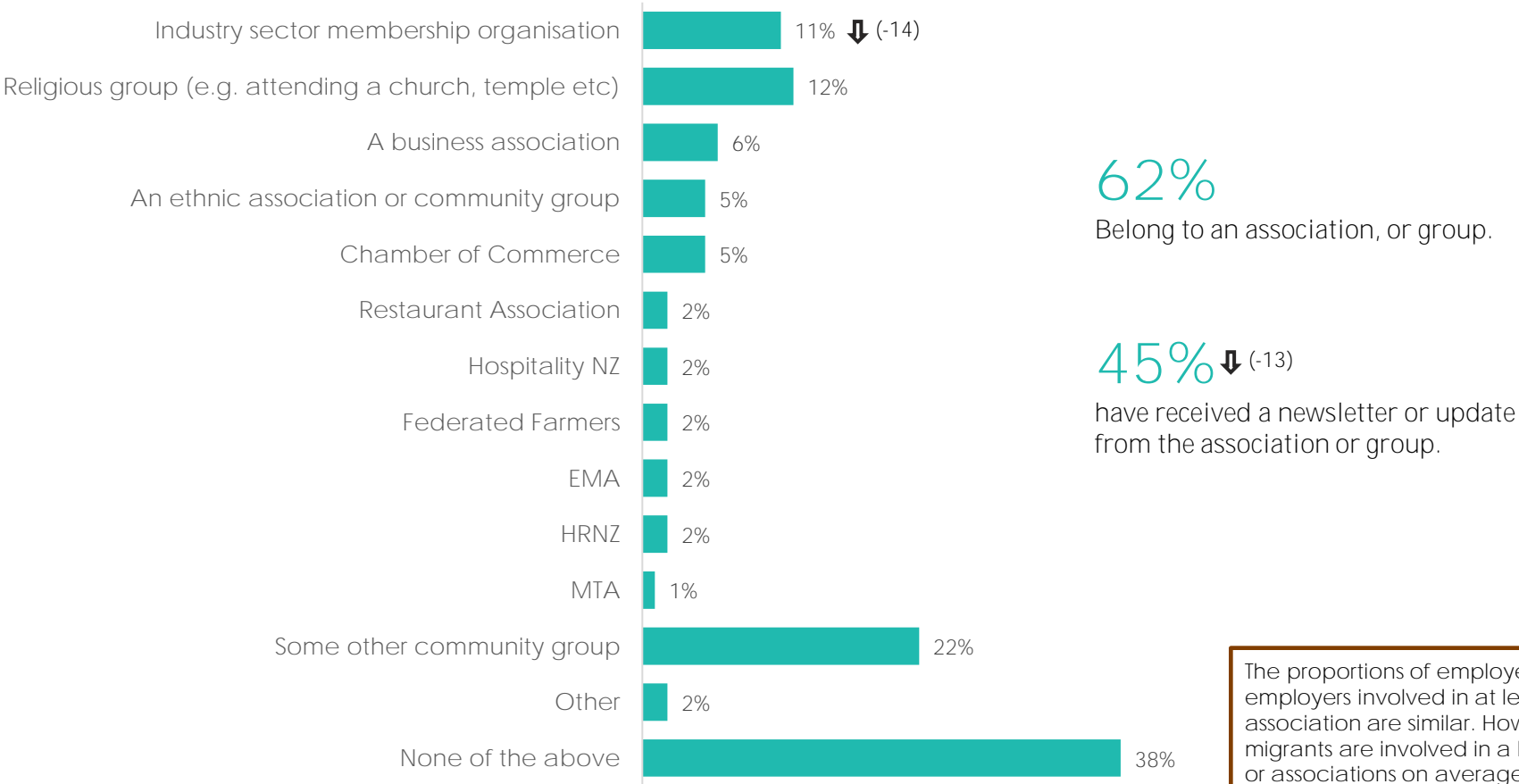


Base: All employers of migrants (n=333)
Q16b. What mainstream TV, radio news websites or news appts, newspapers, magazines do you usually read/use?

↑↓ Significant increase/decrease since last wave

Around six in ten employers of migrants are involved in an association or group. Receiving information from these groups has dropped since 2024.

Professional and community group affiliations
%



Base: All employers of migrants (n=333)
Q18. What groups, if any do you belong to?

Encouraging employers of migrants
to comply

Punitive measures continue to be favoured to boost compliance, but employers are less optimistic about the effectiveness of increased investigations compared to 2024.

Perceived likelihood of compliance initiatives %



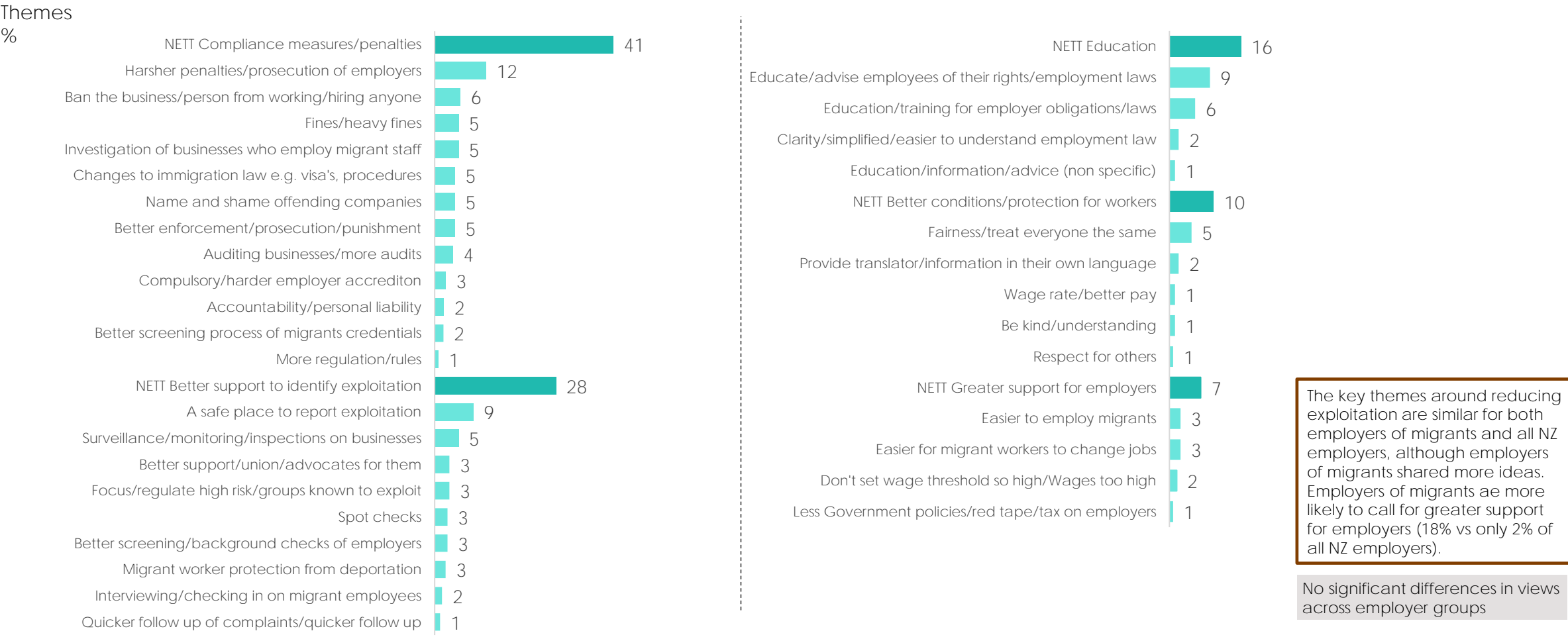
↓ Since 2024, employers with fewer than 5 migrant workers are especially less likely to think increased investigations will help employer compliance (down 20 pts to 60%).

The top eight initiatives that employers of migrants believe would be more likely to encourage employers to comply with employment law are the same as the top eight initiatives for all NZ employers.

Base: All employers of migrants excluding 'Doesn't apply' and Don't know (n=253-323)
Q12. Do you think this would make it more or less likely employers in your industry will comply with employment law?

↑↓ Significant increase/decrease since last wave

When asked how exploitation and mistreatment of workers in their industry could be reduced, employers typically point to stricter compliance measures and tougher penalties – often followed by calls for better tools to identify exploitation and education.



Reducing exploitation and mistreatment of workers

Suggestions in their own words ...

"There needs to be an ability for workers to anonymously report an employer. Although, we also need to ensure that employers are protected from malicious employees making false claims." Other industry

"Collaboration between governments, companies, and advocacy groups can help ensure workers' rights are respected and upheld, fostering an environment where exploitation is less likely to occur." Technology

"More education and awareness of harm and damage for both employers and employees about the consequences of exploitation and mistreatment of migrant workers." Health

"Create a department dedicated to investigating businesses that are reported." Other industry

"I would like there to be some sort of training available to employers regarding how to integrate migrant workers into their staff – e.g. the best way to talk so they understand, common ways that misunderstandings happen, common things migrant workers may find difficult or culturally unacceptable practices that we might do without realising etc." Manufacturing

"Keep the rules easy to follow/understand and easy to access. Employers need to demonstrate they understand the rules before they can employ migrants. Then hold them to account if they fail to meet their obligations with fines and an inability to employ any new migrants." Construction

"Migrant workers need to be vigilant themselves to exploitation. Exploitation can't happen without workers accepting it as normal and not reporting it to authorities." Hospitality

"Increase unannounced inspections in industries notorious for employing and exploiting a large number of migrants. Ensuring that government officials (inspectors, officers) investigate all sites and businesses, even when language barriers exist and do not systematically default to site and teams who are proficient in English." Construction

"Developing close relationships such as having a case worker between migrant workers and a New Zealand authority. Migrant workers are scared to be sent home so they don't reach out. Have their rights and information on how to report a bad employer outlined in their own language and clear communication that they will not be sent home for reporting their employer." Dairy farming

"Migrant workers need to know their rights when they come to New Zealand, and have pathways to raise concerns that are not scary or inaccessible due to language barriers." Other industry

"Employers should be prosecuted if they have been investigated and found to have purposefully exploited or mistreated their migrant workers." Other industry

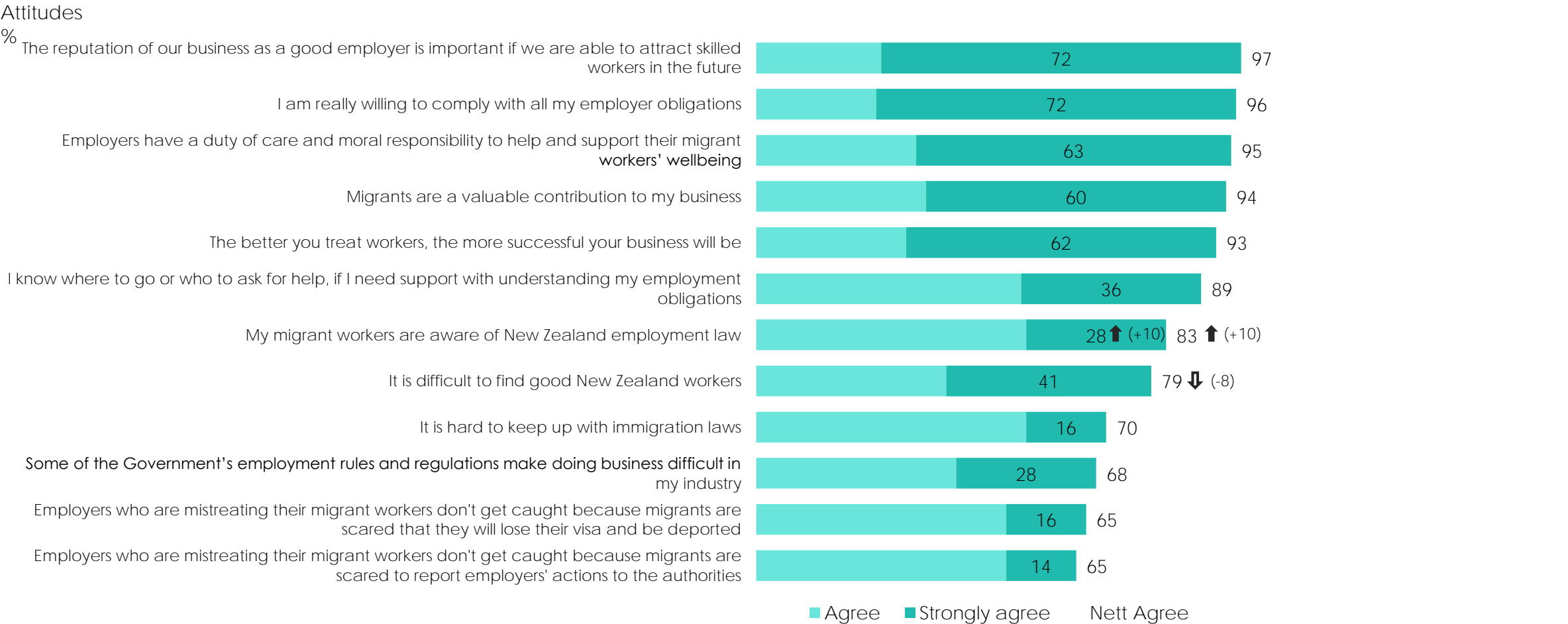
"Approximately half of my young or migrant workers don't read their employment agreements, they trust that we are good employers, but we do ask them to read their employment agreement and ask questions. Maybe an intro to New Zealand employment law to all migrants/workers/youth would be beneficial. We get a lot of people from other hospitality businesses who have never had a contract or holiday etc." Hospitality

Base: Employers of migrants who provided an answer (n=237)

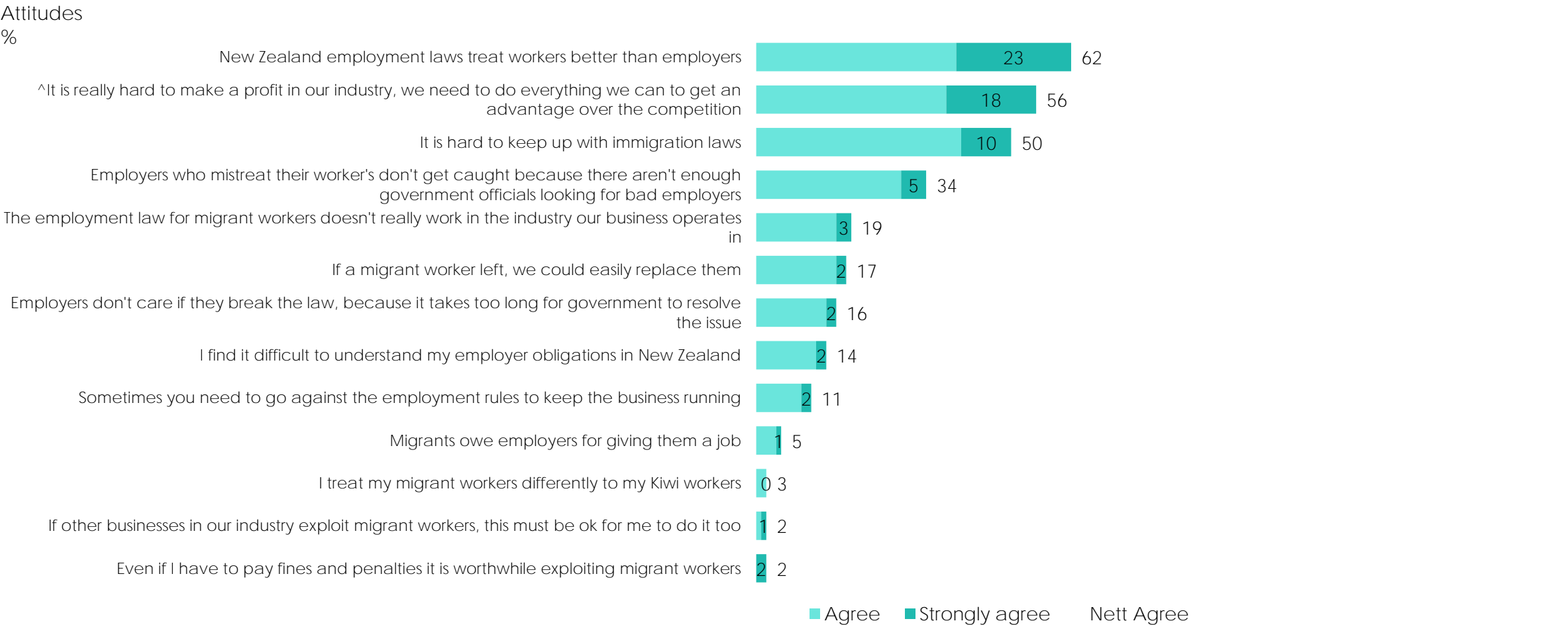
Q14. In your own words, what is the one thing you think could be done to reduce the exploitation and mistreatment of workers in your industry?

Employers of migrants – attitudes

Since 2024, employers of migrants are more likely to feel that their migrant workers are **aware of NZ employment law and less likely to say it’s difficult to find good NZ workers** – possibly because some roles are easier to fill given the tighter labour market.

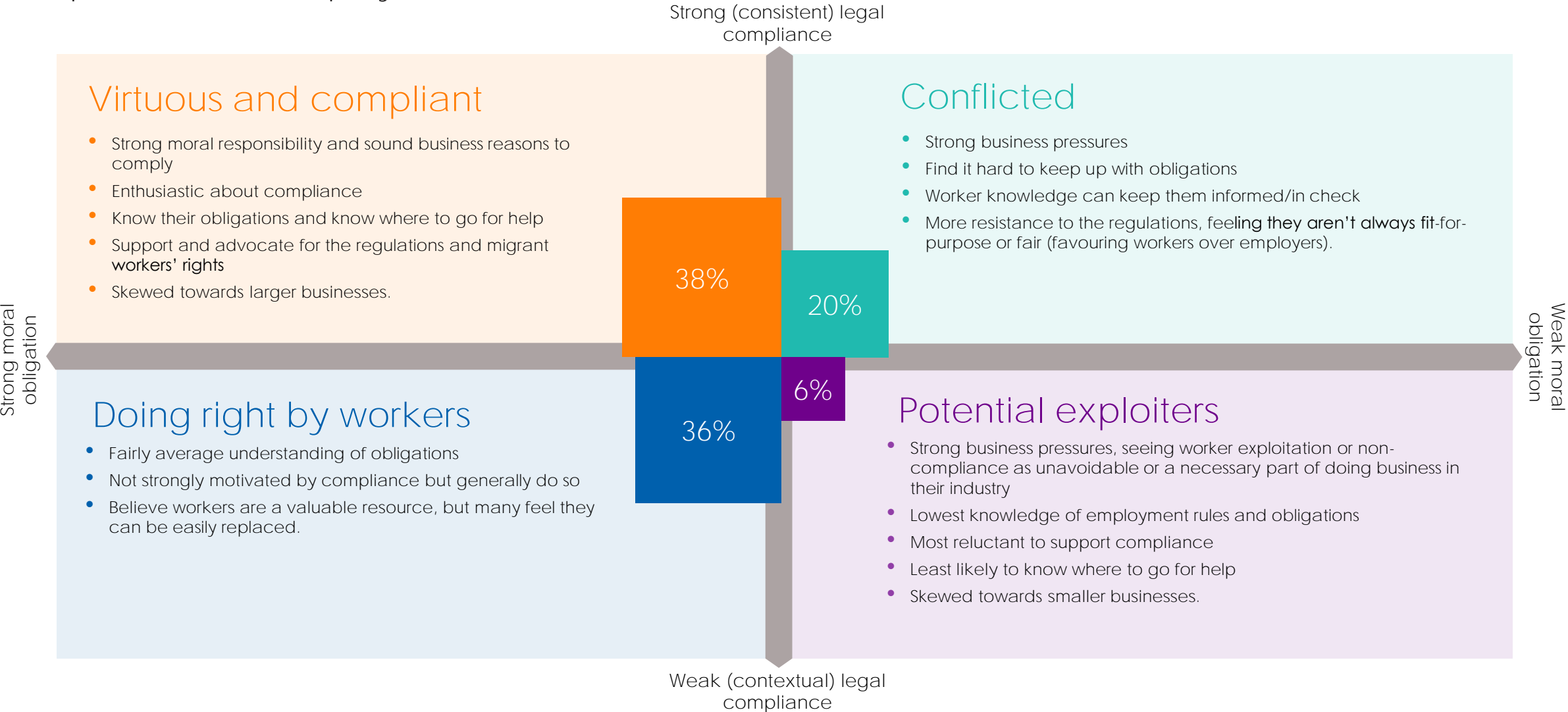


The attitudes of employers of migrants are stable on matters such as NZ employment law favouring workers and the difficulties faced in making a profit.



Employers of migrants – segments

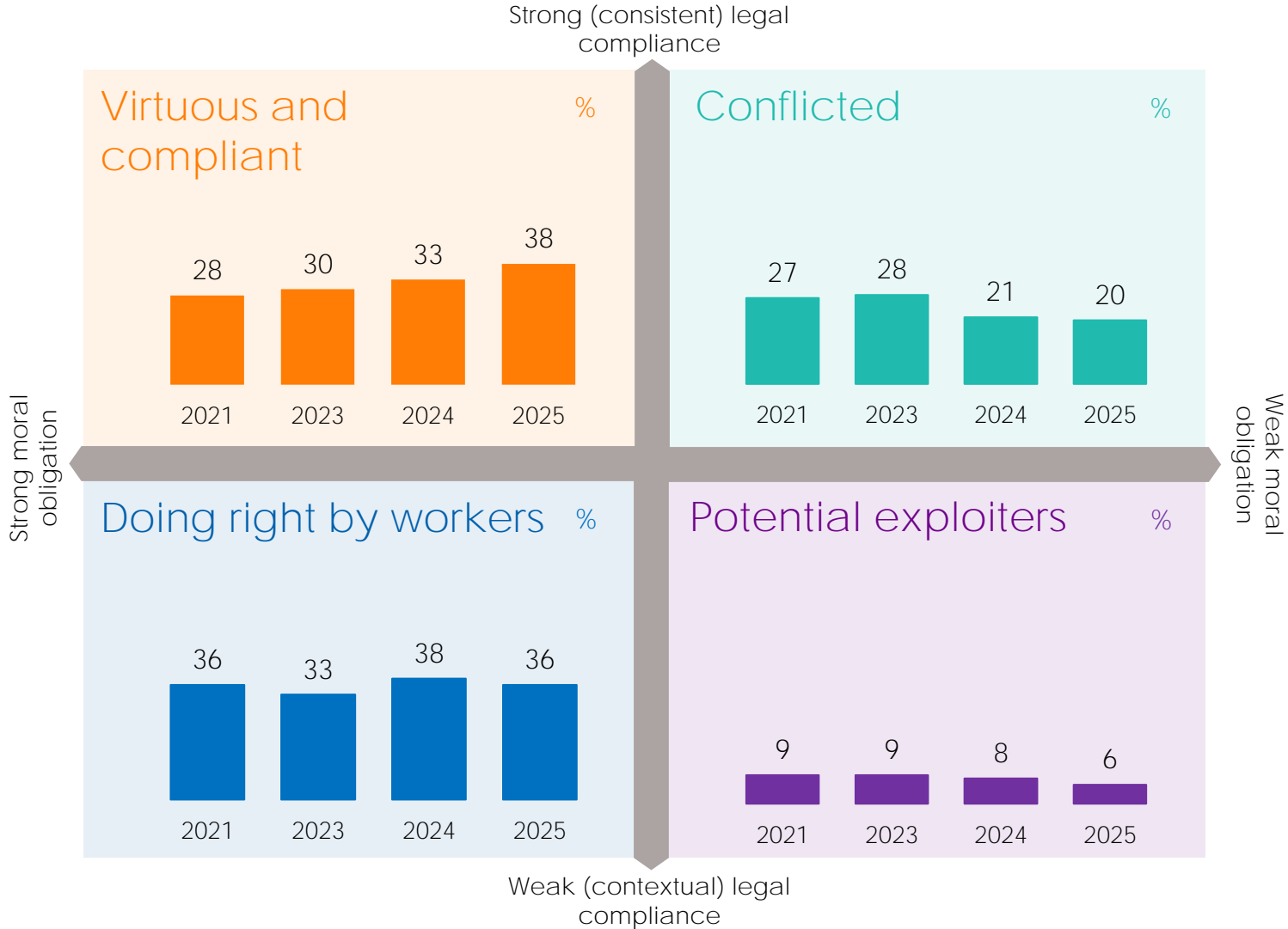
We identified four segments by crossing employers’ moral obligation to workers and employers’ compliance with employment law. See page 90 for a fuller explanation of these two dimensions.



Base: All employers of migrants (n=333)

The size of the *Virtuous and compliant* segment has gradually increased in size over time.

The segment profiles on the next four pages are based on samples from 2021 to 2025 combined (to produce robust analysis).



Base: All employers of migrants, 2025 (n=333), 2024 (n=271)

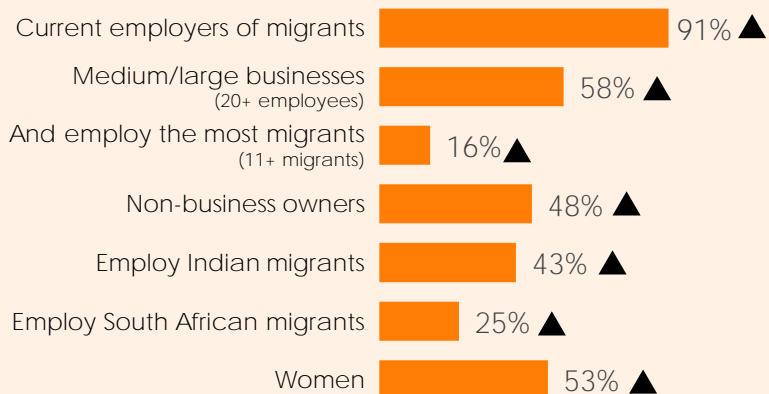
↑↓ Significant increase/decrease since last wave

38%

Virtuous & compliant

They are driven both by their duty of care and their reputation as an employer.

Compared to other segments, they're more likely to be employees themselves at larger organisations with more migrant workers...



This may mean the volume of employees necessitates compliance, as well as less incentive personally to exploit migrants (i.e. compared with a small business owner personally managing their workers while also worrying about their profits etc.)

They have the highest knowledge of rules

They're confident in their understanding which is reflected in their actual understanding

17.3 Highest average understanding of rules out of 19 / ▲ 98% Say they have a good understanding

They also feel their migrant workers have better understanding than other segments (▲ 90% say their migrant workers understand the rules)
This may **show they're a driving force, informing their workers**

They generally prioritise their workers' needs and see this as tied directly to their business' reputation and success

Employers have a duty of care/moral responsibility to help/support their migrant workers' wellbeing 99% ▲

Migrants are a valuable contribution to my business 99% ▲

The better you treat your workers, the more successful your business will be 99% ▲

The reputation of a business as a good employer is important to attract skilled staff in the future 99%

At the same time, they reject many harmful views

If others in my industry exploit migrants, it must be OK for me to 0.3% ▼

Even if I have to pay penalties, it's worthwhile exploiting migrant workers 1% ▼

I treat my migrant workers different to my Kiwi workers 1% ▼

Migrants owe employers for giving them a job 1% ▼

In spite of their existing knowledge level, **they're the most open to learning more**

Employment law 85% ▲

Immigration law 77% ▲

To address exploitation, unprompted, **they recommend...**

Compliance measures/penalties 37%

Support to spot exploitation 31% ▲

And across the board, they support most interventions, especially investigation...

Increased investigation 82% ▲

Annual audits 74% ▲

As well as efforts to humanise migrant workers and share positive experiences

Understanding the impact on the lives of migrants 66% ▲

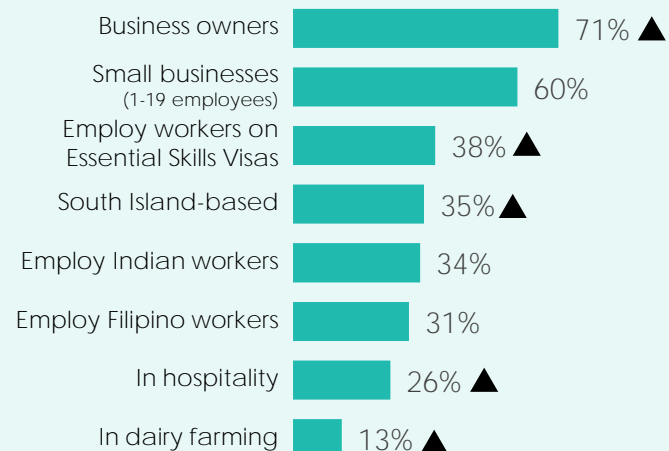
Hearing from good employers 66% ▲

20%

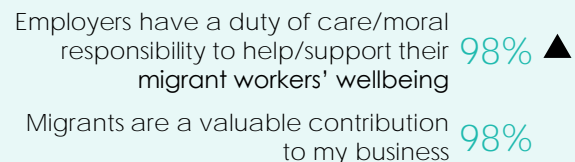
Conflicted

They generally want to do the right thing for their employees, but struggle to do so. They struggle with the regulations in practice, but not the spirit of the regulations in theory.

Compared to other segments, they tend to **be...**



They want to do what's right and they value their migrant employees



They struggle to follow the regulations

Their knowledge of regulations is about average, but they're aware they and their workers lack some understanding.

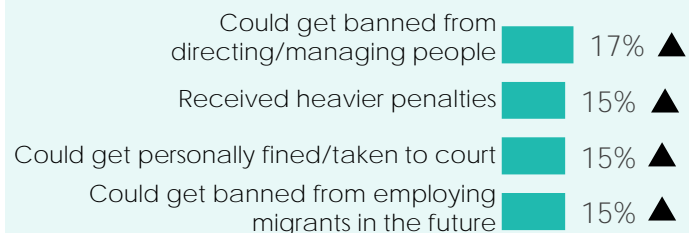
16.6 out of 19 Average understanding of the rules / ▽ 43% Say they understand regulations very well

83% Feel their migrant workers understand the rules

They say it's hard to keep up with regulations, including...



They're more apathetic towards penalties, with more people saying the following would make no difference, e.g. if exploitative employers...



They blame outside forces

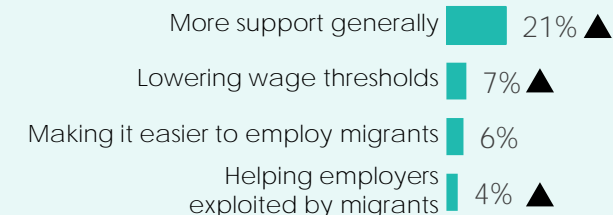
They find it hard to comply in the climate their business operates within

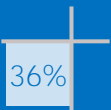
It's hard to make a profit in my industry/I have to do anything to get an advantage over competition 67% ▲

They disagree that the regulations are fit for purpose



They want more support for employers and are more likely to suggest (without prompting)...





Doing right by workers

They are often middle of the road employers with decent knowledge and attitudes.

Compared to other segments, they tend to ...



They see the benefits to treating their workers well

The reputation of our business as a good employer is important to attract skilled staff 99%

The better you treat your workers, the more successful your business will be 97% ▲

Although they're not entirely virtuous, with a fairly small element of dismissiveness towards migrant workers

Migrant workers are valuable to my business 94% ▼

Migrant workers are replaceable 14% ▲

I treat my migrant workers different to my Kiwi workers 5% ▲

They're broadly on board with regulations

Their knowledge of regulations is about average, but they're not entirely confident in their knowledge

16.5 Average understanding / ▲50% Say they understand regulations quite well
out of 19 of the rules

And some feel their migrant workers have poor understanding (▼78% say their migrant workers understand the rules)

They're more on board with regulations than other segments and are less likely to agree that...

Some of the government's rules/regulations make doing business hard in my industry 72% ▼

New Zealand employment laws treat workers better than employers 69% ▼

The employment law for migrant workers doesn't really work in my industry 17% ▼

But, there's still room to improve their knowledge especially around...

Contractors' rights 52%

Overtime 65% ▼

Unpaid trials 74% ▼

Responsibilities (Tasks you're given vs what you were employed to do) 77% ▼

They're most receptive to penalties. Unprompted, they suggest reducing exploitative practices by...

Compliance measures/penalties 36%

Support to better identify exploitation 27%

And they feel the following will encourage more compliance if employers caught exploiting workers were...

Being personally fined/taken to court 88% ▲

Being banned from being a director/manager 86% ▲

They can be reached through a range of channels, consuming...

Mainstream media 86%

Social media 62%

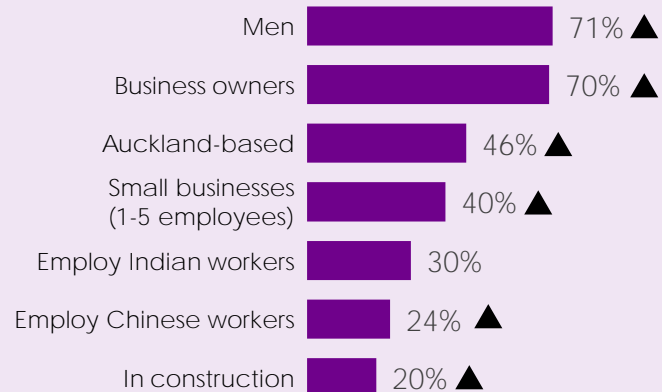
With more free-to-air TV consumption than average

TV 59% ▲

6% Potential exploiters

They generally see themselves as under immense business pressure, doing what they can to get by. As a result they see worker exploitation or non-compliance as an unavoidable part of doing business in their industry.

Compared to other segments, they're more likely to be...



They have an underlying antagonism towards their migrant workers.
They may first need to recognise their workers deserve fair treatment before they look at following specific regulations.

They are often resistant to regulations

They have poor regulation knowledge, but don't fully recognise the gaps in their knowledge

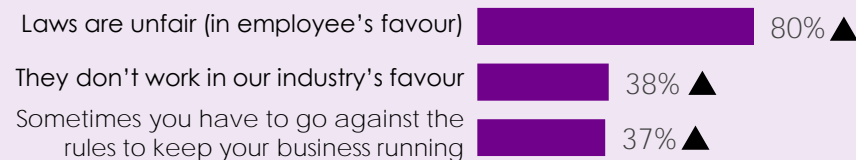
14.2 Lowest average out of 19 understanding of rules / ▲23% Say they have poor understanding

And to some extent, rely on migrants' poor understanding
(▼69% say their migrant workers understand the rules)

They say it's hard to keep up with regulations, including...



But are also dismissive of regulations in general



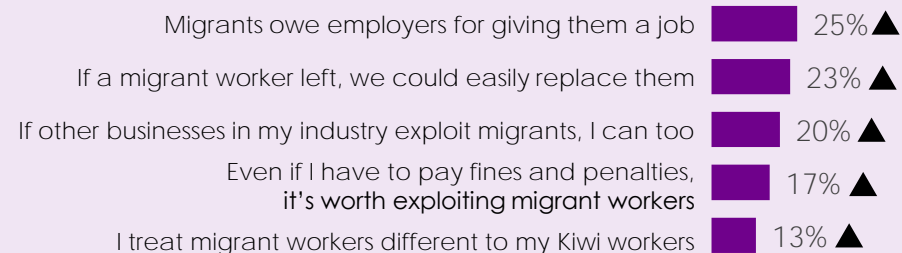
And hard to reach

Logistically they're the hardest to reach as they have the least...



They're also entrenched in their thinking

They offer the fewest suggestions to improve compliance which may tell us that the barriers to compliance they cite are excuses and in reality they're less invested in actually addressing exploitation.



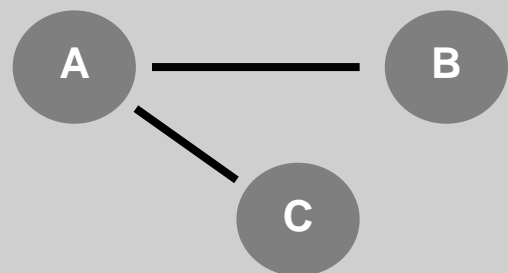
Appendix – Bayesian Belief Network technical details

Technical details regarding Bayesian Belief Networks

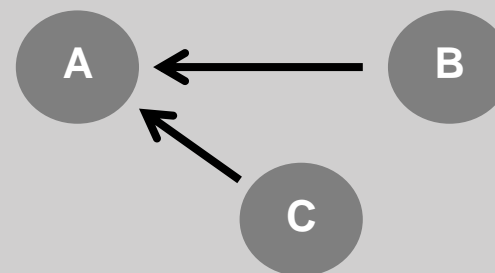
There are four key stages in generating the Bayesian Belief Network map:

- 1) Determination of relationships between map variables: Connections between variables are determined based on tests of independence conducted within a learning algorithm.
- 2) Determination of indicative directionality of relationships: Indication of causal direction is determined by the pattern of conditional dependence and independence between variables.

A simple example of this can be seen below.



Three variables, two of which (B and C) are conditionally independent.



Given conditional independence of B and C, causal direction has to occur as on left.

- 3) Running tests across the dataset: Multiple tests of independence between all independent/dependent variables are conducted.
- 4) Determining the most stable solution: Steps 1-3 are run for at least 200 bootstrap samples (i.e. the model is run at least 200 times). The average of these maps is presented as the final map, resulting in a more robust and stable model. The threshold value presented with the model represents the number of bootstraps the relationships shown are present in.