

A SNAPSHOT OF FINDINGS FROM THE 2025 EMPLOYMENT MONITOR

Young workers in New Zealand

MBIE’s employment monitor delivers a comprehensive view of New Zealand workers’ and employers’ perceptions, experiences and pressures in the employment market.

This infographic focuses on NZ workers aged 18 to 29 years. Verian surveyed 355 workers in this age groups in February and March 2025. Comparisons are made with the 2024 survey.

An economic downturn and rising youth unemployment have made jobs harder to find and thrive in, with employers tightening budgets on things like training. But how are young workers feeling about their place in the workforce?

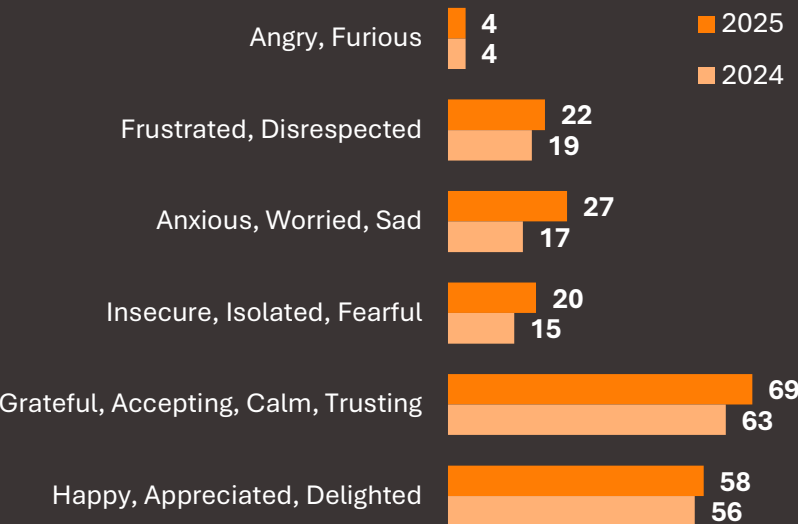


Most young workers continue to say they’re satisfied with their current employment situation – a sign of resilience and appreciation in a challenging climate.



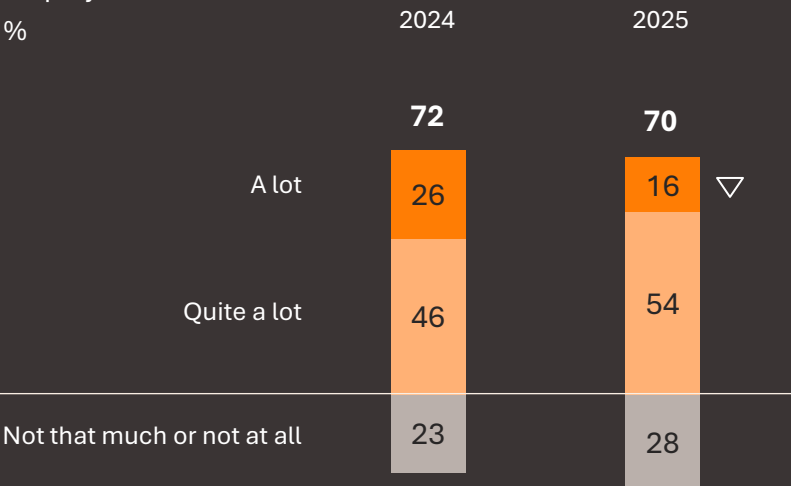
But there are signs of greater apprehension in 2025.

Emotions
%



While most youth still trust their employer, that trust is weaker than it was.

Employer trust
%



Compared to last year, fewer young people are strongly positive about some key aspects of their working life...suggesting some are feeling less seen, supported and invested in.

%



Strongly agree

There are growing concerns about fairness.

More than half of young workers now report at least one concern about their employment.

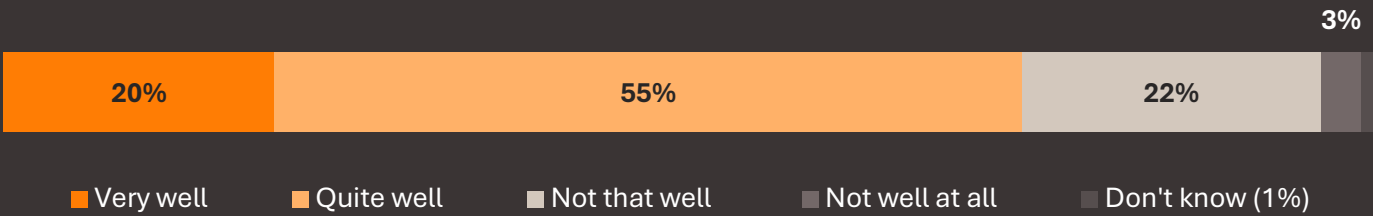
Any employment concern



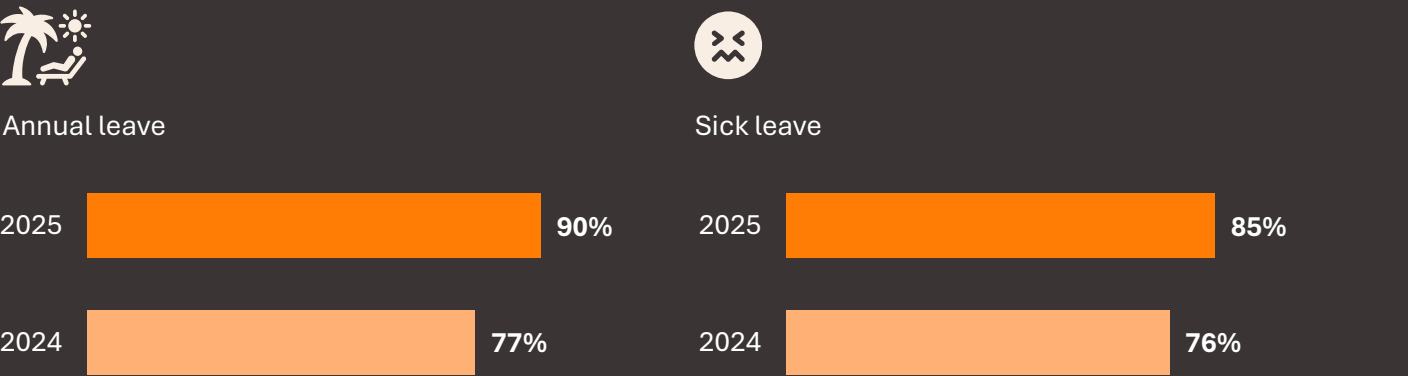
Young workers’ self-rated understanding of their employment rights hasn’t changed.

One in four young workers say they don’t understand their employment rights that well.

Young workers feel they understand their employment rights...



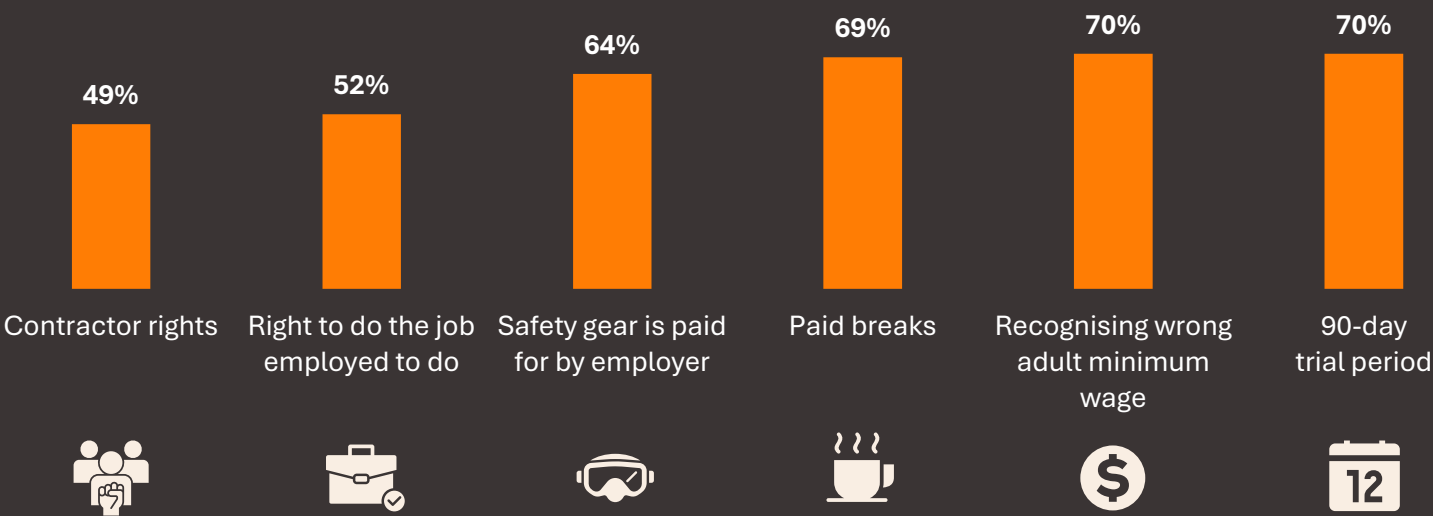
However, tested knowledge has improved for annual leave and sick leave entitlements.



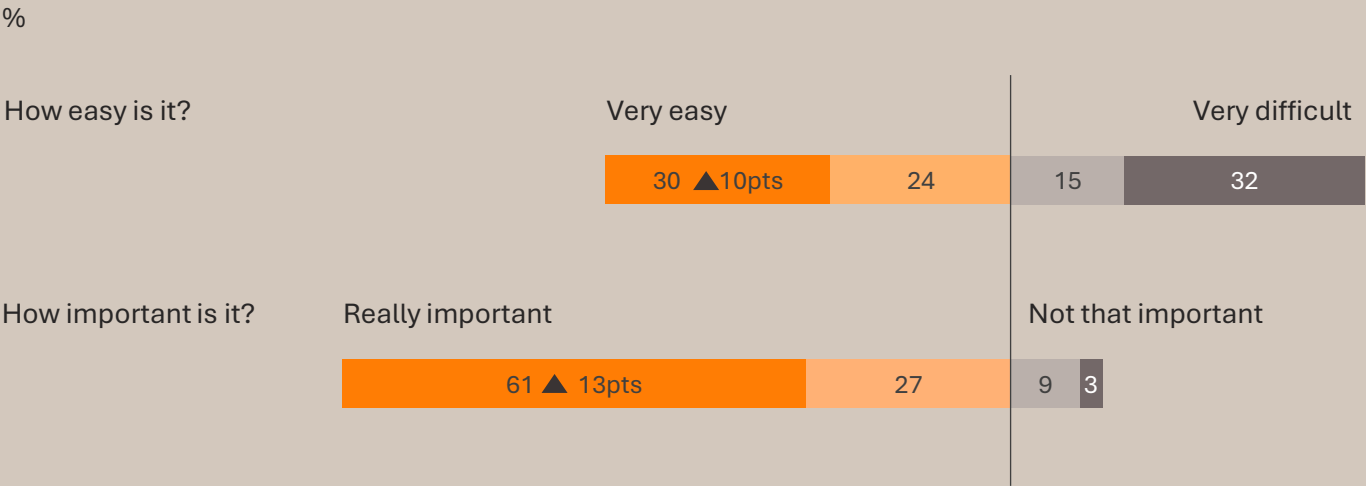
On average, young people lack understanding of four employment rights (out of 14 tested).



Tested knowledge is lowest for...

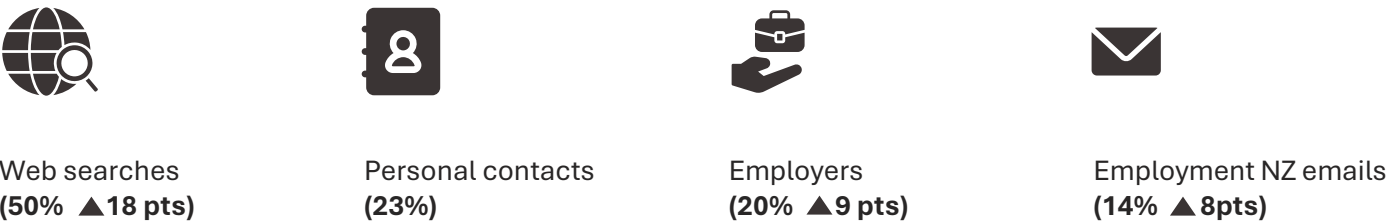


Employment rights are a rising priority and young workers feel more empowered to ‘speak up’ to Employment NZ.



Young workers are more active in searching for information on employment rights than they were last year.

Top 4 sources of useful info on rights:



75% used at least one source of useful information (up 16 points since 2024).

Finding information online is now easier.




There are signs^ that perceptions of Employment New Zealand’s website have improved.





^Not statistically significant due to small base sizes.


Young workers are more enthusiastic about support ideas than in 2024.

Top ideas (% very or somewhat helpful)

- 

Dedicated website on employment rights
(87%)
- 

Freephone to ask employment questions
(85% ▲ 14pts)
- 

Free independent disputes resolution service
(83%)
- 

Freephone at a suitable time
(83% ▲ 13pts)
- 

Independent advocate to speak to employer on your behalf
(83% ▲ 11 pts)

Since 2024, young workers also show more interest in contacting the Employment NZ service centre (up 11 pts to 77%).



We see a shift in the size of our four young worker groups that are defined by worker knowledge of rights and risk of exploitation.

Improved knowledge coupled with weaker employment sentiment has led to a decrease in the size of the *Naive, but unexploited* segment and increase in the *Knowledgeable but trapped* segment.

